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"If I fall down, he will pick me up": refugee hosts and everyday care in protracted displacement

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Around the world, refugees share shelters and homes with other refugees. Such household-level hosting relationships play a central role in the lives of displaced individuals and families, offering support to meet basic needs, safety, and a sense of belonging. Yet, the role of displaced people as refugee hosts is often overlooked, an omission that fails to account for the active role of displaced populations in supporting one another and the dynamic social connections between refugees. Thus far, hosting relationships have often been understood through hospitality. Instead, in this paper I develop an understanding of refugee-refugee hosting as constituted through care. Drawing on qualitative research conducted with Sudanese refugee men in Amman, Jordan, I demonstrate the value of this framework in explaining the emergence and experiences of their hosting relationships. I highlight the importance of everyday interdependencies for life in displacement, alongside the challenges and ambivalences of providing and receiving care in such contexts, and show how configurations of care shift and alter throughout protracted displacement. In doing so, I center informal and everyday acts of care among refugees in relation to external humanitarian care, arguing for a re-conceptualisation of the relationship between 'hosts' and 'humanitarians', and propose avenues for those working with displaced populations to engage with the vital support that refugee-refugee hosting provides.

KEYWORDS

refugees, host families, hosting, care, humanitarian, Jordan

1 Introduction

The generous welcome of refugees into citizens' homes has frequently featured in coverage of the response to refugees arriving in Europe, particularly since 2015 (Lyons and Grant, 2015; Cantor et al., 2017; Wade, 2018; Refugees at Home, 2019; Room for Refugees, 2019) and again following the start of the war in Ukraine (for example, the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched by the government of the United Kingdom in March 2022 (House of Commons Library, 2023)). Many of these reports on hosting in Europe rightly acknowledge that only a small proportion of the global refugee population comes to Europe, with the majority living in countries neighboring the conflict (UNHCR, 2022). Few, however, recognize that nationals and refugees in these countries of conflict, first asylum and transit are also hosting refugees in their homes, sharing accommodation and resources.

Data remains slim, but in humanitarian settings many forcibly displaced people have at some time resided with a host family (Davies, 2012; Caron, 2019). In such contexts, the distinction between host and guest, citizen and refugee, established group and new arrival,

does not fully hold. Despite a continuing depiction of hosts as non-displaced residents and guests as refugees, in many cases hosting practices take place between refugees: individuals and households who have little to no formal claim over the space they inhabit yet nonetheless share their space and resources (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Yassine et al., 2021). It is these refugee-refugee hosting arrangements that are the focus of this work, and within my research, participants had only lived in hosting arrangements with other refugees (with the exception of one Sudanese man who had shared a room with a Jordanian man for a short period). Further, while the wider literature discusses refugee hosting at the neighborhood, city, or country level, I focus at the household-level, albeit with recognition that household level hosting arrangements have wider interactions with members' experiences of the cities and societies in which they reside, as will be discussed later in this article. In this article, I refer to these arrangements as refugee-refugee hosting at the household-level. Accommodation sharing exists in many forms and contexts: my attention here is on those household-level hosting relationships that are built between those that would not in non-displacement or non-humanitarian contexts be living with each other. The earlier stages of this research identified different types of hosting, along continuums of guesthood and independence (For further details, see Section 4 and Jordan, 2020). This article focuses on the 'shared group' hosting type, in which individuals shared both accommodation and resources in a reciprocal and collective manner with displaced people.

Refugee-refugee hosting practices are just one example – a particularly widespread example – of the ways in which displaced populations and affected communities care for one another, in negotiation with the assistance provided by host states and international organizations. Thus far, hosting has typically been conceptualized through hospitality. However, in this article I demonstrate the insufficiencies of hospitality for fully understanding such acts, instead focusing on the participant's descriptions of their relationships as a form of care enacted through sharing, and the value of such a reconceptualization.[1] I argue that a reconceptualization of hosting relationships as relations of care allows us to better see the multifaceted support that they offer, as well as the limitations and challenges. The centrality of care within this understanding of hosting contributes a sense of the interdependence of hosting participants, this distinguishes it from the independence of tenancy-rental and the dependence of guesthood, and moves the discussion of hosting away from one dominated by economic transactions and meeting of material needs, to a more holistic consideration of refugee well-being and social presence. An ethics of care requires recognition of the other as part of our world and ourselves, attention to everyday acts, and connection and participation in a real and everyday web of relations and human interaction (Staeheli et al., 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2013). For the men in my research, such acts are a vital response to marginalization and obscurity within the city.

In the following sections, I first outline the reality of life in Amman in 2017 and 2018 for the Sudanese Darfurian men who participated in my research. I then offer a succinct overview of existing literature on refugee-refugee hosting and the dominant conceptualisation through the lens of hospitality. I then present my methodological approach to the research. Drawing on qualitative research with Sudanese men in Amman, I propose a new conceptualisation of the refugee-refugee host dynamics, that centers a relationship of interdependent care. In the remainder of the article, I show the value of this framework in understanding how the men I worked with created and experienced care in their hosting relationships and how this shaped their experiences of urban displacement in Amman. I then interrogate some of these dynamics, in particular the ambivalences shared around receiving care, and how care dynamics have shaped, and are shaped by, the temporalities of displacement. In concluding, I reflect on value of understanding hosting as care, and the implications for humanitarian response.

