



raisd

Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively vulnerable people among the forcibly displaced

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Catalogue of vulnerability context

Deliverable D4.3

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About RAISD	
Call (part) identifier	H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2018
Topic	MIGRATION-08-2018 Addressing the challenge of forced displacement
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<p><i>Forced displacement crises overcome societies and institutions all over the world. Pushed by the urgencies rather than events, solutions are frequently reactive, partial, and disregard some groups. The project 'Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively vulnerable people among the forcibly displaced' (RAISD) aims at identifying highly Vulnerable Groups (VG) among these forcibly displaced people, analysing their specific needs, and finding suitable practices to address them. The concept of 'vulnerability context' considers the interplay between the features of these persons and their hosting communities, their interactions and experiences, and how different solutions for attention and inclusion affect them. As a result of this work, a methodology to carry out these studies will be developed. These goals are aligned with the call. They pursue characterizing these migrations and developing suitable aid strategies for them. The Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) frames the project. It proposes that all actors (including civil society) co-design actions, transversely integrates the gender perspective, and supports sustainability. Our research strategy will be based on methodological triangulation (i.e. the combined application of several methodologies). We will implement it through a specific participatory action research approach to fulfil the aim of undertaking advocacy-focused research, grounded in human rights and socio-ecological models. The team will work as a network of units in countries along migration routes. The units will promote the VG people' involvement, so they can speak with their own voices, gather information, and test practices. Work will rely on a tight integration of Social and Computer Sciences research. Automated learning and data mining will help to provide evidence-based recommendations, reducing a priori biases. A software tool will support collaboration, continuing previous H2020- funded RRI work.</i></p>	

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Executive Summary

Increasing numbers of people are fleeing conflicts and various forms of crisis and persecution in their home countries. Their migration may exacerbate their vulnerability by subjecting them to physical dangers and other severe risks along the way. Moreover, in their host countries, they may encounter various hardships, making them more susceptible to harm.

The objective of the deliverable

The objective of this paper is to offer a contextual analysis of the vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced people (FDP), drawing on desk research and empirical work in seven countries. The report argues that, in addressing the concepts of vulnerability, it becomes necessary to ground definitions within specific macro-, meso- and micro-level contexts to uncover the qualitative differences between them. This report also highlights the importance of the lived experiences and voices of forcibly displaced people so that their vulnerabilities can be understood and assessed.

Background and methodology

This is the final deliverable of Work Package 4 (WP4), which examines the vulnerability contexts for the Reshaping Attention and Inclusion Strategies for Distinctively Vulnerable People Among the Forcibly Displaced (RAISD) project. The aim is to provide an accessible synthesis of the main findings of WP4. We draw on the vast empirical work conducted by project partners in seven countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Finland. In total, 178 interviews with FDP were conducted in 2019. In addition to interviews, we use the information provided by project partners based on numerous stakeholder meetings and desk research activities.

This deliverable contributes to the previous literature and other RAISD artefacts by providing a broader and more coherent picture of vulnerabilities in various contexts of forced displacement along the routes between the Middle East and northern Europe. More detailed information about the country-specific contexts and methodological premises of the project can be found in other project deliverables, particularly deliverables 4.1 and 4.2. Further, more information about the FDP interviews can be found in the final fieldwork reports of individual partner countries.

Introduction

Concept

Our theoretical approach builds first on the abundant critiques of group-based ideas about vulnerability in refugee studies and various other academic disciplines. Second, it builds on intersectional thinking. With refugee policies, group-based understandings of vulnerability are widely adopted and can have an impact on an individual's access to international protection, as group characteristics often take precedence over individual, situational and contextual characteristics. In this report, we do not assume the existence of predetermined, static 'vulnerable groups'; we instead highlight the centrality of contexts and situations for understanding vulnerability and acknowledging the extant power structures and social inequities. We approach vulnerability as a dynamic, multidimensional and context-dependent process that is interpreted based on the situation at hand. The characteristics and root causes of vulnerability change over time, and their meanings vary within social groups and across geographical and social spaces. Through the narratives of the interviewed people, we gain insights into the qualitative differences of vulnerability within specific contexts.

In line with the above critique, the intersectional perspective stresses that vulnerability is a product of social contexts, situations and multiple overlapping identities with which people are often categorised. In some contexts, for example, being a young Arab male might lead to more vulnerabilities than in other contexts. Moreover, and highly importantly, an intersectional perspective refers to vulnerability as a cumulative process. People in the most vulnerable positions often have not one but several statuses, depriving them of resources in certain conditions. These statuses might include ethnicity, education level, legal standing, sexual identity and so forth.

Results

From the results of the desk research and the narratives of forcibly displaced people, we identify four distinct vulnerability contexts from the participating countries' perspectives. These contexts are based on the factors that create or exacerbate vulnerability. Context of survival in the Middle East, context of fragmented aid in Southern Europe, context of hostility in eastern Europe and context of control in Nordic countries are the four types discussed in this report. As Figure 1 illustrates, these contexts change and overlap and are not siloed into their national contexts. At least some features of each context can be found in all others.

In the south (mostly in the Middle East), vulnerabilities are highly acute and related to survival in everyday life. When there are millions of FDP, and resources are scarce, there is often a chronic shortage of nutrition, safe housing and good living conditions. In these contexts, individuals, families and communities must find ways to survive with the support of international non-government organisations (NGOs), because state authorities rarely recognise their rights.

In southern and western Europe, the number of FDP is smaller than in the Middle East. However, the number is still high, and the FDP population is heterogeneous. States and public authorities responsible for asylum in these countries are often either reluctant or incapable of fully recognising the manifold needs and vulnerabilities of FDP, and they lack resources and integration strategies. Consequently, one can find third-party small and medium NGOs

promoting the well-being of FDP populations; however, they have different interests and agendas. Recently, international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have adopted community-based strategies and actions. In the field, there is a drive for intensive networking and collaboration among diverse actors.

