WE ARE NOT GOING ANYWHERE

An ethnographical study of (im)mobility in Jordan

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Author: Hanna Berg
Supervisor: Isa Blumi, PhD, University Lecturer/Associate Professor
Abstract

In present time, to be mobile, to be able to physically move from point A to point B is something taken for granted by a small minority of the world’s population, while the vast majority are caught within or between borders. How did we reach to this point? This study examines the lived experiences of (im)mobility in Jordan. It captures the experiences of Syrians who live in Jordan and who have been denied mobility because of their flight from their homeland. By means of an ethnographical approach this study challenges conventional conceptions of what it means to be displaced. Situating the understanding of displacement in relation to the modern nation state, territorial boundedness, national identity and geographical categorizations it ultimately lays the foundation for conceptualizing the relative human (im)mobility and its links to a historical past. Through travelling and living in Jordan periodically between 2017-2018, totalizing approximately 6 months, conducting semi-structured interviews and engaging in everyday social and contextual encounters, this study offers a more multifaceted understanding of what it means to be (im)mobile in present time, as additional to conventional scholarship. It ultimately demonstrates that displacement as we understand it today is inadequate and simplified, and as we reassess its components we are able to reconceptualize the understandings of relative human (im)mobility.

Keywords: Jordan, refugee, Syria, passport, nation, identity, displacement, camp, mobility, nativity, foreignness, refuge, territory
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Notes on transcription & translation

The interviews were conducted in Arabic, all the transcribed sections will be presented transcribed in Arabic and translated in English with regard to the readers who do not know Arabic.

“transcripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purpose (Kvale 2007: 98)”, consequently, only the paragraphs that are relevant for the analysis will be included and therefore represent only a fraction of the full-length conversations. Thus, reading this thesis one must consider the transcribed sections as abbreviated and decontextualized renderings of the complete interview (Kvale 2007: 93).

While a translation is always a selective re-description of the original, I have tried to keep the translations as equivalent as possible to the original Arabic versions, sometimes at the expense of the comprehension in English. A prerequisite for a successful ethnography is the empirical evidence being interpreted from the native language (Hanks and Severi 2014), which is why I have favoured the original conversations before the translations. I have also chosen to include recurrences of expressions, in order to mirror the conversation as much as possible. However, my own hums and comments have been left out when I have regarded it as insignificant for the understanding. In occurrences when my interlocutors themselves have translated words or expressions to English, these are written in English in the transcribed sections, and marked in italics in the translated sections.

Furthermore, I aim to present both the transcribed and the translated parts in a simple style, marking higher voice and voice indicating questions, short and long pauses. The focus in this thesis is on the individual’s larger understandings and sense making of how mobility is lived, the choice to not use a more advanced transcription-scheme is based on the purpose to make visible the nuances of the narratives and facilitate the reading (Kvale 2007: 98).

Transcription of interviews

! – high voice
? – voice indicating a question
, – short pause
. – short pause, end of topic.
Transcription of Arabic

All Arabic words and names are transcribed in accordance to the key below. However, names are transcribed once, following a popular spelling. Transcribed names and words in text are written in italics and so is the in-text translations of the empirics. The Arabic definite article is exclusively transcribed as: ‘l’. Hence, it does not mirror the various pronunciations in the conversations. This choice is made on the motivation that the interpretation of definite article in every day conversations is context-based; it does not always sound clearly for the listener even though it is present.

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Notes on structure of the thesis

The empirical material in this thesis is based on the recorded testimonies of my interlocutors and my own experiences and reflections, jointly combined in linking to the theories and analyses presented. Inspired by the style of other ethnographers such as Amina Mittermeier, Engseng Ho, Lori Allen and Avtar Brah in writing about their own experiences, along with Shahram Khosravi’s especially inspiring autoethnography, I have, in combining empirical material with personal experiences, opened every chapter in this thesis with an account to set the tone for the theme aimed to be discussed. Hence, reading these passages one should be aware that everything written is gathered from the recorded conversations and my own notes. Thus, while I adopt a narrating, describing language, these accounts should be understood as equally valuable empirics as the interview passages throughout the thesis.
PART I
Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign.

But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

(Adichie 2009)
Introduction

Suddenly it was time to leave, to escape. It wasn’t something they had planned for long, and even if the time was now, it was only for a short period, a couple of months or so, but it was time. Having agreed on time and place with the man who could transfer them out of their hometown, through the border city Dara’a, they were now on their way. In the middle of the night they laid down in the back of the truck as it took them out of the city without being noticed by the Syrian authorities. The road was bumpy and as they approached the border city the distant sound of gunshots came closer. The violent combat in Dara’a delayed the journey and they had to stop and wait at a house in the area. The house was like a gigantic waiting hall. Hundreds of people were sitting there. Everyone waited for the same thing: for the darkness to allow them to continue the journey.

And the night came. And they walked. They walked for kilometers in the night, in the desert-land between Syria and Jordan, until they reached the border, the border between native and foreign, between citizen and refugee, between two different lives. As they crossed the border, something changed, and to be Syrian would come to mean something else, something it had not meant before.

This is a story about mobility, a story about places, and peoples, about documents, about privileged and unprivileged, about borders, about waiting, longing, about wishing, giving up and about trying again. Human mobility, documented in all kinds of stories: religious, historical, oral tales and political debates (Chatty 2010: 8), ultimately makes this a story about humanity. Today, mobility and migration are part of an international discourse which legitimizes unlimited mobility for some, while restricting others. Thus, to be mobile, to be able to physically move from point A to point B, is something taken for granted by a small minority of the world’s population. Yet, the vast majority are caught within borders (Khosravi 2010; Lundström 2014).

This thesis is an attempt to capture the experiences of those who cannot physically move freely within or between national borders. To capture these experiences, it is necessary to understand the present dimensions at play in shaping these conditions.

Ever since the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishments of British mandates in the Middle East, Jordan has been a place for arrival, departure, transit and resettlement and thus it has also been the site for a variety of stories of mobility (Blumi 2013; Chatty 2010; Hamed-
This land has long been the site for migration and movement testimonies of Assyrians, Armenians, Iraqis, Palestinians, Yemenis, Syrians or Lebanese, some of many peoples who have crossed or settled here. Consequently, the borders of contemporary Jordan, first drawn by the British and the Hijazi Amir Abdullah in the beginning of the 20th century, embody a population with a majority whose geographical origins can be located outside (Massad 2001: 15). Nevertheless, this land is still a place of mobility.

\textit{Ahmad:} kunnā mfakkirīn ya'ni 'innu.. mā nṭawwil hūn, ya'ni 'innu l-urdun 'ibāra 'an maḥaṭṭa, kānat neṭna hēk mfakkirīn, 'innu maḥaṭṭa, nastaqīr fihā la-fatra mu'ayyane ya'ni, ‘alā 'amal 'innu sūriya tehdā, taḥlūṣ l-ḥarb w-narja'.

\textit{Ahmad:} We thought like that.. We would not stay long here, like that Jordan is like a station, this was how we thought, that it is a station, we stay here for a specific period of time like, on the hope that Syria calms down, the war finishes and we return.

The outbreak of the violence in Syria 2011 forced millions of people to flee from their homes, separating many from friends and family. Today, those Syrians who left, share a fate with millions of ‘displaced’ people in the Middle East and larger world. Over the last seven years, what began as just temporary resettlements within or outside of Syria, have developed into something that, together with other ‘displaced’ over the globe, challenges the usual conception of humans as naturally divided in homogenous groups culturally, linguistically and ethnically on geographical spaces distinguished by national borders.

The aim of this study is to examine the lived experiences of (im)mobility. I hope to make visible those lived experiences of Syrians relocated by war who have been denied mobility because of their flight from their homeland. This condition is not only a simple problem experienced by refugees, however. Since the creation of the modern nation state in the end of the 18th and following and 19th century, humans have been targeted by administrators seeking to categorically distinguish, then physically separate and thus trap subjects within national borders. This constitutive foundational element of the nation state – the interrelationship between territory and humans – thus proves loaded with sometimes violent coercive acts of governance that hinders as much as induces (in)voluntary human mobility (Blumi 2013; Ho 2006; Khosravi 2010). To examine how mobility in such conditions is lived is to reveal how larger structures associated with modernity affect every single human. In the process, such examinations often help explain the ways in which people deal with the dilemmas of their choice.
to accept or resist these structures. As argued throughout, the ‘Syrian refugee’ proves an ideal, if often tragic, example of these kinds of dilemmas created by invasive state policies towards restricting (and/or inducing) mobility.

Territorial boundedness – an invented truth

Efforts to account for this dynamic has long been started with an analysis of the state. Understanding the resulting, often violent process by which the modern-nation state emerges, necessarily begins with the paradigm of its ‘imagined’ origins. That the nation state is imagined has for long generally been agreed on within academia. According to some of the leading advocates for this framing of the genealogy of the modern state, the division of peoples and populations over different territories have ever since the 18th century created the understanding of territorial boundedness as the most significant identifier of place, power and population (Agamben 1995; Anderson 2006; Soguk 1999). In the case of population, the territory to which “one is naturally tied (Anderson 2006: 143)” has become “the uncontested idea of a location as the most significant marker of the existence of communities (Soguk, 1999: 72)”. This fixation of framing this territorial boundedness as ‘natural’ has been linked to an objective to end the “polyglot imperial-dynastic systems”. The idea that by creating a new world where populations were separated into ethnically and linguistically homogenous national entities, when necessary through “mass expulsion or extermination of minorities and other unwanted populations” proves historically accurate when considering the modern history of the Middle East (Soguk 1999: 114). Perhaps the most glaring example of this is the population-exchanges imposed by this new political order in the early 20th century. As the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires formally ended, the implementation of agreements to distinguish peoples of formally heterogeneous communities along religious (ethno-national) lines as between Turkey and Greece and Bulgaria, resulted in millions of people forcibly relocated. The leading principle behind these often brutal policies implemented by an emerging international community by way of the League of Nations was presumably the need to form homogenous national populations (Soguk 1999). This was “a crucial event in the production of national myths channeled into statist cultural, political, and economic institutions and relations (Soguk 1999: 134)”.

Evidently, the project of territorializing the nation state has involved the creation of an identity built on the relationship between humans and territory; a homogenous national identity confirmed by a legal regime that granted national citizenship to people with certain distinguishing qualities. The result has been the notion of being of one ethno-national group (and not another) is necessarily based on one geographical place where humans are ‘in place’. Consequently, since ‘mixed’ populations were assumed to induce conflict, those peoples who did not fit a seemingly clear criterium of inclusiveness, necessarily were misplaced, and thus justifiably ‘displaced’. Originating from this idea of the nation and being ‘in place’, displacement has become a recognized subject within academia (Agamben 1995; Anderson 2006; Jalal 2014; Malkki 1995; Scott 1998).

In contrast, the point of departure for this study is a concern that viewing humans as bounded to a specific territory creates an unchallenged understanding of what it means to be displaced. This has resulted in examining displacement not so much as a physical movement, but rather as movement from one’s original culture to another. This formula of studying displacement results in always connecting movement as losing one’s identity, traditions and culture (Malkki 1992). In this respect, most studies on displacement can be traced to studies on transnationalism, national identity, diasporic communities and belonging.

Instead of focusing on this ‘cultural traditional or identity loss’ in relation to peoples’ settlement in a new geographic place, I aim to focus on the lived experiences of another type of loss: namely the loss of ability to move and its geographical and historical interconnections with nationalism, borders, refugee-ness, camps and displacement. To grasp at the complexity of these issues when understood through the filter of a lack of mobility, this thesis asks how peoples’ lives have been politicized into bodily representing the national ideology through different human categorizations such as ‘citizen’, ‘expat’, ‘displaced’, ‘migrant’ or ‘refugee’.

Previous research & background - Soil, mobility and national identity

In accordance with John Torpey (2000:5f), I suggest that studies on human mobility largely have taken the existence of the territorial state for granted, analyzing migration in the light of processes such as socioeconomics, transnationalism and push/pull theories of migration (Castles and Miller 2003; Richmond 1994). While these quantitative studies tell us something about the larger condition of the world, the ‘macro-level’ of migration or movement of people
and populations, this study instead turns the attention elsewhere. This study recognizes the centrality of the state in a qualitative analysis of human mobility but wishes to steer away from a focus on the relationship between human (im)mobility and the state regulations on a large scale. The result I seek is to understand the individual human and how everyday life is affected by larger structures shaping our world.

Dawn Chatty (2010) offers a mix of this type of examination in combining ethnographical and quantitative data in order to examine ‘displaced’ communities in the Middle East with regard to their assimilation, integration, identity, social inclusion and exclusion. In a similar fashion, this work presents a general understanding of the scholarly subject displacement and migration while also illustrating the dynamics of different stories of ‘displacement’.

The common understanding of displacement has resulted in the academic focus on themes like transnationalism, national identity, diasporic communities and belonging. From Avtar Brah (1996), Nadia Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (2002), to Anh Hua (2005), offer valuable ethnographies of the complexities of territorial boundedness in transnational contexts. While identity and nationality are something covered within academia and these studies highlight important complexities of the present world, these types of examinations might also have unintended negative consequences. Perhaps one of the most significant examples is the large volume on Palestinian dispersal and how they relate (or not relate) to their lost homeland, the forms of new identities that as a result uphold (or reject) their national identity. By characterizing these cases as possibly ‘negative’ with regard to studies on Palestinian dispersal I mean the kinds of arguments that justify the situation in Palestine as a result of a lack of national aspirations.

There have been attempts to move beyond this concern about identity and nationality. Unfortunately, these attempts have possibly instead resulted in diminishing of the importance of the social and collective role in identity-shaping in which living in a condition of fixed displacement often results. For instance, Diana Allan (2013) in her book about Palestinian exile experiences in the notorious Shatila camp in Southern Lebanon, argues against the notion that identities are exclusively rooted in nationalist discourse. She claims that economic subjectivities and individual aspirations play a more important role among younger Palestinians, born and raised in the camps than the collective national imperatives many scholars assume (97f). Another example of diminishing collective and social factors in identity shaping, is the article, “people-eat-people”, by Giulia El Dardiry (2017), who examines refugee experience through socio-economic factors in opposition to what she calls romanticized “cross-border identifications (715)”. Her claims demonstrate that refugees, mainly Iraqis (but also Syrians) did not identify through nationalist, religious or other terms, but rather through socio-economic
registers visible in Jordan. While these studies have been invaluable elaborations of the lived experiences of displacement, I argue that, while it is important not to glorify identity complexities connected to nationality, even these kinds of examinations fall in the trap of conceptualizing the displacement experience as an essential condition, proving or disproving the significance of territorial (national) belonging. For, as Barry Hindess (2000) argues, the nation does not provide an “extrapolitical foundation on which to base a politics of inclusion and exclusion (1492)”. Disappointing, he continues, is the fact that even scholarship that insist on the artificiality of the nation and nationalist discourse, tend to treat societies as substantial identities (1492).

In accordance to Malkki’s (1995) accounting of the entire 20th century as a story in which this conflict takes place, I instead suggest that, while contemporary ethnography on displacement involves a recognition of the complexity of historical and contemporary dimensions of the nation state, there is still a tendency not to look beyond, or question these dimensions further. This attempt to make sense of how the making of this ‘national order’ has resulted in new social categorizations and understandings of peoples and mobility that in present time have come to be understood as exempted from time and place, i.e. history and geography. Thus, failing to recognize that all types of contemporary collective formations and societies, whether national or not, in place or displaced, are “intimately related products of the same historical developments (Hindess, 2000: 1493)”.

In this respect I suggest that while scholarship has agreed the imagination and construction of nation state system, we tend to continue to examine how humans relate to, or not to relate to this construction. As in for instance the case of Palestine, to argue for or against the importance of national longing or belonging have resulted in the never-ending debate whether the Palestinians deserve a nation or not. Sherene Seikaly (2015) problematizes this understanding of national aspirations as the only way of doing politics. In the process Seikaly challenges the argument that the reason for why Palestinians do not have a geographic land is because they were not national enough, claiming that national aspirations should not be understood as the only type of collective belonging or aspiration. Nevertheless, today national belonging is regarded as the only thing legitimizing the right to officially exist, and Palestine is an important example of this.

_Nesrin:_ ʿillī ʾṣār ʿaleyna, ʾṣār ʿaleyun.

_Nesrin:_ what happened to us, happened to them.
Considering the nationalist rhetoric explaining Palestinian dispersal, the fates of the Syrians dispersed could be equally justified. For, since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution 2011 the dominant scholarly argument for continued violence and instability is that the colonial-era borders defining the Syrian nation did not correspond to the heterogenous population within the border, thus resulting in national instability as a natural consequence (Azmeh 2016). Evidently, this rhetoric resembles the master narrative for why Palestinians were not national enough to enforce a national home. To explain the instability in Syria by suggesting it suffered from a too diverse population reinforces the understanding of borders and nations as emerging naturally, embodying a homogenous native population whose associations must conform within a narrow set of categories – religious, culture and language. Thus, by placing the nation state at the center of our argument, both the historical and geographical complexities of the events in 1948 Palestine and 2011 Syria become ignored. Considering the ongoing destruction of the Syrian state in relation to this rhetoric, it illustrates that within the national order, anyone can become a Palestinian.


Hanna: inṭī ‘aṣlan fakarti hāḍ l-šī?


Lina: Before I left I was standing like.. I was looking at everything in the house.. I swear to god like, I felt that like, that for real, I might not be able to return here like.. Or be able to live in the same place where I spent, like a long time […] And I just with this thought was thinking, I was thinking of a Palestinian.. I don’t know why.. Seriously I was just thinking that.. Like.. That we will return, this was the only thing in my mind my head, this thought.

Hanna: You already thought this?

Lina: I was afraid of this but it was strong feelings, like I had seriously strong feelings that I might become like a Palestinian, I will not be able to return to my home, my place, my work, my people and my friends and the whole world.
Lina’s feelings about becoming ‘a Palestinian’ demonstrates a complexity of displacement and the simplified understanding of it at the same time. In the process of explaining why being ‘displaced’ means being a Palestinian for Lina, the findings in this thesis reveal an unexplored space between the citizen-refugee dichotomies, inviting further recognition of the complexities of being ‘displaced’. In this regard, this thesis should be understood as an attempt to move the attention beyond questions around an individual’s sense of national belonging or identity, and to offer another perspective to the available scholarship on migration or transnationalism. For, beyond identity, culture or community formations, we need to realize the historical and geographical categorizational dimensions of displacement, shaping everyday life of the relative ability of mobility.

It is important to note that a focus on the mobility in conditions of displacement, does not prove or disprove any other aspect of displacement: I do not argue, for instance, that nationalism, transnationalism or socio-economics are not a part of the persistent negotiations of identity. Rather, this thesis rejects the “national order of things (Malkki 1995)” as a point of departure. In this respect, I do not take interest in debating whether people relate or feel a part of the Syrian nation or not, but rather I try to recognize how people live their lives under the structures existing because of this order. In the process we may understand peoples expressed and lived experiences within these structures.