2 Context: Sudanese displacement in Jordan

Jordan is a long-term host of refugees[2], having hosted a Palestinian refugee population for over 70 years. However, Jordan also hosts between 720,000–1.3 million non-Palestinian refugees, nearly all of whom are also living in protracted displacement.[3] In the last decade, Syrian refugees have been the primary focus of research and commentary, however at the time of my research in 2018 refugees from over 50 other countries were also registered with UNHCR in Jordan (recent conversation with UNHCR in June 2023 suggest this has dropped to 38 countries of origin). Among these, the largest populations are Syrian (656,762) Iraqi (59,814), Yemeni (12,784), Sudanese (5,068), and Somali (572) (UNHCR, 2023a). Despite the large and long-term presence of these groups, Jordan is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees, and refugee presence, including adjudication of their asylum claims, is instead managed through the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Jordan (GoJ). Jordan presents itself as a transit state and there are extremely constrained options for long-term formal integration or citizenship. Many refugees -including the Sudanese – also see their time in Jordan as transitory, on route to a different country or while waiting to return to their country of origin. They therefore remain 'guests'. At the same time, the protracted nature of displacement for refugees of many nationalities in Jordan call into question this temporariness. Many refugees have created lives in Jordan, in some cases extending to multi-generational families, and hold long-established, albeit precarious, ties to their places of residence and to the country.

Sudanese refugees in Jordan do not have access to camps, and the largest proportion live in Amman. At the time of my research, the

2   Some men participating in this stage of the research were registered with UNHCR as asylum seekers but had not yet undergone a refugee status determination assessment. I use the term "refugee" throughout this paper as it was the term used by the men to refer to themselves, and refugee recognition rates among Sudanese in Jordan are near universal.

3   Refugee numbers in Jordan are contested. As of the end of 2023, there were 720,000 refugees registered with UNHCR (2023b). However, the Government of Jordan estimated that there were 1.3 million Syrians in the country (For example, King Abdullah II, 2018), in addition to those of other nationalities.

majority of Sudanese refugees in Jordan came from the Darfur region of Sudan. Darfur received international attention during the conflict in 2003, but has been suffering from on-going and renewed conflict in the intervening years (de Waal and Flint, 2008; Mamdani, 2009; Jok, 2015), and again in the current conflict in Sudan (Human Rights Watch, 2023; MSF, 2023). A large proportion of Sudanese refugees in Jordan are young men (estimated 70% at the time of my research), fleeing conflict and conscription into armed groups, though the number of women and children appeared to be growing at the time of my data collection. There was a Sudanese refugee population in Jordan before 2011, but numbers increased in 2012/2013 following the separation of South Sudan, economic collapse, and renewed fighting (Johnston et al., 2019). Following this, numbers of new arrivals remained low. The total number of Sudanese refugees in Jordan was severely reduced in late 2015 when more than 500 Sudanese people were deported, including those holding UNHCR documentation, following demonstrations outside UNHCR calling for increased recognition of their refugee status and response to their needs (Human Rights Watch, 2015). In 2017/2018, numbers began to climb. Between February 2018 and August 2018, 840 new individuals registered with UNHCR, bringing the total number of registered Sudanese up to 4,898, an increase of 21 percent in 6 months (UNHCR, 2018). Since 2019, the GoJ has requested UNHCR to not register people claiming asylum who enter the country through specified routes, including arriving at Queen Alia airport with medical visas, one of the primary entry routes for Sudanese nationals seeking international protection.

Since the deportations in 2015, there has been a noticeable increase in the attention of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) toward the Sudanese (Baslan, 2023), and a number of reports have been produced detailing their living situations (ARDD-Legal Aid, 2015; Baslan et al., 2017; MMP, 2017a,b; Johnston et al., 2019). These reports show that Sudanese refugees have acute unmet protection, healthcare, education, food security, and shelter needs, and extremely limited livelihood opportunities. Despite acute need, there were far fewer NGO-provided services open to Sudanese and other non-Syrian refugees. In recent years, there has been a shift toward a "One Refugee" approach, with the establishment of a working group, and with a larger number of organizations now providing humanitarian assistance to Sudanese refugees. However Sudanese refugees still report being underserved, and humanitarian funding levels more generally have been declining in Jordan in recent years. Further to the gaps in formal assistance, many Sudanese report frequent incidents of racially motivated harassment and discrimination from other urban residents, state institutions and the United Nations (UN) and NGOs, compounding formal exclusions and restricting access to some forms of informal societal support. In such a context, refugee hosting relationships are an essential and widespread response.

3 Literature review: refugee hosting as hospitality in humanitarian contexts

As the response to displacement increasingly engages in out-of-camp and urban contexts, refugee hosting has gained more attention within practice and research. However, while there is a growing body of important work on refugee hosts so far this has often focused on community and neighborhood responses (Jacobsen, 2002; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Rodgers, 2021). There has been much less work with

host families, despite their prevalence and their importance to refugees. Where literature does exist, hosting at the household level (often referred to as host families) is typically depicted as a response to economic need. When motivations for participation are considered, they are often reduced to unproblematised notions of family obligation and hospitality (Chambers, 1986; Haver, 2008; Davies, 2012; Brookings-LSE, 2013; UN-Habitat, 2013; Argenal and Setchell, 2014; UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2014; Caron, 2019). The following section briefly summarizes existing knowledge from within the humanitarian space on host families (from here referred to as hosting), before unpacking the notion of hospitality as the central framing of hosting practices.