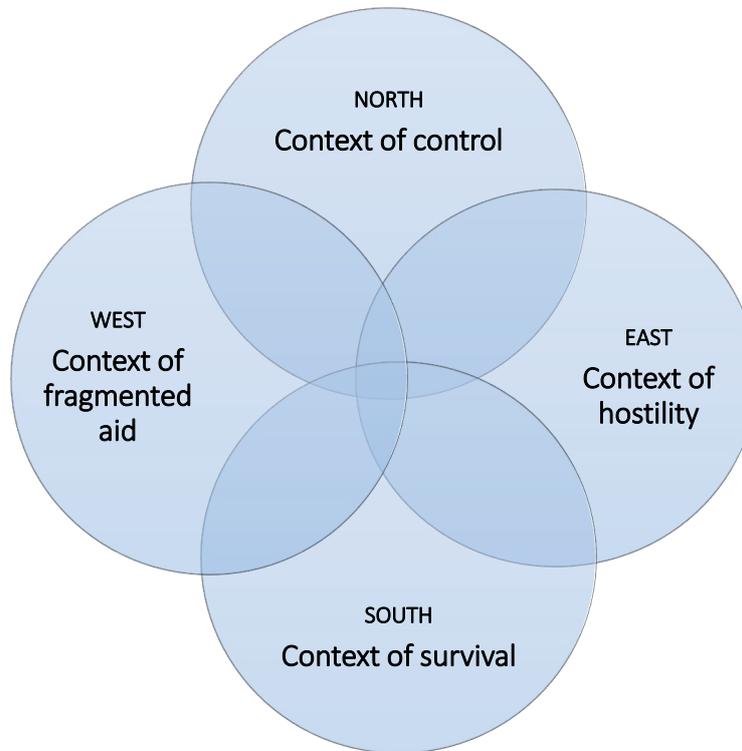


Figure 1: Vulnerability contexts in the forced route between the Middle East and northern Europe

The defining feature of both eastern and northern European contexts is the state control of FDP populations. Another common denominator between the east and the north is the small number and relative homogeneity of the FDP population. Only a few have the resources to enter the farthest corners of Europe through irregular routes. In eastern Europe, states tend to be hostile toward FDP and aim to expel them without concern for their rights or international agreements. In northern Europe, although there is a lack of explicit state-level hostility, the FDP population is heavily controlled; hence, asylum seekers and irregular migrant accommodations are scarce.

In the following sections, more detailed accounts are provided. In Sections 2 and 3, the concepts and contexts of vulnerability are defined. In Section 4, the key results and each of the four contexts are presented. All four contexts are illustrated by using the stories of actual FDP. These stories were constructed using typical narratives of various people in their given contexts. Consequently, they are not based on one interview narrative. Finally, the deliverable concludes by summarising the main findings of WP4.

1 The concept of vulnerability

The term 'vulnerability' is used in numerous ways when talking about FDP. In everyday discourse and in the media, vulnerability is often used to describe traumatised or dependent individuals and groups. Deriving from the Latin word, *vulnus* (wound), the concept expresses the capacity to be vulnerable and to be physically or emotionally wounded. It can refer to the vulnerable positions of all FDP, owing to, for instance, the lack of legal documentation or the existence of discrimination and dangerous transit. It can also indicate specific groups of people within a population who have distinct needs for support, owing to their particular social, physical or mental circumstances. In European asylum and refugee regulations, such vulnerability provides specific pathways for international protection (Peroni & Timmer, 2013).

Vulnerability, hence, is used for the categorisation of FDP in the practices and policies of national and international authorities. For instance, all actors within the field of European asylum and refugee management use some kind of vulnerability criteria as an assessment tool to identify and, ideally, better help and protect groups and individuals that are seen as particularly vulnerable. However, the concept is widely criticized for its vagueness and malleability (Welfens & Bekyol, 2021). Virokannas, Liuski and Kuronen (2020) summed up the criticism by explaining that 'vulnerability is used without properly defining it, and the consequences of such naming and conceptualising are not always carefully reflected on'.

This section examines the conceptual and practical dilemmas embedded in the academic discourse about vulnerability. Then, it introduces the working definition of vulnerability in the RAISD project, which relies on the idea that, instead of labelling individuals or groups as vulnerable from the outside, it is important to focus on the contexts that exacerbate or produce vulnerabilities during the migration process, including departure and transit. Moreover, we emphasise the importance of acknowledging the individual experiences of asylum seekers in pursuing a definition and operationalisation of the concept of vulnerability in different policy and practice contexts.

1.1 Concept of vulnerability in the academic literature

Vulnerability has become an increasingly common concept in both theory and practice (Cole, 2016, p. 262). Discussed first in the 1980s in the field of moral philosophy, vulnerability has subsequently gained prominence in sociology, social policy, bioethics, development studies, media studies, migration studies and migration governance and humanitarianism. As scholars have noted, the concept seeks knowledge and understanding about the inequalities and insecurities in contemporary society (Brown, Ecclestone & Emmel, 2017). Simultaneously, it has become a highly contested concept as is often deemed 'ambiguous' or 'imprecise'. This is partly because it was deployed in diverse vulnerability literature as a term of policy and practice, as a cultural trope in contemporary society and as an analytical concept in social and political research (Brown, Ecclestone & Emmel, 2017). There are also different understandings of the concept across disciplines (Virokannas, Liuski & Kuronen, 2020).