*Lubna:* 'izā ḥalaṣet l-ḥarb bi-sūriya b-yjūz mā 'arja 'a-sūriya, 'aḥībb 'abqā hūn, lākin, fī fushā 'innī rūḥ azūr sūriya. mū ṣārṭ 'innī 'arja ‘astaqīr, lā’, ḥeluw hūn, bas fikrat 'inno 'intī mū 'ādir trūḥī tūtu zikrayātik hay 'illī b-tahrā’īk, bas! lākin ‘anā bi-nisba ‘illī ḥeluw hūn, jayyid, b-aḍalnī bi-hāḍ l-beyt bas b-arūḥ w-b-yjjī […]

*Lubna:* If the war finished in Syria perhaps I won’t return to Syria, I like to stay here, but, there are possibilities for me to go and visit Syria. It is not a condition that I return [and] settle, no, it’s nice here, but the thought that you can’t go and see your memories this is what hurts you, just! But for me it’s nice here, its good, I stay here in this house and I just come and I go […]

Even though we examine how humans make new spaces, create social communities and reformulate identities, we need to recognize the reality of spatial imprisonment as a result of historical events geographically categorizing national territories and peoples, and how these dimensions ultimately affect how we perceive the world. With the understanding that I myself enjoy unlimited freedom of mobility in contrast to my interlocutors: I aim to capture the everyday life of Syrians living in Jordan, in respect to existing circumstances that prohibit them
to move freely, and hopefully to add to the understanding of the relationship between lived experiences and larger structures regulating human mobility and ultimately, life.

Research question

The research question I aim to examine is: How do Syrians living in Jordan experience their everyday (im)mobility? Framing the ethnographic work around the theme of mobility in this context should be understood as a means to problematize the relative ability of physical movement. To examine how humans experience the ability to move locally and globally can add to the general understanding of the experience of displacement in a way that can reveal the historical and contemporary relationship between humans and nations. In other words, it ultimately functions as a crucial component determining the fate of human life (Khosravi 2010). As such, this question involves (im)mobility as much as it involves ‘displacement’. This means the context of being in Jordan with the geographical proximity, close to home – but ‘trapped’, as many interlocutors describe it. By engaging in the ways these people experience and deal with their choice to accept or resist the new qualities of ‘displacement’ and ‘refugee-ness’ defining their essential existence, this thesis aims to challenge the very understanding of that essence.

Disposition

This thesis is divided into three sections: the introductory section includes an introduction to the themes, previous research and methodology.

Section II is divided into four different chapters conceptualizing the characteristics of lived (im)mobility through the combination of relevant theories, empirics and analysis. The first chapter, Papers: a validation of existence, examines the historical event of the construction of the national order in which human existence came to be recognized only through identity documents. By using theories of nationalism offered by scholars such as Giorgio Agamben, Liisa Malkki and Nevzat Soguk, I conceptualize the interrelations between documents and mobility, following, with regard to John Torpey, the emergence of the passport and its effects on mobility throughout history, and how it ultimately affects me and my interlocutors differently in present time. The second chapter, Stranded within, without and in between, reveals the consequences of
documenting peoples existence in relation to abilities of settlement, autonomy and mobility. This chapter uncovers a more complex understanding of ‘displacement’, as an alternative to the inadequate conceptions of the loss of home. Further, with the use of scholars such as Sarah Kunz, Mark B. Salter and William Walters I examine the understanding of the exceptional nature of the national border in relation to categorizations such as the ‘migrant’ and the ‘expatriate’ in an attempt to illustrate how border exceptionality involves geographical categorizations of territories and populations, and how it ultimately affects my interlocutors, as they stay inside or travel outside of Jordan. The third chapter, The ‘displaced’ refugee: a legitimizing force for internationalism, examines negotiations of resisting or accepting the imposed refugee-identity. With the use of scholars as Isa Blumi, Liisa Malkki, Joseph Massad and Laura Robson, I demonstrate how the emergence of the figure of ‘the refugee’ is related historically and is thus not only connected to people with certain stories, but also involves geographical localizations. Examining ‘the refugee’ as a historical invention, demonstrates how mobility is ultimately connected to different categorizations of existence. The fourth and last chapter, Spaces but not places, provides a discussion about the nature of the refugee camp as a crucial component in forming the terms and conditions examined in the former chapters. This chapter thus demonstrates the ways in which the maintenance of ‘the national order’ rests on the camp as a device for upholding human categorizations and how it affects mobility within national borders. With the use of Malkki’s conceptualizations of the emergence of the refugee camp, in relation to Agamben’s, Walter’s and Khosravi’s notions of the camp’s exceptionality, I try to separate the perceptions of the camp’s nature and the figure of ‘the refugee’.

Section III contains a conclusion in form of a summarizing discussion of how the four characteristics analyzed in section two combine into the larger understanding of how (im)mobility is lived.
Methodology

Positioning the use of terminology

I have intentionally chosen not to include the word ‘displaced’, ‘refugee’ or ‘migrant’ in the title of this thesis, leaving it to be just an ethnographical study of (im)mobility in Jordan. As Nicholas De Genova (2013) argues, “if there were no borders, there would be no migrants—only mobility (253)”, and likewise, if there were no nation states, there would be no citizens or refugees, only humans. The choice to leave the meaning of the title open should not be understood as a generalization of the experiences of (im)mobility. My intention is not to make any metaphysical argument about mobility, but rather to refuse the “continuous requirement that our fetishized social ‘realities’ be re-fetishized, that their objectivity be re-objectified (De Genova 2013: 252)”. In other words, as I seek to offer a more multifaceted understanding of what it means to be (im)mobile in contemporary time, to simultaneously reproduce terms such as ‘refugee’, ‘migrant’ or ‘displaced’ I would contravene my own reasoning.

by constituting undocumented migrants (the people) as an epistemological and ethnographic “object” of study, social scientists, however unwittingly, become agents in an aspect of the everyday production of those migrants’ “illegality” (De Genova 2002: 423).

My interlocutors all refer to themselves as ‘Syrians’ in everyday conversations. However, in an attempt to be self-reflexive of my own contribution to “the ongoing nationalization of ‘society’ (De Genova 2013: 252)”, I have chosen not to refer to my interlocutors as ‘Syrians’, but as ‘the people I have talked to’, ‘my interlocutors’, or just simply with reference to their pseudonyms. It is true that my interlocutors all have left Syria, a nation state that emerged with the national project, as all other states. However, my interlocutors’ experiences are not specifically ‘Syrian experiences’ i.e. the stories presented in this thesis are not results of any essential ‘Syrian-ness’ or any chain of events specific for Syria, but rather of a conventional external understanding of what it has meant to be a Syrian abroad these last seven years. Their experiences should not be
generalized, but they should simultaneously not be considered as experiences of a specific ‘displaced group’ in a specific place. Therefore, I exclusively use terms such as ‘displaced’, ‘refugee’, ‘migrant’ or ‘Syrian’ in reference to discussions of scholarship and theories, as I consistently exclude these vocabularies in reference to my interlocutors.

Voices of mobility

During my first years of academic studies, my travels to Jordan played a major role in my increasing interest and attachment to the region we call the Middle East. It was from periodically living and working in Jordan during 2016 and 2017 that the interest in the dimensions of mobility really formed. The growing awareness of the ways my passport formed a reality that differentiates me from many people I met in Jordan, motivated me to investigate the forces, mechanisms and power relations making these realities. Nevertheless, this theme was not something I witnessed from an outside perspective, but rather something I was part of from the very beginning.

I specifically remember a day in the end of April 2017. I and Ismail were sitting at a coffeehouse with the view over downtown and we had just ordered something to eat as he told me that he had decided to move to Saudi Arabia. As I was trying to argue about his choice to leave, he told me that the only reason why I appreciate Jordan is because I can leave. Yet, for him, it is a prison, beautifully decorated with friends, restaurants or other joyful places. He was done, he told me. Five years of working with something just to make life bearable, he had to try something else, to feel like he was going somewhere, forward in life. Saudi was the only place he told me, and now was the only time. With his brother already living in Saudi, he had managed to attain a visitors-visa on which he would be able to stay if he just renewed it every third month once he arrived.

Listening to his reasoning I remember feeling ashamed of my own arguments in my attempt to convince him to stay. He was right. Jordan was not the same for me as for him. Nonetheless, at that time I had just started to ‘settle’ and inhabit some kind of comfort zone in which he was a part of. Ironically, him leaving felt difficult for me.

Avtar Brah (1996) writes “every border, in resonance with other borders, embodies a unique narrative (195)”. This is also true for Jordan: it is a significant place for this study both because of its geographical proximity to the Syrian state, but also because of the number of Syrian
nationals residing inside the borders of Jordan, which ever since 2013 have been closed periodically (Aljazeera 2015; Al-Khalidi 2013; Ibrahim 2018). Over 600 000 Syrian citizens are registered as refugees in Jordan (UNHCR 2018b), but the real number on Jordanian soil is assumed to be over one million (Jordan Times 2018). More than 80% of all Syrian citizens who registered at the UNHCR in Jordan lives in urban spaces (UNHCR 2018a), and this number alone reveals a dimension of mobility. However, before the events in Syria 2011, Jordan was already considered a “containment zone for regional migration (El Dardiry 2017: 703)” (together with other nations in the region). The conflict in Palestine 1948, the First Persian Gulf war in 1990 and the Iraqi war in 2003 forced millions of Palestinians and hundred-thousands of Iraqis to settle temporarily in Jordan. In present time, more than 2 million Palestinians are registered as refugees in Jordan, of which almost a half million still lives in refugee camps on Jordanian soil. Additionally, almost 70 000 registered Iraqi refugees resides in Jordan as well (UNHCR 2018c; UNRWA 2018b).

To investigate meaning production, according to Ann Gray (2002), is not necessarily built on long periods of observation, but could as successfully be understood through descriptive accounts such as interviews. It is not only the features such as geographical territory which constitute this narrative of mobility but also the particular experiences of different people. Thus, it is the combination of the people and the geographical place in this case that makes this study unique (Brah 1996: 195), but hopefully it will also contribute to a larger understanding of the themes presented in this thesis.

In gathering the data for this study, I have traveled and lived in Jordan periodically between the spring 2017 and 2018, totalizing a period approximately 6 months. During this time, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with Syrians now living in Jordan outside of the official refugee camps, three group-interviews and seven individual interviews, totaling thirteen participants, six men and seven women. Nine interviews were conducted in Amman and one in Irbid. People who are considered to be ‘displaced’ while living in spaces outside of refugee camps are actively operating within the border-nation-human space and can therefore contribute with new knowledge about experiences of (im)mobility that is otherwise unregistered by scholars and the authorities alike.

I composed an interview guide with themes outlining a starting point for the conversations. It was written in both English and in Arabic for the additional purpose to function as a linguistic support while I conducted the interviews. The formulated questions functioned mainly as a means to initiate discussions. All interviews took different directions and thus, which questions were asked, how they were expressed and in what order differed in every conversation. The full
interview guide is included in the appendix. The recorded interviews were conducted on the explicit premise that everyone participating would be given the possibility to read the passages in retrospect. Also, if regretting sharing something with me I would restrain from including it in the study, a principle that equally applied if regretting participating in the interview as such after it was conducted.

I have not given any attention to age, gender, religion, ethnicity, local origin or socio-economic circumstances for the purpose of this research. Rather, the motivation for writing this thesis has been to understand the conceptions of (im)mobility with the presumption that the lived experiences would matter for anyone, regardless of such distinctions. Thus, leaving the simple definition of those I have engaged with to be Syrian citizens who have left Syria for a temporary resettlement in urban Jordan. The interviews together compose approximately 17 hours recorded empirical data, with each interview lasting between 50 minutes up to almost 3 hours.

I performed the interviews in Arabic and independent of an interpreter: I have good knowledge in spoken Syrian and Jordanian dialect. Nevertheless, Arabic is my third language, thus concerns about the limitations of moments of in-communicability was a central part in considering the methodological limitations of conducting the interviews. Nonetheless, in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of different interview methods, I came to the conclusion that it would be more beneficial to conduct the interviews independently. I have based this decision on two main factors: First, the validity of the data: to perform interviews independently make me solely responsible for the data and accountable for its credibility and how it is presented. Second, with respect to the social context of the field: During my former travels to Jordan I have on a few occasions experienced encounters with l-muhābarāt, the Jordanian security police, while spending time with Syrian citizens living in the Jordanian urban spaces. From these encounters it is evident an anxiety from being sent back to Syria or to any of the refugee camps in Jordan. Therefore, to be dependent of an interpreter (a local) means taking a risk of important experiences not being shared because of fear of that the interpreter would be connected to l-muhābarāt. Furthermore, the careful examination of the recorded conversations has helped me to, on a later stage, map nuances and details in our conversations.

Furthermore, Thomas Csordas (1999: 146) highlights the gap between language and experience, claiming that language is only a representation of experience, and does therefore constitute experience rather than denote it. He claims that, beyond oral representations of experience, there are also “bodily processes of perception by which those representations come into being (147)”. Accordingly, in order to give the interviews a contextually larger significance,
I have on a daily basis volunteered at two different organizations located in Amman, one where Syrian staff provide psychosocial support for Syrian families, and a Jordanian organization which provides different basic services for people living in muḥayyamāt ‘ašwāṭiyā, so called ‘irregular camps’ throughout Jordan, that is, people who have ‘illegally’ left the official camps, tahrīb, in order to live in private camps away from the organized settings by the UNHCR.

I participated in their daily work and projects as a volunteer but also as a researcher with my purpose openly stated. Ann Gray claims that “traditionally, anthropology aims to ‘discover’, through extended participant observation, the ways of life of particular cultures (94)” In taking issue with this statement, participant observation is not what I did in Jordan: I did not participate in another ‘culture’ in order to reveal another way of life. Therefore, I have intentionally decided not to call it ‘participant observation’, but instead ‘contextual engagement’. Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) emphasizes the danger of recognizing the divisions of self and other as givens. Instead she claims that culture is itself embedded in a historical genealogy formed on this very division. Hence, the criteria for anthropologists have been to preserve the communities of study to appear ‘other’ in contrast to the identity of the researcher. Drawing from this, I suggest that to spend time with my interlocutors and to conceptualize the contexts shaping relative experiences of mobility, does not imply any phenomenon essential nationally or culturally. Rather, my interlocutors’ narratives can reveal the historical and geographical interconnections with our understanding of ‘displacement’, ‘nationalism’, ‘identity’ and ‘refugee-ness’. Thus, while my interlocutors experiences can provide a human portrait of the human-nation relationship, the purpose of this examination is not to reveal a cultural or national meaning of displacement and mobility, but rather, to demonstrate a group of people’s experiences performing as testimonial to the larger understanding of what it means to involuntarily be trapped in a particular geographic place, not having opportunities to independently decide where to live or where to go.

In this respect, this study is rather a project where I, as a person who have some kind of papers, interact with people who have another kind of papers, recognizing that both me as an individual and a researcher and my interlocutors, have been given different roles in these politics and are thus both differently involved with it and affected by it. Thus, I contend that I cannot ‘participate’ in their experiences of (im)mobility because the issues, difficulties and obstacles my interlocutors encounter can I never equally experience.
Keeping distance?

I traveled to Jordan for the first time in 2013, through an exchange course in Arabic studies at Gothenburg university. Since then, through travels between Sweden and Jordan, I have developed close friendships and good knowledge in spoken ‘āmmiyya ʿurduyya w-ṣūriyya, colloquial Jordanian and Syrian dialect. It is through established contacts and friends in Amman that I gained access to my interlocutors. Some of my interlocutors I knew since before, and some I did not know. Many of my interlocutors have not only participated in interviews but engaged with my project on a daily basis during my time spent in Jordan, inviting me to different events of interest for my research, introducing me for friends and families and sharing their life stories. Some of my interlocutors have also given me invaluable support in listening and interpreting specific passages in the recordings that, for me, otherwise would have been impossible to interpret.

However, I too shared my life stories. In fact, in most situations I was not only considered to be a researcher, but as much someone familiar, a friend, and in some cases, a very close one. I remember a few evenings when I, Lina, Eima and Nadine spent time together, having coffee and ʿarkīle, hookah, at Nadine’s and Eima’s place. How they talked about other ‘foreigners’ who had asked them about participating in various research projects, and me, feeling somewhat awkward, not knowing how to deal with my position as simultaneously being a friend and a researcher.

So, how did I keep distance in a context of evolving acquaintances and friendships? Or, a perhaps even more imperative question, how did I position myself to the ‘danger’ of going native? Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) argues that “What we call the outside is a position within a larger political-historical complex (467)”. Likewise, De Genova (2013: 252) claims that there is no “neutral ground” but that scholars of migration “are of the connections” contributing to the gap between human and geographical categorizations. Drawing from this, I believe that the notion of ‘keeping distance’, i.e. as an anthropologist reinforce the gap between self and other, is solely a question of positionality. Thus, it is crucial to challenge the notion of ‘objectivity’ and ‘nativity’ as antonyms, meaning that not being ‘native’ naturally implies being objective.

Probably the simplest aspect of the common sense of anthropology to which this image corresponds is the sense of physical immobility. Natives are in one place, a place to which explorers, administrators, missionaries, and eventually anthropologists, come. These outsiders, these observers,
are regarded as quintessentially mobile; they are the movers, the seers, the knowers. The natives are immobilized by their belonging to a place (Appadurai 1988: 37).

Appadurai argues that the anthropologist rarely consider him/her-self as a place, even though we all are from somewhere (1988: 37). Thus, we are all natives, which implies that to perform studies in other places where we are not natives, does not mean objectivity. As Abu-Lughod convincingly argues, while ethnographic research are always partial truths, we should not forget that they are also positioned truths (1991:469). Likewise, Orin Starn (2015) argues that

we’re always partial prisoners of the ways we’ve been trained to see, no matter how much we want to flatter ourselves on our open-mindedness. What anthropologists “discover” in the field inevitably refracts, often mirrors, the discipline’s agendas of the moment (6).

Drawing from this, instead of taking caution of keeping distance, I argue that it is rather more important to recognize “the various connections and interconnections, historical and contemporary, between a community and the anthropologist… not to mention the world to which he or she belongs and which enables him or her to be in that particular place studying that group (Abu-Lughod 1991: 472)”’. This implies the recognition that “there is no neutral ground (De Genova 2013: 252)”. In other words, there is no outside position beyond the question that I am examining but I am as much a part of this context as anyone else.

Ethical fantasy

We need to ask questions about the historical processes by which it came to pass that people like ourselves could be engaged in anthropological studies of people like those, about the current world situation that enables us to engage in this sort of work in this particular place, and about who has preceded us and is even now there with us (tourists, travelers, missionaries, AID consultants, Peace Corps workers). We need to ask what this “will to knowledge” about the Other is connected to in the world (Abu-Lughod 1991: 473).

Dilemmas of doing ethnography today do not only concern the issue of the researcher’s positionality in relation to the validity and reliability of knowledge-production as discussed in the previous section, but also involves the relationship between the researcher and the researched, the knower and the known. The word ‘reflexivity’ has arguably become the trend
within anthropological debates regarding ethics, implying the importance of reflecting one’s own position in relation to one’s research and interlocutors. However, using what Peter Pels (2014) calls “epistemological shared time”, I argue for the need to recognize the power-relations on which anthropology and ethnography is historically based on. Furthermore, John and Jean Comaroff (1992) argue that ethnography, is “a historically situated mode of understanding historically situated contexts (9f)”. Thus, in ethnography today, it is not enough claiming that ethnographies might perhaps be instruments of Othering, but real considerations of the effects of our writings is necessary (Comaroff 1992). Considering the fact that I come from the Middle East Studies Department, it is in this case especially impossible to ignore the ‘shared time’ in the attempt to situate this project in relation to ethnography as method, but also to the contemporary contexts in which we try to understand ourselves and our interlocutors. As Edward Said argued,

To speak of scholarly specialization as a geographical “field” is, in the case of Orientalism, fairly revealing since no one is likely to imagine a field symmetrical to it called Occidentalism (Said 2003: 50).