3.1 Hosting in humanitarian contexts

Hosting is recognized as a core part of support mechanisms for displaced populations by humanitarian actors (Davies, 2012; IFRC, 2012), however there is relatively little sustained attention to these practices. Four main characterizations emerge (Corsellis et al., 2005; Davies, 2012; IFRC, 2012; Brown and Hersh, 2013; Argenal and Setchell, 2014; Caron, 2019):

1 The first is that host families and the displaced people they host have an existing connection, such as being distant relations or a pre-existing social or economic tie.
2 Secondly, that hosting a refugee places a burden on the host family, particularly as time goes on.
3 The third representation is that hosted refugees are at high risk of exploitation, particularly if they are women and children.
4 Finally, that host and guest are distinct roles. Although a guest may later reciprocate and host their former hosts, this does not occur within a given instance of displacement.

These characterisations hold some basis, and highlight relevant concerns within hosting. However, they do not represent the full picture. In particular, these characterisations do not fully recognize the active role of displaced populations in constructing hosting relationships and within hosting arrangements, and the relationships depicted are static. There is some recognition that they may deteriorate over time, and a concern that 'guests' may be asked to leave, but little other consideration of this as a dynamic relationship that alters and shifts in response to the wider displacement and socio-economic context over time. This is linked to the conceptualisation of the relationship as one of hospitality, as implied in the terminology, 'hosting' or 'host family'.

3.2 Hosting and hospitality

Hospitality is very frequently used when discussing and analysing responses to refugee movements (Komter and Leer, 2012; McNevin and Missbach, 2018), yet hospitality practices among displaced populations themselves are rarely considered (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). The centrality of hospitality in existing understandings is implicit in the language used to refer to and describe refugee responses. In Jordan, the Iraqi and Syrian refugee response has largely been framed around, and uses the language of guesthood with an emphasis on the value of hospitality (El-Abed, 2014). During my

fieldwork, such language was rarely used to describe the response to refugees of other nationalities, either in official discourse or everyday conversation. Though hospitality is commonly understood as a positive action, with connotation of refuge, generosity, and friendship, such relationships also mask complex power relations and divisions between those who belong and those who do not.

On the surface, hospitality can be considered as the creation, celebration, and reinforcement of relationships between people. In the Derridean ideal of hospitality, it is unconditional, open to the not-yet-known and the yet-to-come, bringing guests – strangers – temporarily into the group (Derrida, 2000; Aparna and Schapendonk, 2020). However, this becomes unrealistic in application. The rituals and etiquette involved in hospitality bridge the boundaries between group and stranger, friend and foe. Yet in doing so, they also reinforce these boundaries, requiring an implicit drawing of boundaries between oneself and those within ones' group, and those who are excluded (Ramadan, 2008, 2011; Sobh et al., 2013). Once this contradiction between honoring the guest and keeping them at a distance is recognized, the tensions within hospitality practices become apparent. These considerations are brought to the fore in considering migration (Louise Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018), particularly in Jordan which maintains itself as a transit state.

I find hospitality a valuable starting point in conceptualizing the act of hosting. In recognizing the collision between imaginaries of unconditional hospitality and the conditions attached to everyday practices, it draws our attention to the underlying tension of hosting practices. Similarly, it allows for the recognition that no matter how well treated or how warmly welcomed the guest is an outsider and does not fully belong. However, hospitality cannot fully explain hosting relationships.

Hosting relationships are not exclusively between established groups and new arrivals, and refugees very clearly demonstrate a wide range of hospitable practices. Yet, during this research I found that hosting practices, for the most part, take place between refugees, individuals and households who have little to no formal claim over the space they inhabit. As will be discussed further below, there was rarely a secure tenure residing in a singular individual within these spaces. Rather, they were collectively and precariously held. Opening your door to another suggests ownership of the home and control of the space and necessary resources with which to be hospitable (Brun, 2010) – something the refugees I worked with did not consistently experience. In these cases, hosting was less a case of extending hospitality, and more a question of sharing the space and resources available and caring for one another. In the remainder of this paper, I therefore build on these understandings to introduce a new conceptualisation of refugee-refugee hosting as a relationship of care. There is a growing body of work that concentrates on ethics of care in relation to migration and forced displacement, and its intersections with accommodation practices (Darling, 2011; Brun, 2016; Serra Mingot and Mazzucato, 2019; Boano and Astolfo, 2020; Yassine et al., 2021). As yet, however, care has not been used to conceptualize household-level hosting relationships.

4 Methods

The research that informs this article was completed as part of my doctoral research into everyday humanitarianisms and the act of refugee hosting. The key arguments presented here were initially developed through this work, and have been further refined through regular return trips to Amman and continued informal discussion with some of those who participated in the research.

The research was conducted in two phases: Phase One (2017) sought to capture a 'snapshot' of the different types of hosting arrangement existing in Amman at that time, encompassing semi-structured interviews with 37 individuals of different nationalities (Syrian, Somali, Sudanese, Iraqi) with a range of characteristics suggested in the literature as influencing hosting relationships (gender, age, marital status, family size, physical health and disability). This work was not intended to be representative, nor to provide indications as to the scale of hosting in Amman, but rather to delineate the wide range of types of hosting relationship at the household-level that exist under the hosting umbrella. As a result of this phase, nine types of hosting arrangement were identified. Phase Two of the research focused on one hosting type – shared group hosting arrangements – among one population – Sudanese men.[4] This focus was chosen as previous reporting had indicated that Sudanese men were a group most at risk of homelessness (Baslan et al., 2017) and initial interviews had shown that non-Syrian refugees in general, and single African men in particular were largely excluded from formal humanitarian assistance and assistance from wider society that, in some cases, provided support to individuals from other groups.

