Camps vs. Self-settled refugees? A comparative analysis of syrian refugees' Settlement in Jordan and Lebanon

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CAMPS VS. SELF-SETTLED REFUGEES?
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES' SETTLEMENT IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

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INTRODUCTION

SINCE the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, over 5 million refugees settled in neighbouring countries. While Lebanon refuses to open new official refugee camps, Jordan and Turkey has adopted a different perspective. Several new refugee camps have been created at their borders with Syria. However, at a regional level, less than 20% of the registered refugees reside in camps. This chapter aims to present a comparative analysis of the settlement process of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. The respective role of settlement policies developed both by states and international organisation will be analysed in relation with the refugees' own settlement strategies. How do refugees adapt to policy and socio-economic constraints in different contexts? What is the role of kinship and previous transnational networks (based on labour migration, religious affiliation, etc.) in shaping forms of gatherings at a local level in host states?

Once the border crossed, most of the refugees often settle precariously in the main cities of the host countries. Others are forced to live in refugee camps, conceived as temporary reception areas by the international organizations that manage them, but

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which often remain on the long-term[1]. From an operational point of view, for international organizations or humanitarian organizations, refugee camps are the privileged place of their action[2]. It also gives some visibility to their activities. However, far from being just a space for humanitarian intervention, the camps have acquired a special status in the eyes of their inhabitants. Camps are spaces of marginalization, marked by high level of poverty, but also places that symbolizes and represents the specific history of the refugees in exile. This double dimension (material and symbolic) is inherent of the existence of camps in the long term. For example, since 2012, the three refugee camps opened in Jordan to accommodate Syrians fleeing their country obey to the same logic. They symbolize both the absence of a political solution to the Syrian conflict and the impossibility of return for its inhabitants, as well as a space of marginalization and poverty.

This chapter aims to shatter two misconceptions concerning refugee camps. First, because camps are created in a context of emergency, they are usually described simply as a gathering of tents, considered as a spatial, social and political archetype of temporariness. But many authors highlight the complexity of camps' organization with the transformation of shelters - from tents to houses -, of the local economy - from humanitarian assistance to informal markets and workshops -, and of camp dwellers' practices and perceptions[3]. In other words, as Michel Agier[4] and Sari Hanafi[5]

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[1] AGIER, MICHEL (2002), Between war and city: Towards an urban anthropology of refugee camps. *Ethnography*, vol. 3, no 3, p. 317-341.

[2] WARD, PATRICIA (2014) Refugee Cities: Reflections on the Development and Impact of UNHCR Urban Refugee Policy in the Middle East, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Volume 33, Issue 1, p. 77-93.

[3] *Dadaab Stories* is an example of this different dimensions, showing how refugees are also inhabitants despite the precariousness of their life. http://www.dadaabstories.org/ See ABOU ZAKI H. (2017), *Chatila à la croisée des chemins: guerres, mémoires et urbanités dans un camp de réfugiés palestiniens au Liban*, Thèse de doctorat, EHESS, Paris, 2017; DAHDAH A. (2015), *Habiter la ville sans droits. Les travailleurs migrants dans les marges de Beyrouth*, Thèse de doctorat, Aix-Marseille Université, Aix-en-Provence; PUIG N. / DORAÏ D. (2012), Introduction. Insertions

argue, refugee camps should be analyzed as urban structures and not only through a humanitarian and an ephemeral perspective. As a consequence, this approach tackles the preconceived idea that refugees are basically assisted and dependent populations waiting humanitarian and social aids. As a matter of fact, the transformation of camps by the refugees underlines on the one hand their capacity of resistance to precariousness and to the humanitarian management of space and population on the other. In other terms, following Cathrine Brun reflection on the making of place for refugees, "*the here and now should also be present when analyzing situation of forced migration. Though many refugees and migrants feel that they live, or want to live, their lives elsewhere, they have a present life, where they need to survive, to make livelihood, and thus through their actions construct the place where they are physically present*"[6].