Thus, to claim intersubjective harmony in ethnographical research today through terms of advocacy, collaboration or dialogue, is an “ethical fantasy (Pels 2014: 212)”, an ignorance of the asymmetrical power-relations still at play. Subsequently, the asymmetry on which anthropology and ethnography was founded, does not disappear only through the rephrasing of terms of the relationship of researcher and subject, but requires a recognition of the shared historical path leading up to present time where claiming intersubjectivity must be understood as decontextualizing autonomy. Maher’s response to my question about feeling settled in Jordan, sharing my own perspectives with him regarding this issue, demonstrate this unescapable asymmetry:

Maher: Hanna, qārantī ḥālik finā, neḥna w-’inti miš netqāranš min ba’d, lēš? ḥassa ’antī jāye la-hūn dirāsa, manḥā dirāsiyya, m-’ammene māddīyān, ‘ārife ḥālik ’inti rāḥ tugu’dī šahr, iṯmēn ṭalāt, ba’dēn rāḥ tarējātī ’a-beytītik. ’inti w-mawjūda hūn, ’abūkī ’iṯī la-‘andīk, ’umnīk ’ijāt la-‘andīk, ḥaṭībik ’iṯī la-‘andīk, ṣufțīhum, ṭalā-ṯī ’a-lubnān ma’ ḥaṭībik, ṭalā-ṯī min lubnān ‘a-turkiyya ma’ ḥaṭībik w-rājaṯī ’a-l-’urdūn, ‘ārife ḥālik ’inti šahr w-rājījā ’a-l-swēd. tab ’inti lamā ’iṯī tugu’dī hūn ḡaṣban ‘anąk?[…] lamā ’inti ta’išī bi-maḵān manṭūš ‘ārife amēt biddik tarējātī ’a-balaḏik? ’aw ’inti bi-‘imkānāk tarējātī la-balaḏik bas ṣqārār ša’b.. la-’ānnu balaḏik muq āmin.
**Maker:** Hanna, you compared yourself with us, we and you do not compare with each other, why? Now you come here for studies, for the aim to study, financially insured, you know that you will stay here a month, two three, then you will return to your home. When you are here, your dad came to you, your mom came to you, your fiancé came to you, you saw them, you went to Lebanon with your fiancé, you went from Lebanon to Turkey with your fiancé and you came back to Jordan, you know that after a month you will go back to Sweden. Okay, so what about when you come and sit here against your will? […] When you live in a place where you don’t know when you can go back to your country? Or that you are able go back to your country but the decision is hard. Because your country is not safe.

Facing no national barriers, I am what Catrin Lundström (2014) calls the opposite of the migrant. My body being ‘out of place’ is instead related to other attributes such as an expat, a student, a tourist, a mobile professional or just a European, many things, but not a migrant. There are certain adjectives your body and story need to correspond with to be one.

In this light, I have experienced difficulties with coming to terms with the complexities of myself being able to be in Jordan, listening to testimonies of peoples’ experiences of being immobile while I simultaneously enjoy unlimited mobility. Unable to reduce this asymmetry, I believe it is significant to move away from a perspective of ‘keeping distance’, and instead value the emerging relations with the people one collaborates with, daring to be subjective and daring to locate both oneself and interlocutors in the research.
PART II
I asked Nadine how everything was going, did they find a way to get Eima the duhūl w-tawda, exit and return-paper yet? She didn’t know how many possible wāṣṭa, contact[s], she had asked to help them, perhaps fifteen or twenty, she had even talked with actual deputies at the migration department, but nothing.

She wanted to be strong and confident she told me, and for a long time she didn’t tell her mother in France that it perhaps wouldn’t work, that they would perhaps not be able to reunite. Until yesterday. Telling her mother three simple words “I miss you” and she didn’t have to say more. Her tearful eyes alone revealed the bitter truth: they were not going anywhere.

In 1995 Giorgio Agamben commented on Hannah Arendt’s article “We refugees”, arguing that “precisely fifty years later” it had “not lost any of its currency” (1995: 114). Accordingly, 23 years after the publication of his article, I am confident in making the same argument. For, as Agamben wrote then, the debate of the outcomes of the national order, human rights and categorizations of human lives is still evident both in popular and academic literature. Talha Jalal (2014: 318) writes, “the history of nationalism is also, to a great extent, the history of human displacement”. Adding to Jalal’s statement, I suggest that the history of nationalism is not only connected to what we understand as ‘human displacement’ but also history of human (im)mobility. Resulting from the construction of the nation state was the emergence of the documentation of peoples territorial belonging, i.e. categorizations of existence that consequently effected and still effects humans’ relative ability to move.

Anderson (2006: 143f) argued that the imagined natural ties to the territorial nation state, resulted in an understanding of the nation as interestless, natural. This naturalization implies that social belonging and cultural identity is tied to territory as opposed to social community (Chatty 2010: 9). In this respect, human life is constructed in a natural order where the nativity is only understood as national nativity, and what is essential for national nativity is soil (Malkki 1992: 29).

The nationalist discourse plays an essential role in understanding the different dimensions regulating human mobility today since the division of peoples and territories have resulted in a
world where documents, maps and laws have become a question of official existence. That is what Agamben calls politization of the biological body (Agamben 1998). In citing Hannah Arendt from 1943, Talha Jalal (2014) writes that “passports or birth certificates, and sometimes even income tax receipts, are no longer formal papers but matters of social distinction (321)”. These are also matters of mobility. For, in the construction of the nation state system, individual and international states “successfully monopolized the legitimate authority to permit movement within and across their jurisdictions (Torpey 2000: 9)”. To make this possible, a discourse about who belongs and who does not, who is welcome and who is not, was crucial, and documents such as passports and identity certificates played a significant part in the forming of this discourse (12).

Eima and Nadine arrived in Jordan together with their family in 2013. Being dissidents against the Syrian government as their father simultaneously was an officer in the national army, there were no other choice but to leave the country. It was first when they left Syria the family piece by piece got parted. Family member after family member left the apartment they had rented all together when they first arrived in Amman. In 2014 their father took the route over the Mediterranean Sea, a trip that took him 10 months to reach his final destination, France.

Ever since he reached France in 2015 the main ambition for Eima and Nadine has been to find a way to reunite. Having received three rejections for family reunion from the French state, and with the last response permitting only their mother to leave, the sisters have now started to look for alternative exit strategies. At the moment the sisters have registered at an international music project which will make a tour this summer in some of the Schengen countries, one of the stops will be France. In order to get the Schengen visitor’s visa, they have had to buy plane tickets and pay for residence in every country, a sum of money that will disappear in a moment if they are rejected a visa. However, to be able to even apply for the visa, to insure the visagiving state that it will not be a permanent stay, they need to get a certification from the Jordanian Government saying that they, as Syrians, are permitted to enter the country again if they choose to leave, duḥūl w-‘awda, a paper that for many is impossible to get.

\textit{Nadine:} bas b-yaktab ‘a-l-hawiyye ‘inti kif fayye, halla’, ‘inti kif fayyehek kamān tal’ab dūr bi-l-ḥayāt, lamā ykūn tahrīb ‘aw lamā ykūn nizāmī.

\textit{Nadine:} They just write on the identity-card how you entered [Jordan], now, how you entered like this also plays a role in life, when it is illegal or when it is according to the rules.
The certificate, ḏuḥūl ʿawda, exit and return, can only be applied by those Syrians who entered Jordan by air, getting an official entry stamp in the passport at the airport. Eima however, belongs to those who came to Jordan overland through the border between Syria and Jordan, and is thus not permitted to obtain this certificate.

Eima: ’anā fāyte tahrīb, mammū’.
Nadine: fa-halla’ ya’nī ‘am n’hāwil nas’al nās […] Eima rāḥat ’imbāriḥ w-’ila’ūa.
Eima: ḥāwalet ma’o ’ultillo has ḥalīnī ’āljud ṭalab ’adamo ’allī mammū’ […] ’allī ’izā biddekJ ba’tīk wara’et ḥurūj balā ‘awde.
Nadine: ’āl fī wara’e ḥurūj bidūn ’awde bas hey l-wara’a.
Eima: hay mā bi, lā’.
Nadine: ya’nī l-sāfāra l-fransiyye hiyya bidda war’et ḥurūj w-’awde la-taḏman ’innek rāji’a ‘a-l-’urdun, ya’nī šū biddun ya’malū fiḍī ’izā ruḥṭī w-mā raja’tū?

Nadine: Now Eima must apply for the permission with me, and she entered illegally.
Eima: I entered illegally, [so it’s] forbidden..
Nadine: So now like we are trying to ask people […] Eima went yesterday and they made her leave.
Eima: I tried with him I told him to just let me take the application [to] apply for it he told me it’s forbidden […] He told me if you want to I can give you the paper for exit without return.
Nadine: He said that there is an exit-paper without return but this paper..
Eima: This doesn’t, no..
Nadine: Like the French embassy wants the exit and entry paper to ensure that you are returning to Jordan, like what should they do with you if you went and you didn’t return?

Eima’s and Nadine’s story evidently demonstrates the significant role of papers in relation to the outcome of peoples’ lives, and that papers have become a way of understanding the difference between legal and illegal when it comes to human mobility flows. Further, it is not only the question of having paper or not, but evident in Eima’s and Nadine’s situation is how the different categorizations and documentations of peoples function as a determining factor determining relative mobility. Khosravi (2010) argues, “the modern nation-state has claimed the right to preside over the distinction between useful (legitimate) and wasted (illegitimate) lives (3)”. Thus, the degree of mobility is two-dimensional: it is a matter of either not having papers, or perhaps worse, having undesirable kinds of papers. Visibly, these matters are related to a historically embedded and geographically organized world order.
Emergence of documents as representations of life

As scholarship have urged, the national narrative needs to be recognized as a construction for the purpose to serve political objectives of a certain time and place. Nevzat Soguk (1999) demonstrates how the emergence of different official documents constructing different representations of life was instrumental for articulating the territorial state as a natural condition of life (128ff).

National passports emerged as yet another instrument of “envisioning” the state and its counterparts, the citizen and the nation. National passports became a normal part of the daily rhythm of statecraft, signifying a specific organization of life into territorial insides and outsides, of which passports in various shapes and colors, were to be the symbolic demonstration (132).

Another crucial part of ‘the daily rhythm’ was the state’s monopolization of authorizing mobility of peoples (Torpey 2000). For, in the national narrative it is the citizens who, in a natural relation with territory, constitute the nation. The very foundation of the territorial state is thus “threatened when people cross borders, leaving spaces where they “belong” and entering those where they do not (2000: 12)”. Protecting these associations is a primary strategic concern of the state. Indeed, the most recognized right of the sovereign state is to decide who has the right to enter its territory. Nevertheless, as much as keeping undesired humans outside of the nation affects human mobility, so do the attempts to keep its national subjects inside. For, what is left of a territorial nation when those who make the body of the nation, leave? For many people who left Syria, mobility is not only a question inside of Jordan or between other external borders but it became a part of their lives already inside Syria. For, as much as Jordan or any other state regulates the entry of outsiders in order to maintain the virtue of the nation, for the same reason, when people started to leave because of the violence in Syria, the Syrian government made similar efforts to prevent citizens from leaving the country.

Maryam and Lina’s testimonies demonstrate that (im)mobility is not only manifested in issues of entering another nation, but also about depart from one’s own.

Maryam: ruḥt ma’ ablī ka-qismeyn, neḥna ṭala’nā ‘alā qismeyn.. qism l-’awwal ḵa-jā l-hūn ‘a-l-’urdun neḥna kunā l-qism l-tānī, li-’anno ‘anā kuni ‘anā muwazzafē w-bi-l... mammū’ ᵁla’ barra ṣūriya ᵁzā mā hinne ya’tūnī muwāfa’a, ᵁṣā ᵁraḥḥūlī ᥁la’, ᵁnu lāzim ᵁl l-itwaqqa’ ‘alā l-muwāfaqa ᵁnīk ᵁntū... ya’nī l-dawla lāzim taṣʿarīḥlī ᵁnī ᵁna ᵁṣāfīr, fa-hinnen ᵁraḥḥūlī ᵁnī ᵁṣāfīr w-
... w-mā 'ārifānīn ʻinnī jāye 'a-l-ʻurdu, ḥānnūn metwaqqātīn ʻinnī ṭālīʻa sīyāha li-lubnān. ʻanā mudarrīsese [...]. tuḥlūs l-madrāse bi-šahr sīte, tamām? yaʻnī ʻanā šahr sīte ʻandī ʻātle fa-hinne yaʻtūnī ʻiğāzie ʻinnī ʻatlaʻ bi ʻātletī hāy, yaʻnī ʻanā rūh ʻalā lubnān w-ʻerja, yaʻnī mā-nun ʻārifānīn ʻinnī rāyihe 'a-lubnān w-bi-lubnān ṭālīʻa ʻalā l-ʻurdu [...]

Hanna: mā saʻalūkī yaʻnī lēș ʻaw ḥēk...?

Maryam: hattā ḥēk mā samaḥūlī! ʻanā lawlâ mā ʻandī ʻalāṣ hunīk ʻamanī wāsiṭa sammaḥli, ḥakâlī maʻ ʻaktar min ʻalāṣ mišān yaʻtūnī waraʻet l-muwāfaʻa wa-la muḥallaʻinli ʻatlaʻ w-ʻanā ḍallēṭ stannēt la-šahr sīte, yaʻnī ʻanā w-bābâ, yāḍṭarr yāḍall maʻī kurnālī ʻanā.

Lina: huwwa lissā bi-l-fatra ʻillī ṭałąʻiti fihā ʻintī kānū ʻam b-yaʻtūʻ ʻijāzātī, baʻd fatra hunnen șāfū ʻinnu hadūl mā...

Maryam: ʻam ṭațlaʻ mā ʻam ṭarja.

Lina: mā ʻad ruḍliyū wa-la ʻiğāzie, yaʻnī ḥattā l-muwawzaḫafīn ʻağlabun mahṭūt ʻalleyhun mamnūʻ muḥādara, mamnūʻ yuğādir sūriya.ʻizā b-iğādir sūriya, b-yaʻtabirūh munṣaqī [...]

Maryam: hattā law muwawzaḫafe ḥukūmiyye hinne mā biddun kān ḥada. yaʻnī yaṭṭášlis, ḍinnī l-nāṣ kūnī ʻam ṭațlaʻ [sic], tuḥrub, tuḥrub, tuḥrub, tuḥrub fa-ḥassī ʻa l-nāṣ ṭațlaʻ w-ʻinnu ʻam tuhrub, fa-ʻintī lázim mā taṭlaʻī!

Lina: ʻam yamsikūh.

Maryam: ʻam yamsikūh l-ṣaliḥ.

Maryam: I went with my family in two parts, we went in two parts... the first part came here to Jordan [and] we were the second part, because I was an employee at the... [it was] forbidden for me to go outside Syria if they didn't give me a permission, they didn't permit me to leave, that [they] must [he said] sign the permission that you... like the state has to permit me that I [can] travel, so they permitted me so that I could travel and... and they did not know that I was going to Jordan, they thought that I was leaving for tourism to Lebanon. I am a teacher [...] School finishes in June ok? Like in June I have holiday so they gave me vacation [so] that I [could] go on this holiday, like I go to Lebanon and return, like they do not know that I will go to Lebanon and then from there travel to Jordan [...] 

Hanna: Didn't they ask you why or so...?

Maryam: Even if it was so they wouldn't let me! If I didn't have a person there that fixed a personal contact for me [to] permit me, he talked to more than one person in order for them to give the permission and they wouldn't had let me go and I stayed I waited until June, like me and my dad, he had to stay for my sake.

Lina: Still in the period when you left they were giving vacations, but after a while they realized that these [people] don't...

Maryam: They are leaving, they are not coming back.
*Lina:* They didn’t permit any vacation, like even most of the employees are forbidden to leave, [it is] forbidden to leave Syria. If one leaves Syria, they consider him separated [...]  

*Maryam:* Even if you are employed by the state they didn’t want anyone to. Like leave, like that people were leaving, they were fleeing, fleeing, fleeing, fleeing, so [the authorities] noticed that the people are fleeing, so you are not allowed to leave!  

*Lina:* They’re catching him.  

*Maryam:* They’re catching the person.  

Evidently, (im)mobility should not solely be understood in relation to crossing external borders, but as a situation of many stages. That is, (im)mobility is not a geographical beginning and end. Rather, it is a situation of constant change. This is also the reason for why this study should be understood as an ethnographical study of (im)mobility, without giving too much significance to the geographical space. It is true that I have met everyone in Jordan between the 2017 and 2018, but my interlocutors (im)mobility extends beyond, both spatially and temporarily.  

The outlook of a world system where documents serve as a requirement for mobility has not always existed. In Hadramawt, southern Yemen, for instance, Engseng Ho (2006) demonstrates how in 1937 the British Empire imposed the concept of a national citizen on a region where life had been articulated differently until then. Explaining how the Hadrami diaspora historically established themselves throughout the Indian Ocean and maintained an association with Southern Arabia by negotiating identities through a genealogy, Ho (2006) demonstrates how western invasion reconstructed identities to be articulated in national and political terms. Consequently, those identified as diasporic creoles, offsprings of another world-order, “straddled the widening gap between internal and external found themselves having to decide where they belonged, if indeed the choice was theirs to make (247)”. The free mobility that the Hadramis had enjoyed earlier ended as the British empire colonized Hadramawt in the 20th century. Ho demonstrates that the diasporic life of travel and return under this British decree suddenly became “troublesome, if not suspect (247)” which is also visible in contemporary national discourse where cross-border travel is understood as abnormal (Torpey 2000: 19; Hindess 2000).  

It was in this context that the passport became crucial for the accessibility of mobility. For the 20th century Hadramis it meant finding loopholes in order to be able to enjoy some degree of mobility in the new world order; British Yemeni subjects of certain categorial distinctions were given greater travel rights and since the colonial regime was unaware of
categorizations based on family names, a part of the Hadrami diaspora was able to attain Dutch and British passports by adding a name indicating such categorial distinction to their applications. This enabled many Hadramis who would otherwise not have been granted a passport, to enjoy the privileging societal position normally held solely by people within these categories (Ho 2006: 279).

Likewise, Isa Blumi (2013) in his book *Ottoman Refugees*, demonstrates how changing identity politics in the late Ottoman Empire enabled many subjects, Egyptian Orthodox Christian Tosk Albanian migrants, for instance, to claim Greek citizenship. This granted them privileges such as travel rights, something other Ottoman subjects did not have. Blumi argues that holding ‘Greek’ citizenship did not necessarily imply national identity claims, but demonstrates how many categorical ‘Greeks’ in the empire simultaneously socialized as Albanians, Vlach, Bulgarians, or Serbs (2013: 83f). Drawing from Ho’s and Blumi’s contributions, I emphasize the ways similar political rhetoric results in similar actions among the otherwise legally immobile today. In other words, while mobility always has been significant in accordance to the understanding of freedom, in different places and different times, humans have always found strategies for being mobile when conditions formally restricted them. While both Blumi and Ho, in contrast to the teleological understanding of the modern world, offer narratives of peoples being eminently mobile and where identity as much as borders was in flux, I try to demonstrate the difficulties of being mobile in another world, in another time. For, as the 20th century Hadramis or the 19th century Ottoman migrants due to the changing world order and new identity negotiations, found their own ways of enjoying degrees of mobility, the static understanding of national identity in present time results in other types of experiences, as is the case for people stranded in Jordan. Torpey (2000) argues that today people have “become dependent on states for the possession of an “identity” from which they can escape only with difficulty and which may significantly shape their access to various spaces (4)”.