In Phase Two, I conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with nine men living in six different hosting arrangements (although, given the frequency of change between houses, some men at the time living in different houses had previously lived together). In the first phase, I had worked with two research assistants with strong relationships to the communities, built through long-term engagement and trust. Initial participants in the second phase came from these connections, and the assistance of a Sudanese community member who initially acted as an interpreter in Phase Two.[5] Further participants came through interaction at community events, chance meetings and, for one participant, a request to join the research having heard about it from a friend. As in the first phase, participant recruitment did not aim for representativeness, but rather an in-depth understanding of a small number of cases as a basis for exploratory research. Nonetheless, I sought to include a range of different perspectives through using multiple entry points in addition to snowballing. In addition to the interviews, I spent time 'hanging out' with the men, participating in community activities, joining them for dinner and other social events. However, our differences in gender and my position and visual appearance as a privileged, white and 'expat' European foreigner, as opposed to a refugee, conditioned our interactions. For example, although I frequently visited the men's homes, and was kindly and generously welcomed, I was rarely part of their daily routines or privy to domestic moments that could have shone greater light on their daily experiences. Other aspects were more overtly referred to in our conversations: the men's gender and

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4 For further discussion of the range of types of hosting identified, please see Author (2020).

5 I had prepared to conduct interviews in the Sudanese Arabic dialect, and had recruited an interpreter to assist with this. However, in the end, all the men except one preferred to communicate in English, to practice their language skills.

race has deeply shaped all aspects of their displacement and they clearly and repeatedly emphasized these points to me and explained these experiences that I could not share. Their attention to these issues has shaped the analysis presented. The analysis approach relied on thematic coding, based on detailed reading of interview transcripts and fieldnotes, in addition to attention to key themes raised by the participants in explaining their experiences.

5 Re-conceptualizing refugee-refugee hosting: from hospitality to care

In my work, I found that there is far greater interdependency within household-level hosting than has yet been recognized and which is not fully captured by hospitality. While I find some value in conceptualisations of hosting that start with hospitality, I also draw on notions of sharing and care to propose a more complete and nuanced understanding of hosting. These concepts have often been used in discussion of migration and humanitarianism (For example, in the Middle East and in relation to Syrian displacement see: (Ramadan, 2008; Mason, 2011; Rozakou, 2012; Thorleifsson, 2016)) but not in conjunction with one another nor in relation to hosting relationships at the household-level.

Hosting provides shelter, but also it can provide food, water, access to sanitation facilities, connections to work, a sense of safety and protection, as well as social and psychological wellbeing. In Amman, the high costs of rent and living expenses were frequently mentioned by the participants in my research, in conjunction with the uncertainty and informality of their employment. Ali, a young Sudanese man in his late twenties, described the situation in his household:

"We share all the food together, we share the things that there are, so when food is ready, we do not have to eat me and you, and we know that somebody else is here," he said, gesturing to the next room, *"hungry."*

For Ali and his housemates, their sharing goes beyond the sharing of food and accommodation. The central premise of sharing was prevalent in our conversations, but it was not only sharing of the financial and material resources they can access, but also a form of protection, and a practice informed by a shared experience of their lives in displacement, awareness of one another, and recognition of each other's position and need.

Here, Ali used the language of sharing, defined in the literature as the act or process of having a portion of something with another, distributing a portion of something to another, receiving or taking something from others, or the joint use of something with others (Belk, 2007). Further, sharing has been characterized by the creation and maintenance of social links to others, shared ownership or usage rights, the irrelevance of money, dependent relationships, social reproduction, and motivations of love and caring (Belk, 2007). Much work on sharing has emerged in the Global North, and looks at excess sharing or for-profit sharing. However, Waite and Lewis (2017) have written convincingly on the importance of sharing in situations of precarity as the "*social relations and ethical interdependencies [that] are brought to bear on economic practices to enable people to make a living; for example, trust, caring, sharing, reciprocity, cooperation, coercion, guilt, self-exploitation, and solidarity*" (p. 966). I find such work helpful in thinking about how sharing economies emerge in precarious and resource-poor contexts, and the interdependencies that sharing arises from and entails. Such work highlights the relational aspects - positive

and negative - of sharing, and the role it plays in maintaining relations. As with hospitality, sharing is often uncritically celebrated, without consideration of relations of power. Sharing is embedded in social and moral contexts, and is contingent; neither fully benevolent hospitality, nor servility. It also helps us to see that sharing potentially engenders relations of dependency and coercive sharing. In the definitions provided above, care or caring is a central feature of sharing dynamics.

Recognizing care brings us closer to how the men described their hosting relationships. Othman, recounting his experience of living in a hosting arrangement, told me:

For me…since we became…4 of us, everything has been good. We care about one another, and we support one another. So that is one of the good things, that we understand one another, and we support one another. So when one is sick, we have to help getting the stuff with that. Take care of him.

As recognized in Othman's explanation, an ethics of care relates not only to taking responsibility to care of someone (caring for) and competent caregiving, but also caring about them – attentiveness to individuals and their needs (Tronto, 1998). Care can be understood to include "*everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair our "world" [including] our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web*" (Tronto and Fisher, 1990, p. 40). In developing this article, I have found it useful to think using Held (2006) framework of care. Her framework is centered around five key tenets: Firstly, the compelling moral importance of recognizing and attending to the needs of the particular others for whom we take responsibility. Secondly, the value of emotions, and their importance in ascertaining the actions morality recommends us to take in certain, contextually-nuanced, situations. Thirdly, an ethics of care does not aim for abstract impartiality. Rather, it is carefully attuned to the context of decision making, and understands the validity of particular moral claims, even if the judgment is not one that we would wish to generalize. Fourthly, an ethic of care reconceptualises private and public, recognizing how political, economic, and cultural power are already present in the private sphere, despite being proclaimed off-limits to politics and government. Finally, Held's fifth characteristic relates to a fundamental re-conceptualization of how we think about the nature of people, viewing persons as relational, rather than self-sufficient individuals (Held, 2006). Her work also calls for us to pay attention to context and people's everyday practices (see also Hanrahan, 2015). The following briefly illustrates how these facets of care are evident in the men's hosting practices through their accounts.