The theoretical discussion of vulnerability is characterised by a dichotomy between the universal and particular character of the term. Judith Butler (2009) argued that 'vulnerability is inherent to the human condition and may be exacerbated under certain political or social conditions'. Thus, whereas vulnerability is universal, it is also characterised by differentially distributed patterns of vulnerability. Everyone is vulnerable, but some are more

vulnerable than others (Fineman, 2013). Another meaning comes from the identification of individuals in need of special care and protection. Therefore, rather than being a universal and relational condition, 'vulnerability is understood as a distinctive character of particular groups or individuals'. The concept is used to advocate for the special protection of potentially disadvantaged groups, such as children, ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) people.

The concept of vulnerability is normative, as it implies specific political, legal and organizational actions and assessments. According to Turner (2019), it is 'a signifier that incites and legitimates intervention'. Such interventions aim to offer mitigation strategies towards vulnerability, either by focusing on eliminating harm or enhancing individuals' resilience. Thus, it means providing a method to recover from the challenges they face. Sometimes, vulnerability is seen as the opposite of resilience. That is, vulnerability refers to the inability of an individual or group to resist, accommodate and recover from the adverse impacts of harms. It is important to note that such definitions are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are overlapping concepts (Cutter et al., 2018). An individual or group can be vulnerable as well as resilient as they try to overcome their vulnerable situations. Importantly, both structural and social characteristics affect vulnerabilities and resilience.

Labelling some groups as inherently vulnerable has received abundant criticism. First, it is seen as creating and maintaining stereotypes, stigmas and hierarchies of 'deservingness' with regard to FDP (Brown, 2011; Freedman, 2019; Holmes & Castaneda, 2016; Turner, 2019). As Koivunen, Kyrölä and Ryberg (2018) noted, 'an understanding of vulnerability as "different from the norm" easily allows the norm to remain invisible and uncontested'. Understanding vulnerability as a political language allows us to analyse how the naming of groups as vulnerable invokes social inequalities. Some vulnerabilities weigh more than others (Butler, 2009). For instance, hierarchies of deservingness have significant practical implications for how asylum seekers are received, and this perception influences their rights and their access to services. Furthermore, it influences public attitudes. As the vulnerability of FDP and worthiness for protection are entangled, there is a danger of narrowing entitlement for 'non-vulnerable' FDP in the process—the notable example being young adult male asylum seekers who are typically perceived only as threats because they do not conform to expectations of how vulnerable people should look and behave.

Second, vulnerability terms tend to strengthen the idea of individuals as incapable, and it produces a diminished sense of human agency. Turner (2019) argued that vulnerability criteria encourage 'performances of powerlessness', as refugees self-identify as vulnerable under humanitarian conceptualizations of refugee situations.

Third, the concept is seen to have controlling functions, as it justifies interventions and patronizing attitudes for the people conceptualized as vulnerable. Research has associated vulnerability with the intensification of social control, which maintains forms of social exclusion (Brown, 2014; Burghardt, 2013). As Burghardt (2013, p. 563) noted, 'the naming of particular groups as vulnerable de-problematizes the naming process and discourages critique about how these groups are discursively constructed in the first place'. Hence, the concept obscures structural inequalities and contributes to the individualisation and psychologisation of social problems.

Despite the criticisms, the concept has become increasingly important in refugee and asylum policies and in human rights discourse (Sözer, 2019). Indeed, in humanitarian discourse, the focus has changed over the past few decades from the collective vulnerability of asylum seekers to referring to the most vulnerable groups.

1.2 Concept of vulnerability in asylum policy and legislation

The migration discourse depends on different labels and categories, such as 'forced migrant', 'undocumented migrant', 'asylum seeker', 'migrant in a vulnerable situation' and more. In all cases, the aim is to identify who should be perceived as needing special protection and assistance. Flegar (2018) showed that references to vulnerability in law and policy suggest access to resources for an individual while functioning as a general framing tool for deservingness in political discourse.

UNHCR emphasizes in various policy documents the need for the appropriate reception and protection of vulnerable individuals. Typically, this refers to vulnerable groups, such as children, pregnant women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and those experiencing trauma. In some documents, UNHCR provides more nuanced factors. For example, the vulnerability of refugee children is seen to be caused or exacerbated by 'refugee circumstances', such as a lack of living conditions and support systems. When discussing women as a vulnerable group, UNHCR also mentions specific refugee situations and forced displacements that increase the threats of violence and trafficking for purposes of sexual slavery or forced labour. Other factors in the displacement context that contribute to vulnerability include being displaced in remote locations, the deprivation of legal documents, the lack of family or community ties, the lack of knowledge of the local language, discrimination and the inability to make use of public support mechanisms (Flegar, 2018; La Spina, 2021).

UNHCR, then, sometimes acknowledges the displacement context and asylum system itself as factors contributing to vulnerability, even if contextual factors are connected to a particular group rather than discussed at a more general level. The factors that create a vulnerable situation for migrants might be the situation in their home countries and/or at transits or destinations. For instance, harsh conditions in which migrants might be received at borders or at their destinations can further exacerbate vulnerabilities (La Spina, 2021).

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) sets minimum standards for the treatment of all asylum seekers and applications across the European Union (EU). In practice, the treatment of asylum seekers varies across the EU. 2020 legislative proposals aimed to replace the Dublin Regulation with a new asylum and migration management rule that establishes more comprehensive governance at the EU level.

The concept of vulnerability has become central to European asylum and refugee law and policy, as well as in international human rights law, pointing to a shared understanding of the need to respond to the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, upon which international and national refugee policies and laws are based, does not mention the concept of vulnerability, nor does it refer to specific groups that may be more vulnerable than others. CEAS, however, addresses the need for special actions and adjusted reception conditions for those considered vulnerable (Freedman, 2019).