*Fadi*: For instance me, between me and you, there is no difference, logically, in the.. in the.. construction like this, with the, with the thing that, we came to like I, I originated, I came to the world, like you, for example, or like anybody else, but I, there is something despicable, [that]
judged me, that I am, a nationality, a specific nationality, Syrian for instance, in my country it became war, [and] I went to Jordan.

Stuck with a national identity given to him by the Syrian government and the rest of the international community, Fadi testifies for the difficulties of holding papers identifying him as a Syrian citizen in the contemporary world. He demonstrates that the importance of his condition is really only appreciable when taken in contrast to anybody else holding different kinds of national identities, comparing himself to me. He becomes, as Torpey (2000: 166) has argued, a prisoner of his own identity.

The passport – a ticket for mobility?

Just as the 20th century Hadramis or the 19th century Ottoman refugees, the immobile of the present too find their strategies to move and travel.


Tariq: “it has become a must to always think of a way to get another nationality […] A lot of people are trying with other ways, there are people who have money [that] buy it, who, who wants to try through the UNHCR, or who tries to go through ways, through smuggling to Europe […] All of it in the end is [that] they wanted one only purpose which is the passport. He wants to pick a foreign passport, [so that] he can enter and go relax, [so that] he has some rights you know?

As Torpey (2000) has shown, what is understood as illegal movement derives from the state’s monopolization of the authority to regulate movement; illegal mobility should in this light be understood as mobility unauthorized by the state (2000: 9). Today people pay enormous sums and take high risks in order to be able to travel as state authorizations aim to regulate and thus hinder some peoples’ mobility. Perhaps this is the most comprehensible through reading Khosravi’s (2010) uncompromising words about the current condition in the Mediterranean:
The Mediterranean Sea has turned into a cemetery for transgressive travellers, and the floating dead bodies washing up on the shores of European tourist islands are evidence of border-necropolitics (28).

The passport in this context does not only serve as a document confirming citizenship and national identity, but, as much it has become an internationally recognized requirement for mobility, even though it does not guarantee gaining permission to travel across national borders (Torpey 2000: 163). Through the time spent with my interlocutors in Jordan, it is visible the awareness of the importance of the passport, although through a variety of perspectives. In different conversations the passport has become to symbolize either the ticket for freedom, or just another requirement for enabling further attempts of movement. Not all of my interlocutors held Syrian passports which also was an influencing factor of how one reasoned about the passport and interpreted its importance. The estimation of the passport as a ticket for freedom was usually connected with not having a passport, while having a passport revealed the bitter truth that while it is a requirement, it does not guarantee anything.

Holding a passport in present time or not, something somewhat alarming is some of the testimonies demonstrating that entering Jordan also involved losing one’s original passports and papers: arriving to Jordan, Said lost his Syrian identity-certificates:

\textit{Said}: b-yāḥūdu minnik 'inti šū ma’k.. hawiyye sūriyye, daftar 'ēile l-sūri.. l-'awrā’ l-sāḥṣiyye ‘ante tkūn ma’k.. l-'awrā’ik [sic] l-sāḥṣiyye. fa-haḍūl b-yāḥūdu minnek.. ‘anā kān ma’i hawiyyaṭl l-sūriyye w-kullo, 'āḥādidūhun minnī, hadūl mā b-yrajja’ūhun, ḥalaṣ […]

\textit{Hanna}: ya‘nī humma ‘āḥādidūhun…?

\textit{Said}: ‘āḥādidūhun mā ‘ad šufūn wa-la ‘ad b-arīf wēnun.

\textit{Hanna}: okay?

\textit{Said}: Mmn.. hawiyyaṭl ‘anā mā ‘ad b-arīf wēn.. bass b-yḥallūn ma’k l- daftar l-‘āile..

\textit{Said}: They\textsuperscript{1} take what you have from you.. [the] Syrian ID, the Syrian family book.. the personal papers that you have with you.. the personal papers. So these they take from you.. I had my Syrian ID and everything with me, they took them from me, these they don’t return, that’s it […]

\textit{Hanna}: Like, they took them…?

\textit{Said}: They took them I haven’t seen them [since] nor do I know where they are.

\textit{Hanna}: Okay?

\textsuperscript{1} The ‘they’ in this context meant the Jordanian authorities.
Likewise, Ahmad and Hala explain how they managed to keep Hala’s passport as she hid it from the Jordanian authorities.

Ahmad: b-yḵūn fī bāṣāt b-yāẖūdūna ‘alā ḫalde ’ismo l-mafraq, w-min hunīk mīnshallīm ‘iḥbātātna l-sūriyye, b-yāḫūdū minna hawīyyātna, hawīyyāt jāwāż l-safar, daftar ‘aēle, ‘aḵd zawāj, kūl šī, ‘iḥbāṭāt sūriyye ‘illī ma’na ’aẖādūḥa.

Hanna: bas hūnne raḵā’uha?

Hala: lā’.

Ahmad: halla’, hunne ‘aẖādūḥa, w-min sene, min sene ‘illī bidd hay l-'iḥbāṭa... yugaddim ṭalab, ‘arifū šlūn? w-b-yṛja’ b-yāḫūd l-'iḥbāṭat l-sūriyye.

Hanna: fa-halla’ ūnṭū ‘andkun jāwāḏāt l-sūrīyya, kamān?

Ahmad: ‘ā, neḥnā halla’ zawjati kān ma’ha, mā sallamto, ḫabbēṭullha ‘iyāḥ [...]

Hala: l-jrāḇāṭ, ḫāṭṭeto ’alā ṭijli w-libist l-'ījribāt w-libist l-būt w-ribaṭto.

Ahmad: l-jawāz l-safar.

Hala: li-'annu ‘iḏā basbūlū b-yāẖūdūḥ mimni.

Hanna: lēs biddun yāẖūdūḥ ya’nī? ūḏ biddun ma’-ẖāḏ l-sī ya’nī? ’awwal šī bas b-yšūfūḥ w-ba’dēn b-yṛjaḵja’uḥ, lēs lā’? [...]”

Ahmad: neḥnā mā mna’rīf! [...] ‘arifū šlūn? neḥnā mā mna’rīf hunne... ya’nī ḫattā, ’izā biddhum yāḵsurū ’adad sūriyyin, ka’-adad, b-ḥṣurū, bīḏūn mā yāḵudū l-‘iḥbāṭ, ya’nī, ‘iḏā biddhum ya’rīfū kam šaḥṣ fāt ’a-l-’urdun, b-ya’rīfūḥ, bīḏūn mā yāḵudū ’iṭḥāṭak l-sūrī, bas hiyya kānat ’ibāra ‘an ’innu ūnṭū... ṭqayyadī, ya’nī tūḏjuli ‘alā l-‘urdun w-ḏallik fiḥā, ‘arifī šlūn? ya’nī ’innum nesma’o neḥnā ya’nī... fiḥā ’istīḏa ya’nī, fī musā’adāt b-tijī ’a-l-’urdun w-yīḥkūḥa mā b-a’rīf ’iḏā ḫaḍ l-klām šāḥīḥ wa-la lā’.

Ahmad: There are buses that take us to a village named Mafraq, and from there we hand over our Syrian documentations, they² take our identifications from us, ID-cards passports, family book, marriage contract, everything, [the] Syrian documentations that we had with us they took.

Hanna: But did they give it back?

Hala: No.

Ahmad: Now, they took it, and from a year ago, from a year ago the one who wants these documentations.. applies, you know? And goes back [and] take the Syrian documentations.

Hanna: So now you have the Syrian passports, as well?

Ahmad: Aa, we now my wife had it with her, I didn’t hand it over, I hid it for her [...]

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² The ‘they’ in this context meant the Jordanian authorities.
Hala: The socks, I put it on my feet and I put on the socks and I put on the boots and tied it.

Ahmad: The passport.

Hala: Because if they seize it, they take it from me.

Hanna: Why do they want to take it like? What do they want with this like? First of all they look at it and then they return it, why not? [...] 

Ahmad: We don’t know! [...] You see? We don’t know they.. like even, if they want to enumerate the number of Syrians, like a number, they [can] enumerate, without taking the documentation, like, if they want to know how many people entered Jordan, they [can] know it, without taking your Syrian documentation, but this meant that you.. were restricted [to leave], like you enter Jordan and you stay there, you know? Like that we hear like.. there is a gain like, there are supports that come to Jordan, and they [people] tell this I don’t know if these words are true or not.

While these testimonies raise questions of the reasons for why the Jordanian authorities sometimes confiscate Syrian passports from those who enter the state by land, they also demonstrate how the passport is related to the question of evidence of existence, of confirming one’s story and perhaps most important, of a continued journey. Sitting in the living room at Ahmad’s and Hala’s place I remember not being able to fully grasp what it means to get one’s personal papers confiscated at a border. Afterwards, as I made notes about our meeting, I thought about myself constantly checking that my passport was still left in the little pocket in my bag, several times a day as I walked or went to different places. Further, the panic that would occur if I lost it, though it would only be a call to the embassy and 400 SEK away to get me a new one. It is important to notice that to actualize the passport as crucial for mobility while simultaneously not a guarantee, is embedded in a set of different means and collaborations between the state and other actors:

During the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, for example, governments in Europe pressed steamship companies into overseeing for them whether particular people should be permitted to travel to the destinations they had chosen. Since the development of air travel, airline companies have been subjected to familiar obligations (Torpey 2000: 9f).

Just as steamship companies in the 19th and 20th century were pressed by European governments to oversee the regulation of human mobility, airline companies today have similar responsibilities. The interrelationship between the airline companies, the government and travel possibilities is visible in the fact that airline regulations of movement correspond with the principles of the state (Torpey 2000: 9f).
Flight: I was about to travel from Lebanon to Jordan. It was me, my mother and my grandmother [...] We had permission with us from here from the Interior ministry that we can enter Jordan, okey? Now Jordan, Jordan [was] carrying out a universalization on all the worlds airports that.. a Syrian, it is forbidden to go from any airport to Jordan.

Hanna: Even though they had.. ?
Fadi: No, if one has a permission he [can] go, okay..? when.. we came to the room and he gave (us) a stamp in Lebanon, like okay we can leave, an exit stamp, now, at this moment, by means of the law I became outside, outside Lebanon, I was done [and] I could board the plane, we arrived at the door of the airplane from the outside, at the gate, staircase:
- Eh Syrians? it's forbidden for you to travel to Jordan.
- Okay, [but] I got a stamp? [...] I, I got a stamp in Lebanon, exit, that I can go.
- No no no, it's forbidden forbidden.
And it was still ten minutes left [until] the airplane door closed, and my grandmother [was] with me, on a chair and she was tired.. so I at this time became very angry, I told him that:
- Come on like this, this situation that, is it because you hate Syrians for example, you are doing this?
He said:
- No, but this can’t be done.
I said to him:
- My friend, here you go, I have the permission with me, from the Interior ministry, of Jordan that I can enter Jordan.
He said:
- Maybe its false.
- It has a stamp, it has a stamp, not a signature, there is a stamp, and besides that I am a University student.
I, I was, my dad here had registered me at the university, so I [was] a university student, and my dad is an investor in Jordan.
- Mm.. okey just wait until all the passengers has entered.
- Excuse me..? Excuse me? What are you saying? I now want to enter, now.
I started to shout, I shouted very much like [...] he said to me:
- Okay okay come on, board the airplane.
So, this was hard.. very!

It is in this context that the hierarchy of desired and undesired nationals becomes visible. Fadi’s testimony evidently highlights how airport companies ultimately function as the states’ extended arm through managing the flow of different nationals between borders. This often requires forbidding certain nationals to board airplanes in spite of the fact that they hold all the required papers. My argument here is that the different levels of mobility are not only a matter of holding a passport, it is as much the matter of holding the right kind of passport. For, ultimately it is the value of different passports that determine the relative levels of mobility.
Summary

The ties between national territory and cultural and social belonging has become the primary categorization of existence in contemporary time. This chapter has accounted for how the construction of the nation state in the end of the 18th following the 19th century laid the ground for these present-day categorizations. As a result of national territorializing, identity certifications, documentations and passports have become a means to authorize human (im)mobility and thus function as a key element in maintaining the national world order: an order in which it is no longer only a matter of having identity certifications, but an order where identity certifications are tied to the story behind the person. A story predetermined within the national order. It is in this context the passport has become to play the most vital role in confirming one’s story. Today it is a requirement for movement, but not a guarantee. The testimonies in this chapter demonstrate the struggles of protection and loss of personal identifications, obtaining required documents or proving the credibility of the documents one holds. Further, testimonies also demonstrate that (im)mobility does not specifically begin or ends with entering another nation but is a situation constantly shifting both spatially and temporarily. The different experiences display the centrality of papers, thus demonstrating a fate predetermined by the categorization of papers linking human (im)mobility to national territorial boundedness.

By conceptualizing the interrelations between national territory, documents and human (im)mobility and the ways in which me and my interlocutors in present time are differently affected by its history, this chapter has laid out a foundation for the themes in the following chapters. The following chapter examines further the ways mobility and the documenting of human categorizations are interconnected.
I stepped out of the airplane and smelled the air of Jordan, of memories, of expectation and of anxiety. Territorial boundedness, I say, is not natural. Perhaps I am the exception that makes the rule? Travelling between Sweden and Jordan always comes with a piece of anxiety for me. Every time I leave Sweden. And, every time I leave Jordan. But then again, perhaps that is exactly the meaning of refusing national, territorial boundedness? Having pieces of your heart on places all over the globe? Well, if that is so, not many people have felt what it means to be territorially unbounded.

The day after my arrival I went to see Nadine, Lina and Maryam. Asking them about life, they told me: miṣl mā taraktīnā yā Hanna!, it is like you didn’t leave us Hanna! Nothing new since we saw each other last year, except for that Nadine’s mother had left for France, but she and her sister were still searching for a way to go there. Maryam was also waiting. And Lina. Waiting.

It must be devastating waiting for something not knowing when it will come? Still, I wouldn’t know. I have never waited like that.

Negotiations of ‘istiqrār, stability and home

In Jordan, the people I have met live in a temporarily undefined period of time, a temporality that has lasted for seven years now. Living as a Syrian citizen in Jordan implies not being able to own a house or a car, and until recently it was not allowed for Syrian citizens to work, except for those who had invested in the state. Now however, the Jordanian Government has opened up the opportunity for some working possibilities, in some limited occupations.

Except for the obvious reasons that prevent my interlocutors to settle permanently in Jordan, most have also indicated the ways they experience themselves as markers of ‘outside’ in the context of life in Jordan. ‘istiglāl, exploitation, is a word frequently used when telling me about life. It comes in the form of high rent prices, long working hours and low salaries. Visible is also the feeling of not going anywhere in life, not physically or geographically, but personally. This
sense is also one of the main reasons for why Jordan, for many, is considered as just a temporary stop on a longer journey not yet completed.

However, perhaps the most significant issue is the feeling of being stranded in Jordan. While the stranded-ness further separates Syrian citizens from the rest of the population which has other mobility possibilities, it simultaneously triggers the feeling of Jordan as a temporary place, as Fadi told me, “ānā halla’ b-a’tabir ’innu hay, hay, bas la-‘illi mahāṭṭa”, I now consider this, this is just a stop for me. Likewise, Amer describes a life anything but permanent, a feeling of temporariness, that this place is for ‘now’, for the moment, though it could change any time.


Amer: a Syrian, like I cannot go to any country at all, now we here are refugees in Jordan we cannot leave, except for Syria or we just [stay] here in Jordan.. even like, the number of us here in Jordan like, now like you say aren’t we living3 here like? Also we are like we are not so much at peace like […] Maybe they make regulations, maybe, like at any moment for example that, you dissent anything or something like this, or.. maybe anything could make them send him off from us or something like this.. like now they tell you we cannot stand the burden of the refugees like, many, like according to the country’s situation here that, it cannot bear for example, it begin request from the, in the western countries to accept, European countries, [to] accept refugees […] We have reached the ultimate capacity, the limited capacity for us […]

“šū ‘illi jāb lak ‘alā l-murr?[…] l-’amarr”, what brought you to the bitterness? […] The worse bitterness. In the search for a settled life of one’s own choice, my interlocutors have three alternatives: go back to Syria, continue to live under the current conditions in Jordan, or find an alternative route to another country in the region or further away. Many of the people who I met consider it

3 The lexical meaning of qaʿād is sitting or remain seated, and in this context it was understood as staying permanently thereof the translation ‘living’.
impossible to go back to Syria, have registered at the UN in the wait for being chosen to leave for another country and are thus left with the only choice to live in Jordan, for now.

Asking people about if they feel at home in their houses, on their street or in their area, I always got the answer ‘no’. This regular reply perhaps leads other scholars to the direct conclusion of the significance of understanding the concepts of the lost homeland, the ‘displaced refugee’ and the longing for home. However, I argue that these concepts are teleological to the very idea of national territory and nativity. That is, to understand displacement as a condition of losing something crucial of what it means to be a complete human being, is a way to accept this order. Sara Ahmed (2003) argues (with regard to a different problem: the war on terrorism) that to speak out of the war on terrorism is understood as an attack on the truths of this world in which the war is understood as a defense of values of freedom and democracy. She says “To ‘be with’ in this discursive context is not only to support the war, but to support the very world that the war is identified as defending (384)”. With this example my intention is to point out that, since our contemporary world is defined within the national, territorial discourse, most scholarship, through examinations of displacement, i.e. loss of home, too easily draws the conclusion about a human’s natural belonging to another territory where (s)he is native. In contrast, the people I have talked with, demonstrate a more complex picture of what is at play, far away from the simple understandings of displacement as only a wait for return.