Samir explained the care that he provided for others, saying:

Samir: They need help. I do not have money to help. I call someone, I told him the story, and he told me 'I can help'. And he goes back through me. And I try to help people by talking to help, through emotion, talking.

Interviewer: Yeah, like some moral support, to let them talk about their situation.

Samir: Yeah, yeah, to make him down, to make him patient. If he need money, if I have, really - I'm not sure how to say, someone he did not give his money -.

Interviewer: It's slang, but we could say tight.

Samir: Yeah, tight. Not be tight, I give. We were born without money, money is nothing, you know. We must be kind with people.

Samir's brief description illustrates multiple forms of care that he provides, and his sense of duty or responsibility to do so: money, when he has it, drawing on social networks to find assistance, and by

talking and providing emotional support. Other men offered further examples: accompanying one another to work, providing information about jobs, housing, and security crackdowns, and supporting each other's goals, such as further study. Their descriptions show multiple forms of care, which provide a specific response to particular needs and their responsibility toward others, that is attuned to the local context and to the social, political, and economic realities of their lives in displacement in Amman.

These responsibilities to one another stem from relationships developed during displacement in Amman, as well as broader socio-political affiliations of nationality and tribe. Returning to Ali, he described how he first moved into a shared group hosting arrangement from a larger form of shared accommodation:

Ali: We cannot decide, it just happens. You know, you find people in there so you have to.

Interviewer: But, like you do not decide who are your best friends and move with them? What are the different things you think about?

Ali: Well, we decide when we study together, or when we do something together, so you move together. But normally most of us we just came and find each other here. So you cannot decide. So if you find me, you cannot decide to move somewhere. It needs time, so if we sit with you one month, two month, three months, I know you, you know me, and then we got to move together.

As in many of the cases I saw, hosting arrangements were formed between specific individuals who had come to know each other. More broadly, however, Ibrahim described the help provided and received on the basis of being recognized as Sudanese. After recounting a story from his early days in Amman, where a Sudanese man who he did not know helped to cover an expense, he shared his own attitude:

"If I see you are Sudanese, for example, and if you came from anywhere and I am here in this country, when I saw you, I know you just as Sudanese. I'll ask you, do you need some help? Where you are going? Who you are going to? Maybe I know these guys who you need and I can bring you to him."

This was shared elsewhere: other men spoke of hosting as contributing to a sense of belonging, to maintaining a sense of identity and connection to community, and to making a positive contribution to society. Further, hosting also provided a way to acknowledge and process emotions, offering a forum for explicit discussion of feelings between the men, and the importance of these emotions being recognized and shared.

However, their accounts also raised questions about access to hosting for those without such connections. Ibrahim's words above show the specific aid extended to those he recognized as sharing his community, via their area of origin and nationality, and in other conversations he spoke clearly about his assistance for all, based on their shared humanity saying *"I am first of all a human being, like him…If you have blood, I have blood. If you have feeling, I have feeling. Yes. I do not care about your colour, I do not care about your religion, your cultures, background, anything. Just if you have humanity, I have it too."* In later conversations, however, some of the men narrowed the range of people included within their typical hosting relationships to those from their tribe, and spoke about the differences in finding a place without such ties. This reflects the attention in Held's work to the validity of the moral claims of particular others, even where such judgment may be problematic if generalized. This is also not to say that emotions underpinning such claims are never harmful, and Held (2006) is explicit in her call for expressions of care to be subjected to

moral scrutiny and evaluation, not just observed and described. Recognizing that access to the care enacted through hosting is not universally extended raises questions as to access for support from those not perceived to be part of a community of responsibility, and is returned to in the following section on ambivalences and limitations of hosting.

The preceding quotes also highlight examples of the expectations of support from one another and the requirements to do so. In a second conversation, Ali explained further how others found hosting arrangements via one of the Sudanese cafes (one of a couple of spaces downtown particularly frequented by the men), explaining that having a job or receiving assistance was not a condition for moving into a household *"If they a friend, they just say yes. Because we are all together. We are all together, we do not have anything."* Although Ali's words describe a certain expectation of assistance, his descriptions also show that hosting arrangements take place between those who have been recognized by the other participant's as a friend - as within their circle of affection and responsibility. Further, as Ali says: *This is the same situation that one day you are going to get the same thing. So I have to help you.* While Ali's statement could be read as requiring an exchange, further explanations from the men show that this a generalized or diffused form of reciprocity and a recognition of mutual interdependence. Where no return is expected in an immediate or future time period, such relations then become need-oriented, rather than profit oriented (Waite and Lewis, 2017), and the long-duration and vagueness of such claims can be the basis for the formation and continuation of social relations, creating the space for relationships to develop and be continued. Similarly, Othman, spoke about the men he lived with, saying.

"I found roommates but one of them is my best friend and also two very close friends. So they are 4. So far we been living together…We moved, we have been living in the same neighbourhood but in another house."