Second, the way medias, international institutions, humanitarian organizations but also academics focus on camps tends to exaggerate the role of this kind of space in the exile trajectories and refugees' experience, at the expense of those who live by their own

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urbaines et espaces relationnels des migrants et réfugiés au Proche-Orient, K. DORAÏ / N. PUIG (dir.), *L'urbanité des marges. Migrants et réfugiés dans les villes du Proche-Orient*, Paris-Beyrouth, Ifpo-Tétraèdre, p. 11-25; MARTIN, DIANA (2015) From spaces of exception to 'campscapes': Palestinian refugee camps and informal settlements in Beirut. *Political geography*, vol. 44, p. 9-18; SANYAL, ROMOLA (2011) Squatting in camps: Building and insurgency in spaces of refuge. *Urban Studies*, vol. 48, n° 5, p. 877-890.

[4] AGIER, 2002, *ibid*.

[5] HANAFI, S. (2006), Vivre dans le camp, vivre ailleurs: Les Palestiniens réfugiés en Egypte et dans les Territoires palestiniens, *Bulletin de l'association des géographes français*, n° 83, p. 79-92.

[6] BRUN, C. (2001) Reterritorializing the Relationship between People and Place in Refugee Studies, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 83(1), p. 19 (pp. 15-25).

in urban and rural areas[7]. And as we mentioned above, the majority of refugees across the world do not live in camps, mainly in the cities where they find resources but also face precariousness in the margins where they settle. Indeed, before 2009 this precariousness had been strengthened by UNHCR policy which denies protection and assistance to refugees in urban areas that is already supplied in camps[8]. Furthermore, national authorities of host countries also attempt to limit social integration of refugees by <mark>segregate</mark> them in isolated camps[9]. The refugees' strategies and their presence in the cities have forced UNHCR, humanitarian organizations, and national authorities to soften their policies. However, the conditions of living of refugees outside the camps are still precarious, more specifically in the rural areas.

In our chapter based on the displacement of Syrian populations in Jordan and Lebanon we will disentangle the complexity of the relation between forced migrations, refugee camp and self-settlement out of camps. In this respect, we will explore two very different contexts: in Jordan refugee camps managed by UNHCR and NGOs are the keystone of national policy regarding the Syrian crisis; in Lebanon authorities refused categorically the construction of official camps and have adopted the policy of "*laissez-faire*", which means that Syrians are dispersed through the country, a dispersion structured by settlement and job opportunities on one hand, and on the migrants' networks built before the war when Syrians were the main workforce.

Our analysis is based on fieldwork at a local scale and on an ethnographic approach illustrated by four individual experiences and narratives of exile, both in Jordan and Lebanon. The 4 cases,

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[7] GOODALL, C. (2011), Sanctuary and solidarity: urban community responses to refugees and asylum seekers on three continents, *New Issues in Refugee Research*, n° 221, p. 45.

[8] DARLING, J. (2016), Forced migration and the <mark>city</mark> Irregularity, informality, and the politics of presence, *Progress in Human Geography*, p. 1-21.

[9] KIBREAB, G. (2007), Why Governments Prefer Spatially Segregated Settlement Sites for Urban Refugees, *Refuge*, vol. 24, p. 27-35.

despite their diversity, highlight the instability and the vulnerability of the refugees as a consequence of national policies, pitfalls of local integration in a region deeply affected by political and economic crisis.

1. THE ROLE OF REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE RECEPTION POLICY: CONTROL AND SEGREGATION

The non-resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which results in the permanence of the camps since their creation in the early 1950s, is a major factor to understand the current treatment of new refugee flows in the region. For example, following the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, the main host states in the region did not open refugee camps on their territories. While camps are conceived to develop the operational management of a humanitarian crisis and to facilitate the control of refugee populations, it raises several problems for host states. It can generate pockets of poverty that are partially disconnected from the socio-economic environment of the host country[10]. Barriers to refugee mobility generates increased dependence on humanitarian assistance over the long term. It can also develop forms of segregation of refugee populations in their host society creating a form of stigmatization. Palestinian camps contrast for example with the archetypal image that can be made of a refugee camp. From spaces made up of the juxtaposition of tents, the camps are today dense urban areas with a developed informal economy[11].

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[10] MCCONNACHIE, KIRSTEN (2016) Camps of containment: A genealogy of the refugee camp. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, vol. 7, n° 3, p. 397-412; CHAABAN, J. / SALTI, N. / GHATTAS, H. / IRANI, A. / ISMAIL, T. / BATLOUNI, L. (2016), *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015*, Beirut: Report published by the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

[11] MARTIN, 2015, *ibid*; SANYAL R. (2012), Refugees and the City: An Urban Discussion, *Geography Compass*, vol. 6, n° 11, p. 633-64.

The host state authorities' reluctance to open refugee camps is partly based on the fear of the permanent settlement of refugees on their territory following the Palestinian refugees' experience. The Iraqi crises of 1990-1991 and then post-2003 showed that in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon the absence of camps combined with rather unrestrictive forms of entry and residence (depending on the countries and periods concerned), a relatively easy access to public services and employment in the informal market, increased the possibility of refugee mobility and thus their re-emigration to third countries.

However, the decision not to open a refugee camp is the responsibility of both state policies and the logic developed by the actors themselves. Iraqi refugees, like other groups of refugees in the Middle East, gathered in urban areas. The construction of Azraq camp in Jordan was decided in 2013 while the number of refugees entering the country was very high. Built up to accommodate up to 130.000 people, the camp is today half empty. In December 2017 UNHCR registered only 53.000 refugees. The majority of Syrian refugees, when they have the opportunity, move to urban areas where opportunities to find a job are higher and where to rebuild a "normal" life easier.

Unlike Lebanon[12], Jordan has opened refugee camps in the North of the country[13]. While only 20% of all the registered Syrian refugees live in a camp today, most of the refugees have transited through a camp at the Syrian border. These were set up parallel to the gradual closure of the Western border between Syria and

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[12] In Lebanon, the authorities have refused to open official refugee camps for fear of reproducing the Palestinian experience again. The camps were in fact established in the long term, and they were also during the 1975-1990 war spaces where developed armed groups. It is therefore for security reasons as well as to limit the long-term possibilities of refugee settlement that this policy has been developed. As a result, the Syrians are settled mainly in the outskirts of the big Lebanese cities, and have constituted a multitude of small unofficial camps in the rural areas.

[13] Turkey has also opened camps along its border with Syria. At the regional level, less than a tenth of the total registered refugees live in camps.

Jordan. They allow the Jordanian authorities to conduct security checks before allowing refugees to enter the country. The waiting time in these camps varies according to the refugee profiles. In 2019, almost 40.000 Syrians were stuck in the Rukban transit camp East of the Syrian-Jordanian border, in a no-man's land between the two countries. This transit camp - where the refugees spent at first between one to ten days -, turned today into a settlement camp. The tightening of entry policies in Jordan has transformed border posts into a *de facto* camp. Despite the intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian conditions are extremely difficult. When refugees are allowed to enter Jordan, they are then directed to one of the 3 settlement camps. If they have a Jordanian *kafil*, they can settle elsewhere in the territory.

The Zaatari Camp: From Humanitarian Intervention to the Resilience of its Inhabitants

What does it mean to settle in a refugee camp in Jordan? It is worth remembering that refugees in camps are the most vulnerable and those who have little connection in their host country. They have received limited education and have very few social and material resources as well as transnational connections that would allow them to continue their journey to a third country to build a more stable future.

Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan's biggest refugee camp, was opened in the summer of 2012 to accommodate the growing number of Syrian refugees crossing the border between Syria and Jordan. The first refugees settle in a plot of land close to the Northern city of Mafraq, on an empty land. Tents were set up by international organizations, according to an orthogonal plan as many refugee camps around the world. Refugees are then registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and are eligible for assistance. The refugees then reorganize their lives in this isolated, arid space, very different from the region they left in Southern Syria. They are therefore assigned a place by UNHCR with one or two tents depending on the size of the family. Sanitary and collective kitchens were gradually built in each neighborhood

of the camp. In the absence of night lighting, and as the refugees are in an unknown environment, Syrians preferred rapidly to develop their own sanitary and kitchens in their tents or in its immediate vicinity. To create a private space they connected two tents with blankets distributed by humanitarian organizations. From a simple temporary reception area, built up to respond to a humanitarian emergency, the camp was gradually transformed into a piece of Syria in exile. Refugees reorganize and regroup in each neighborhood by village, city or district of origin. Families are also trying to regather. The camp was reorganized and reshaped by the initiative of the refugees.

Case Study #1

Faisal[14] arrived in Zaatari camp in October 2012. He left Bosra in Southern Syria at a time when the crossing of the Jordanian border was still easy. He entered Jordan without difficulty. A place with a tent was attributed to him and his family by the camp authorities. Apart from a short period during which he tried to settle outside the camp, he spent all his time with his family in the camp until his resettlement in France in the summer 2017. During the five years he spent in the camp, his situation changed significantly due to the evolution of his economic situation.

Zaatari camp was originally conceived as a classic refugee camp. A plot of land and a tent was given to each refugee family by the authorities. Later on, prefabricated housing was granted to replace the tents. Rapidly, refugees began to move inside the camp to join family members or people originating from the same areas. They also began to transform their housing, circumventing the strict regulation in the camps. Faisal quickly built a small shelter in corrugated iron, attached to his tent which serves as a bathroom and toilet to avoid attending public toilets built by UNHCR. Because of the lack of public lighting it was difficult and unsafe to move at

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[14] The monitoring and surveys of this family were carried out with P. Piraud-Fournet and T. Fournet, architects at Ifpo Amman and members of the ANR Lajeh program team (lajeh.hypotheses.org).

night in the camp. Then, he improved its housing condition by receiving a prefabricated house from the UNHCR. He managed to buy another prefabricated house and build a kitchen in corrugated iron with wooden structures. He reproduced by himself the type of rural dwelling characteristic of Southern Syria. The two living rooms, the kitchen and the toilets were organized around a small central courtyard. The latter was protected from the street by a metal wall. From a tent placed along the street without private space, he managed to create a private space for his family away from the eyes of neighbors. \

Figure 1: From Tent to Temporary Makeshift Shelter
in Zaatari Camp (P. Piraud-Fournet, Ifpo)
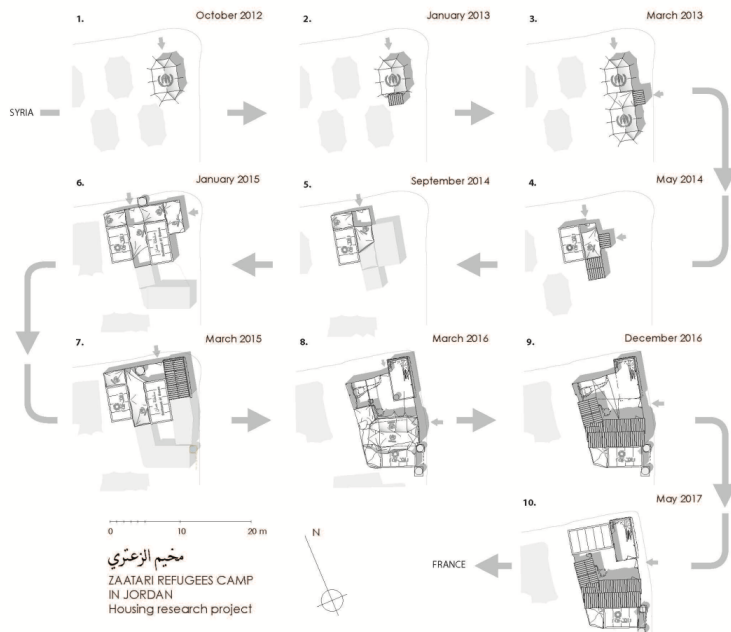
He has recreated in a context of high constraints the premises of a normal life around his home. It should be noted that international organizations were very little involved in this process. The process is mainly based on the initiative of the refugees who transform and adapt the humanitarian material distributed to them. A building materials market developed autonomously in the camp as well as small workshops associated with their transformation (carpenters, electricians, ironwork, etc.). The trajectory of Faisal is however not linear. Because of lack of financial resources he was forced to sell one of his two prefabricated housing units and reorganize his living space. He reduced the size of his kitchen and toilets around the only dwelling unit he had left. Having five young children he asks UNHCR for a second housing unit that arrived only a few months before his resettlement in France. His experience showed on the one hand the importance of refugee initiative in a very constrained context such as refugee camps. On the other hand, it shows the limits of humanitarian intervention that fails to eliminate the economic hazards faced by refugees with very limited access to Jordan's labor market.