Maryam: ‘ay, mā b-ahiss ḥālē, b-ahiss ēnnu ḥattā mumkin ēnni bi-‘omrī mā ‘ad yarja’lī hāḍ l-su’ūr l-‘istiqrār. ēnnu wajadi ʾinnik baladik. ya’nī, l-’āshāṣ l-muqarrabūn ʾilli kānū mā’lik bi-sūrīya, ḥattā halla’ izā raja’t ‘a-sūrīya mā raḥ ‘ahiss hāḍ l-su’ūr, li-’annu mu’azam l-wasat ‘illī kān mā’ī,
Maryam indicates that the Syria she remembers would not be the same Syria even if she boundedness, but rather about a mix of factors that, put together, would constitute this loss. Maryam indicates that the Syria she remembers would not be the same Syria even if she

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4 Lina’s workplace.
returned, because of the people who have left and come. Lina discusses the worth of self-choice in order to consider a place as permanent and accessible for making a home. Turning to my own interpretations of space-making in Jordan, Maryam and Lina bring up two important factors determining my ability of home-making as well. For I, like Maryam and Lina, do not have my closest community in Jordan, family or old friends, thus making this place difficult to become completely a new ‘home’ with all that implies. Nevertheless, my travels to Jordan are of my own choice and days when I feel homesick I think of places and communities that do exist elsewhere. This is not the case for Maryam and Lina, having had to take life determining decisions about leaving their houses and having their family members spread out over the globe. Having this conversation with Maryam and Lina it is evident that all three of us reason quite similar when it comes to when, where and what we need to feel ‘home’. However, scholarship have until recently not been interested in the experiences of ‘people like me’ living across national borders. Writing ‘people like me’, I mean western, white, privileged migrants. Sarah Kunz (2016) argues that while it both morally and politically impacts how we understand migration and the lives of migrants, to not scholarly consider ‘people like me’ when studying migration, also involves conceptual and theoretical shortcomings. For, by only focusing on a certain ‘kind’ of migrants, the concept of ‘migration’ suffers of incompleteness (Kunz 2016: 89). Additionally, it demonstrates how the ‘migrant’ as we understand it as a person with a particular set of qualities and contributes to the national territorial teleology. Since, categorizing only some people who live outside of their national borders as ‘migrants’ intimately relate to concepts such as race, class, nationality and gender which can reproduce a colonial past (Kunz 2016; Leonard 2010). In other words, there is a problem when concepts like these are determinant for attributing the word ‘displaced’ to some migrants while others are just ‘expats’ or seen as enjoying their given right of free international mobility. Hence, it is a problem to ignore my experiences of being outside my national borders, i.e. ‘displacement’, while stories such as Maryam’s and Lina’s are in constant focus. This focus is misleading however, since neither the story of Maryam or Lina, or any other story presented in this thesis involves a passive wait for repatriation. Ultimately, I argue that their narratives capture well the understanding that by giving certain people attributes, such as ‘displaced’, ‘sad’ ‘deprived’, in relation to the understanding that it all will disappear the moment they return to the territory where they belong, is not only a simplified picture, but it also safeguards a worldview where borders, nations and (im)mobilities are considered natural.
Residents of house arrest

While, no one of the people I have met regard this place as a permanent stay, it is somehow yet a fixed place where life is happening at the moment. The house, the streets and the people around jointly constitute a temporary place for the everyday life. However, two contrasting factors together constitute the environment in which the stranded-ness becomes ever clearer. On the one hand, due to a variety of reasons, Syrians are restricted to create a permanent life in Jordan, but on the other hand, to leave means a decision for good, since Syrians as a rule are not allowed to return to Jordan after going abroad. This situation adds yet another layer to what it means to be stranded. It could be understood as an entrapment both within, without and between national borders.


*Lubna:* Suddenly from 2011, every sixth seventh month [there is] a law.. law, law, changes, law, they closed the border, they opened the border, they forbid the Syrians, they permitted the Syrians, they kept only the investors, they made Fulān⁵ leave, like every day, there is a new law […] We even like stopped knowing if there is a law the next day or if there is no law, even themselves the founders of the decisions, started not to know if there is a [a new] law that appeared in their absence or not. I swear every day, every day there is [a new] law, every day […] I, I feel like travel, I’m afraid to take this risk, and go travel and not be able to return to Jordan, [that] they don’t let me enter because I don’t know what’s the law! What’s the law that came up […]

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⁵ The name Fulān is typically used in order to describe a general person, anybody.
Okay I now, if I got a visa in Turkey I will not be happy, and neither will I go, because of this I am a resident of house arrest. here [...] Because of this I now from inside [of me] have stress I will explode, frankly, that I feel like go [and] get a breath of fresh air but I can’t, I can’t, I’m afraid that I [will] not return, [and] lose my children and my husband?[...] Suffocated I feel ahh, suffocated, I swear suffocated. Like, I feel like I feel like go [and] get a breath of fresh air, but it is not possible, that’s it stay [here], I say come on perhaps in the future the circumstances will be solved perhaps in the future, perhaps in the future..

What Lubna describes as ‘house arrest’ can be understood in a larger dimension than entrapment within and between borders. It goes beyond that. For, while she, along with Eima whom we met in the first chapter, and many more, may leave Jordan at any time, this type of house arrest is experienced as a form of fear of ‘what if?’ that ultimately prevents her from going anywhere. This fear Lubna expresses is related to other life stories around her. She told me in this conversation that traveling back to Queen Alia airport after a trip to Turkey, a friend of hers was prohibited to enter the country again, having to choose to go either to Syria or return back to Turkey.

Lubna: ‘awlādo w-zawjto hūn! mā dhahlūh bi-l-maṭār, mā dhahlūh.
Hanna: ‘anjad?
Lubna: ’ay wallah.
Hanna: bas šū ‘amal?
Lubna: nām bi-l-maṭār talat ’ayām bi-l-’awwal w-ḥāwal, mā dhahlūh, mā dhahlūh.

Lubna: His children and his wife are here! They didn’t let him in at the airport, they didn’t let him in.
Hanna: Seriously?
Lubna: Yes, I swear.
Hanna: But what did he do?
Lubna: He slept at the airport three days at first and he brought a contact6 and tried, they didn’t let him in, they didn’t let him in.

Having to leave the airport and return, his wife had to get rid of everything they built up in Jordan and leave for Turkey with the children since he could not return. From a simple trip, to a lifetime banishment. Another almost identical story was shared by Said. His friend also went

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6 wāṣiṭa implies a personal contact that is used to gain something.
to Turkey and faced the same treatment when arriving to Queen Alia airport, having to choose between Syria and Sudan. Since he could not return to Syria he was sent directly from the airport in Jordan to Sudan, a country he had never visited before.


*Said*: They didn’t let him in […] they told him either you return to Syria, or Sudan, make a choice! He told them I [will] not return to Syria, they sent him to Sudan, he went to Sudan, from Amman to Sudan.

Furthermore, Lubna’s describes how she experiences this inherent house arrest:


*Lubna*: What are my feelings? The simplest thing I feel is that I’m humiliated, the simplest feelings, okay my brother is in Germany […] Okay I also feel like go [and] see him, it’s hard, impossible, my cousins are in Sweden, it’s hard, impossible, my uncle is in Italy, it’s hard, impossible, impossible! Okay and then what? So I am here in Jordan almost.. imprisoned.. *in a jail*, you can’t go or come, neither on vacation, nor on visit.

**Border selectivity**

As the essential figure of the migrant, the general understanding of borders too reinforces the national territorial teleology. For, just as the migrant is connected to the national teleology in the form of nativity and the loss of territorial natural belonging, so do borders function as the markers of the beginning and the end of this belonging. In his analysis of the relationship between the body and the government at the border, Mark B. Salter (2006) argues that what is outside “both constitutes and threatens the integrity of the inside (172)”. Thus, at the border, “the right to detain, examine, and search travelers is defined in relation to their foreignness, their origins “outside,”(172)” . Nevertheless, to understand the border as a signifier of the ‘inside’
and ‘outside’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ based only on foreignness is to not move beyond the understanding of the national order. While we recognize that borders signify national territories and thus border practices are in relation to what constitutes the difference between inside and outside, we once again accept the idea of the nation state as given. For, in the same light as examining belonging and loss of the homeland of the migrant, to examine how border practices function in relation to nativity, otherness and foreignness based on national premises, too accept the incomplete picture that it is only the national self and the foreign other that constitute these practices. Instead, as Walters (2015) himself argues, enjoying “a form of hypermobility (9)”, being a white male university professor holding two passports, I suggest that borders are not only exclusive or inclusive, they are also selective. As Salter (2006) puts it:

The bordering process constituted by the decision to include/exclude is a dialogue between body and body politic requiring the confession of all manner of bodily, economic, and social information (170).

Drawing from this passage with regard to my own experience in relation to the people I have met during my time spent in Jordan, I argue that certain bodies, certain social information is always viewed as ‘less foreign’ (read: less threatening). Obviously, the ‘foreignness’ on which scholarship base border-exclusion indeed involved in a larger complex national order of things, to use Liisa Malkki’s term once again. It is in this light I suggest that to view the border as either exclusive or inclusive based on foreignness is a too simplified understanding of the border. As William Walters (2015) importantly states, it is crucial to move away from this scholarly border-centrism and instead implement an “inessential and circumstantial view of borders (11)”. In other words, Lubna’s and Said’s testimonies should not simply be interpreted as an example of borders as excluding in nature, keeping the foreigner out. Rather, it is important to recognize that borders functionality have differed in different places and in different times (Fassin 2011; Walters 2015), which is also indicated by Amer, speaking about how Syrian nationals outside, are affected by the events inside of the Syrian nation: “l-duwal ba’d mā ṣārat l-‘ahdāt bi-sūriya, ḥaṭṭat šurūṭ, ya’nī šurūt kābīr bi-‘aqabāt kābīr bi-nisba l-sūriyyīn”, The countries after the events in Syria placed conditions, like very large conditions and very large punishments regarding the Syrians. Thus, it is crucial to recognize the complex circumstances in which the situations appear when people from Syria are now rejected in almost every nation worldwide, and how this is experienced by those rejected at borders. As Nadine told me:
Nadine: If the airline staff rejected you at the gate, you are Syrian until you go to the airports, at that time you know this thing [...]. When I went to the airport I for the first time in my life really felt that my nationality it is really a problem, that like [can] you imagine that someone tells you like: Syrian!? Yok?

Traveling to Jordan after a training program in Turkey, Nadine was not permitted to enter the airplane at Ataturk airport. The reflections of her nationality as a problem originates from this trip. Having passed all the security procedures ready to board the airplane, she found herself rejected at the gate by the staff of the airline company.

Nadine: Having passed all the security procedures ready to board the airplane, she found herself rejected at the gate by the staff of the airline company.

Nadine: lamba 'ahladat jawaz w-hay 'àlatli “sùrî yok”, ya'nî “sùrî lâ”... w-kânat kîr kîr 'ašabiyye [...] 'ânà ḥatămûlî ḥurûj w-anà kânat l-visa taba' turkiyya ḥâliṣa, fa-mammûl ‘ânà 'annî 'arja' fut 'a-'ıstanbûl. fa-wa'tha ya'nî 'ânà kunt kîr ħâyiye w-kunt kîr mtdâyi'a bas ‘ânà kunt ‘am fakkir 'innu ‘ânà halla' lázim kûn, qaqîyye mišîn ahsan atsarraf w-illâ ‘ânà b-âdall ‘âide bi-l-μaṭâr, fa-înà ṭaht la-ând. ṣurt 'înzel bi-l-darrâj w-îmîl la-ând ḥurûj ya’nî... fa-la’êt fih mîtl šurtî wā’îf, 'ulîllo 'innu ‘ânà biddi 'aṭla' fa- [...] 'awwal si ‘ânà kunt kîr ta’bâne fa-‘ânà wa’afet ‘ulîllo ‘innu ‘ânà mî b-âlîkît turki w-anà mî b-âlîkî ‘înkîzî w-anà šattà ‘arabî mî ‘adraîne ‘aîkî!

fa-nehnî ḥawalna naḥkî šâyâ bi-l-înklîzî ya’nî šâyâ, ‘ânà mî kîr kîr šâṭîra bas ‘ânà ḥâwalat ‘innu wasîlî f-îkra, w-kunt ‘am b-astalîdhîm mutarjîm ahyânàn, w-ḥâwalat ‘înnî, w-luwwê ḥâwal yaḥkî ma’î šâyâ bi-l-arabî w-kân kîr lâṭîf, fa-îlî ‘innu ‘înti [...] ya’nî ḥâwal ‘innu yihaddînî šâyâ ‘innu ‘ânà raḥ ‘aṣidîk w-kaza...

Kān lissa mū ṣā'yīr ṣu'bēḥ ḥattā kān kūr leyl, fa-'anā ṭała’t ‘a’det barra ’udām l-maṭār, ‘a’det ‘a-l-kurṣī ba’d mā ‘aḥaḍt ᵺaṭ İntātā w-‘aḥaḍt ‘aḏrāḏī w-ḥaḷaṣēt w-‘a’det.. bas ‘a’det ’aṣṭānā lā-ḥattā yaṭla’ l-ḏaw.. li-‘anumu ‘anā b-‘aḥāf ya’nī ’anā, b-‘aḥāf kūr ’innu wēn biddi ’arūḥ ya’nī? w-‘anā raḥ‘ātī wasṣāḥātī ‘alā l-maṭār [...] fa-‘anā mā biddī arja’ ‘aḥkā ma’‘un kānat l-sā’a ’arba’ ᵽu’bēḥ, ya’nī hunnen wadd‘ūnī ‘a-l-ellā ṣa’s w-nūṣ ‘a-l-maṭār hunnen ‘aḵīd nāmū ya’nī ḡaḷaṣ rāḥū, fa-‘anā ḥēk ‘a’det ‘a-l-kurṣī.. dālīt ‘a’ide ‘a’ide w-ṣuurt ᵻbḳī ya’nī kūnt ‘am ᵻbḳī w-kūnt kūr ya’nī mṭāyī’ī fa-ba’dēn lammā ṭaḷa’ ṣway ḍaw ‘anā ḡaḷaṣ ya’nī, ‘aḥaḍet takṣī w-raja’t ‘a-l-beyt.

Nadine: When she took [the] passport and this, she told me “Syrian yok”, it means “Syrian no”.. and she was very very angry […] They stamped an exit-stamp for me and my Turkish visa was ended, so [it was] forbidden that I return [and] enter Istanbul. So at this time like I was very scared and I was very worried but I was thinking that I now have to be, strong because it is better to act or otherwise I [will] stay sitting at the airport, so I went to.. I started go down the stairs and walk to the exit like.. so I there I found like a police standing, I said to him that I want to leave [Turkey] so […] First of all I was very scared so I stopped [and] said to him that I don’t speak Turkish and I don’t speak English and I wasn’t even able to speak Arabic!

So we tried to speak a little bit in English like a little bit, I’m not very very good but I tried to make him understand, and I was using translation sometimes, and I tried to, and he tried to talk with me a little bit in Arabic and he was very nice, so he said to me that you […] Like he tried to calm me a bit like “I will help you” and like this..

So I walked with him, he began to walk with me, like we went from counter to counter, from place to place and no one of them never even gave their permission until lastly he took me to two who were very important officers who were sitting, so they started to look at him like this from top to down and made him like “no” like “we can’t”, that “she stays at the airport until she has fixed her circumstances”.. like I stay at the airport, because the Turkish visa ended and.. that’s it like there is no, I had already overstayed my visa three days […] I told them [that] I want to pay money the fine so that they [can] receive me one more time in Turkey. So since my visa ended so I payed money […] He discussed with them very very much, and he talked with them a lot so in the end they took the stamp and stamped on the exit for me […] Like, a cancellation of the exit [stamp] […]

It wasn’t yet becoming morning still it was very much night, so I went outside [and] sat outside in front of the airport, I sat on the chair after I had taken my bags and I had taken my things and finished and sat.. I just sat [and] waited until the [morning] light appeared.. because I was scared like I, was very scared like where can I go like? And my friends had dropped me off at the airport […] So I didn’t want to talk to them, the time was four in the morning, like they had said goodbye to me at half past eleven at the airport they surely slept like that’s it they left, so I just sat like this on the chair.. I stayed sitting sitting and I started to cry, like I was crying and I was very very like
upset so after a while when some light appeared I was done like, I took a taxi and went back to
[my friends’] house.

Salter (2006) argues that the border is in a permanent state of exception, meaning that it is a
space where humans are neither citizens nor foreigners until their political status are decided
by the agent of border customs (169ff). In Nadine’s case this exception implied that no
permission or passport would get her on that plane, because her documents said ‘Syrian’.

Understanding the different dimensions at play when linking the meanings of borders,
migrants or travelers with other definitions, such as expatriates, it is clear that the figure of ‘the
migrant’ is substantial in defining the functionality of the border. In other words, in the
definition of the border as an including/excluding signifier in relation to the ‘outside’, only ‘the
migrant’ embodies that ‘outside’. As Shahram Khoresvi (2010) claims, asylum seekers, refugees,
undocumented migrants, carry the borders with them everywhere. They are the borders,
meaning that they are constantly put “on the threshold between in and out (98)”. Consequently,
the ambition for many Syrians living in Jordan has become to get another set of documents,
substituting or adding to the Syrian nationality, something that does not say migrant, refugee,
deprived, dangerous, weak, poor; something that simply says human.

Maryam: neḥna kull ḥayātnā ‘am nāḥwil naṭmaḥ la-nḡayyir jinsiyyatna ’aw nāḥud jinsiyya
’iḏaḥiya kumāl bas neḥna ḫiss ḥālna ‘insān, bas ‘insān ’il-na ḥu’ū’.

Maryam: All of us are trying to strive to change our nationality or to obtain an extra nationality in
order just for us to feel that we are human[s], just human[s] who have rights.

This is not a question of identity. As Maryam’s passage clearly demonstrates, it is rather a matter
of papers, about strategies, about finding alternatives to be able to move, to be able to live.
Arguably to be Syrian have become understood as related to an essential figure well known, the
migrant. Thus, one strategy for breaking loose from these forced identities of deprivation and
loss, has become to attain another document, another nationality.
Summary

This chapter has engaged with a more complex understanding the term ‘displacement’ in contrast to conventional concepts. In the national teleology, territorial boundedness is a natural feature of human life, which ultimately implies a fundamental loss for the displaced. In contrast, the testimonies in this chapter demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be displaced, resisting the idea of territorial belonging and ‘loss of home’. The understanding of displacement is evidently not solely an issue of territorial boundedness but rather it should be understood as a consequence of a mix of factors related to autonomy, community and (im)mobility.

Further, this chapter has also engaged in the shortcomings of the understanding of the ‘migrant’ and ‘the border’. The categorization of humans as migrants or expats evidently involves attributing different sets of qualities to different kinds people. This is also true for the understanding of border exclusiveness or inclusiveness based on the simple dichotomy of the native and the foreigner. In both cases, the foreigner and the migrant involve a geographical categorization based on the national order of things. Thus, focusing on a specific category of migrant or foreigner results in an incomplete understanding of the concepts of migration and border exceptionality. Testimonies demonstrate how to be a Syrian have become understood as the essential figure of the migrant and thus also increasingly foreign (threatening) which in turn has resulted in the search for strategies to reject these forced identities. The following chapter further elaborates the experiences of accepting or resisting involuntary given qualities by focusing on the emergence of the refugee-identity.
The ‘displaced’ refugee – a legitimizing force for internationalism

The camp is located in the backyard of the lively neighborhood Jabal Hussein; muhāyyam l-husseyn, Al Hussein Camp. The first week of Ramadan a sunny afternoon I stopped at little bakery in the center of the neighborhood to bring with me some cookies for ‘ifār later the same day. Walking along the crowded main street for less than 15 minutes and I arrived at the little alley leading me to the camp area. This Palestinian ‘refugee camp’ was set up in 1952 as a result of the events in Palestine 1948 (UNRWA 2018a), and over the years the tents became simple buildings of cement that tightly side by side compose this overcrowded quarter of Jabal Hussein. This day Nesrin had invited me for ‘ifār at her house with her family. And, as I was walking to her house I looked around the narrow streets and the tightly constructed buildings, I thought: For over 60 years this place had been a Palestinian ‘camp’ which was now inhabited not only by Palestinians, but also other people who have been assigned pretty much the same identity, the identity of the ‘displaced’ refugee. For over 60 years. 60 years.