Interviewer: "But you stayed with the same guys?"

Othman: "Yes of course. I wish we are resettled somewhere, we would be the four."

Though not the focus of this particular article (see Jordan, 2022a), such relationships can also be the basis for wider political ramifications. Hilal explained why men lived together, saying: *"If you do not have work, that means you will be outside the house. You will sleep in the street. That is why it is so hard for us. So that is why we live together, and we help each other. That's why"* As Hilal emphasized, hosting is a domestic practice created within and against external practices of exclusion. In providing a means for the men to remain in Amman and to claim their rights as refugees and urban residents, it can further be read as a form of political engagement (See also Riga et al., 2020 on the political of forced displacement; Jordan, 2022a).

The care provided and accessed through shared group hosting confirms to Held's (2006) framework. The men's recognition that their survival in Amman depends on one another is based on a deep understanding that they could not, in the hostile context of Amman, be self-sufficient individuals – despite the humanitarian rhetoric of self-reliance -but are enmeshed in dynamic interdependent relationships. As expressed by the men, hosting was rarely a first choice, but a recognition of their shared positions and need for one another. The need did not necessarily have to be explicitly communicated nor assistance formally requested, but equally, not all needs may be able to be met through hosting. By recognizing these

common vulnerabilities and sharing assets, the men could secure (albeit precariously) a life that would not otherwise have been possible.

Held notes that the extremes of "selfish individual" and "humanity" have been recognized and discussed, but what lies in between has often been overlooked. She argues that care does not equate to compassion or altruism, as both parties share an interest in their mutual well-being. This is a helpful entry point into understanding the hosting relationship, moving away from perspectives which seek to portray the hosting relationship as primarily a matter of financial and material gain, or as an altruistic and benevolent act. Instead it recognizes the interconnectedness of the different parties involved and their mutual support for each other, prioritizing the social relations and appearing to require a familiarity and sense of commonality between participants. As Samir explained, "*All the guys are like my brother. But the level - because I live with him [Ali] for a long time. And I know him, I know his mind, I know how he thinks. I know if I fall down he will pick me up. I know him well.*"

The previous section has demonstrated how care can contribute to understandings of refugee-refugee hosting at the household level. The following sections address the men's ambivalences around such interdependencies, and the challenges of relying on care in precarious and transitory contexts of displacement.

5.1 Ambivalences and limitations of care

Hosting provided many benefits to the men I worked with. Yet, hosting can also present a danger—overcrowding, poor living conditions, ill-health, stress and a lack of privacy, exploitation and abuse. As Hilal explained "*That [lack of work] is something difficult for us, and that forced us to live like this. It is not good for your health, and other things also. Sometimes you stay at home but you do not get rest because you want to sleep and there some person who is still not sleep.*" For the people I worked with, hosting was not a preference, but rather a way to confront the realities of their displacement in urban contexts.

As Held writes, "*Many of our responsibilities are not freely entered into but presented to us by the accidents of our embeddedness in familial and social and historical contexts*" (2006, p. 14). This is not to say that we do not have the agency to reconfigure these relationships, but that we do not freely enter into them. This was captured in the words of those of the men for whom it was simply 'what we do' to share with others. A few of the men, however, interrogated these dynamics further. Although the men were reluctant to discuss any hesitations they may have felt about providing care for others, they were more forthcoming in the challenges of being the recipient of care and not wanting to ask for help Jordan, 2022a. Much literature on care has focused on gendered and racialized relationships of care, highlighting the unequal 'burden' of care (Duffy, 2005; Hankivsky, 2014). However, there is also a growing literature showing that men, including migrant men, do care (Locke, 2017; Serra Mingot, 2020). The men's descriptions indicate that attentiveness to need, responsibility and providing care through various means – material, financial, emotional – are valued parts of what it means to be a young Sudanese man in Amman. Many of the men expressed similar sentiments to Samir, who described his own attitude to providing care, saying "*I do not know, like, I respect the people. If I meet Sudanese, I love him. You are Sudanese, you need help, I'll help you if I can. If I can, I'll try to help, if I cannot, I'll tell you Allah ma'ik, you know, god with you.*" However, receiving care

was rather less talked about. While this was rarely discussed in conjunction with perceptions of masculinity, it suggests there is a still a hesitation as being identified as in need. Indeed, Samir, reflecting on his future plans explicitly articulated that he planned to "*work, to pay by myself, to help myself, I'll be like a good person for myself and for the community. I will go there [another country]. I'm not going to be a, like, shame…You must be independent, try to do something for yourself.*"

A second concern relates to who has access to and participates in which types of hosting, and under which conditions. Zooming out to the interviews conducted during the first phase of my research, Abdi – a young Somali man – moved from house to house at frequent short-term intervals, rarely remaining for more than a month in each household. Others contrasted their more stable position with his, and explained that in addition to his lack of work or low and unpredictable income, Abdi had not 'found his people'. They explained:

It depends on the people that he lives with, their personalities. The guys that I live with, we understand each other, and we have made it a home and we help each other even if someone left…he [Abdi] lived with people that worked all over Somalia but I live with people from [the same place as me], and we got to know each other well.