EU policies follow a group-based understanding of vulnerability attached to certain social groups rather than focusing on how specific contexts and circumstances may render asylum seekers vulnerable (Freedman, 2019; Welfens & Bekyol, 2021). In the Qualifications Directive (Directive 2011), EU Member States are urged to consider the 'specific situation of vulnerable persons, such as victims of human trafficking [...] and persons who have been subjected to rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence'. Further, the Reception Conditions Directive (2013a), in Article 21 on the qualification for protection, refers to the needs of vulnerable persons, including minors,

unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, including victims of female genital mutilation.

The Procedures Directive (Directive 2013b) does not refer to vulnerable groups but to applicants in need of special procedural guarantees. The factors that determine this condition include age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, serious illness, mental disorders and consequences of torture, rape or other forms of violence.

Under these directives, member states are expected to identify those who fall into the category of vulnerability and, accordingly, respond to their specific needs. Vulnerable groups enjoy a range of rights, including special reception conditions and procedural guarantees. The European Asylum Support Office provides tools and training for asylum officers across Europe to identify vulnerable applicants. National authorities are expected to assess whether an applicant requires special procedures after the application for international protection is submitted.

This has raised criticism about the operational value of the concept and how the vulnerability of specific groups should be assessed and monitored in practice (Welfens & Bekyol, 2021). Moreover, the identification of vulnerable groups is seen to lead to the requirement of categories and the failure to account for the agency of those seeking asylum. As the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) argued, 'While specific safeguards in the asylum procedure and reception structures are certainly needed and welcomed, the legal "vulnerabilisation" of applicants for international protection should not presume nor be conflated with a lack of agency of asylum applicants and refugees' (ECRE 2017, p. 13).

Recently, policy debates have increasingly addressed problems related to static identity-based categories of vulnerability. Lidén and Sarolea (2020) explained 'the three-dimensional nature of vulnerability' by examining the framing of minors' vulnerability in EU legislation. In a policy brief, they argued that the exclusive focus on age fails to reflect the diversity of minors' experiences. The proposed conceptualization comprised three intersecting categories of vulnerability: ontological vulnerabilities due to minors' personal characteristics (e.g. age, race, gender, physical capabilities and minority status); situational vulnerabilities due to past or present experiences (e.g. trafficking or disadvantaged social position in host societies); and administrative vulnerabilities (e.g. the precarity of legal status).

2 Vulnerability as a dynamic process

We emphasise that vulnerability is not something static; rather, it is quite dependent on contextual and situational factors. There are certain situations that increase exposure to vulnerabilities, such as dangerous journeys, precarious legal statuses, prejudices in the receiving country, poor language skills and access to information and social networks. Vulnerability also depends on specific political, social, economic, geographical and cultural factors. Thus, there is a need to attend to the fact that particular contexts create vulnerabilities and that those contexts reinforcing vulnerabilities and reducing the autonomy of individuals may include national and EU asylum policies (Freedman, 2019).

Drawing especially on Martha Fineman's (2010) concepts, the project approaches vulnerability as a universal human condition, meaning that anyone can end up vulnerable in certain situations. This understanding does not detract

from the consequences of social inequalities, and some of us are more at risk of vulnerabilities than others (Cole, 2016; Ten Have, 2016). Some groups, such as asylum seekers, can be considered more vulnerable than others, owing to the context in which they find themselves. From this perspective, vulnerability can be associated with global injustice. According to Fineman (2010, p. 269), 'our individual experience of vulnerability varies according to the quality and quantity of resources we possess or can command'. Thus, when discussing the experiences of asylum seekers in this project, we understand them as those in vulnerable life situations instead of as vulnerable groups. It is therefore important to identify the things that produce vulnerabilities for individuals and groups.

The notion of a vulnerability context is what Rogers and Meek Lange (2013) called 'pathogenic' vulnerability, which refers to situational vulnerabilities that occur because of adverse social phenomena, such as injustices, domination and repression. They also include actions intended to alleviate the vulnerability that actually makes them worse. In the same vein, Luna (2018) wrote of layers of vulnerability while describing the structural conditions that cause them for people who might already be disadvantaged. From Luna's view, all individuals are vulnerable, and there should be no predetermined labels for groups. However, some individuals and groups have more layers of vulnerability than others due to the variety of social contexts. If situations change, an individual may become less vulnerable (Fineman, 2010).

Vulnerability not only indicates one's exposure to potential harms but also refers to the reduced capacity to cope with or prevent the harms (Ten Have 2016). For example, in harsh winter conditions, the adaptive capacity or resilience of refugees is insufficient when living in makeshift shelters. It is therefore important to have a comprehensive understanding of both the social conditions surrounding forcibly displaced people and their individual or group-based strategies for coping with them. The identification and assessment of layers of vulnerability should be based on several criteria: an analysis of the origins of vulnerability and of its effects (i.e. the probability and intensity of harms; Luna, 2009; 2018). Luna also suggested that each vulnerability layer has its own mitigation strategy, aiming to eradicate and minimise vulnerabilities through safeguards and empowerment methods.

Depending on the situation, the same groups may be exposed to different vulnerabilities. For example, a Syrian refugee living in a spontaneously set-up tented settlement in Lebanon has different layers of vulnerability than a Syrian asylum seeker living in a centre in Finland. Although a refugee in Lebanon may have limited access to food, healthcare and electricity, an asylum seeker in Finland probably does not lack the basic necessities of life. However, asylum seekers in Finland might be exposed to different vulnerabilities, such as the absence of family members and social isolation.

In any context, vulnerabilities have an accumulative nature. Consequently, they should be analysed from an intersectional perspective. Vulnerabilities mostly harm individuals who have multiple exposures. For instance, in a Finnish reception centre, an adult, single Dari speaking male (e.g. Farsi) with little education might be more vulnerable than if he were an unaccompanied minor living in a special unit and having access to the Finnish educational system.