2. SYRIANS OUTSIDE CAMPS, PRECARIOUSNESS AND VULNERABILITY OF THE SETTLEMENT

The situation for refugees outside the camps in Jordan is very different. Most of them are renting houses in the main towns and villages of Northern Jordan and in the suburbs of Amman. A small minority constructed their own house on lands belonging to Jordanian owners. Non-camp refugee trajectories are generally even more chaotic than their counterparts in the camps. They are indeed very dependent on their resources to meet their needs. They receive less assistance than the refugees in the camps, they have to pay all the costs of living in Jordan (rent, electricity, water, etc.). They are often forced to move to cope with an increase of the rent or move closer to their place of work. Most of them also stayed, for more or less long periods, through one of the transit and registration camps opened by the Jordanian authorities.

Case Study #2

Abu Bilal arrived in Jordan in 2013. He comes from the Homs region in central Syria. Before arriving in Jordan he lived in Deir Baalba an area Northeast of the city of Homs. He used to work in the construction sector as a self-employed worker on construction sites. Following his military service in Lebanon, he worked as a seasonal worker in several Lebanese regions, most often for periods of one to two months depending on economic opportunities, from 1993, when he finished his military service, until 2005, when Rafic Hariri was assassinated. The Syrian army withdrawn from Lebanon the same year. The security situation of Syrian workers tends to deteriorate in Lebanon. Some of the were targeted, and this leads to the return of many workers to Syria. Abu Bilal continued his activity in the construction sector in Syria as an independent worker. He lived with his parents and brothers in a self-built house. Abu Bilal was circulating for professional reasons between Syria and Lebanon as many Syrian workers at that time. At the beginning of the Syrian uprising, he was involved in the rebellion and was forced to flee with his family from his neighborhood. He first fled to Qousseir (near the Lebanese border) in his wife's family for 2 months.

Then he moved to a safest place inside Syria, while the security situation on the Lebanese border was deteriorating. He bought a small piece of land with two of his brothers in Furqlus, a small town east of Homs on the road to Palmyra, where he built a small house, with no electricity and not connected to the water network.

Seven months later he was forced to leave again for security and economic reasons. He decided to leave Syria in March 2013. While the Western border with Jordan was closed, he headed first to Qaryatayn, a city further South in Syria, before heading to the Ruweished transit camp in Jordan. From there he went to another registration camp, Raba'a Sarhan, and then he arrived in Zaatari camp.

After 12 days in the camp, he decides to leave Zaatari to join relatives in Azraq. He illegally left the camp and settled in Azraq where 3 of his nieces were married to Jordanians. He rented a small

apartment on the outskirts of Azraq before settling on a land that his niece's husband lent him. He built up his own house with the money he earned by working illegally on construction sites. He took the opportunity to build relationships with Jordanian sellers of building materials who sold him materials at attractive prices. Mutual aid between refugees facilitates the construction as well as the assistance he received from his Jordanian family (free land, connection to electricity, helps to find work).

Following a family dispute in May 2016, Abou Bilal was expelled from his house by the owners (his niece) under pressure from other members of his family who left Syria with him. He decided to rent a few hundred meters from his former home. While the family conflict was growing, he preferred to leave Azraq and try to settle in Ramtha, a border town in Northern Jordan. He settled in downtown Ramtha but cannot get used to the urban environment. Failing to find work and adapt to the city he decided to return to settle in Azraq, where he still receives job offers for him and his son as workers on construction sites. Today Abu Bilal has great difficulty finding work. He has to assume the cost of renting his apartment.

In protracted situation, such as for Abu Bilal, refugees in the Middle East are deprived of a right to stay, what Susan Banki describes as *precarity of place*. "[…] *the permission to remain in one's physical place is perhaps paradoxically at the core of a concept of national assignment of privileges and benefits. 'Precarity of place' describes the absence of such permission and be defined as vulnerability to removal or deportation to one's physical location*"[15]. Lebanon, as the next example shows clearly, is also a place of precarious settlement for Syrian refugees.

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[15] BANKI, S. (2013) Precarity of place: a complement to the growing precariat literature, *Global Discourse*, 3:3-4, p. 453 (450-463).

From Time of Passage to Time of Installation: The Syrian Migrants in Zgharta

Zgharta is a 30.000 inhabitants city situated in Northern Lebanon. Because of the tensions with the Northern metropolis of Tripoli during the Lebanese war (1975-1990) and its increasing high-educated population, Zgharta has developed its own service sector since the 1970's: hospitals, schools, banks, shops. As a consequence, the agriculture sector (more specifically orchards) that had traditionally ruled the local economy and organized the local space has been progressively marginalized. So, contrary to the old generations who were mostly peasants (landowners and labourers) a high proportion of Zgharta inhabitants totally abandoned their lands or switched to another activity. However, agriculture in and around Zgharta has remained and needed labour force despite the irreversible expansion of the service sector and the urbanization process. As a result, and like in other region of Lebanon, since the 1960's Syrian workers have supplied to the local demand of unqualified labour force in the agriculture sector, but also in the building sector also in expansion.

Thus, through decades a migration system had been established between Syrian rural areas of Homs, Hama and Idlib provinces and Zgharta. Hundreds of Syrian workers, mainly single men from the same families and/or villages (fathers, sons, brothers and cousins) moved every year for weeks or even months, waiting everyday on the streets to be recruited mainly for the orange, olive, apple and pear harvests or for construction work. With time, Syrian workers have been symbolized the "birds of passage"[16], who were tolerated because of their economical usefulness, the temporariness and the relative invisibility of their presence. We argue in this chapter that the modalities of exile in the context of the Syrian war could not be understood without taking into account these historical perspectives and the specificity of the local scale. As a matter of fact, in 2017 the settled Syrian refugees in Zgharta are mainly the migrants who used

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[16] PIORE, M. J. (1979) *Birds of passage: migrant labor and industrial societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

to work in this Lebanese locality before the crisis. However, Syrian war has deeply affected the social, economic, political and status conditions that had framed Syrian migration to Lebanon, impacting the conditions of settlement for thousands of Syrian nationals who are now displaced with their family.

Indeed, the former labour migration system was kind of an "invisible cage"[17] based on the relatively free circulation of workers[18], on the economic disparities between both countries and on the social stigmatization Syrian workers had to face. In fact, Syrians got paid in Lebanon where they rudely lived (sometimes settled in hovels or in the construction sites), saving the money they planned to invest once back to their village or send as remittances to their family. Their access to the labour market was guarantee as long as they did not attempt to cross the limits fixed by the Lebanese social hierarchy where they occupied one of the lowest rank.

As a result, the consequences of Syrian war on the Syrian-Lebanese migration system are multidimensional: *1)* Lebanese authorities officially closed the border in 2014 in order to stop the refugees influx; *2)* they also imposed to Syrians the *kafala*[19] system, which pushes thousands of them into illegality and limits their mobility; *3)* the settlement of families linked to the impossibility of returning to Syria have dramatically decreased, if not suppressed, the economic benefit of Syrian migration to Lebanon where the cost of living is considerably higher; *4)* like in Zgharta some local

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[17] CHALCRAFT, JOHN (2008) *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[18] This free circulation had been officialised by the Lebanese-Syrian agreement (1993), which aimed to facilitate the migration of workers between both countries.

[19] *Kafala* system is a sponsorship system, which leads to control the social and the spatial mobility of foreign workers placed under the responsibility of their Lebanese employer. This system binds the residence permit to the work permit. The abundance of demands because of the massive presence of Syrian refugees has led to the creation of a "*kafala* black market" where Lebanese ask hundreds of US dollars to sponsor Syrian refugees.

authorities constraint the Syrians' spatial mobility (curfew between 6pm and 6am, ban on waiting for employers after 10am on the streets). All these aspects have impacted the modalities of Syrian settlement in Zgharta where the agriculture sector is also in deep crisis because of the Syrian war, which has blocked the exportation of Lebanese products to the Gulf region.

The Syrian Refugee Crisis, the Lebanese Economic Crisis, and the Stakes of Accommodation in Zgharta

According to international institutions and NGO reports, Lebanon has been economically suffering with the internal political instability since 2008 and more specifically with the regional instability since the uprising in Syria and then the war. As a consequence, the Syrian refugees' influx has been considered by Lebanese inhabitants both as a burden and as an opportunity. In fact, for Lebanese host society, and more specifically landowners, renting to Syrian refugees is an economic opportunity generating income in a context of a deep economic crisis affecting most of the Lebanese population. According to UNHCR coordinator in Lebanon[20], the income generated by rents to Syrian refugees in Lebanon is estimated to 350 million US Dollars in 2016.

In Zgharta the number of Syrian refugees has reached 5.000 individuals in 2017. The group is dispersed in and around the urban locality in three main different categories of accommodations: *1)* The majority of refugees live in converted farming, warehouse buildings, and in basic breezeblocks constructions mainly located in the countryside. *2)* There are also hundreds of Syrians who stay into the city especially in old buildings abandoned by Lebanese inhabitants but rent for high price by the owners[21]. Some landlords

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[20] The UNHCR coordinator MIREILLE GIRARD mentioned this estimation during the French Red-Cross colloquium "Transition humanitaire et réflexions éthiques à Beyrouth. Quels regards, quelles perspectives?" in Beirut on November 16th 2017.

[21] According to a local study led by architects and urban planners, Syrians represent 30% of the Zgharta oldest area in 2018.

who still live in the old city also split their house in order to rent one or two rooms, generally in the basement. *3)* In Zgharta, tents' camp represents only a minor accommodation place, unlike in other region such as the Beqaa valley or the Northern region of 'Aakar. Only one small camp is situated in 'Iaal, a small village close to Zgharta where the Syrian family who lives there used to work in the olive orchards during the Autumn before the war. The landowner, who was their employer before the war, is now both their employer and landowner who rent the land they have built the tents on.

The converted buildings and the basic breezeblocks constructions are the principal accommodations of Syrian refugees in Zgharta. As we mentioned above, urbanization process and agriculture sector crisis have pushed farmers and landowners to transform their activity and the use of their properties. For instance, several large surface buildings originally designed for chicken or cows breed had been converted into shelters for Syrian refugees. These buildings are undeniably inappropriate for human settlement because of insalubrity and lack of intimacy. However, the scarcity of the offer, the small resources of the Syrians and the stigmatization against them have forced the refugees to accept these rudely conditions of living. For example, some Lebanese farmers or landowners rent hovels for 70 US dollars to 150 US dollars per month per unit of accommodation to more than twenty families. And thanks to the NGO interventions that have improved the quality of the hovels - construction of walls made by wood for the intimacy, construction of private toilets or latrines, adding kitchen equipment like sink -, some owners have increased the rent.

Case Study #3

Ahmad is a 40 years old man from a village in Hama countryside. In 2012 Syrian army and rebels fought in the village and around, forcing Ahmad's family (wife and children) and his relatives (brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins), as all the inhabitants, to leave. Ahmad's relatives split into three groups: one moved to Turkey, one to Jordan, and one to Lebanon more specifically to Zgharta where the men have worked since 2000 for one employer

mainly, a chicken farmer. So, there are 25 families from Ahmad's village who have gathered in Zgharta, most of them belonging to the same lineage. After being expulsed by Zgharta municipal authorities from their first settlement, an empty store on the street, Ahmad, as one of the leader, had negotiated with the chicken farmer in order to transform his unused farm buildings into accommodations (figure 1). In 2016, families have subdivided the buildings into small units and rent each part around 100-150 US dollars per month.

Figure 2: Syrian Refugees' Accommodations
in Former Chicken Farm Buildings in Zgharta

Credit: ANR Lajeh 2016

Ahmad had its own land in Syria. He used to be a peasant who circulated between Lebanon and Syria, depending on availability of work on one hand and on the agriculture rhythms on the other. As a

result of his circulation, Ahmad said that he knows Zgharta inhabitants and that he is well-known in the city. As a matter of fact, he is really disappointed when he explained the conditions of living for Syrians in Zgharta today. As other Syrians, Ahmad has to face the lack of work opportunity, the constraints of the *kafala* system, and he is subjected to the public spaces restrictions and to the curfew. So, as all Syrians, Ahmad struggles to pay his rent every month.

However, in the group who lives in the farm, Ahmad has a specific status. He is the middleman between the tenants and the owner. For example, he is responsible for collecting the rents and for the group organization and interactions *i.e.* he has to deal with the tensions within the community, but also with the NGOs, the Lebanese authorities and the Municipality. But as middleman, Ahmad has also some benefit. For example, he takes care of the vast vegetable patch and works in the chicken farm. In return, Ahmad is allowed to take vegetables for its own consumption and his rent is diminished. Furthermore, according to his specific status, Ahmad, his wife, and their two children live in a room apart with a small garden, hid behind a wall made by flowers, bamboos, and a net (figure 2). Compared to the accommodations in the farm buildings, Ahmad's room is big and the family is not affected by the lack of intimacy.

Figure 3: Ahmad's Habitat hid Behind a Wall
made by Flowers, Bamboos, and Net

Credit: ANR Lajeh 2016

Case Study #4

Oubeyda's residential instability highlights her vulnerability. Oubeyda is a 30 years old widow with 3 children without any official status, one born in Syria in 2010, the others in Lebanon in 2012 and 2014. She comes from a village close to Idlib. Because of the war, she, her husband, and their son moved during 6 months from one village to another before deciding to cross Lebanese border. They settled in Minieh (near Tripoli) where they worked as caretakers. During this period Lebanese-Syrian border was opened and Oubeyda's husband was still travelling to Syria. Nevertheless, in October 2013 he was arrested at a Syrian army checkpoint, imprisoned, and killed. Forsaken in Lebanon after the death of her

husband, Oubeyda decided to come back to Syria and gather with her parents. A few months later, without resources, it was evident for her that it is impossible to live there as a widow with two young children. So, she chose to come back to Lebanon where she rented a small room in the city of Halba ('Akkar, North Lebanon) close to relatives.

Oubeyda's oldest brother lives in Zgharta and decided to marry her to one of his friend. Oubeyda left Halba to live with her second husband in Zgharta where her third child was born in 2014. At the end of 2014 the couple divorced and Oubeyda was not able to pay the rent of the small apartment by her own, around 120 US Dollars. She was registered at the UNHCR and received a monthly cash assistance of 130 US Dollars, which is not enough to cover basic family's needs. As a consequence, the Lebanese owner expelled the family, but her brother accepted to accommodate her for a short time. Oubeyda has worked as cleaner for less than 3 euros per hour, for a few hours per week, which is quite insufficient to pay a rent. However, because her brothers' house is too small Oubeyda left and rent a small breezeblocks room close to a river in the countryside of Zgharta, where she and her children suffered the humidity and the cold during the winter. The family left the room in February 2015 and moved to another room in the countryside of Zgharta within kind a breezeblocks camp. In 2016 Oubeyda does not have a *kafil*, a Lebanese sponsor, which means that she is not allowed to work legally. But if Oubeyda is still not able to pay the rent, some inhabitants who come from different Syrian regions help her and the owner looks tolerant despite her debt.

Figure 4: Breezeblocks Camp in Zgharta Countryside

Credit: ANR Lajeh 2016

As a Syrian widow Oubeyda is affected by a multidimensional vulnerability and a high precariousness. She struggles to survive in Lebanon, more specifically in Zgharta where it is impossible for her to find a job to pay a rent and to take care of her children alone. Regarding this situation, in 2016 Oubeyda decided to apply to the reinstallation program organized by the UNHCR in order to reach Europe or Northern America. However, she is also think to come back to Syria where she said life could not be worse than in Lebanon.

CONCLUSION: RESIDENTIAL TRAJECTORIES
MARKED BY INSTABILITY AND VULNERABILITY

Regardless of where refugees settle, whether in or outside the camps, the Syrian refugees' residential trajectories are marked by precariousness and vulnerability. Humanitarian assistance in the camps mitigate some of the hazards faced by refugees but cannot guarantee their residential stability. The many limitations put in place both by Lebanese and Jordanian authorities to keep the camp or the informal settlements temporary, such as the ban on the use of building materials, make the settlement very precarious and unsustainable on the long term. Outside the camps the economic conditions are very difficult and push refugees to move regularly due to rising rent prices or to find a job. Few guarantees are offered to refugees to secure their habitat, whether it is self-built or rented. Housing, that represents for the refugees a space of stability and recreation of "normal" a life. Refugees' experience of exile is marked by a high degree of precariousness that reinforces their sense of vulnerability and instability.