Unable to form these connections, Abdi was stuck in dependency. A separate conversation with Sudanese men focused on how people were admitted into a household with Hilal explaining the need for collective decisions, previous knowledge of the 'applicant' and, if they were unknown, for them to be vouched for by a known member of the group. Other conversations with those with long-term ill-health or physical disability revealed their fears about perceived lack of contribution to the household. In combination with the men's words in the preceding section, this suggests that while hosting can be a form of care for those who are recognized as having a particular moral claim, such care is intricately embedded within economic and social dynamics in the hostile context of displacement in Amman. It also reflects the non-binary nature of hospitality and care. As reflected in the typology of hosting (developed in Phase One of the research), guesthood-tenancy and interdependency-dependency are continuums, and both hospitality and care may be conditional social relations. As Hankivsky (2014) argues, care is inherently bound together with power dynamics that relate to our embeddedness within specific contexts and our positions understood in terms of the intersections of gender, class, race and other identities. Interdependence does not mean equality. Within the men's hosting relationships, power relations were linked to the men's economic and social standing within and outside of the hosting relationship, and the dependencies created through economic inequalities and the privileging of certain relationships (e.g., siblings) over other relationships of care.

This brings me on to the third concern raised by the men: the relationship between their caring practices and those of the humanitarian system. The Sudanese men I worked with are neither completely within the system, nor fully beyond its effects. Rather, their lives and practices are shaped by and in interaction with the formal care provided (or not) by the humanitarian system, their own various forms of mobilization (Baslan, 2023), and their gender, nationality, and race. Male, Sudanese experiences of refugee-hood and displacement in Amman, Jordan are characterized by the exclusions of state and international humanitarian response bureaucracies. As explained by Hilal,

If you go to the UNHCR and you talk about you do not have work and your rent is so high, they say to you: "you are guys, and you have energy, you can go to work." But also, there are no chances to work, because of the government."

Interviewer: I see. So because you are guys, they say you are a young guy, you can go work?

Hilal: Yeah. UNHCR calls you, the employee of the UNHCR just told you something like this – 'yatik il afia' [may God give you health and all the good things].' 'So, yatik il afia, why you say yatik il afia?' 'Because you have energy.'

These exclusions are further compounded by pervasive racial discrimination and violence at multiple levels, from street level harassment to violent attacks, and reportedly from official actors of the state and the humanitarian community. Though accommodation sharing is common among many different groups, it is recognized as being particularly prevalent among Sudanese men in Amman (Baslan et al., 2017). In addition to the limited access to humanitarian assistance received at the time as a result of their nationality, single men are often de-prioritized for assistance in an over-stretched system that emphasizes the vulnerability of women and children (Turner, 2016). The single men I worked with were seen to be independent and able to work, and therefore in less need of assistance. The men involved in my research perceived women and families with children as having additional vulnerabilities that merited prioritisaion, however, they question a system that required them to work (in dangerous and exploitative conditions and without authorisation) yet provided little recourse when they were detained for working, and failed to take into consideration the difficulties they faced in finding work and in working conditions. Partly in response to this, the men developed their own way of providing care. Hosting continued to be shaped by the humanitarian system, from the intermittent arrival of winterization cash grants, to roles as students, volunteers and participants in various NGO activities, to the men's existing socio-economic positions and their aspirations for future resettlement through UNHCR or related bodies and their work toward these futures (Jordan, 2024). However, as previously noted, hosting was not a preference but a way of coping. As Ali explained, with particular reference to those who were injured, unwell or had a physical disability:

"With the guys they help you. We have guys with the [wheel]chair also, we help them. We go to them and then we see what's going on with them, we help them, we take them to UNHCR if they have something to do. There are many injured people also we have here. But you know, we cannot help them with everything. We cannot."

The support and protections provided by such refugee-refugee care are vital and yet limited in the face of ongoing systematic and structural exclusions. This therefore brings me to my final point, regarding care dynamics in protracted displacement.

5.2 Care dynamics in protracted displacement

All of the refugees I worked with in Jordan, with the exception of one young Sudanese man, had been in Jordan for more than 5 years and, despite striving for resettlement saw a near-term end to their displacement as unlikely. As they explained, protracted displacement had become protracted uncertainty (Brun, 2015). There is an existing and growing body of work on how refugees construct their lives in

such uncertainty, in protracted displacement, and in everyday emergency (Dryden-Peterson, 2006; Grabska, 2006; Holzer, 2014; Brun, 2015; Horst and Grabska, 2015). As yet, however, little of this work has considered the role of household-level hosting arrangements within refugees' experience of the present and their work for the future [though see (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Yassine et al., 2021)]. Refugee-refugee hosting, and the care that underpins it, has important temporal considerations.

Firstly, refugee-refugee hosting occurs across timescales and can adapt. The care that is provided is not only a short-term response, but can last for years. Further, even though perhaps one specific relationship may not last for the entirety of an individual's residence in a given city or location the mechanism and relationships that have enabled hosting to exist persist, and people can move through different specific situations. For the men I worked with, and for many refugees, emergency is not a one-time short event, but something that repeats and extends. Holzer (2014) has spoken about the maintenance of life through emergency, it is not some brief blip, but something that people persist through. Hosting is one way that refugees engage with this, and in doing so in what Feldman (2012) calls a politics of living, of surviving, of claiming. One outcome is that hosting supports people to persist, and to remain open to future possibility (Simone, 2020).

Hosting thereby is a way that refugees can maintain their presence in urban areas and claim part of that space, which opens a question to how we understand urban citizenship and home in displacement (Jordan, 2022a,b). Returning to what care brings to an understanding of refugee-refugee hosting, and wider understandings of displacement, Darling has argued that "shifting attention from the ethical value of hospitality to the social fact of presence might be more productive for non-citizens and migrants who would otherwise be positioned as "guests" within a hospitable home" (Darling, 2014, p. 162). In recognizing care, we see the ways in which refugees are already enmeshed in their places of displacement through social and economic dynamics that shape, and are shaped by, their environments.