There are also limitations to the concept of vulnerability layers. For example, it is unclear who will define these layers and how they should be mitigated. The concept of vulnerability not only suggests exposure to possible threats, but it also refers to the responsibility of care. The key question is how the concept of vulnerability advances or threatens social justice and how it can be operationalised to understand particular FDP needs and combat structural

inequalities (Fineman, 2008). Hande Sözer (2019, p. 11) argued that the ‘piercing problem is that we cannot recognize some existing vulnerability conditions’, and that the solution is found in ‘avoiding imposing our analytical conceptualizations on the reality and by examining the real-life vulnerabilities with a fresh eye before attempting to generate vulnerability categories’.

RAISD focuses on different contexts that can impose or exacerbate vulnerabilities, rather than on the intrinsic vulnerabilities of particular groups. In this study, we aim to provide a deeper understanding of FDP vulnerabilities by focusing on their own experiences. We seek to understand the situations that produce or exacerbate vulnerabilities and how people can cope with and operate within a vulnerability context. We desire to further illuminate ways societies can become better equipped to react and understand these vulnerabilities.

Table 1: Defining vulnerability in the RAISD project

Defining Vulnerability
Vulnerability refers to the possibility of being harmed
The increased likelihood of harm that the concept implies is not predetermined
Certain contexts and situations impose or exacerbate vulnerability
Vulnerability can have a cumulative effect based on overlapping group statuses and contextual features
Vulnerability refers to the reduced capacity to cope with or prevent harms
Vulnerability cannot be defined only from this list; there is a need to focus on displaced people’s experiences

3 Vulnerability contexts

3.1 Context of survival in the Middle East

Despite their FDP-receiving contextual differences, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey share many similarities. The first and most obvious concern is the amount of forced migration. Unlike Europe, migration flows in the region have been extremely large, particularly after the breakout of the Syrian civil war in 2011. The three countries host the largest number of refugees in the world, both in absolute and proportional terms, from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Palestine and others. Simultaneously, their ability to provide care and support for large FDP populations is insufficient due to continuous economic crises, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan. In Lebanon, nine out of ten Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty (UNHCR, 2021).

Second, all three countries are community hosts and transit countries. Some FDP in Jordan, Lebanon and, in particular, Turkey aim to continue their journeys to another country or region, sometimes to Europe. However, making the journey requires financial, social and physical resources, which are out of reach for most people. Therefore, it is likely that the most underprivileged individuals and groups will stay for a prolonged period. Young, healthy men with sufficient financial resources are typically those who continue their migratory journeys.

Third, none of these countries has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or the subsequent Protocol. Hence, they apply their guidelines in very limited ways. Jordan and Lebanon are not parties to the Convention, whereas Turkey retains a geographical limitation to its ratification and only applies it to people originating from Europe. Nevertheless, all three have ways of providing mostly temporary protections to FDP. They have made agreements with the UNHCR about the treatment and rights of FDP in their territories. Those with UNHCR-granted refugee status should have access to services, education, and the labour market. However, these countries tend to treat people as temporary guests, and more durable solutions are expected to be found from repatriation or

Delal's story

Delal is married female and has a 5-year-old son. She graduated from the Theater Department at Baghdad University. She met her husband at the university, but because she is a Shiite, and her husband is a Sunni, their relationship was not accepted by their community and family members.

After graduating, she went to work for a TV channel and a theater. However, this situation brought different problems because she did not cover her hair, and she made appearances on TV, which was not welcomed by her family and society. Because she and her husband were used their platforms to support women's rights, they received death threats and had to flee their country to Turkey.

Upon their arrival and because every city in Turkey has a refugee quota, the Presidency of Migration Management settled them in the city of Bilecik. Both struggled to find jobs in their small new town. Eventually, they moved to Eskişehir, a large city with more and better opportunities.

Although her husband found a job, his salary was insufficient to support the family; hence, Delal took two jobs as a car washer during the day and as a dishwasher during the night. Her husband must return to Bilecik each week to sign his residency documents. Delal has not been able to find meaningful work. She wishes both herself and her husband to be able to pursue their art again in the future.

resettlement to third-party countries. Moreover, many FDP and recognised refugees lack counselling and information about their legal rights in their host communities.

Fourth, there are many unrecognised FDP living in urban areas and border zones. The number of unregulated or undocumented people is likely to increase, owing to the slow processing of immigrant applications, refugee statuses and related issues. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of FDP suffer from absolute poverty, food insecurity, insufficient housing, limited freedom of movement and lack of educational and employment opportunities. Deprivation and lack of opportunities may cause restlessness, criminality, radicalization and other mental and social problems among both FDP and local populations.

Consequently, although there is a lack of legislative measures and recognition by the states in question, the roles of various NGOs and unofficial actors tend to be significant. In addition to UNHCR, NGOs, such as the Red Crescent and the International Organisation for Migration, govern several issues related to forced migration in the region. In Jordan and Lebanon, refugees receive most of their humanitarian aid from UNHCR, NGOM and the EU. Lacking state-provided support, communities, private companies, groups and individuals carry the responsibility for providing life's necessities for FDP.

Fifth, all three countries are patriarchal and conservative in different ways and to different extents. Employment and educational opportunities for women are relatively limited, as are their spaces in public life in general. Moreover, many FDP women suffer from domestic and sexual exploitation, and they lack the means to report abuse and get support. Furthermore, the identities of sexual and gender minorities or disabled people are rarely recognised in everyday life and legislation, making them more susceptible to various adversities and vulnerabilities.

Rasha's story

Rasha's family fled bombings in Homs, Syria in 2011. When they moved to Lebanon, they first lived in a tent.

Now she lives in a refugee camp in northern Lebanon with her four children between the ages of three and eight. Her father died in Syria in an air raid and her husband was killed in a car accident two years ago.

Her children are born in the camp and have spent their entire lives there. The older children have lost years of schooling because the NGO run camp school was closed in the wake of the pandemic.