Considering the different elements constituting the national teleology, this chapter is about perhaps one of the most essential components of this structure: the refugee. The refugee does not only exist in a national discourse as an essential identity contrasting and simultaneously confirming the citizen, its essence also play a central role in the international discourse as a symbol for ‘a shared humanity’ to use Liisa Malkki’s (1994) words. In 1921 the LNHCR, the predecessor of UNHCR was founded which was the start of a tradition of refugee relief work (Soguk 1999: 58), something that is still fundamental for present time refugee protection. It was in the aftermath of the first World War that permanent organized world peace was articulated, out of which the League of Nations, “the first body to marry the democratic idea of a society of nations with the reality of Great Power hegemony (Mazower 2013: 159)” was founded two years earlier. The postwar period, the upbreaking of the empires in present day’s Middle East and Eastern Europe, resulted in hundreds and thousands of refugees, an issue that came to be known
as ‘the refugee problem’ (Mazower 2013; Soguk 1999), and that needed to be handled through international cooperation. It was in this light, almost exactly a century ago, the refugee came to be articulated as a known figure. However, refugees had always existed, and it was indeed not a new phenomenon in the beginning of the 20th century. In resonance with Isa Blumi’s (2013) important work, I claim that we need to view the refugee as a historiographically invented figure for the matter of maintaining the ontology of internationalism, that is, the “family of nations”, the “transnational cultural form for imagining and ordering difference among people” (Malkki 1994: 41).

Breaking this conventional picture, Blumi (2013) offers an alternative to the nationalist master narrative in presenting a variety of contexts in which refugees, as political and economic actors, mobilized to interact with the Ottoman state, challenging “the normative association of refugees with political vulnerability and dependency on the charity of others (49)”. Additionally, Laura Robson (2017) further establishes this picture, in her study about the League of Nations’ and United Nations’ presence in the Middle East, she argues that the emerging refugee regime in the region was met with resistance of resettlement schemes and protests of refugee policies as refugees for instance refused to sell land intended for new refugee establishments (626). Robson (2017) also importantly claims that the figure of the refugee was used in order to justify the establishment of a permanent presence of international authority in the region. Almost a century later, this has not changed much, as scholarship continue to conceptualize displacement as uprooted-ness, loss of territory and as a disruption of the normal mode of being, reinforcing the concept of the nation state, a concept in which the refugee has become to have a given place:

Almost like an essentialized anthropological “tribe,” refugees thus become not just a mixed category of people sharing a certain legal status; they become “a culture,” “an identity” (see 152:323), “a social world” (109, cf 144), or “a community” (51) (Malkki 1995: 511).

Drawing from this I suggest that the figure of the refugee needs to be understood as a reproduction of a colonial past. As Edward Said (2003: 232) argued in Orientalism:

ideas about primitive origins and primitive classifications, modern decadence, the progress of civilization, the destiny of the white (or Aryan) races, the need for colonial territories—all these were elements in the peculiar amalgam of science, politics, and culture whose drift, almost without exception, was always to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind.
It is positive to claim here that as much as orientalism served hegemonic purposes, also the figure of the refugee was created to serve an already hierarchical system. This is further demonstrated by Joseph Massad (2016) who, in *Islam in Liberalism*, demonstrates how internationalism not only structured different populations and nations in different ways, but how this structure also involved in an east/west hegemony, whereas the politics of citizenship evolved ‘at home’ while politics of suffering evolved ‘abroad’ (126). Accordingly, Malkki (1995) in her study about the origins of the scholarly field refugee studies, illustrates the parallels between the contrasting classifications of the primitive or the civilized in the colonial world, and the refugee and the citizen in contemporary world, and how these concepts share the same ‘roots’ as they emerged within the scientific anthropological field from the very beginning. As these scholars indicate, it is evident the comparable motives for the knowledge production about the ‘uncivilized or primitive’ in the 18\(^{th}\) century and the present time refugee; both are figures in need for international authority. Hence, replacing the primitive, the contemporary refugee has become the new excuse for international presence in the postcolonial world.

**Negotiating forced identities**

*Nesrin*: b-ikraha ‘anā hāy l-kalimat ‘l-ḥudūd’ b-ikraha.. b-ikrah kalimat lāji’.. b-ikrah.. kalimat lāji’, w-neḥna ‘emāt rāḥ naḥluṣ min hay l-kalime?

*Nesrin*: I hate it this word ‘the border’ I hate it.. I hate the word refugee.. I hate it.. the word refugee, and when will we become free from this word?

Evidently, “there is no “proto-refugee” of which the modern refugee is a direct descendant, any more than there is a proto-nation of which the contemporary nation form is a logical, inevitable outgrowth (Malkki 1995: 497).” Instead, it has been established how the new civilized world composed by the national order symbolized the ““normal” conditions of life on Earth (Soguk 1999: 128)” and that it was in this light the ontological figure of the refugee emerged, an identity that was a historic remarker since

it encoded the refugee unequivally in the state-centric terms, ontologically linking the refugee’s identity to the state’s posited territorial universe at a time when this universe was still in the making…
The refugee became one who was outside this universe, lacking ties to the national community and the state (Soguk 1999: 135).

Being ‘outside the universe’ of nations, the identification of the refugee was not only about distinguishing the meaning of citizen and refugee on a theoretical level, it had to be officially documented, stating the refugee-ness of a mode of being, as much as the passport stated the citizenship of another mode of being.

It was the invention, in 1922, of a legal document, specifically, a certificate of identity that officially “documented” a displaced person as a “refugee.” Identity certificates attributed certain qualities of refugees, linking them to a set of statist subjectivities and entities posited to be already historically well established. The devising of identity certificates for refugees, informally known as the Nansen passports, was significant in terms of refugee problematizations (Soguk 1999: 128).

‘The Nansen passports’, a solution devised by the Norwegian explorer Fritjof Nansen, who, from the beginning was appointed to the ‘General Commission for the Russian Refugees’ with the task to repatriate or resettle Russian refugees. These refugees proved the first objects on the agenda after in the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Mazower 2013; Robson 2017; Soguk 1999).

a great many of the Russian refugees in Europe suffered considerably for the sole reason that they have been unprovided with any legal passports or paper of identity, without they were unable to travel from the countries in which they found themselves (Soguk 1999: 129).

In a world where restricted mobility was to become the most significant solution to national security and where nation states formed citizenship laws leaving minorities or political opponents with no papers, the Nansen passports became alternative to citizenship, recognized by the emerging international community (Mazower 2013: 162). It assured a status, a guarantee of existence leaving people to hold on to it when possessing it, and if not, to desire it (Soguk 1999: 138). Considering the context in which mobility was conceptualized and thus also the refugee certificate, the outlook of the world today is, to say the least, unfortunate, as mobility has become the very definition of security, leaving people stranded both spatially and mentally. In other words, the refugee status has become even more prevailing as the document itself enforces a hierarchical order, but also the enforcement of identities, generating dilemmas that the people I have met constantly try to deal with through accepting or resisting these attributes forced onto them.
Lina: The thought that I am a refugee, I didn’t want to reach to [that point], seriously you in the, we are talking about the first period when we left, because we couldn’t imagine! I refused completely, I completely refused this attribute, I refused it but now I have accepted it, but before I definitely refused it like, what is a refugee? Why [would] I want to register [as] a refugee, I am returning to my country I will not stay. Now later after a long time when we came here, and we applied.. we registered later at the UNHCR.

Lina’s reflections about being a refugee demonstrates the complexities of leaving a place in order to enter another as a refugee. Complexities that are otherwise simplified by conventional scholarship. Instead, Lina shows the difficulties of embodying a total new identity just by leaving Syria. However, it is not about the national identity, but rather the ‘human-or-refugee’ one. Evident from the many conversations about the role of the UN in relation to living in Jordan, the financial aid, l-mufawwadiyye, the refugee-ID⁸ is a dilemma of accepting the refugee-identity by register at the UNHCR or resisting it through the choice to not register and thus abandon the material benefits offered by the UNHCR. Said for instance, when I asked him about the difference between a refugee and a non-refugee, he answered:

Said: baynik w-baynī ḥa-naḥkī.

Hanna: okay, maṭalan.

Said: lā’ mū maṭalān, anā lājī bi-l-nihāya.

Hanna: ’anta.. ’anta.. ’anta b-thuss b-tīsh hāy l-hjala miṯl lājī’ yā’nī?


Hanna: mi?n?


Hanna: aha...

Said: ’anāṣ firīyī dir rūḥ hūn kā-lājī’.. ’anā hay l-ware’a.. l-mufawwadiyye lāw mā b-astafid minḥā bi-l-balad yā’ni innī hawiyātī, wālālī mā, wa-la b-arūḥ wa-la b-, wa-la b-aghala’ha ʿašlan. bass

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⁸ Though the lexical meaning for mufawwadiyye is commisariat or legation it is popularly used as indicating the refugee ID-card confirming registration at the UNHCR.
minšan la-ḥuṭṭ ḥālī bi-hād mawqi̇f.. anā bass 'aḥuṭṭ ḥālī bi-hāda mawqi̇f.. eh.. ya'nī kūr b-a'as̱i̇b.. kūr kūr mū šway.. ya'nī kūr 'anā b-aḍāya' wallah […] nās tijī dūr w-hād bi-s'alīk.. 'as'ila šaḥšiyya kūr b-tūn w-.. ya'nī ţaβ lēš? ya'nī lēš hēk..!? 'inti 'andik 'asrāīk šaḥšiyya ţaβ 'anā 'andā 'asrāī šaḥšiyye ḳamān […] miṭti miṭlak!. 'anā hādī l-yawm bi-mūt minno.. ya'nī law anā mā b-astāfīd minna hāy mā b-aṭla'.. wallāhī mā b-aṭṭala'ha […] fī nās mā 'andha muš̱kile bas 'anā šaḥšiyyan b-etdammar ya'nī, fih […] 'anā lamā ārūḥ, ya'nī b-ḍall mā bāyyīn wujhī la-ḥadā.. b-hāf yimurr ḥadā w-yuṣūnī.. hēk b-ḍall fakkīr.

Hanna: b-aḥāf..?
Said: 'īānnu ymurr ḥadā w-b-a'ri̇fyo yuṣūnī.. fa-mā biddi ḥadā yuṣūnī 'anā bi-hād l-makān bi-ḍāt.

Said: Between you and me we will say.

Hanna: Okay, for example.

Said: No not for example, in the end I am a refugee.

Hanna: You.. you.. do you feel [that you live] this condition like a refugee like?

Said: Now, yes.

Hanna: mm?

Said: I feel that I am a refugee when I.. go to the UNHCR.

Hanna: aha..

Said: I have come to play a role of a refugee here.. I this paper.. the UNHCR if I didn’t benefit from it in [this] country like that my ID, I swear to god I wouldn’t, I would neither go nor, nor [make an effort to] get it at all. But because I put myself in this situation.. I just put myself in this situation.. eh.. like I get really mad.. very very not a little.. like I get really upset I swear […] People [wait] for their turn and this one asks you.. very personal questions and.. like okāy why like why is it like this..?? You have your personal secrets okey I have my personal secrets as well […] I am like you!.. This day kills me.. like if I didn’t benefit from this I wouldn’t go.. I swear I wouldn’t [make an effort to] get it […] There are people who don’t have a problem but I personally get devastated like, by it […] When I go, like I keep my face not visible for anybody.. I fear that anyone passes by and sees me.. like this I keep thinking.

Hanna: I fear..?

Said: That someone that I know passes by and sees me.. so I don’t want anyone to see me when I’m in this place especially.

Said’s reflections over how and when he feels like a refugee opposes the idea that the refugee-identity is ‘essential’ and instead undoubtedly demonstrates the difficult negotiations of resisting or accepting the new associations of what it means to be Syrian in present day Jordan. However, important to note here is that negotiating identity in this context does not imply negotiating
national or transnational identity but rather the enforced association of becoming a refugee according to the national order while simultaneously not identifying with this word. Talking with Amer about how he perceives the question ‘are you Syrian?’ he directly connected this question with being ‘a refugee’:


*Amer:* There are even people who [asked] degradingly refugee like, even this word refugee, I, [if] you want honestly I despise it [if] you want me to be honest. The time someone tells you that you are a refugee, a Syrian refugee […] Like there are people that even think that we, the, the, the UNHCR is providing us with our food and our drink and our residency, they don’t the UNHCR doesn’t give us here, like how can I tell you like, per person.. they don’t give him/her ten dinar […] Like why refugee like? Like because I left the war and left this and.. and this happened in my country, why are you when you came [to my country] […] We didn’t tell you [that you were] refugees.. we didn’t say refugees.. why not for example, not guests for example? Not inhabitants for example? Like what, what is the word refugee? […] Even the whole world, not only that, the whole world adopt like the word refugee.. they even say it like in the United Nations, and in the whole world, the word refugees, like what are refugees? Like, for whom is this earth? is it for somebody really?

Amer asks ‘what are refugees’ a question that, when asked by him, a person who is conventionally considered to be a refugee, demonstrates the artificiality of the refugee-identity when relating it to the fact that both scholarly and politically the same question was asked decades ago in order to create the essence of the refugee, a figure that also successfully clearly has become understood as essential. In this context, Amer asking this question becomes almost derisory as it affects him and the outcomes of his life to the extent that his qualities as a human being is determined by an organization constituted by nation states, transforming his identity
into something he clearly not identifies with. Drawing from the many conversations about comparable dilemmas I suggest that the ‘refugee identity’ is indeed related to the very registration for the UNHCR, the documentation. This can be noticed for instance, in Tariq’s reflections over why he has not registered. As we were talking about refugee-ness and I asked him why he felt that the word refugee rings out negatively, he told me:

*Tariq:* How the people view the refugee this is what keeps you feel like this.. like honestly there are a lot of persons.. they have a good economic situation, but for example, they registered at the UNHCR for many reasons perhaps the supports that came every month with 27 dinar in the beginning or something, maybe because of the purpose to travel later, like there are many purposes for the people to register at the UNHCR, now.. frankly how they treat people.. and their view of the refugees, is not nice, [it is] mainly because of this I for example haven’t registered.

Further, Tariq told me about a situation when he was buying food at a supermarket and when he was treated with disrespect as the cashier directed him to the checkout where he could pay with his card for the UNHCR.


Ḥanūn: ‘ānā rah ’adāfa ya’nī[ . . .]

*Tariq:* ‘ay tamāmān bas huwwa šū ya’nī ḥakā kalime, bad w-‘anā nza’jet w-huwwa mā b-tefri ma’o.. huwwa ya’nī bi-niṣba ilo.. ‘āḍi, ’annma huwwa ṭarī’at l-nāzaṭ tabo’ [. . .] kānāt mū ḥeluw.. miṣān ḥēk ‘anā masalan.. lā sajjalt w-la-biddī asajjil bi-l-ṣarāḥa.. li-ānu tariqat-l-ṭa’āmul ma’ l-‘ālam inni ḥēke innu inta lājī ‘inta ‘am tāḥud maṣāřī mīn l-ḥukūma.. ya’nī ‘arifī kīf?

*Tariq:* [. . .] He talked to me in a way present there, in a way that was a bit.. like there is no respect actually, that, that if you [. . .] Have the card here for, for the UNHCR, something like this, like
go to the checkout over there […] I told him that not on the card, the UNHCR, and that that’s all there you go like I bought something.

*Hanna:* Like I will pay […]

*Tariq:* Yes exactly but what this is [about] like he said a word, a *bad* one and I became upset and he doesn’t care. he like according to him.. it’s normal, indeed the way he views […] was not nice.. because of this I for example.. have neither registered and nor do I want to register honestly.. because the way they treat people like this that you are a refugee you are taking money from the government.. you know?

The interconnections of being Syrian, a refugee and the issue of registering at the UNHCR are visible in this passage: to choose to not pay with the card from the UNHCR ultimately becomes a way of resisting this forced identification of what it means to be Syrian, i.e. a refugee. Drawing from this it is safe to say that in the ontology of the nation state there is no grey area but instead humans who travel across borders for reasons other than work, studies or tourism, simply become *refugees*. In other words, there is no way to take a decision to leave an inhospitable place, arrive in another place, and simultaneously keep one’s autonomy, identity and self-respect, if you are not fortunate to have specific political or economic means. Saying this I do not refer to the conventional idea that people lose this by seeking refuge, being ‘displaced’, ‘lost’ or ‘uprooted’, but rather I suggest that it is the very understanding of the refugee’s essence is that is the problem; we are indeed lacking a more comprehensive understanding of displacement that forces these categorizations of humans.

**Humanity as geography**


*Hanna:* United Nations is the biggest lie in this world, the biggest lie, it is neither united nor nation, it is equivalent to a group of thieves, a group of cheaters, they convinced people that “we want to help
you”, they don’t help at all, they serve other interests, with other agendas, with other characteristics, it doesn’t concern the humanity at all. When I want to come [and] help a human being I help him in silence.. when you want to meet a poor person you go knock his door you don’t sit [and] take pictures [of him] […] What kind of humanity is this? Is it injustice or not? Seriously, it is injustice. When I want to take a box of subsidies for the family, it’s all taking picture taking picture and sharing sharing⁹, what, what kind of United Nation is this?

Regarding the relationship between mobility, the UNHCR and the refugee, this section aims to discuss my interlocutors understandings of the “shared humanity (Malkki 1994)” constituting the international presence in Jordan in this case. Lubna’s reflections of humanity as she relates it to the UN demonstrates the issue with constituting simplified categorizations of peoples and populations, in this case the charismatic figures of “the needy, sick, dirty recipient and the strong, healthy, clean giver (Malkki 2015: 8)”. Territory is central in this understanding, since suffering is

essentially located “over there”. The “suffering stranger” is still the main imagined as “distant” (Boltanski 1993; Haskell 1998), socially anonymous, only “basically” human, and usually only momentarily in the worker’s or volunteer’s life (Malkki 2015: 7).

Being ‘basically human’ is a theme that have emerged in many conversations during my fieldwork, as my interlocutors are trying to deal with the realization that they have become just that, human beings for whom the basics in life should be enough, according to the international community. Lubna’s important observation on the difference between giving aid in silence or public for instance, illustrates the connections between the ‘refugee problem’ and the NGO self-image. During my time spent at one of the organizations in Amman we often got visitors from other NGO’s or local and international celebrities who in different ways supported the organization. It was everything from organizing activities for the children or giving them gifts. Nevertheless, every visit always included the unavoidable picture taking and/or video making with the children, in which, for the children unknown people were posing together with them before they left with enough material for their own advantages. As they left the center, the same discussions at the office always followed. My colleagues who worked at the organization had as the children also left Syria, and they expressed feelings as something resembling mockery. The mockery that organizations and people came to their center for the purpose of showing the

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⁹ Talking about sharing in this context, it was clear that Lubna meant sharing on social media.
world that they gave the ‘poor Syrian children’ an hour of happiness, a new toy or a Happy Meal from McDonalds, that they were good people, while the children would go home to their parents, still representing figures of refuge, while the world still excluded them. The uncomfortable feelings expressed at the office were somehow connected to the symbolism of the ‘refugee child’ on a picture, misrepresenting both the children’s and my colleagues’ everyday lives. In these visits, it was evident that the refugee child became the general representative of true suffering in the making of effective, imaginative and representational practices (Malkki 2015).