Recognizing care also adds to how we understand the development and maintenance of relationships in displacement. With regards to hosting, though these relationships do not replace biological family or kin, displacement does often reconfigure relations, perhaps with greater intimacy than in non-displacement settings. Ali described the new relationships created in Amman:

"The Sudanese community are the same whether here or anywhere else, so they, they, when you get to the place you get, you have to know some Sudanese, who's here, who's Sudanese here, so then you just immediately get in a relationship and then he can help you, you can help him. If you want work or something searching like that, so they give help, and they give the stuff."

This cycle can be self-reinforcing: perceived familiarity due to shared cultural or national origin can be further developed through familiarity with everyday practices in cohabiting. Particularly where such practices typically take place in the private sphere, this can result in intimate emotional ties (Heger Boyle and Ali, 2010). Further, practices of care can play an important part in providing meaning and maintaining traditions in displacement: such relationships can maintain a cultural idea of caring norms and provide a positive identity for participants.

However, what happens to relationships of care when the individuals within them move away? In the case of the Sudanese in Amman, the deportation in 2015 of between 500 and 800 individuals

caused massive disruption in their systems of care for one-another, physically removing those who had been part of care dynamics in the community, from the intimate and familial, such as mothers separated from children, to the wider cycles of care and reciprocity that sustained the whole. For the men I worked with, the deportation and the attention that came with it substantially changed their living practices: large-scale houses were reduced into smaller groups, new groups emerged, and the men found it harder for landlords to agree to rent to them. At the time of my research, the community had perhaps recovered some stability, but the fear and repercussions of the deportation still reverberated.

Since completing my fieldwork, there have been further shocks, not least the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. The effects of these regulations on informal practices of care such as hosting require further investigation in order to understand how such mechanisms function and can be supported in times of crisis. Finally, and more happily, a number of those that I worked with and in the wider Sudanese community have been resettled or traveled for further study. In many cases, these men played a key role in the community, within their hosting relationships and in their wider responsibilities. While their travel is a cause for celebration, it has in some cases left a gap in the relations that underpin everyday life for Sudanese refugees in Amman. The gaps – at home and in communal and public-facing life -further supports the contention that care crosses the boundaries between the private and the public, the domestic and the political.

6 Conclusions: refugees as hosts, care and humanitarianisms

This article considers the role of care in refugee's everyday practices of mutual support, understood through the exploration of one particular form of support: refugee-refugee hosting at the household level. In doing so, I contribute to the emerging literature on ethics of care in displacement and humanitarian contexts (Darling, 2011; Brun, 2016; Boano and Astolfo, 2020). In focusing on refugee men, I also add to a growing literature that explores the caring practices of migrant men beyond the financial, and the interaction between care and masculinity, repositioning care as an intrinsic part of masculine identity within displacement and crisis contexts.

As argued by Long, "we need to document the ways in which people steer or muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning 'bad' into 'less bad' circumstances" (Long, 2001, p. 14). Understanding hosting through care can help us to do this, and to begin to unpick some of the limitations and challenges of refugee-refugee care in protracted displacement. The existing understandings of hosting are too narrow, and they do not encapsulate the full range of support strategies that are being used. In reality, the hosting relationship is much more nuanced than allowed for by the characterizations currently commonly found in existing literature. The hosting relationship is a constantly evolving relationship, and both parties actively negotiate and adapt their relationship and roles within the relationship according to external and internal factors. This is not to deny the unequal power dynamics of many hosting relationships, but to question the inevitability of these arrangements implied in much of the current discussion of hosting. This reconceptualization has implications for humanitarian practice. In remaining within existing

understandings, we limit ourselves to thinking primarily about material and financial interventions, rather than seeing these as part of a much richer tapestry of what is happening. The act of hosting is not a uniform act. Contextualisation is key, and the different elements proposed here will come to the fore in different hosting arrangements, depending on environment, supporting organizations and institutions, and societal norms. However, recognizing hosting as care has the potential to move humanitarian engagement with hosting beyond financial, material, and legal support for housing toward a recognition of the centrality of hosting practices in the experiences of displaced people and their hosts, and the wide-reach of these practices into socio-economic stability, protection, psychosocial well-being, and integration processes.

Aside from direct impacts on forms of intervention, the wide ranging and vital support provided by hosting suggests a need for an adjustment of the relationship between 'hosts' and 'humanitarians'. I position refugee hosting at the household level as a form of humanitarianism, in that it meets essential needs, thereby alleviating suffering. It is flexible and dynamic. It works in crisis and in protracted displacement and is motivated by humanitarian ideals of compassion, of solidarity of the need to intervene and to prevent suffering. However, it is different than the current understanding of humanitarianism enacted through the international system, which is experiencing ongoing tension between increasing bureaucratization and distance, and an impulse toward greater partnership, and localization – a marked difference to proximity and a shared recognition of the interdependence between us that characterizes hosting. Recognizing hosting, and the care it enacts, as a form of everyday humanitarian – following the burgeoning literature on alternative forms of humanitarianism (Rozakou, 2017; Olliff, 2018; Fechter and Schwittay, 2019; Vandevoordt, 2019) -has wide ranging implications. It further questions the social, geographic and power distances that exist between those who help and those who are helped; shifts the perception of response from exceptional rescue to one of ongoing commitment; requires a situated and contextual understanding of the social connections that exist in displacement contexts; and, vitally, reconceptualises refugees as both providers and recipients of care.

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Ethics statement

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