She does not believe she will ever go back home, and she does not have any long-term plans. The only issue now, she says, is to survive. She is also supporting her mother. She lives in extreme poverty, and she is struggling to keep her children and mother fed.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic she lost her job of cleaning. She has been looking for a new work without any luck.

Table 2: Features of the vulnerability context of the Middle East

Vulnerability Context in the Middle East
Extremely large and heterogeneous FDP population from neighbouring countries
Deterioration in the living conditions of FDP: substandard, overcrowded shelters
Food insecurity
Gender- and diversity-based violence
Consequences of the financial crises of the host country: Increasing need to resort to negative coping measures, such as child labour and early marriage

3.2 Context of fragmented aid in southern Europe

Southern European regions (e.g. Italy and Spain), function as FDP gateways to Europe. For some, Italy and Spain function as host societies of many people who aim to reach other regions of Europe. Consequently, in southern Europe, larger forced migration flows are substantial. Both Italy and Spain have an ageing population, and most immigrants represent younger age cohorts. Forced and unregulated migration contributes significantly to many branches of industry in southern Europe, such as agriculture and domestic labour.

FDP in both Italy and Spain are highly heterogeneous and depend on the so-called Mediterranean route between Europe and Africa, sometimes using the post-colonial relations of the countries. Although both Italy and Spain receive FDP from various sub-Saharan regions, Spain is the target of a significant number of people from Maghreb and Spanish-speaking countries in South America.

Both Italy and Spain are parties to the Refugee Convention and the subsequent Protocol. However, there are significant shortcomings in how they fulfil the European standards of receiving and hosting asylum seekers and refugees. This is due to a lack of public funds and increased unregulated migration. For instance, in Italy, the availability and quality of reception shelters and facilities are inadequate even for unaccompanied minors, a situation that may lead to severe social problems such as homelessness **19** of **29s** and being susceptible to exploitation. Consequently, many asylum seekers live in informal settlements.

Currently, in both Italy and Spain, a vast number of undocumented migrants are excluded from any form of protection or services. Undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable to violations of their basic rights, and they face problems of exploitation at work; they also live in fear of arrest and deportation. The lack of available health care easily leads to worsening conditions. Moreover, the asylum process is slow, and people are forced to live for years in a state of uncertainty, often with a lack of legal counselling.

Itohan's story

'When we crossed the desert, we met some guards who said that they needed money in order to allow us to cross the border. They killed some boys and girls in front of me. They just shot those who had no money. As for the others, they were taken to a place they call "underground". I was lucky because they didn't kill me, they just raped me'.

Crossing the central Mediterranean route, 19-year-old Itohan was rescued at sea. She was lured to leave Benin City in Nigeria with promises of a better life in Europe working as a cook. Encouraged by her mother and older siblings, she made a contract with a Nigerian madame and a trafficker.

Itohan and two other girls set off with an escort, the smuggler, to Tripoli, Libya. During their long transit, she was frequently sexually exploited in the so-called connection houses. In Libya, she survived torture in a detention centre.

Finally arriving on Italian shores, she was soon identified as a potential victim of human trafficking and welcomed in a reception centre in Sicily, where she has lived for 2 years with a migrant community. She was contacted several times by the trafficking network in Sicily who threatened to kill her and harm her family back at home if fails to work for them and pay her debt. She is terrified of the threats.

Today, Itohan rarely leaves the community centre and is reluctant to meld with the new hosting community; she disappointed by her present social relationships.

'I'm not doing anything because I have this little baby; even my husband is not doing anything, but sometimes, he gets some job here and there. In the camp, we receive a pocket money that is our only income. They give us food and everything we need, even clothes but nothing more'.

The public sectors of Italy and Spain are under-resourced and inefficient when it comes to implementing policies on FDP sustainment.

Groups and individuals in the most vulnerable positions are rarely recognised or sufficiently supported. In the context of highly heterogeneous migration, there is a need for resources and policies to recognise various subgroups and their potential vulnerabilities. For instance, in recent decades, both Italy and Spain have witnessed a 'feminisation' trend in migration flows. Young migrant women from African and American continents look for work possibilities in the domestic sector, or as a worst case, in the sex industry. Consequently, there is a strong need to recognise the often difficult and heterogeneous living conditions of migrant women and their children.

Because of the inefficiencies of the public sector, the problems and vulnerabilities of FDP are often tackled by third-sector organisations. However, it is evident that various NGOs lack the resources needed to support large populations with diverse needs and backgrounds. Some people are reached and supported, but many remain out of scope. Moreover, NGOs supporting FDP are geographically unevenly distributed, and their aims, expertise, target groups and ideologies vary considerably. Consequently, displaced people in southern Europe face a heterogeneous, fragmented and often scantily resourced third sector aiming to alleviate their vulnerabilities.

Ahmed's story

'When you're a minor here in Spain they treat you very well, but when you become an adult, they don't treat you well'.

Ahmed was born in Western Sahara and lived there with his family. Now 21, he crossed the border between Morocco and Spain when he was still a minor. He considers himself Sahrawi, not Moroccan, and he mentioned the political tensions in the territory. Now, in Spain: 'I am doing better than in Sahara. There is freedom, there are rights... and everything'. However, he feels that his life became much more difficult when he turned 18.

He left his hometown by swimming to reach a city in Morocco with a friend because they were undocumented. In Morocco, he tried to cross the border fence into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, but he was caught by the coastguards and returned. In a second attempt, he hid on the underside of a truck boarding a ferry for the Spanish mainland.

In Spain, he escaped a reception centre for foreign minors, which was overcrowded and had absolutely nothing to do. Later, he was captured by police and moved to another centre in a different city. There, his situation improved considerably. The new centre offered language lessons and sport activities.