It is all too easy to strip children of their personhood and to fill them with a pure humanity and an unspoiled nature… In the process, we [adults] place them outside the complications of history, beyond the lines drawn by political violence. They are the innocent representatives of a common humanity, able to appeal — across the boundaries of race, culture, and nation — to an underlying, essential humanity many of us (at certain times) believe we all share (85).

Ironically this ‘shared humanity’ in itself maintains the hierarchical order of different peoples, populations and geographies. The characterizations through images and videos in different kinds of NGO advertisements raise serious ethical questions, but also questions about geography, that is, the localization of the sufferer and the aid worker/volunteer/expat. In other words, drawing from scholars such as Joseph Massad, Liisa Malkki, Sarah Kunz and William H. Legget, I suggest that while the ‘refugee identity’ becomes an issue of resistance for many, the contrasting identity is instead encouraged. Connecting the identity of the refugee to post-colonial geographical spaces, westerners tend to enforce the dichotomy between the western selves and the local others (Legget 2012: 82), that is, imagining a communion with other westerners based on the dichotomies constructed within the national order. One day my colleagues asked me to join a day extra at the center as an interpreter, as they were taking a course in psycho drama for children with a psychologist visiting from Switzerland. Sitting on the floor in a circle the psychologist noticed my tattoo on my wrist. In a way insisting some kind of unity between me and her, she asked me about what the other girls on the floor thought about it hinting ‘about their culture’. Uncomfortable by the question, I translated it to the group even though I understood that the comment was meant to me alone, upon which her imagination of difference was disconfirmed. Likewise, the same day as we were chatting during a break, I told her that I lived together with my fiancé in Sweden upon which she lowered her voice stating that clearly this was not something I could tell anyone here, meaning that my colleagues would not understand that how I could live together with someone without being
married. Further, I participated in the exercises as I was interpreting in which some of them implied doing different activities while listening to music. A couple of times the psychologist directed her comments to me, saying things like, “you should know this composer” as she played Mozart, indicating an illogical asymmetry in a context where, for instance, Nadine has a bachelor in music, knowing much more than me about music history. William Legget (2012) calls this ‘colonial imagination’, suggesting that western selves in postcolonial spaces tend to maintain both spatial and temporal distance from the ‘others’. In this case it was obvious that the imagination of this woman united both of us spatially and temporarily, as I automatically became the modern, sophisticated one in the group.

In this construction of self and other, the colonial imagination does more than create a reality that denies the contemporaneousness of human populations; it operates also as a high-powered medium of domination that recalls the asymmetry of colonial relations (Legget 2012).

As the suffering is happening ‘over there’, it is important to view this recalling of asymmetrical colonial relations in respect to humanity and geography. Namely, the importance to recognize the ways in which the refugee, the idea of loss and suffering, aid and nationalism interconnect and function as affirmative of each other, sustaining a world order that ultimately determine the lives of those people I have met in Jordan. I suggest that these terms also reinforce an asymmetry in the hierarchy of needs. That is, the understanding of the categorization of people on certain geographical spaces as ‘basically human’ while people on other geographical spaces are more than that. For the refugee for instance, it is enough to eat, sleep and breathe. The problem however, is that it is not enough:

b-ıt‘īs, w-l-šajara ‘am b-ıt‘īs, ‘anā šajara? là’! ya’nī ‘anā ‘am b-ıtświni equal to other creatures, hay hiyya, hay hiyya l-insāniyye?

Lubna: I don’t request pity from anyone, I don’t request mercy from anyone, I don’t request money from anyone, so the word refugee is tied to that you are begging money, you are asking for pity, hence the human reaction these days, there is no courtesy, like, for example, assuming that I want money for real, I should go to my human brother, you should, you are my sister, this is supposed, that if you may, I need for example […] The natural behavior for the human for humanity is like “I’m ready to help you come!” and like this, no! Now you need to beg him and kiss his hand and… no! […] So it is understood [that] the word refugee is completely connected to injustice… only.. like you are a refugee like you need to beg to get to the lowest standard of the requirements of life, the lowest standard… just to live, okay so is the purpose that god created us just to live and breathe? Just!? Is this what I need to beg for? That please just let me live!? This is not what life is […] A sheep lives, and the ant lives, and the tree lives, am I a tree? No! Like, you are making me equal to other creatures, is this, is this what humanity is?

The hierarchy separating the citizen and the refugee does not only concern rights and mobility, but ultimately also the fundamentality of life where for some people it is ‘enough to just breathe’, while other people have an inherent right to pursue everything that life has to give. Lubna’s reflections about the value of life demonstrates the very irrationality of these categorizations. Evidently, there is no ‘pure need’. Nothing is completed as the international community keep feeding the ‘displaced’. No one wants to be fed for seven years.

Maher: ‘izā ‘anti yijī ḥakūlik hanā, hay beyt hūn bi-l-‘urdun, w-hāy siyyāra w-‘īsī hūn yā hanā, b-tīsī…? mindūn Love, mindūn ‘ummak w-‘abūki… hād mawqīf tānī… law jābūlik ‘ummik w-‘abūki la-hūn w-‘isti ma’hum ‘inti hūn, mà tartāhī… dall hanānak la-baladik, la-beytīk īllī nāṭī wi-l’a‘ibti w-kabarti fiyyo, dīkrāyātik w-ḥāratik w-‘ahlak w-nāsik w-jirānik… w-‘ādātik w-taqālidik, w-mabāda’ ‘innu kullhā hunāk […] hanā l-rūḥ, l-rūḥ b-tisrah hunāk […] kūr min ‘ahlīyān hēk.. ‘innu wēn ‘anī, wēn kunt, wēn šurt, beytī w-‘urtī, jirānī, ‘aṣdiqāʾī, ‘ahlī garābī, ḥāli, ḥāltī, raғātī…

Maher: If they came and said to you Hanna, this is a house here in Jordan, and this is a car and live here Hanna, would you live…? without Love10, without your mother and your father… this is another situation… if they brought your mother and your father here for you and you lived with them here, you wouldn’t rest… you would keep longing for your country, for the house where you

10 The name of my fiancé
[were raised] and played and grew up in, your memories and your neighborhood and your family and your people and your neighbors.. your customs and your traditions, and convictions like everything is there […] Hanna the soul, the soul drifts over there […] Often I think like this.. like where am I, where was I, where have I become, my house and my room, my neighbors, my friends, my family my relatives, my uncle, my aunt, my friends..

Much scholarship would perhaps automatically interpret Maher’s reflections as confirming the concepts of territorial belonging, nativity and displacement. Instead I suggest that this passage demonstrates that experiences of feeling ‘basically human’ naturally results in desiring life elsewhere, in Maher’s case, return to Syria. For this thesis, examining experiences of mobility, it is significant to notice however, that return to Syria has not been the aspiration for everyone in this study. Rather, it is the search for a totality of life: independence, family, friends and freedom. Some believe to find this through a future repatriation, while others believe to find this elsewhere. What instead unifies my interlocutors is that they do not believe they will find it in Jordan, which evidently demonstrates a multidimensional, and thus more comprehensive picture of the conventional understanding of the essence of the ‘displaced’ or the ‘refugee’.

Summary

The figure of the refugee does not only function as an element of maintaining the idea of territorial boundedness but also as a symbol for geographical categorizations of peoples, emerging from a historical hierarchy. This chapter has given an account of this figure and how it functions as a fundamental element in safeguarding different concepts interrelated to relative (im)mobility. Since the creation of the specific refugee document, the Nansen Passport, in the beginning of the 20th century, the ‘refugee identity’ has been officially established containing a specific set of qualities and thus stripping of all other qualities shaping a human. The testimonies in this chapter has demonstrated the difficult dilemmas of resisting or accepting refugee documentations, since register as a refugee implies accepting the imposed ‘refugee identity’. The ‘refugee identity’ has evidently become to imply qualities that my interlocutors do not identify with.

Further, the ‘refugee identity’ should not simply be considered as an antonym to the citizen, but it also involves a geographical hierarchy. This chapter has suggested that the figure of the refugee is linked to a colonial past, meaning that the ‘refugee identity’ was created in an already
hierarchical order of different peoples, populations and geographies. Thus, the ‘shared humanity’ upholding the ontology of internationalism, localizes the aid worker and the aid recipient on different geographical spaces, but also on different places on the hierarchy of needs. The aid recipient, the sufferer, symbolizes a ‘pure need’ in contrast to the aid worker, who evidently symbolizes another type of human. These categorizations are not unlike the concepts of the ‘primitive’ and the colonizer in another time in history. In contrast, my interlocutors constantly refuse being stripped of autonomy, identity and self-respect, which demonstrate that there is no such thing as ‘pure need’.

The following chapter contextualizes the refugee camp historically and contemporarily, a crucial component in forming a foundation for the upholding of ‘the national order’ and which as a result, affects human (im)mobility within national borders.
CHAPTER FOUR

Spaces but not places

The sanctuary city was located in the middle of the desert land, far away from the civilization. It was a dusty place, overcrowded with people and tents that, with time, came to be replaced with caravans as the space urbanized.

Waiting. Waiting for their turn to the mobile-chargers, waiting for their turn to the drinking water, waiting for their turn to the shared kitchen, waiting for their turn to go to the bathroom.

There was as much masses as there was sand. No space, no privacy, no air.

This was it: the longed-for rest that wasn’t relaxing at all, the newfound safety that wasn’t safe at all, the stability that wasn’t stable at all. It was the new ‘temporary’ life that in reality wasn’t going to be temporary at all.

This wouldn’t work, there had to be a way out, and fortunately there was. At least for some of them at a certain time. Before Jordan decided to close the camps, they could find someone to take them out of here, a bailsman, ḳafīl. Now however, not even a bailsman would get anyone out permanently. Those who were in the camps, were in the camps, and those who were outside, were outside, ḫalas.

The camp – a space of exceptionality or autonomy?

This chapter represent the last piece of this thesis: how spaces within nation states become sites for specific articulations for both upholding and resisting the national order. By examining the refugee camp as the last puzzle of conceptualizing mobility, this chapter adds to the understanding by examining control and management of population mobility within national borders. ṣaʿārī, Zaatarī, like any other camp, should be understood as a specific space, functioning as a physical marker of inclusion and exclusion, as territorial and extraterritorial at the same time: like a national border, the camp is understood as something ‘outside’ or ‘in between’ the territorial nation state (Khosravi 2010; Salter 2006; Walters 2002).
This understanding of the camp is regarded as the ‘Agambian view’, from which much scholarship has theorized further on its exceptionality (Khosravi 2010; Malkki 1995; Salter 2006; Walters 2002). To protect the virtue of the nation, the exceptionality of the refugee camp should be understood as similar to a national border: if the purpose of the border is to keep the unwanted outside, the purpose of the refugee camp is to regulate and manage human mobility within, in order to “sustain the principle that all the world’s population can be ascribed a ‘country’” (Walters 2002: 286). In other words, by separating citizens and non-citizens through establishing camps away from the urban areas, the national order can be preserved.

However, recent scholarship has claimed that the Agambian view, through emphasizing the exceptionality of the camp, victimizes the refugee, making the refugee a device for metaphysical arguments, and thus calls for a de-exceptonalization of the camp (Sigona 2015). Perhaps it is in its place to say that Agamben’s fundamental understanding of the refugee lacks political or social agency, but it is important not to dismiss his concept as it addresses the very intention of the camp in the first place.

The refugee camp was a vital device of power: The spatial concentration and ordering of people that it enabled, as well as the administrative and bureaucratic processes it facilitated within its boundaries, had far-reaching consequences. The segregation of nationalities; the orderly organization of repatriation or third-country resettlement; medical and hygienic programs and quarantining; “perpetual screening” (173:59) and the accumulation of documentation on the inhabitants of the camps; the control of movement and black-marketing; law enforcement and public discipline; and schooling and rehabilitation were some of the operations that the spatial concentration and ordering of people enabled or facilitated. Through these processes, the modern, postwar refugee emerged as a knowable, nameable figure and as an object of social-scientific knowledge (Malkki 1995: 498).

Evidently, ignored in the attempt to move beyond the Agambian view of the camp by claiming it to be a place for political agency, as scholars such as Sigona (2015), Ramadan (2013), and Levy (2010) have done, is the difference between the purpose of the camp and what people within this space make of it. I argue that the camp indeed needs to be viewed as exceptional and we should not too easily de-exceptonalise it.

*Lina*: l-nās hanna, hennen ‘illī şana’ū ħād l-sī, humnen sana’ū hay l-ḥayā ‘illī juwa za’tarī, hennen şana’ū l-ḥayā ‘illī swey.. ya’nī yidirū yī’..

*Maryam*: yuqammillu.

Maryam: The people Hanna, it is they who created this, they made this life that is inside Zaatari, they created the life that is a bit.. like so they ca..

Maryam: continue.

Lina: pursue with it, like you know? But [it] doesn’t mean that if they advanced Zaatari a bit this means this is what they want, or this is what originally, they didn’t live like this.. they developed the no-life that they are in so that it becomes a little bit similar to their life but this is not what they want, they want to return and to get out and live at least a little bit like it was […] They are deprived of everything […]

Lina’s reflections raise questions about the logic of refugee agency in the camps as delegitimizing its exceptional nature. To view the space as a ‘no life’ out of which they themselves make ‘a life’, reveals the nature of the camp and contradicts the nature of the refugee. Thus, this ultimately raises questions about the obligation to prove refugee agency in the first place. As Lina clearly states, the agency that is happening within the camp space is brought by the people themselves; it does not disprove exceptional nature of the space itself. Perhaps it is instead in its place to ask when refugee agency became a question at all? Asking this question it becomes clear what Malkki (1995), Agamben (1995) and Khosravi (2010) argue, that camps “impose ‘refugee ness’, not as a juridical category but rather as a mode of being, an identity, on individuals (Khosravi 2010: 70)”’. Indeed, human agency even among the most unsettled has always existed throughout history (Blumi 2013; Cohen 2014; Ho 2006). Thus, to claim the camp as a site of agency ignores the important detail that this was not the fundamental intention of the camp, rather it has played a crucial role in the categorization of the refugee as passively waiting, being basically human in need for the ‘basics in life’, as discussed in chapter three. However, humans are living there, which naturally makes it a site of agency, but it does not dismiss the fundamental nature of camp.

Thus, the need to anthropologically prove that refugees inside camps are active members of communities, agents in their everyday lives, political or economic actors, is to ignore the fact that the ‘refugee identity’ as we know it, was invented for the purpose of the national order, and in which the camp was a site in its service. Thus, while Levy (2010) claims that in
overdramatizing the camp, Agamben orientalizes and exotifies the refugee, I suggest that in discussing the camp with a vocabulary as “burden sharing” and feel obliged to claim that the refugees are “struggling for their rights” (101), ignores the history of the construction of the refugee while simultaneously reinforces the idea of the refugee as a human category.

Most of the people I met, came to Zaatari when they first arrived in Jordan, and all of them found a way to leave the camp in order to live in the urban areas. The last years how

I kiss your feet so that he for god’s sake...

What has my sister done for them to put her behind the fence? We are

_Nesrin:_ mā tāṭhayali Hanna wa’t šūfnī ba’d, mā tāṭhayali..

_Hanna:_ kuntī mabsūta?

_Nesrin:_ [...] mā tāṭhayali gåd ḍābīṭ la-haṭṭa fawwatnī la-’andhā [...] ḥa-būṣ rījlo, waṣalt la-i’nī būṣ rījlo ḩuṭīllo būṣ ’įjrak fawwatnī. bas ’anā mā b-aḥkī hēk ’uddām ’awlādi. ḥāda’īllo ’inno biddī ’abūs ’įjro mišān ’allah fawwatnī šūfa, saba’ sinīn ya’nī ’illī bitrūḥ [...] lēš? lak šū ’āmile ’uṭīl la-taḥbīṣūḥā wara l-sūk? mānā ’irḥābīyīn wa-la fajjaret hūn wa-la ’amalet wa-la, wa-la ’etlet ḥadā, wa-la ḏabḥet ḥadā. lēš? mā ṣawwarī ’awlādha, mā ṣawwarī, mā ṣawwarī l-manżar ḏīf. mā ṣawwarī l-zill ’illī [...] mā ṣawwarī šlūn ’āyišīn. mā ṣawwarī šlūn ’am b-ynāmū, mā teta’ṣawwarī kīf ’am yaṣrabū, kīf ’am yaṣrabū may. ’ādīyye. mā fī may mfeltara mā fī may šaḥiyye. l-ḥamāmāt ’anā ’aṣt bī-l-muḥayyam bas l-ḥamdu li-lḥāl ’anā ṭala’et. bas Ḥay yunkin tīl ’omra ḏall ’āyiše juwa. mā ṣawwarī kīf l-ḥamāmāt tfūtī l-’araf [...] b-t’ullī “bī-l-ṣīf mā ’am na’dir narkid zahrnā ”a-l-karafānīš”, nār, nār, ḥadīd, nār, l-karafānī ḥadīd! zīnk w-ḥadīd! mā ‘ad ta’da’r terkud zahra.

_Nesrin:_ You can’t imagine Hanna the moment we saw each other, you can’t imagine..

_Hanna:_ Were you happy?

_Nesrin:_ [...] You can’t imagine how much I obeyed him the officer so that he would let me in to her [...] I [would] kiss his feet, I reached [to that level] that I was about to kiss his feet I told him I kiss your feet let me in... but I don’t speak like this in front of my children... I obeyed him like I would his kiss feet so that he for god’s sake would let me in so that I could see her, seven years like that pass by [...] Why!? What has my sister done for them to put her behind the fence? We are
not terrorists neither she did not blow [anything] up nor did she nor, nor killed anyone, nor decapitated anyone.. why? You can’t imagine her children, you can’t imagine, you can’t imagine the view how.. you can’t imagine the injustice that […] You can’t imagine how they are living.. how they sleep, you can’t imagine how they drink, how they drink water.. normal.. there is no filtered water there is no healthy water, the bathrooms I lived in the camp but thank god I left.. but [she] perhaps through her whole life she will keep living inside.. you can’t imagine how the bathrooms you enter the disgust […] She tells me “in the summer we cannot lean our backs on the caravans”, fire, fire, iron, fire, the caravan is iron! Zink and iron! She cannot lean her back..

Azraq, the latest established refugee camp in Jordan, is also the camp with the strictest surveillance and control. For those who are settled in zone five, no one can either leave the camp or enter any other zone within the camp. Nesrin’s reflections make the question of agency seem unclear. For, what are we trying to prove through demonstrating that refugees are agents in sites constructed for exclusion? Are we trying to un-prove an, by ourselves, invented identity? Perhaps we should let historians do that kind of research instead, a field that puts our understandings in a time perspective, where a different world outlook with other understandings of the refugee can be revealed, disproving present established conceptualizations. In this ethnographical thesis, perhaps it is more important to recognize that however how much agency refugees have, the camp remain a segregating space, keeping stigmatized identities and undesirable groups away from the civilization, “like lepers in the Middle Ages, who were kept outside city walls (Khosravi 2010: 70).”

Ahmad: ḥayā l-muḥayyam šaʼbe, šaʼbe bi-l-ʼāhir yaʾnī l-muḥayyam bi-l-ṣahra.
Hanna: ’anā kunt bi-l-zaʼatari marra wāḥida.
Ahmad: ’aha, yaʾnī ṣuﬁ wēn maḥallo! yaʾnī šahrā, saḥra, mā fī, mū madīna wa-la hiyya balde! intī ‘āyiše makān fārdī [sic], fāriq, mā fiyyo ’ayye šī.