His family still lives in Western Sahara. He did not apply for asylum because he was afraid that he would not be allowed to visit his family afterward. He is currently waiting on a permit of stay and dreams of finding a job.

Table 3: Features of the vulnerability context in Southern Europe

Vulnerability Context in the Southern Europe
High number and diversity of FDP from various parts of Africa and former colonies
Dangerous journey across the Mediterranean Sea
Exposure to violence and abuses at various points of the migratory journey, especially in Libya
Protracted legislative procedures
Inadequate housing conditions, shortage of places leads to informal settlements
Labour exploitation
Lack of data on the conditions of particularly vulnerable groups

3.3 Context of hostility in eastern Europe

Like many other European countries, Hungary has an ageing and shrinking population characterized by a low reproduction rate with moderate immigration and significant emigration figures. In recent years, the country has become increasingly hostile towards immigrants, especially asylum seekers and other FDP. There has been a series of hostile legal and political measures alongside xenophobic public communication campaigns that have resulted in the dismantling of refugee reception and integration systems. Following the border crisis of 2015, Hungary's land borders were fortified with razor-wire fences and an enforced legislation that contravened Hungary's obligations under international and EU law (Bíró-Nagy, 2021). Anti-migrant rhetoric and campaigns persistently portray migrants as threats to the economic, cultural and individual security of Hungarians.

The border crisis has resulted in the emergence of fault lines between western European states and central and eastern European countries (e.g. Hungary and Poland). Overall, exclusionary attitudes towards migrants and asylum seekers in post-communist Europe have been more prevalent than in western Europe (Gorodzeisky, 2021). Hungary has played a more significant role than its real political and economic weight would grant, owing to its location on the Balkan and eastern Mediterranean migratory routes. Hungarian immigration laws and practices are the most restrictive in the EU. Two features significantly affect the vulnerabilities of FDP in this context. First, due to recent legislation changes, lodging an asylum application has been virtually impossible. Under current regulations, migrants entering a 'safe' third country are no longer entitled to asylum. As Hungary is surrounded by safe third countries, it is practically impossible to obtain asylum. Until 2020, migrants could only apply for asylum in the transit zones at the national borders, where they were also required to stay during the entire process, typically in dire housing conditions and without access to special care.

Transit zones were closed by the government in 2020 due to an EU court ruling. Since then, it has been only at two Hungarian embassies (i.e. Belgrade and Kyiv) where a request for asylum in Hungary can be made. However, these requests are usually denied on the basis of the above-mentioned safe third-country principle. Hence, migrants enter

Abbas's story

'Hungary was the worst. They were brutal. They would hit us with anything. They wanted our fingerprints, or we would get imprisoned'.

Abbas was detained with his 6-year-old daughter for 17 months at the transit zone at Röszke on Hungary's southern border with Serbia until the transit zones were closed in 2020 due to an EU court ruling. In the transit zone, they lived in a tiny container.

Abbas had fled Iraq 5 years prior and constantly feared deportation. He had travelled through Serbia, which was regarded as a safe country by the Hungarian authorities. For this reason, their asylum application was not processed, and they were expelled back to Serbia, who refused their entry. It took 2 years to gain permission to reenter Hungary. He witnessed how border authorities beat migrants they were pushed back into Serbia.

Apart from his daughter, there were other children at the transit zone detention site, and they were only allowed to leave into Serbia. There were no opportunities for education or play at the site. Abbas also suffered from hunger, which the usual practice at the detention site. Living in uncertainty for long months resulted in his deteriorating mental health.

'My daughter and I suffered a lot during the asylum journey. We were exploited while searching for the most basic human right, which is safety. I was more worried about my daughter than about myself'.

and stay in the country with other statuses (e.g. students). As a result, they remain in precarious situations because they do not wish to return to their own country and cannot extend their stay.

The second characteristic is Hungary's status as a transit country among EU member states. Many recognised asylum seekers leave Hungary for another European country but are then sent back according to the Dublin procedure or the respective readmission agreement. Consequently, for many FDP, it is critical to pass Hungary without authority intervention. Although Hungary has officially adopted EU-level regulations and legislation on refugee and asylum policies and definitions of vulnerability among FDP populations, these practices contradict its legal position. Examination shows that only unaccompanied refugees and asylum-seeking children have special accommodations and procedural conditions. However, the procedures and safeguards regarding other vulnerabilities are less clear, and highly discretionary rules can be applied.

While a state is hostile to asylum seekers, some NGOs and religious organisations support the FDP and help alleviate their vulnerabilities. Practically, this equates to providing language tuition and social work alongside various forms of counselling. This work is mainly carried out with private or EU funding or as voluntary work. Despite the efforts of civil society, FDP conditions related to services, labour and education are often distressed. Many FDP are forced to work long hours at low wages in poor conditions.

Table 4: Features of the vulnerability context in Eastern Europe

Vulnerability Context in the Eastern Europe
Low numbers of FDP, mainly young men trying to reach western and northern Europe
Hostile political environment to migrants and to non-governmental aid organizations seeking to assist them
People in need of international protection denied access to territory and asylum
Increased risk of violence by authorities
Detention of asylum seekers in the transit zone until 2020: dire conditions
Labour exploitation
Lack of standardized assessments to determine special vulnerabilities

3.4 Context of control in Nordic countries

Finland is often characterised as an egalitarian and safe Nordic country with a strong welfare state. Like previously presented contexts, Finland is not only a host country; all immigrants can resettle permanently. For some, the country functions as a steppingstone towards other EU states or the UK. However, owing to increased wealth and EU membership, Finland has been a target of migration since the 1990s. As a result, Finnish authorities have created a highly centralized state system to govern immigration and harmonize legislation with the rest of the EU. As a result of several programmes and public policies in recent decades, humanitarian and work-related immigration have been kept separate: the former is strictly controlled, the latter is aspired.

Although there are some diverging trends with Nordic asylum policies, the general trend of policy restrictions following the influx of asylum seekers in 2015 prevails in all countries. Forced migration is seen primarily as an issue of policing and security by public authorities, and not, for instance, as a matter of economy, employment or a social issue. Although ethnic and cultural diversity is respected in political-normative discourses, the everyday attitudes of people are often more supportive of cultural homogeneity and prejudices towards ethnic and religious minorities are common.

Owing to Finland's geographical location in the northernmost part of Europe, it is difficult to reach for most asylum seekers via irregular routes. Consequently, the number of FDP in Finland is low compared with southern Europe. Since 1990, the average number of asylum applications has been ~3,000 per year. However, in 2015, the number peaked at more than 30,000. The journey to northern Europe requires money and social networks, which are unlikely assets for the most underprivileged individuals.

FDP in Finland comprise quota refugees and asylum seekers. In recent years, the size of the quota has fluctuated between 700 and 1,500. Quota refugees are accepted with permanent

Jabers story

'I have lost four years of my life. It's true that I am in a safe country, but I have not been able to actually live my life'.

Jaber is 24 years old. He left Iraq in 2015 after seeing his police colleagues being kidnapped and after personally receiving several threats. After a long journey through Turkey and eastern Europe, he ended up in Finland in 2016. At first, he was optimistic about continuing his studies after learning the Finnish language and getting a residence permit. His dreams did not come true. After almost 4 years, Jaber was desperate as he was still awaiting a permit to stay.

He had not been able to find a means to study apart from some basic language tuition arranged by his reception centre. Except for the first couple of months, he has lived in peripheral locations in Finland with few possibilities of finding legitimate work and peer groups. He has had difficulties making contacts, and those he have made were negative; he has frequently been a target of racism.

Jaber has two major problems. The first is related to not knowing what is going to happen and the other is not having any influence on his asylum case. A year ago, he began to suffer mental problems and has hardly any motivation to take part in social activities. He feels like a disappointment to his family and relatives. There were high hopes of him educating himself and earning a living. He feels emotionally lonely because he cannot share his sorrows with his family. He also constantly fears for their safety. Maybe Jaber's enemies will hurt them because of his choices and actions.

He has made some friends in the reception centres but there are many conflicts between Iraqi men belonging to different social, religious and political

residence permits and have access to all public services and education. The number of asylum seekers is larger and suffers from a more precarious situation. Some fall into the category of undocumented migrants after receiving negative decisions with no chance of return.

sects. Jaber tries to avoid certain people in fear of such problems and prefers to just wait.

The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri), a division of Finland's Ministry of the Interior, has a strong view of asylum seekers' lives and possibilities in Finland. As a wealthy country, the minimum living standard (e.g. housing, food, health care and financial allowances) is secured for all asylum seekers and for some undocumented migrants as well.

Since 2015, the processing periods for asylum applications have been exceptionally long, lasting several years. While waiting, they have limited rights to operate outside reception centres and their service provisions. Their right to work and access education and healthcare services is limited. Moreover, asylum seekers are often placed in peripheral regions far away from services, employment, educational opportunities and social contacts. Despite these structural constraints, most try to accommodate themselves to the surrounding society through educational institutions, labour markets and local communities while waiting for their asylum decisions.

Table 5: Features of the vulnerability context in Northern Europe

Vulnerability Context in the Northern Europe
Low number of FDP, mainly young men trying to integrate
Protracted asylum processes since 2015
Restricted rights and access to public services
Uneven quality of legal counselling
Social isolation and marginalization
Labour exploitation

4 Conclusions

Vulnerability refers to reduced capabilities to cope with harm and risks. Such things are inherent to all human beings and societies. However, in the context of forced displacement, some individuals might be more vulnerable than others, depending on their group status and their living contexts. All individuals identify with or are set to represent several groups. These demographics, such as gender, age, class, ethnicity, religion and sexuality, always intersect. For instance, being an uneducated young woman often creates a particularly vulnerable position when having to migrate through irregular routes towards European soil. However, being an educated young man with brown skin while applying for asylum in northern Europe might create a highly vulnerable position, in which institutional and everyday exclusions are constantly experienced. Intersecting group statuses will either intensify or alleviate vulnerabilities, depending on each context.

Consequently, the vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced people tend to change according to their contexts. One can observe quite different vulnerabilities in the Middle East and southern, eastern and northern Europe. In this deliverable, we named four different vulnerability contexts: that of survival (Middle East), that of fragmented aid (southern Europe), that of hostility (eastern Europe), and that of control (northern Europe). In each, FDP vulnerabilities are formed in unique ways, and the intersections of different group categories have different significances. To understand FDP vulnerabilities, one must understand contextual differences.

However, despite making distinctions between the four vulnerability contexts, there are plenty of overlaps among them. The distinction between the four contexts serves mostly analytical purposes and provides a tool for understanding the contextual nature of vulnerability. For instance, there is often a fine line between state hostility in eastern Europe and state control in the northern regions. Further, the patriarchal culture is a factor outside the Middle East as well, as is sometimes the need to struggle for one's survival. In European contexts, the patriarchal order might take different forms, and survival might refer to more of a mental state than a physical one, but from the perspective of the FDP, their consequences are quite similar.

Finally, the work carried out in the RAISD project provides a strong contribution to international policies related to forced migration and refugee and asylum matters. Treating vulnerability solely as a group-based fixed concept leads to unsuccessful, inefficient and unjust policies and practices. Humans are much more than representatives of one categorical group detached from context. Successful, efficient and just policies require intersectional perspectives, contextual sensitivities and a willingness to tailor practices to meet the needs of various sub-populations at local levels.

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