Ahmad: The life in the camp is hard, extremely hard like.. the camp is in the dessert.
Hanna: I was in Zaatari once.
Ahmad: Aha, like you saw where it is located! Like dessert, dessert, there is no, it’s neither a city nor a village! You are living in an empty11, empty place, there is nothing there..

11 In the context I interpreted this word as a mix between the words fāḍī and fāriq which both of them indicate the meaning empty, and with which Ahmad corrected himself directly after, saying fāriq.
Ahmad’s reflections about life in the camp demonstrate a two-dimensional exceptionality. First, the geographical location of the camp, and secondly in the same light, the topography of the camp. Topography and geography relate since, while the purpose of the camp is to place undesired people outside of the society, its existence is not recognized as a part of the nation since it is invisible on every official map (Khosravi 2010).

Camps occupy space but are not recognised as official places. Their inhabitants live, give birth and die there for generations but are not recognised as a community (70).

Drawing from this, existing on soil while simultaneously not on any map, Zaatari, like all other camps in Jordan and elsewhere, become a space but not a place (70). Arguably, there is a need for this kind of conceptualization of the camp while simultaneously not interrupting the autonomy of the people living there. For, while the experiences of living in camps are many and diverse, involving complexities and dimensions that are often missed by scholarship, we must not ignore the historical and contemporary contexts in which sites for separation, isolation and population management emerge and function as a natural part of the world.

‘Basically human’ – between isolation and civilization


_Fadi_: Some countries make, in the camp, areas, for example there is an area called the Saudis’ area, that this for example the Saudi government funded the building of caravans, perhaps it’s privileged, a little, in comparison to other caravans, Qatar, did the same thing, so the thing has become, frankly repulsive, very disgusting, very very not little, that.. that you are laughing at the people, you are lying to the people.

Liisa Malkki (1995) argues that it is the geographical concentration of the ‘displaced’ people that gives room for processes making the refugee become a knowable, nameable figure and as
an object of social-scientific knowledge. Refugee camps in the form they exist today, have existed since the end of the second world war, and have ever since, except for being a temporary and spatially site for refugees, also been an accessible site for humanitarian interventions as much as research and documentation: it is in the camp the modern figure of the refugee, the basic human, largely takes shape (Malkki 1995). In the many conversations I have had with my interlocutors, it is visible the significance for resisting exactly that figure of the camp. Fadi’s passage specifically stresses humanitarian intervention as something humiliating. Furthermore, he stresses the isolated space of the camp, something that is unescapable despite the ‘refugee agency’ found inside.

Connecting these passages, it is visible the interplay between isolation, life expectations and the processes of constructing the figure of the refugee discussed by Malkki (1995). The refugee, as understood in the ‘Agambian’ sense, is a human stripped of all of the rights of a human since

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12 The Arabic word for restaurants is maṭā’īm, however in the conversation it was clear that Fadi meant restaurants.
man is no more equal to the citizen (Agamben 1995). Evidently, it is the conventional understanding of the refugee that legitimizes the modern spatial management of refuge in the nation state system. Lubna sees through these legitimizations, questions the life situation within the camps and regards it as something undoubtedly intentional.


*Lubna:* A question, I want to ask you, are we now in the 1st or the 20th century? Does a human have to live in a tent? Is it in the 1st or the 20th century we started inventing.. eh.. concrete, bricusted, and still there are people who live in a tent? Is it in the 1st or 20th century we have movable caravans13 we’re going with them, [on] trips and journeys, and still there are people living in a tent? Are we supposed in the 1st or the 20th century to [have] a human living in the tent? Okay why? Okay, without this question, is it not possible for us to exchange this tent to a pre-fabricated house? Can we or can we not? We can. But why did we choose the tent? Why? To break, to break the feelings of safety in the heart of this person, to break him, I swear to god, this is just intended, intended! This person who is fleeing from the war we want to break him, is it in the 1st or the 20th century the countries of the world are not able all of them to send money for us to build him a village of concrete? Can we or can we not? We can. Okay why did we choose the tent that is shaggying that is like this [if] you touch it it tears apart, why? Why? Why did we choose the tent for [this human]!? And we can build for him, because it is intended that you break his [integrity], just.

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13 Lubna said *karnafāls* which translates to carnivals, but it was clar in the context that she meant caravans.
Adding to Lubna’s criticism towards the international community’s contemporary refugee management is Nesrin’s experience from visiting her sister in Azraq. Relating the two passages it is defensible to claim that there is no special kind of human category that, regardless of reasons for leaving a nation, naturally settles with poor life standards or isolation from civilization.


Nesrin: Auntie is this from Amman? The slippers, are these from Amman? He was feeling that Amman is something like “wow”, like in paradise, auntie is there television[s] outside? Auntie is there air-fans outside? Auntie is there outside, he was asking me, this one who is five years old, how is the fan, he doesn’t know what the fan is, he doesn’t know it, he doesn’t know it, he came to the camp as little, he has become 5 years.. he left Syria when he was one year old, he doesn’t remember anything, he doesn’t know anything.. he has become five years.. he lived in Rukban14 one and a half year, this one until now six, three years in the Azraq camp, he doesn’t know what the fan is, The moment when he was seeing a picture.. I felt ashamed taking out my phone showing them picture of our home, I felt ashamed.. God they are children, I didn’t reveal or showed them our pictures, and not, and not.. her daughter said to me, auntie how is Hajer sleeping? Did they sleep on a bed? How.. does she has a wardrobe Hajer? Does she has I don’t know..

Nesrin’s niece has never experienced any other place else than the camp and her story about his questions as he met her when she visited from the outside, demonstrates the segregating nature of the camp. A reminder here is that the refugees are not being held isolated, imprisoned, for criminal charges, but rather on their appeal for protection (Khosravi 2010: 4, 100).

Evidently, the camp management must be considered as crucial in the conventional

14 A refugee camp in the northeast of Jordan.
understanding that claiming protection in another nation strips of any other individual or communal attribute until the only thing left is the ‘refugee identity’. This was resisted by Lina, as we discussed the difference between living inside or outside the camps, on which she shared an experience about when she went to Zaatari once, to support a friend who was having an exhibition in the camp.


*Lina:* I went and attended the exhibition, the percentage of the people who came took books and bought books, seriously it wasn’t expected, wasn’t expected, there are people who were, there were people who were readers, like there were people who already read before like, seriously we think that Zaatari, like people are without culture without knowledge, okay there are a large percentage without culture and knowledge, but there are people very intellectual, there are people who are understanding, there are people who were reading I’m telling you like that they were very interested to come and buy books, so you do the imagination of why they want to leave Zaatari?

Rather than demonstrating any ‘refugee identity’, Lina’s reflections of the different peoples she met, simply demonstrate humanity, as much on the inside of the camp as on the outside. Further, it is also visible that Lina differentiates herself from those people living inside the camps even though she also has registered at the UNHCR, which indicates that the figure of ‘the refugee’ is specifically related to the camp.

**Summary**

This chapter has engaged with the ways the camp function as a space for articulating both the upholding and rejection of the national order. Further, it has engaged with conceptualizing nature of the camp. The testimonies have demonstrated the different ways the camp function
as isolating and segregating, thus rejecting any de-exceptionalization of the camp. To theoretically de-exceptionalize the camp, and to understand the camp as a place for agency, is to ignore the initial intention of the camp. In contrast, the testimonies have shown that linking the question of agency to the nature of the camp, is simply an attempt to un-prove an identity invented in the first place. Obviously, any space inhabited by human beings becomes a place for agency, it should not be confused with the nature of spaces intentionally created for other objectives. The camp space reinforces the figure of the refugee as ‘basically human’, passively waiting for repatriation to the lost homeland, and to insist on refugee agency as a product of the camp itself is to ignore the intentions behind the emergence of the camp in the first place. Evidently, any agency appearing within the space of the camp does not derive from the space itself but from the humans residing on that space. As testimonies have demonstrated, the camp has to be understood as a device for preserving the national order, keeping the citizens and the noncitizens separated from each other. In other words, to keep the unwanted away from the civilization allows the national order to persist.
PART III
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

(im)mobility revisited

This study has aimed to examine the lived experiences of (im)mobility of Syrian citizens living in Jordan. The research question in this context has engaged with the everyday dilemmas to deal with choices to accept or resist the imposed qualities of what it means to be Syrian in Jordan today. The qualities that define the essential existence of Syrians in Jordan involve geography as much as they involve history. Consequently, this study has involved a renegotiation of the concepts of nationality, national identity, displacement and refugee-ness as they shape the preconditions for humans’ relative (im)mobility.

By means of an ethnographical approach, the data collection was carried out for approximately 6 months in Amman periodically between the spring 2017 and the spring 2018. During the time spent in Jordan, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews totaling thirteen participants, six men and seven women, who had left Syria for a temporary resettlement in Jordan. For the purpose of giving the interviews a deeper contextual significance, during the time spent in Jordan I also engaged with two organizations providing different services for Syrians living in Jordan, something I have called ‘contextual engagement’. Further, I spent time with many of my interlocutors on an everyday basis.

Different aspects of the everyday life experiences all combined together, have offered a more multifaceted understanding of what it means to be (im)mobile in present time, as additional to conventional scholarship. Following I will resume the themes discussed in section II in order to conclude the links between the empirical findings and the theoretical discussions that jointly have contributed to answer the research question.

The first chapter established a foundation on which to conceptualize the forthcoming concepts, by investigating the historical events of the construction of the nation state and its interconnections to contemporary categorizations of human beings. The emergence of
documents as proving not only humans’ existence but also the individual story and identity located within a national order has proven to be a significant element in contextualizing the conditions for relative (im)mobility. Testimonies demonstrate how different nationalities are located in a hierarchical order shaping living-situations differentiating human experiences from each other. Testimonies also show that (im)mobility was not only an experience when first arriving to Jordan but became a part of life already within the borders of Syria. Thus, (im)mobility should be understood as shifting both spatially and temporarily, as a situation of constant change.

The second chapter engaged with the dilemmas of stability, demonstrating that strandedness involves more than just physical (im)mobility but as well an inherent fear of being refused entrance at the Jordanian border if granted the possibility to travel. Further, this chapter engaged with the inadequate understanding of ‘displacement’ as solely a matter of ‘loss of home’. Testimonies highlight a mix of factors constituting this loss, thus challenging the national teleology of territorial boundedness as a natural feature of life. By conceptualizing the relativity of foreignness, this chapter challenged the inadequate understanding of the migrant and the border. The border exceptionality is generally defined through the self and the other, the native and the foreign, while testimonies showed that foreignness is relative, as the acceptance or rejection of Syrians differs in different times and places. The relative (im)mobility thus depends on the different definitions of foreignness: ‘refugee’, ‘migrant’, ‘expat’ or ‘tourist’ which ultimately implies that certain bodies, certain social information is equal to ‘less foreign’.

The third chapter engaged with the invention of the ‘refugee identity’ as a human categorization not only in contrast to the citizen but also as involved in a geographical hierarchy in which humans are located differently. Linking to the colonial past, the invention of this identity upholds of the national order, the conceived truth of this world. Testimonies showed dilemmas of resisting or accepting the qualities of this ‘refugee identity’. For my interlocutors, becoming ‘a refugee’ meant to strip of all other qualities making them human, situating them unfavorably on the hierarchy of needs. Negotiations of the dilemmas of registering at the UNHCR challenged the notion of ‘pure need’ and demonstrated the irrationality of the conception that there would ever be an essential category of humans for whom it is enough to just breathe.

The fourth chapter challenged the attempt to de-exceptionalize the camp by conceptualizing it as a space for simultaneous articulations of upholding and rejecting the national order. By demonstrating the presence of agency in the camps, testimonies contradicted the nature of the
refugee while simultaneously confirmed the nature of the camp; agency happening within the camp space does not disprove its exceptional nature. In fact, according to the testimonies, the camp is understood as a space of isolation and segregation, imposing the ‘refugee identity’ as a mode of being. Thus, the camp itself should not be credited the agency happening within its space. Rather, since humans are living there it naturally becomes a site of agency, but it does not dismiss its fundamental nature. By managing and controlling mobility within national borders, the camp operates to preserve the national order.

Another story – repairing a broken dignity

The same week as I arrived in Sweden, Lina called me. She and her family had been chosen by the UNHCR to travel to Britain. And Lina was not the only one traveling, Nadine too. She was finally going to reunite with her mother and father in France, however leaving Eima behind as it had proven impossible for her to find anybody who could get her the ḍuḥūl ḥawda paper. I remember the many times we had talked together about the stranded-ness, the de facto immobility, that was shaping their everyday lives. I often found myself in a role where I started dreaming about the future. Initiating talks about next year’s summer, I talked about how we would all reunite in my hometown in Sweden, describing the rooms of the house where we could stay, the activities we could do, the walks in the forest, the barbeque evenings. We would laugh and talk about it like we were planning for it.

By situating myself both personally and professionally in relation to this ethnography and the people I met, I many times found myself in situations where I did not know how to act, how to relate, what to say or what to do. These dreamy talks became a way for me to escape the obvious different experiences of our everyday lives. However, now it was happening. Lina and Nadine were about to travel, and on the group conversation online we started planning our reunion, for real.

Then again, a few weeks ago, I talked with Said over the phone, an interlocutor who also had become a dear friend of mine. When I left Jordan in the end of May 2018, we decided that the next time we meet, it would be somewhere else outside of Jordan. ʾılmaktūb ṣibḥayyin min ʿamwâno, what is written [in the book] is showing on the front page, is an expression he taught me. It
simply means that according to the current situation, it looks like the next time we see each other will probably be in Jordan, after all.

The different negotiations of the meaning of borders, camps, the nation state, displacement and refugee-ness combined with the different events, journeys and situations shaping the fates of the people who have shared their stories in this thesis, contribute to the conceptualization of the meaning of (im)mobility. What is most important about their stories is that they provide another story than the single story that have been told too many times; the story about territory and nativity, about borders and foreigners, about selves and others. The Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) says that if you “show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become”. Evidently, the story that have been told over and over again about people with similar experiences like my interlocutors, is not the same story they tell themselves, or at least not completely. There was never a single story to be told. Instead, their stories are diverse, nuanced, dynamic, they take turns and include side-stories that shape total humanity. So, this is how (im)mobility is lived: in many ways. Hence, (im)mobility, as an important component shaping the experiences of not being settled, should not be understood as a static definable mode of being, but rather as a part of a larger story formed by many stories.

If it was not for the single story about the national order that have been told since the end of the 18th century, it would not have been necessary to write this thesis. That is, it would not have been necessary to challenge the ways people and places have been categorized into representing different essential modes of existence. However, as we have reached to this point, I wish that future research will discuss the issues brought up in this thesis by considering other terms. I wish for instance, that future research enables us to examine not being settled without using the terminology that have been regarded as the single truth of this world. I believe that it is only in this way we can move beyond earlier given understandings and explore new ones. The concepts of borders, foreignness, displacement and refugee-ness are all relative which ultimately makes (im)mobility relative as well. Evidently, there is a need for studies that move beyond the traditional way to view ‘the refugee’ and fully recognize that the concept is as young as the concept of the nation. By revealing the ways different peoples and places are hierarchically geographically located within the national order, the complexities of relative (im)mobility become clear, demonstrating the irrationality of mobility in modern time being a privileging gift carefully distributed to humans within some specific categories. First then we will realize the irrationality of the constructions, establishments and declarations that have made such a simple
thing as mobility so complicated, and that have caused so much suffering, death and despair. However, until then:

We are not going anywhere, ḫalas.
### Borders/mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Arabic Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?</td>
<td>إذا كان لديك فرصة السفر إلى أي مكان، أي وين تروح؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you tell me about your first big travel?</td>
<td>كيف تخبرني عن الأولى سفرة كبيرة تبعك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does this experience differ from when you traveled to Jordan?</td>
<td>هل هذه السفرة مختلفة عن لما اجت على الأردن؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If you want to, could you tell me about your journey to here?</td>
<td>إذا بدك، كيف تخبرني عن رحلتك إلى هون؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you visited any other places except from Amman/Jordan?</td>
<td>زرت أماكن أخرى غير عمان/الأردن؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Where did you go?</td>
<td>إلى وين؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If not, why?</td>
<td>لو لا، ليس؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last year when I went to Jordan, I was asked to leave the visa-queue and the police did not want to give me visa because they found it strange that I had been so many times in Jordan, so I had to speak with the mukhabarat and after maybe 15 minutes they gave me visa. Everything worked out fine but I felt a bit worried.</td>
<td>ستة الماضية وانا مسافرة للأردن وقفتي الشرطة على المطار عشان استغبي اني كنت اجت للأردن كثير مرات، فاخذوني برات الطابور و حكوا مع و سألوني المخابرات كم سؤال، ممكن بعد ربع ساعة وافقوني القيس. كل شيء طلع منح بس انا كنت شوي نفقات.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Have you felt anything similar?</td>
<td>حسبته بيشي مشابه شيء مرة؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Since your arrival to jordan, have the situation changed? Can you go back to Syria?</td>
<td>منذ اجت الى الأردن، هل تغير الوضع؟ فيك ترجع لسوريا؟</td>
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### Nations

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you ever had any issues with getting a visa or getting in to another country?</td>
<td>هل واجهت صعوبات بالحصول على فيسة على بلد ثاني؟</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Do you think there is a difference between a camp and a city?</td>
<td>1. 2 ( \text{Do you think there is a difference between a camp and a city?} )</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. If yes, what are the differences between a camp and the city?</td>
<td>2. 4 ( \text{If yes, what are the differences between a camp and the city?} )</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Why did you choose to come to Amman?</td>
<td>3. 3 ( \text{Why did you choose to come to Amman?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I usually think that the home is where my fiancé or family is. What do you think? What is home for you?</td>
<td>4. 4 ( \text{I usually think that the home is where my fiancé or family is. What do you think? What is home for you?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What do you need to feel 100% satisfied where you live?</td>
<td>5. 5 ( \text{What do you need to feel 100% satisfied where you live?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What do you need to feel 100% like you are home?</td>
<td>6. 6 ( \text{What do you need to feel 100% like you are home?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did you have this in Syria?</td>
<td>7. 7 ( \text{Did you have this in Syria?} )</td>
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**Space**

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**The refugee in international aid and the construction of the refugee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Would you like to tell me why you chose to leave Syria for Jordan?</td>
<td>1. 1 ( \text{Would you like to tell me why you chose to leave Syria for Jordan?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was there a specific point when you took the decision?</td>
<td>2. 2 ( \text{Was there a specific point when you took the decision?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Why do you think there are refugees?</td>
<td>3. 3 ( \text{Why do you think there are refugees?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Who is a refugee?</td>
<td>4. 4 ( \text{Who is a refugee?} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documenting human existence.</td>
<td>1. Have you registered at the UNHCR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What are the benefits from being registered at the UNHCR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. What is the purpose with the ID-card from the UNHCR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. What is the difference between the ID-card from the UNHCR and the Jordanian ID-card?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending questions</td>
<td>1. What do you dream of in the future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW:**

I have no further questions, is there anything you would like to add?

ما عندي أي أسئلة ثانية، يحبك تضيف أي شيء ثاني؟
Bibliography


Interlocutors: