

A 'NINE-TO-FIVE' EMERGENCY
A politics of time & power in Azraq refugee camp

Melissa N Gatter

Department of Middle Eastern Studies
Trinity Hall
University of Cambridge

December 2019

This thesis is submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

PREFACE

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Degree Committee.

Word count (excluding bibliography and footnotes): 70,891

Word count (including bibliography and footnotes): 75,006

To Alia, Qutada, Muawiya, Fulat, Ali, Judy, and Watan.

That we may meet again, in Syria.

ABSTRACT

A 'Nine-to-Five' Emergency: A politics of time & power in Azraq refugee camp

Melissa Gatter
Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge

Much of the scholarship on refugee camps has focused on the spatial politics of such sites, but only a small number of scholars has primarily examined the temporal dimension. While the literature has acknowledged the complex nature of time in these humanitarian spaces, time itself has not often been used as an analytical tool through which to understand the power dynamics at the center of refugee camp operation.

This dissertation contributes to this area of literature by interrogating the relationship between time and power as it manifests through daily lived realities in Azraq refugee camp in Jordan. Based on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork, this dissertation seeks to complicate perceptions of Azraq as the 'ideal' refugee camp through an investigation of its particular politics of time, analyzing perspectives of both refugees and aid workers. I call on literature on emergency, bureaucracy, and humanitarian politics in order to examine how these power structures have established a monopoly over time within the camp's borders. I analyze the role of street-level aid workers within Azraq's bureaucracy as being both shapers of policy but also subject to the power system and its particular temporalities. I explore how refugees then navigate this system, both in the day-to-day and over years, by evaluating various layers of waiting as they affect refugee perceptions of time in the camp – not only the present, but the past, near future, and far future.

By focusing on time in particular, this dissertation reveals a significant temporal dimension of refugee governance in Azraq, and in Jordan more generally. I argue that the camp operates as a 'nine-to-five' emergency through which mundane bureaucratic procedures serve to sustain a power system that manipulates refugees' time. The camp administration limits refugees' capacity to enhance the camp environment as it seeks to preserve the camp as new and refugees as vulnerable and thus under control. Refugees are socialized by this power politics to endure a cynical wait – both for services and for the return – without expectations for a better outcome; that is, refugees wait merely *as if* they believe a meaningful future is possible. I argue that, far from an 'ideal' camp, Azraq and its politics of time constitute a cruel reality in which a power system meant to aid refugees is experienced as one that suppresses, foreclosing futures that it is supposed to preserve. This fits within a Jordanian project of containment and isolation of Syrian refugees, a project both spatial and – equally as important – temporal in nature.

CONTENTS

List of Figures	vi
Note on Transliteration	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Map of Azraq	xi
INTRODUCTION: WHY TIME?	1
1. Time and Displacement in the Literature	4
Waiting and hope	6
Humanitarian time: time in a refugee camp	10
Nuanced perspectives on time	14
2. A Politics of Time in Azraq	16
3. About Azraq	18
Creating the ‘ideal’ camp	18
Understanding Azraq from a security perspective	24
4. The ‘Ideal’ Camp?: A more complete picture	26
METHODOLOGY: RESEARCHING AZRAQ	30
1. The Politics of Access in a Bureaucratic Jungle	31
2. Researching a ‘Difficult’ Place: Positionalities and transformations	34
3. Time for the Researcher	37
CHAPTER ONE: AZRAQ’S EMERGENCY	39
1. Emergency in a Refugee Camp	42
Emergency in the literature	42
Azraq as an emergency space (and time)	46
2. A ‘Nine-to-Five’ Emergency	47
The mundane	49
Extreme context, mundane lives	50
Working in emergency: from shocking to mundane	54
3. Development Work in an Emergency	58
Humanitarianism vs development: how long is the short term?	60
CHAPTER TWO: A HUMANITARIAN BUREAUCRACY	68
1. Bureaucracy and Refugee Camps	72
2. Azraq’s Administrative Structure	76

Aid workers: the faces of a faceless system	77
3. Underperforming Aid: How the camp bureaucracy operates	80
Spaces of waiting: the human and material landscape	81
Delays and disruption: the temporal dimension	88
The unfeeling aid worker: the affective dimension	92
4. Implications of the Camp Bureaucracy	96
CHAPTER THREE: PRESERVING ORDER	100
1. Care and Control	103
2. Village 5	107
Security and a culture of fear	108
3. To Need and Be Needed	113
Vulnerability	114
A hierarchy of need	115
The need to be needed	118
4. Vulnerability and Control	121
The good refugee: new, vulnerable, and powerless	124
Azraq as new	127
CHAPTER FOUR: WAITING FOR WHAT?	129
1. Waiting	131
Waiting as an analytical category	132
2. Performing Patience	135
3. Filling Time to Avoid It	138
4. Cynical Waiting	142
Waiting from a position of loss	146
Not yet and no longer	151
CHAPTER FIVE: ORDINARY FUTURES	155
1. The Future in Humanitarianism	158
2. Nostalgic Longing and Unkept Promises for the Future	160
3. The Near Future	165
The refugee label	166
Escaping exception	168
4. The Far Future	171
The ordinary	172
Return to the ordinary	173
CONCLUSION	179
BIBLIOGRAPHY	184

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. A block of caravans, including separate toilet facilities.	3
FIGURE 2. The fence surrounding the community center in Village 6.	22
FIGURE 3. A plot of caravans in Village 6 featuring residents' customizations.	51
FIGURE 4. An improvised fountain designed by refugees in Village 5 using a shisha pipe.	51
FIGURE 5. The Village 3 community center on a typical day.	53
FIGURE 6. A charging station for refugees' phones in a community center.	63
FIGURE 7. The solar farm at the edge of the camp as seen from above.	63
FIGURE 8. A Facebook post about Azraq's solar project by the IKEA Foundation.	64
FIGURE 9. The checkpoint at Azraq's entrance, accessible only via vehicle.	73
FIGURE 10. To the right of the checkpoint sits a parking lot & a stationed army vehicle.	73
FIGURE 11. Aid workers arriving at the entrance to the administrative base camp.	74
FIGURE 12. The Village 2 community center during interviews for IBV positions.	82
FIGURE 13. The Village 6 community center waiting area after closing hours.	82
FIGURE 14. A diagram of the Village 6 community center layout.	83
FIGURE 15. The interior of the IBV office.	84
FIGURE 16. An annotated map of Village 3 used by aid workers in the community center.	86
FIGURE 17. An abandoned caravan in Village 6 showing the interior structure.	99
FIGURE 18. Refugees meeting from both sides of the Village 5 border.	108
FIGURE 19. Azraq marketplace (Village 6, left) and Za'tari's market (right).	122
FIGURE 20. A view of Azraq Village 5 (left) and Za'tari (right) from afar.	122
FIGURE 21. Residential areas of Azraq Village 5 (top) and Za'tari (bottom).	123
FIGURE 22. The mural in the Village 6 community center painted by a refugee.	152
FIGURE 23. Camp residents fill jugs at the neighborhood water tap.	162
FIGURE 24. Scenes from the World Refugee Day carnival in Village 5.	167
FIGURE 25. An NGO operating in Azraq imagines a different kind of camp.	178

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have transliterated Arabic included in this dissertation based on the International Journal of Middle East Studies transliteration system, excluding diacritical marks except for the ‘ayn (‘) and the hamza (’). When quoting from spoken Arabic, I have transliterated according to the dialect of the speaker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Behind this dissertation is a network of support built over many years. I would firstly like to thank my colleagues at the Jordanian aid agencies who accommodated me despite their overwhelming amount of work, especially Jameel, Sohaib, Olfat, Arwa, Miriam, Muna, Reem, and Haytham. I can only hope that I was able to make a valuable contribution in exchange for the space I was given. Additional thanks to Nadia, Asma, Naela, Shireen, Rula, Sahar, Osama, Hamza, Maram, Mohammad, Ibtisam, Hamida, Muna, and Olivia for creating such a welcoming environment in Shmeisani. I must also acknowledge Mohamad Asmar's invaluable guidance that once again came at the right moment during the initial fieldwork stage.

Research was supported by the Council for the British Research in the Levant, Cambridge Trust, Trinity Hall, and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. I am thankful for continuous support from the Centre of Islamic Studies, especially Khaled Fahmy and Neil Cunningham and team.

During fieldwork, my support network also included those who were present outside the field, especially the families who nurtured me with warm food and their company: Mohammad Tal and Huda, Comari, and Eman Shehade. I am also grateful for companions in Jordan who helped me make sense of my fieldwork from fresh perspectives and without whom I would not have understood Azraq so wholly, including Ayham Dalal, Rawan Arar, Elisheva Cohen, and Alice Su. I enjoyed being able to check in with Zachary Sheldon, a tradition dating back to my bachelor's fieldwork in Amman. Lewis Turner was always available to share words of wisdom and encouragement that carried me through tougher stages of fieldwork. I am also especially grateful for Trish Ward, whose friendship continues to offer much needed clarity in work and life.

Many of the themes and arguments in this dissertation have been presented at workshops and conferences over the course of my PhD. I would like to acknowledge in particular the productive idea-building at 'Refugeehood, Education and Political Subjectivities' at the University of Neuchâtel (2017), 'Languages of Legitimation in the Middle East' at the University of Cambridge (2019), and 'Governing Migration Outside Fortress Europe' at the University of Cambridge (2019). Many thanks to Marion Fresia, Andreas von Känel, Hamza Safouane, Mert Peksen, Ann-Christin Wagner, and Aya Musmar for their insightful commentary in some of these settings. Additional thanks goes to Soleman Abu-Bader of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies for providing me with a platform to speak in Jordan. For their valuable comments and advice on

earlier chapter drafts, I would like to thank Elisa Pascucci, Pia Vogler, and Georgia Cole and the Migration Writing Group.

Michelle Obeid and Yasir Suleiman have been continuous sources of encouragement and support since the completion of my master's degree. I have benefited from the wonderful network of migration scholars we have built through the Cambridge Migration Society, thanks especially to Olimpia Squillaci, Lorena Gazzotti, Liran Morav, and those who continue to grow this network today. I would also like to acknowledge insights from Matthew Mahmoudi, whose expertise on digital aspects of migration provided me with a fuller picture of the technological context within which Azraq operates.

I am indebted to Lorena Gazzotti and Philip Rushworth for cherished friendships that have been not only intellectual but a great source of comfort and support over the past five years in Cambridge. We have presented together, exchanged drafts, and also shared many a laugh in cafes and pubs.

Surviving the many ups and downs of this project would not have been possible without those who have grown with me in our respective journeys. I am grateful for Rosie Maxton and the endless faith she has in me. Thank you to Wendy Wei for always pushing my intellectual boundaries and to Amy Harlowe for the many adventures we have shared. I am lucky to have a sister in Julia Garcia Vargas for the past eight years. I continue to be inspired by Diala Brisly and Diyala Zada, whose creativity and talent knows no end.

I would like to acknowledge Asra Syed for guiding my first foray into writing a research paper and continuing to support my work ten years later and Zahra Jamal for instilling in me a curiosity to pursue responsible ethnographic research.

This dissertation benefited greatly from time and insights from my supervisor Dr Paul Anderson. He always provided space in which I could think aloud and arrive to mini epiphanies. His supervision encouraged me to continuously strengthen my analyses, a positive challenge that has made me a better researcher and thinker.

I would like to thank my parents for their unwavering support with every new endeavor embarked. I am grateful to be able to grow alongside my brother Kevin, whose resilience, kindness, and brilliance has served as my inspiration for twenty-six years.

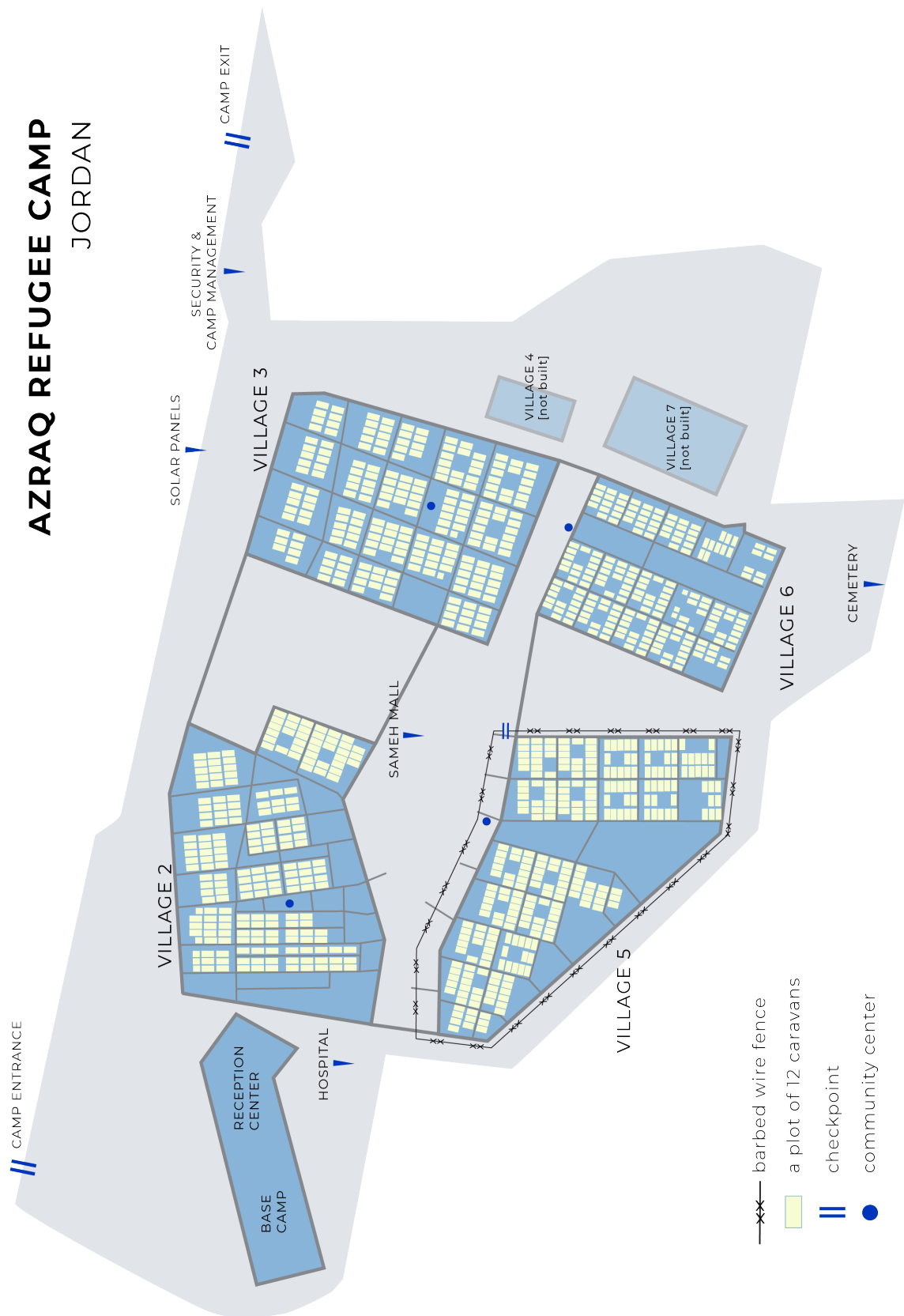
Finally, I am endlessly beholden to the community of Azraq camp, the aid workers who opened up to me and the refugees who let me into their lives for a year. I will always feel connected to the residents of Azraq, and I will tirelessly endeavor to bring attention to their plight.

An aerial view of Village 3. Appearing in the distance is Village 2 (when viewed as landscape, top), 5 (top left corner), and a sliver of 6 (left). [Source unknown]



AZRAQ REFUGEE CAMP

JORDAN



[Map designed by the author, 2019]

INTRODUCTION

Why Time?

The camp is time and time is the camp.
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, “The Camp is Time” (2017)

IN AN AIR-CONDITIONED CARAVAN some 90 kilometers south of the Syrian border, Fadwa¹ knelt on her prayer mat. I chatted with her colleague, a refugee who like Fadwa lived in Village 3 and worked at the center of a non-governmental organization (NGO) in which we sat. We chatted quietly, mindful of the children who were sleeping in this room that served as a nursery and of Fadwa, who at this moment was finishing her prayers. “*As-salamu ‘alaykum, as-salamu ‘alaykum,*” she whispered softly as she looked over each shoulder. She sat still a moment and then turned to join our conversation.

“So what topic are you researching here in Azraq?” she asked excitedly, and I gave her the usual response, that generally I am interested in time, how it passes and how it is experienced.

“There is no time in the camp! [*Ah, ma fi wa’t bil-mukhayyam!*]” Fadwa said. “Our schedules are so full, we are busy all the time.”

“It’s a good thing you are busy, no?” I asked, keeping in mind how others in the camp loathed the idea of sitting at home in their caravan with nothing to do.

“No, it’s not better!” both Fadwa and her colleague said in unison. Fadwa continued, “We feel pressure [*dught*] all the time, we don’t have time to rest, we don’t have time to give our minds a break [*ma fi ‘andna wa’t mnurtah, ma fi wa’t mnurayyih balna*].”

¹ All names have been changed to preserve the anonymity of those mentioned in this dissertation.

This conversation reveals how time is a complicated subject for Syrian refugees living in Azraq camp in Jordan. What does it mean to state that ‘there is no time in the camp’? Fadwa here ties ‘clock time’ – that is, daily schedules filled with work, chores, and childrearing – to a more abstract concept of time that does not allow for a break from camp life. To say that ‘there is no time in the camp’ not only conveys a sense of busyness in the everyday but could also portray a feeling of isolation from ‘outside’ or ‘national’ time. Time as Fadwa may have experienced in her hometown of Quriyateyn, Homs before the war does not exist within Azraq’s borders.

Several kilometers to the south in Village 5, Aya, a refugee from the Aleppan countryside, directs an NGO center. An energetic spirit, Aya loves her job, where she is in charge of the refugee volunteers and oversees NGO programming six days a week. She keeps busy between work and home life, in which she and her husband are raising six children. Aya told me that she does not like to sit still and hates the thought of having to sit at home without work. “If I didn’t have my job, I wouldn’t stay here one minute! [*Law mani mushtaghleh ma badil dagigeh!*],” she once exclaimed. When I first met Aya, she had been in Azraq for about two years, a period she likened to “a lifetime [*umr*]”. Similar to Fadwa, Aya has a full schedule and has also grown tired of the camp environment; every few months she would vow to leave the camp and declare, “That’s it, I’m tired of the camp! [*khalas ta’bit min al-mukhayyam!*]”.

Aya expresses a sense of urgency, not wanting to waste one more ‘minute’ in Azraq if she does not have the opportunity to work because she feels that the camp has already deprived her of a ‘lifetime’. Her experience is one of busyness juxtaposed against an uncertain duration of time that Fadwa and her colleague lamented above. Aya and Fadwa both demonstrate that time in the refugee camp is endless but unwanted. While perhaps filled from day to day, Azraq time is also in abundance – there is too much of it – and neither woman has the ability to break from this time conundrum. In both cases, the abundance of time is not a luxury, but an experience of exhausting endurance.

I often heard refugees using a vocabulary of the future having “passed us by [*rah ‘alayna*]”. There is a sense that the time they desire – one in which future life trajectories are attainable and remain intact – is slipping away, that the future has been lost even before it has come. Indeed, Azraq is the kind of place with simple childbearing facilities and a cemetery, but not much for the life that happens in between.



FIGURE 1. A block of caravans, including separate toilet facilities (the left row). [Photo courtesy of UNHCR, 2017]

Within this order of time exists a spatial element. Azraq's spatial boundaries make feelings of temporal isolation tangible. To desire a break from camp life is not only a wish for freedom from temporal confines but also from physical ones, that is, to be outside of the camp's borders. Azraq, with its crowded residential areas, also has an abundance of space: between villages and between itself and Jordanian civilization (35 kilometers from the nearest town on either side) – again, not a luxury but a symbol of isolation, as a CARE factsheet once identified the camp's location as precisely “in the middle of the desert” (CARE 2015).

Discourse on displacement tends to employ a spatial language, using terms that describe space and place relations such as ‘field’, ‘movement’, ‘humanitarian *space*’, ‘refuge’, and of course, the term ‘displacement’ itself. Many scholars have focused on the spatial element of displacement (see Agier 2011, 2016; Katz 2016, 2017; Katz *et al* 2018; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996; Malkki 1992, 1995; Martin 2015; Picker and Pasquetti 2015; Ramadan 2013; Saltsman 2014; Sigona 2015; Williamson 2016). While these discussions acknowledge a context of dehistoricization and temporal paradox – described as “permanent temporariness” (Bailey *et al* 2002 in Hyndman and Giles 2011), “permanence of transitoriness” or “durability of the transient” (Bauman 2002, 347 in Agier 2002, 362), and “endless emergency” (Agier 2011, 2) – time is not treated as a primary analytical category through which to understand displacement. While this dissertation acknowledges space and spatial mobilities as a major component of the exilic experience, I am interested precisely in the temporal disruption that defines life in Azraq camp. How does a politics of time shape, limit, or enable everyday life for the displaced and aid work in the camp? I build upon the work of the scholars, discussed in the following section, who explore time in

displacement through the analytical categories of waiting and hope, the humanitarian politics of a refugee camp, and themes of biopolitics and biographies.

Time and displacement in the literature

In 2001, Saulo Cwerner called for more analysis of the temporal dimension of migration, noting that the subject of time had thus far been generally left out of migration studies, and likewise, migration left out of the sociology of time. His work emphasizes that social life is shaped as much by temporal experience as it is by one's environment. Temporal experience, Cwerner writes, "expresses itself at the various levels of feelings, concepts, language, tools and social organization" (14). He embraces the complexity of time as something that is "everywhere" (as Kohli and Kaukko (2017, 499) note in their study of asylum seeking girls in Finland: "time flowed in all directions"). Furthermore, Cwerner argues, the study of time is most poignant "where time is itself problematized by individuals and social groups" (15). The context of migration enables a deeper understanding of how time is experienced in and out of crisis, as he states,

Migration is one of such contexts where much of social life is potentially disrupted. By revealing the interplay between ruptures and continuities, old rhythms and new routines, a focus on the temporal dimensions of such experiences can provide a critical anchor for understanding the process, dynamics and possibilities of the migration process. In this sense, time should *not* be seen as a detached aspect of social activities, but as a constitutive element of the immigrant experience, one from which a great deal of meaning is derived. (15)

His study of Brazilian immigrants in London in the 1980s and 90s aimed to bridge the gap between the study of time and of migration. In it, he seeks to explore immigrants' experiential temporalities and to understand whether these temporalities were exclusive to the migrant experience. Cwerner identifies various "sets of times" (18) experienced by Brazilian immigrants in the UK. The first set of time relates to the migrant's experience upon arrival to the new country, such as adjusting to the temporality of a new place and feeling out of sync with the temporality of the homeland. The second set of time emerges as one's immigrant experience develops, involving a feeling of temporariness and memories of the homeland threatened by the passage of time. The final set of time deals with a "long-term temporal outlook" (19) that is shaped directly by the "temporality of migration," when migrants spend free time with others

from their homeland. When migrants are settled in their new location, they interact with time via these various temporalities. For this reason, Cwerner argues that immigrants are “time pioneers” who “problematize dominant temporal conditions and devise new forms of thinking and using time” (29). Cwerner’s work is foundational in forming more nuanced understandings of the complex roles of time in the exilic experience.

Melanie Griffiths (2014) aimed to continue Cwerner’s discussion, stating that even since the publication of his work, “migration scholars have tended to neglect the temporal dimension in their exploration of mobility” (1991). Griffiths collected refused asylum seeker narratives in Oxford and a UK Immigration Removal Centre from 2008 to 2010 and found that her subjects also experienced multiple temporalities in the ‘in-between’ of awaiting asylum decisions. She identifies four types of experiential temporalities: sticky time, or waiting for a decision on an asylum application; suspended time, or the complete stagnation of time during incarceration perceived as meaningless; frenzied time, such as rapid decisions made on asylum cases through the “Detained Fast Track” (1999) or the fear of a sudden raid; and temporal ruptures, any activity that disrupts their “imagined time frames,” such as deportation or raids. Griffiths argues that temporal uncertainty for asylum seekers ensues when these temporalities are experienced simultaneously, creating a “dual temporal uncertainty” (2005), as she writes, “A significant source of the instability and powerlessness of the asylum and detention systems is the tension between anticipating constant change and fearing indefinite stasis” (2001). Griffiths also discusses the idea of time being in abundance. While detainees in the Removal Centre do not have a set ‘sentence’, some asylum seekers who are not detained can experience the ‘in-between’ as a time when they do not have any responsibilities and thus have the freedom to do what they want. However, Griffiths asserts, this abundance of time “is only known with hindsight” (2003), meaning that this time “feels oppressive rather than abundant” (2004).

Cwerner and Griffiths make important contributions to conceptualizations of time and migration. Both find that one’s experience in displacement can be marked by different stages of time, all involving similar tensions of abundance and absence like those described by Fadwa and Aya. Scholars who explore time in displacement have developed both Cwerner’s and Griffiths’s contributions to this gap in the literature. The subsequent section analyzes literature that studies time through frameworks of waiting and hope.

Waiting and hope

Ruben Andersson (2014) studies the policing of migration from Ceuta, Morocco to Spain, where migrants who enter the detention center are unaware of how long they will be held there. Andersson examines time as a “multifaceted tool and vehicle – even a weapon of sorts – in the ‘fight against illegal migration’” (796). He understands the time delays in these migrants’ experiences as “important insights into Western states’ response to unauthorized human mobility.” Andersson cites Griffiths’s work in pointing to the “strong relationship between power, the state and management of time” (Griffiths *et al* 2013, 30 in *ibid*). He conceptualizes the border not as fixed but rather as consisting of a set of practices, arguing that state authorities actively usurp time in order to control migration. Andersson notes that migrants’ engagement in waiting can mirror the types of waiting outlined by Hage (2009b) and Griffiths (2014):

There is, then, a doubleness to waiting. On the one hand, it constitutes an imposed state of ‘stuckness’ (Hage 2009) engendered by pre-emptive controls, in which time may appear as ‘sticky’ or ‘suspended’ (Griffiths 2014). On the other hand, it is a biding of time: a tactic, in Michel de Certeau’s (1984) sense, or a technique. (802)

The latter mode of waiting, of ‘biding’ time, is the subject of studies by Ann-Christin Wagner (2017) and Simon Turner (2016).

Wagner (2017) studies the concept of ‘timepass’ and precarity for Syrian refugee youth in Mafraq, Jordan. She uses the term timepass as defined by Craig Jeffrey (2010) in his research on male youth in India who navigate the precarious transition between university and career. For Jeffrey and Wagner, timepass describes the mode of endless waiting for opportunity by those who do not have access to it, whether because of socioeconomic class in the case of Jeffrey’s subjects or political status in the case of Wagner’s. Wagner notes that refugee youth spend a lot of their time completing NGO training courses that may provide them with certifications but not opportunities that employ the skillsets they obtain. She argues that NGOs exacerbate youth experiences of timepass because such organizations overlook refugees’ limited access to higher education and Jordan’s labor market. She critiques the humanitarian system that “attempts to forge neoliberal model refugees” (108) but cannot overcome the depoliticized nature of development projects that preserve refugees as “less developed *others* in order to retain them as objects of interventions.” This creates a vicious cycle in which refugee youth cannot find work

and are relegated to timepass during which they continue turning to NGOs who are thus justified in their interventions with the refugee population.

Timepass here is about keeping busy, which Wagner argues “coincides with forever delayed meaningful futures” (118). The act of Syrian refugee youth occupying themselves with endless training courses is what leads Wagner to describe their particular mode of waiting as ‘frantic’. The youth are on an endless loop of training to be model neoliberal citizens in their host state, whose politics continuously rejects them. Turner (2016) examines the idea of timepass for Burundian refugees as a means of ‘killing time’. Turner’s ethnographic fieldwork followed Burundians living in a refugee camp in Tanzania in 1997-98 and then those living in Nairobi six years later. He argues that these refugees strategically live out their timepass, refusing to become integrated in their host community in preparation for future return to their home country. Turner states that Burundian refugees exhibit a state of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ simultaneously; that is, ‘being’ in, navigating, and living in their current residence while waiting to ‘become’ someone in the future in a different space. While these refugees avoid “becoming too involved” (38) in the camp or in Nairobi, the life that nonetheless inhabits timepass must be filled with enough meaning to provide a minimal amount of stability. Thus, Turner is arguing for a “third way of relating to displacement, where displaced people make use of being displaced as such...they are neither trying to become emplaced nor are they merely mobile and transnational” (40). He situates time in displacement for Burundian refugees as “bracketed time”, or “time in brackets” (43). He concludes that displacement is not only a situation of forced mobility or immobility, but it is equally about “the temporality of living *in* the present or *for* the future” (44).

Ghassan Hage (2009b) is interested primarily in the question of waiting for communities who feel ‘stuck’. His work has looked at Lebanese immigrants in Australia through a perspective of waiting as an analytical category. He describes that the feeling of ‘stuckedness’ is one where everything is out of one’s control and one must ‘wait out’ the crisis situation. He argues that this waiting “emphasises a dimension of life where the problematic of our agency is foregrounded” (2). However, Hage locates agency in the self-governmentality that those who wait exhibit by merely enduring the wait, choosing to keep waiting even when they feel stuck.

In line with Cwerner's work, Andersson, Wagner, Turner, and Hage understand time in displacement to be something migrants can employ for a specific purpose or to aid them in the particular challenges of life in exile. But there is always another side to this appropriation of time, as these scholars point out, which is the fact that it has been given to the migrant or refugee without choice – whether waiting for a service, employment, mobility, or return home – as Schweizer (2008) argued, “to wait is to have time without wanting it” (2).

Intrinsic to the act of waiting is the presence or absence of hope, an analytical tool that reveals opportunities for understanding the agentic practices of the displaced. In his afterword entitled “Questions Concerning a Future-Politics” (2016), Hage touches on the theme of hope for the future. He states that within the “imaginary of migration” (466), hope has both a spatial and temporal dimension because a better future is neither now (temporal) nor here (spatial). It is implied, then, that hope also drives one's endurance in waiting. In Bandak and Janeja's (2018) edited volume, *Ethnographies of Waiting*, the authors continue Hage's exploration of waiting through themes of doubt, hope, and uncertainty. They delve deeper into waiting as an analytical category by breaking it down into the “politics” and the “poetics” of waiting (3). The “politics of waiting” is the structurally enforced experience of waiting upon specific groups, especially refugees and asylum seekers, while the “poetics of waiting” entails one's existential experience of being in an uncertain temporal instance. Bandak and Janeja cite Bredeloup's argument on the spatiotemporal quality of waiting: “The act of waiting in transit paradoxically expands time, but compresses space for immobile individuals” (2012, 465 in *ibid*, 6). In the volume, Bendixsen and Eriksen analyze hope in waiting for Palestinian asylum seekers in a makeshift camp in Oslo. They describe the narrative of a young Palestinian who feared being sent to a deportation center, where he could be held for an uncertain amount of time. Yet, this man risked making himself vulnerable by participating in demonstrations against Norwegian immigration policy that took place at the camp. The authors argue that his fear actually worked to enable his agency “in an attempt to replace waiting characterized by inertia with waiting that was filled with hope” (99). In other words, instead of submitting to feelings of powerlessness that his waiting to receive asylum created, the Palestinian chose to wait with hope that something might change, a mode of waiting that Hage might identify as heroic, and thus, agentic (2009b). Hope, the authors argue, can inspire agency even in circumstances where that agency is lacking.

Norum *et al* (2016) explore the political economy of hope within “chronopolitics” (61), or the politics of time, for Burmese exiles in shelters along the Thai-Burma border. The authors use hope as an analytical measurement of “exilic time” (64), with hope being “a phenomenological temporality that both shapes perspectives on the future as well as frames and mediates the struggles between possibility, probability, and eventuality” (63). Hope is a product of waiting, the authors argue, and for Burmese refugees, hope is shaped by Burma’s political economic future as well as everyday practices of NGOs. This is directly related to management of the future, both by NGO practitioners, who have over time been directed toward Burmese in camps and inside Burma and away from those on the border, and by the Burmese state, whose increasing involvement in the global economy has led to expectations for Burmese to benefit from eventual participation in capitalist time. Thus, Norum *et al* argues, “Hope is a two-way process forged between those who imagine a better future and those who disseminate and produce imaginaries through geoeconomic promise” (78).

In her research of Palestinian refugees in Burj al-Barajneh camp in Beirut and Dheisheh camp in the West Bank, Ilana Feldman (2016) examines how the displaced confront the future. She argues that from the present situation of protracted displacement, Palestinians confront the future in multiple ways, which she categorizes as reaction, experimentation, and refusal (413). Across these confrontations of the future – whether by reacting to a political project for UN recognition of a Palestinian state, engaging in experimental initiatives to redesign the aid paradigm in the West Bank, or refusing to do either – refugees are negotiating with hope and loss of hope. Feldman asserts that Palestinian refugees engage in these politics of refusal, reaction, and experimentation based on their outlook on possibility and potential for a future that they anticipate or aspire to achieve. This involves a consideration of multiple temporalities, near and distant times, and also spaces. Feldman’s study reveals how, within the confines of protracted displacement, some Palestinians will to live ‘otherwise’ (see Povinelli 2012).

Cathrine Brun (2015) analyzes waiting in protracted displacement for internally displaced Georgians between 2003 and 2012. She aims to connect the concepts of ‘waiting’ and ‘hope’ in order to move toward an understanding of protracted displacement as fluid and of the displaced as having agency. By critically engaging with everyday time within protracted displacement, Brun argues that the IDPs practice an “agency-in-waiting” (23) through which they are active in their everyday routines. She builds upon Gabriel Marcel’s (1967) work on ‘active waiting’, in

which he states “there is a constant monitoring of the likelihood that the events one is waiting for will occur and of how much time one is prepared to wait” (in Brun 2015, 23). Brun’s focus on agency emphasizes that even though the displaced are powerless with regards to controlling the future, they nonetheless exhibit the “capacity to act in the present” (24) based on their expectations for potential futures. Waiting, then, is a “particular way of experiencing this link between time and power.” Likewise, hope connects everyday time with future time, but, as Brun writes, hope of return can also prevent displaced people from creating a more comfortable present. Hope for the future directly affects how people wait, whether forcing them to stop seeking the return or enabling them to persevere in displacement.

These scholars offer hope as an analytical tool through which migrants and refugees who are forced to wait can still be conceptualized as having agency. This conversation is especially important to the situation of refugees in closed humanitarian spaces, particularly the refugee camp. Scholarly work on the relationship between time and migration within the borders of a camp is the subject of the following section.

Humanitarian time: time in a refugee camp

Humanitarian politics is another primary factor to be considered in the exploration of experienced time in displacement. Brun situates discussions of the future for those in protracted displacement within the context of humanitarian politics in her article titled, “There Is No Future in Humanitarianism” (2016). Based on research with humanitarians working with Syrian refugees in Jordan, Brun explores the temporality of humanitarian action for those in long-term displacement. She applies a feminist reading of temporality to her discussion in order to understand the prioritization of ‘biological life’ over ‘biographical life’ by humanitarian organizations. According to Arendt (1958) and de Beauvoir (1952), biological life is considered to be the endless cyclical practice of life that does not move into a future but rather merely sustains one’s needs for survival. On the other hand, biographical life is oriented toward the future, working to produce or contribute something that endures, such as having a career or studying for a degree. Brun thus argues,

If we take the distinction between biological and biographical life with us into humanitarianism, saving biological life does not entail a future. People feel stuck

when biographical life, transcendence and consequently the future are not available: they feel trapped in a never-ending presence. (400)

Working in emergency spaces, within which humanitarian organizations are saving biological lives, renders futures both empty and abstract. Brun asserts that as long as humanitarianism continues to operate within a framework of crisis, however protracted it may be, refugees will never be able to define “a future beyond the exceptional condition of the emergency” (402).

Returning to the work of Ilana Feldman, she has covered various themes within the time-displacement nexus, from humanitarian politics to aging and dying to politics of the future. Her focus on Palestinian refugees in the Middle East provides an interesting perspective on time spent in exile for multiple generations. She conceptualizes the present situation for this community as an experience of “punctuated” time (2018, 27). Feldman argues that this time is influenced by the dynamics of a “punctuated humanitarianism”, which does not follow a “straightforward chronology”, but is “buffeted by waves of repeating change”. Her research has generally worked to answer the questions asked in her most recent book, *Life Lived in Relief* (2018):

Even as the first crisis passes, temporal confusion can continue. First comes the boredom that people encounter as soon as the most acute experience of crisis recedes...Then come the existential questions: Does the experience of a day, or days, define the present for the displaced? Or are their former lives still present to them? Can a refugee's future have any continuity with the past or will it only be rupture? (20)

Camps, she asserts, are particularly fitting sites through which to consider the passage of time in displacement because they are also spaces shaped by the presence of humanitarianism, which itself operates in a particular temporality. The humanitarian category of ‘refugee’ is a “starting point for political life in the humanitarian condition” (37), and thus the return signifies the concurrent ending point in humanitarian politics and the restoration of one's rights as a member of society. In between both points, “structural impediments to work and life mean that merely passing the time is a key part of people's day” (88). Feldman also gives attention to humanitarians in spaces of displacement and gives account of their conundrum: “As displacement extends over time, humanitarian actors are compelled to ask what they can do when they cannot save lives but also cannot declare an intervention over” (117).

Feldman confronts the subject of time in displacement in all its complexity, allowing for contradicting conceptualizations of time by both refugees and humanitarians to speak to the particularities of their experience. She writes,

Long-term need and humanitarianism produces an extended present, but not an unchanging one. Even as people regularly describe their life in humanitarianism as one of waiting and suspension, suggesting that they confront a frustratingly unchanging landscape, in fact the present is considerably altered over time. The passage of time changes how people experience displacement and evaluate humanitarian practice. (174)

Humanitarianism's management of a continual present is perhaps most acute in dealing with refugees who are aging and dying. Feldman's study of end-of-life care in Burj al-Barajneh camp for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon explores how protracted displacement means that humanitarian actors must "confront people's needs across the whole life cycle" (2017, 44), including not only the maintenance of life but also caring for the dead. Through her focus on the elderly in displacement, Feldman reveals the limitations of humanitarianism, itself affected by the "uncertain in-between" (50) of displacement as much as the refugees are.

As Feldman argues, the refugee camp's unique temporal qualities render it an interesting site for exploring exilic time. Michel Agier (2011) examines the complex politics of such temporary spaces in his ethnographic account of refugee camp management. Having spent about seven years (2000-2007) with the organization Médecins Sans Frontières in numerous camps throughout Africa and the West Bank, Agier investigates the physical space of a refugee camp as a site that is always threatening to become a city, often containing characteristics of a city but nonetheless never recognized as one. Agier's spatial analysis also involves a temporal dimension, arguing that social lives in a camp become "reconstructed over time, thus creating a new social polity" (59). Camps are thus paradoxical spaces, "between an indefinite temporality and a space that is transformed because its occupants necessarily appropriate it in order to be able to live in it" (53). The temporality of refugee camps, Agier argues, affects all those who enter:

A telescoping of cultures takes place in a time that is suspended for all involved (the expatriates are there from six to twelve months, the refugees waiting indefinitely), and a space that is initially artificial but does not remain so. Without actually realizing it, both sides find themselves in the world of the humanitarian apparatus, whose long history converges here with the equally long history of camps and removals. (186)

In other words, aid workers and refugees in a camp exist within a state of “permanent precariousness” (71). The camp can only ever be the “immediate present” (79), isolating itself from the past and future “by excluding itself from all history.” Furthermore, Agier asserts, the humanitarian regime that governs the camp is itself an “emergency regime” that exists only for that present moment. Agier captures how this exclusion of past and future history is manifested in the refugee camp:

This is certainly a presence...that has no spatiotemporal reference of its own: what is this space over time? No collective memory of the ‘site’ can legitimately be formed when one is deemed to be waiting only to leave it; no particular history of it has ever been written. No ‘ruin’ is kept and treasured; on the contrary, the camps of today are an exemplary terrain of those ephemeral buildings that are increasingly constructed out of lightweight materials, taken down as quickly as they are put up, and moved elsewhere. The emergency regime that establishes them as a precarious material reality is nothing more than the expression of a ‘presentism’ driven to excess. (79)

That camps are not meant to leave behind legacies directly challenges productions of everyday life by refugees. The everyday life of a camp does not continue from and cannot continue into ‘normal’ time outside of a camp. Thus, it is both spatial *and* temporal exclusion of refugee camps that leads Agier to call them “out-places” (5).

Didier Fassin’s (2011a) *Humanitarian Reason* works to bring the politics of humanitarianism globally and in his home country of France together. In a chapter titled, “Ambivalent Hospitality”, Fassin explores the Sangatte settlement, where refugees in transit sought shelter predating the Calais camp in France. He discusses the temporal aspect of the Sangatte ‘camp’, which he argues was more of a transit center through which four hundred people would pass every day and which also had a long history of being a transitory space. Fassin cites Peschanski’s work on French concentration camps, in which he notes a common trait among all camps: “One thing is constant: the weight of the situation, the primacy of time over space” (2002 in Fassin 2011a, 151). Fassin agrees that Sangatte follows this logic of “contingency (‘the primacy of time over space’) and aporia of governmentality (‘managing the unmanageable’)” (151). However, he is not satisfied with an understanding of the Sangatte camp as a state of exception in the Agamben sense. In the Sangatte, the situation was more complex because in the legal sense, “common law holds” (152), and in the political sense, refugees were isolated in order to “maintain public order” (153) but were also protected and cared for. Security and humanitarianism were “entangled” (157)

in the Sangatte, but the settlement eventually took on new forms and characteristics with the later creation of the Calais 'Jungle' and container camps. Fassin argues for a more rigorous analysis of camps that accounts for diversity, ambiguity, and "different forms of exception and politics."

The above scholars' work greatly informs this dissertation's discussions on the spatiotemporal dimensions of Azraq refugee camp and the various temporalities that both humanitarians and refugees experience. I attempt to embrace, as they have, the many contradictions of the camp's politics of time in order to challenge one-dimensional understandings of such humanitarian spaces.

Nuanced perspectives on time

Wendy Pearlman (2018) is interested in how refugees think of themselves over time, asking at what point does one become or unbecome a refugee in displacement. From interviews with Syrians in the Middle East and Europe between 2012 and 2018, Pearlman finds that "individuals' self-understandings as refugees evolve over time as a contingent process not necessarily coterminous with actual physical displacement" (302). Early on in the conflict, she notes, Syrians in Jordan did not consider themselves refugees, as their memories were still fresh from war and they expected to return as soon as there was a lull in violence. Eventually, as Syrians started to move towards Europe, the legal decisions of claiming or avoiding asylum in certain countries forced them to ask, 'am I a refugee?' (303). Beyond the legal aspect, Pearlman argues, identifying as a refugee paralleled not the loss of hope, but the loss of belief that one would return home. In this case, the refugee label then could be used as a collective cause to rally for the return, "a 'project' more than 'an article of faith'" (304). What Brun might consider biographical life – one's career – also plays a significant role in an individual's self-identification as a refugee. Pearlman asserts that not being able to succeed in a career in displacement implies that society perceives the exiled as a refugee, and likewise, one's success in a career allows the exiled to conceive of herself as she was before, such as a doctor or teacher, instead of a refugee. Thus, labels of refugeedom correspond to one's perceptions of their experienced temporality, either in legal limbo or a resumed participation in capitalist time. Pearlman concludes that while one might

'become' a refugee over time, one might also over time 'unbecome' a refugee. Her work reveals the diversity and constant fluctuation of exilic experiences of time.

Norum *et al* (2016) argue that the dominant understanding of time as 'paused' for refugees fits within wider political motives:

Even today, prevailing discourse about refugees often describes time in exile as 'standing still', 'suspended' or 'achronic', which refers to a time of historical stagnation, or to the condition of 'nothing happening' (Coutin 1999, Malkki 1995b). Such spatial associations are reproduced not just by images and imaginations of liminal actors, but by the very structures of the state bureaucracies in which they are embedded. (66)

Norum *et al* state that this is underpinned by the narrative that "stasis is the norm, and movement an aberration," with state institutions historically implying that mobility of the lower class threatens the global order. Furthering the idea of temporal stasis is the significance of citizenship, as refugees lack this recognition and are thus in a *legal* state of limbo. Norum *et al* assert that the notion of liminality for those in exile then "arises from both their marginality and the temporariness of their experiences." This is exacerbated by the "tyranny of capitalist time" (78), which excludes those who are not "effectively producing in a capitalist fashion." The significance of experiential temporalities in displacement is that it provides a counter-narrative to a predominant global time:

Understanding exilic time as being equivalent in importance to national time encourages a view of exilic time not as a state of exception, but as a necessary counterpart to nationalistic and capitalist temporalities. (67)

By taking seriously exilic time, in all of its various forms and dynamics, Norum *et al* open the possibilities for nuanced perspectives on the refugee experience. Like Pearlman, Norum *et al* allow for ways in which refugees cross in and out of a globalized world and its capitalist time, and how those refugees may be shaped because of it. The following section considers the ideas discussed by all above scholars in the context of Azraq camp.

A politics of time in Azraq

As the above scholars have complicated the subject of time in displacement, I aim to delve into the complexity of time in Azraq. In past fieldwork with other refugee communities in Jordan – from Palestinians in Baq’a camp to Iraqis in East Amman to Syrians in Za’tari camp – I observed that time has a particular character and significance for each group. In Azraq, however, it was at first difficult to pinpoint how camp residents perceived the passing of time. Comments from my interlocutors that revealed their relationship with time often seemed self-contradictory – for example expressing competing visions of the future or feeling simultaneously bored and busy – and aid workers appeared to operate in an entirely different, bureaucratic mode of time. I came to discover that, within Azraq’s spatiotemporal confines, each temporal experience in some way related to one’s position in the camp (i.e., aid worker, refugee, refugee volunteer, researcher) and that an individual’s thoughts on the passing of time were in constant flux. How do I make sense of various perceptions of time that seem at odds with each other but nonetheless exist coterminously?

It is important to establish that time is not a fact that exists to be experienced homogenously by all. It is intangible, hard to locate, and challenging to describe. Generally in one’s life, time is taken for granted and experienced unreflectively. It is when time becomes a problem – the feeling of being stuck or running late – that it becomes something of interest. For example, the philosopher Henri Bergson (1911) noted that when one waits, time becomes apparent as “no longer something *thought*, it is something *lived*” (176). Time becomes “painfully palpable when there is a breach between expectations and chances” (Haas 2017, 81; see also Bourdieu 2000). When time cannot be taken for granted, we experience what Zigon (2007), following Heidegger, describes as a “breakdown”, when one becomes conscious of one’s way of being (136). He likens the concept of breakdown to Foucault’s ‘problematization’, a

reflective state in which an everyday, unreflected state, such as behavior, is presented ‘to oneself as an object of thought and [one is able] to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals’ (Foucault, 1984: 388). (Zigon 2007, 137)

Both concepts of breakdown and problematization are prompted by a disruption to the normal everyday routine and call for a reassessment of meaning and purpose. Zigon writes, “It is in the moment of breakdown, then, that it can be said that people work on themselves, and in so doing, alter their very way of being-in-the-world” (138).

We may consider the refugees of Azraq to be experiencing breakdown in a similar sense, enduring a prolonged existential crisis that confronts them with the widening discrepancy between their short-term lives (i.e. biological survival) and their long-term lives (i.e. biographical purpose). The idea of breakdown sheds light on the value of examining the politics of time for those occupying spaces of displacement. By identifying time as a problematic or a disruption, I examine the complicated existential conundrum of life in Azraq for its refugees as well as the temporariness of work for its humanitarian staff. When mismatched refugee and aid worker temporalities intersect on a daily basis, the camp's power dynamics become clear, illuminating the messiness of bureaucracy, hierarchies of vulnerability, and refugees' cynical attitudes.

My existential approach seeks to examine both refugees' endurance and anticipation within the never-ending present, framed by the past and future through discussions on memory and biographical life trajectories. This deals in part with themes of waiting and hope(lessness) outlined by the aforementioned scholars. I locate these dynamics within the context of humanitarian intervention that shapes life in the camp through a power politics. I also identify refugees' agency as exercised entirely within the micro-level of ongoing daily life, even as they submit to humanitarian – and by extension, Jordanian state – power.

This dissertation asks what the multiple temporalities experienced by various players (refugees and aid workers) reveal about the politics of Azraq; that is, emergency, power, bureaucracy, and the humanitarianism-development nexus. How do these politics shape refugees' understanding of time – not only the present, but the past, near future, and far future? And likewise for aid workers, how does their dual positionality as agents and subjects of Azraq's governing bureaucracy contribute to the camp's politics and impact refugees' temporal experiences?

Exploring these questions involves analysis of opposing dynamics at work in Azraq. Within this space of emergency, as refugee camps are often considered (see chapter 1), elements of the extreme and the mundane are confused, and emptiness and crowding are neighbors; refugees feel bored while also rushing to claim services, and they dream without hope; and a culture of fear is cultivated by the very security apparatus that keeps refugees safe. These dynamics are not in tension but function in tandem as two sides of the same coin: a humanitarian apparatus that seeks to extend control through practices of care. I argue that this power dynamic is experienced by refugees as the cruel reality of Azraq's camp politics – a power system that is meant to aid

refugees is continuously experienced as one that suppresses; a humanitarian regime meant to preserve a good future for its residents has only taken that hope away. The cruelty lies in refugees' loss of belief in the potential for a better situation due to the discouraging nature of the very system that exists to 'do good'.

About Azraq

Creating the 'ideal' camp

When violence in Syria escalated in the beginning of 2012, people fled the country's southern region of Dar'a in the thousands. They set up camp near the northern Jordanian city of Mafraq, where they were met by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Over the course of two weeks, the encampment loosely materialized as Za'tari refugee camp. What would quickly become known as the 'fourth largest city in Jordan' – at least among journalists in the West (see Doucet 2013, Herlinger 2016, Weston 2015) – started out as UNHCR tents pitched in an empty plot of muddy desert. Over the next four years, the population would balloon to 120,000 refugees across twelve districts covering five square kilometers. Za'tari's camp administration, under the initial leadership of Kilian Kleinschmidt, sought continuous negotiations with camp residents who had set up shops and built an informal economy in order to adapt to their uncertain situation. NGOs worked not to upend refugee-led development but to regulate it and limit further growth. Despite a rough first year involving sometimes violent skirmishes between camp dwellers and aid workers, Kleinschmidt's administration was eventually able to build trust among refugees by seeking out established Dar'awi network leaders.

Yet, humanitarian planners of Za'tari consider the camp to be a failure (see Gatter 2018b) because the original blueprints for the camp, which envisioned straight rows of caravans and hence a neatly surveilled population, eventually translated on the ground into a less legible map. Perceptions of failure focused solely on the lack of the camp administration's absolute control. Refugee innovations and informal customizations to camp life supposedly took independence too far and threatened to follow the Palestinian precedent of urban development. Trading taking place between Mafraq businessmen and Za'tari shop owners meant that the camp's

borders were porous. In 2015, the camp closed to newcomers and the population was capped at 80,000. Many Za'tari residents were transferred to Azraq, established a year earlier.

While Azraq officially opened on April 30, 2014, it had been planned, designed, and under construction since 2013, during which time refugees were still fleeing Syria in constant waves. The UNHCR was this time determined to create the 'ideal' refugee camp founded on the 'lessons learned' from Za'tari's model, and they were granted both the time and money to do so (Gatter 2018b). Indeed, the camp has been described as "one of the best-planned refugee camps in the world" (*Jordan Times* 2014). Rows of identical caravans were installed and cemented into the Azraq desert, a landscape once passed only by military, factory workers, and travelers heading to and from Iraq and Saudi Arabia. While only two villages were initially constructed, camp grounds covered fifteen square meters to make room for an eventual 100,000 refugees. Of the expected thousands of newcomers, the camp's opening saw only hundreds who showed up, and while two more villages would be built over the next five years, the camp today remains at an occupancy of about 40,000 (see Reznick 2015).

Today, 27 NGOs operate in Azraq, with some providing humanitarian aid and others focusing on development projects (UNHCR 2018a). Azraq's population is divided across 13,500 shelters (Albadra *et al* 2017, 461) organized into four villages: Village 2, 3, 5, and 6. Villages 3 and 6 were the first to be built and the two with the most advancements regarding electricity and housing. Village 5 features an extra level of security, having received thousands of people from the Rukban border camp who now await security clearance to be able to move out of the village. Village 2 mostly contains those who have already obtained clearance from Village 5 as well as many elderly and disabled people. The disparity between Villages 2 and 5 and Villages 3 and 6 plays a major role in refugee and aid worker experiences of time and power, as will be discussed mainly in chapter three.

I have previously argued that "what makes Za'atari work – for a refugee camp – is everything that Azraq has chosen to prevent from the start: organic development, economic opportunity, a sense of community" (Gatter 2018b, 24). In short, Azraq seems to compensate for Za'tari's 'lack' of control over its residents. Fortified by Jordanian security, the camp's humanitarian policies appear to respond to Za'tari's 'mistakes'. Where Za'tari's residents, due to a provision of tent shelters preceding metal caravans, moved their shelters around the camp and built custom add-

ons to their homes using these mixed materials, Azraq's residents were assigned to specific caravans that had been already fixed into cement foundations, rendering them immovable and impossible to expand.² Za'tari's market – a local microeconomy that threatened to urbanize the camp – was prevented from being duplicated in Azraq, where NGOs built and manage marketplaces that they hire out to refugees. This system has resulted in the markets' unpopularity, with residents pointing to high prices and inconvenient locations (often at the edge of each village). Azraq has also departed from Za'tari's debit card system. In both camps, refugees receive a monthly allowance on debit cards to purchase food items, but Azraq has employed more advanced iris-scanning technology to ensure that only the cardholder can make purchases to prevent refugees from selling their cards to others for extra income as was prevalent in Za'tari (Staton 2016). While Za'tari has more options for grocers, including among its refugee-run shops, Azraq residents have only Sameh Mall, a Jordanian grocery chain that has achieved monopoly in the camp and is thus known among refugees for its exorbitant prices.³ It is clear from these examples that Azraq's governmentality seeks to not only undermine, but to *anticipate*, refugees' adaptive mechanisms that had revealed supposed weaknesses in Za'tari's infrastructure. Indeed, the politics of space in Azraq works to keep residents from placemaking, which can be understood as acts that not only transform the camp into a familiar and comfortable home, but convert an intended 'non-place' (Augé 1995) into a 'place'.

Azraq's administration not only limits refugees' appropriation of space, but their *mobility across* space. In the vast stretch of land between Villages 3 and 6, a pedestrian bridge hovers above gravel, which in the winter becomes muddy and sometimes floods, but oddly does not connect the two villages and thus stands as a literal bridge to nowhere. As the only bridge in Azraq, it embodies the strange concept of mobility in the camp. Azraq's administration does not seek to encourage mobility, which from Za'tari's first year it has viewed as a security threat. Salter (2008) establishes mobility as a threat within a wider global trend that criminalizes migration (366). Bolstered by the example of Za'tari residents protesting administrative failures at the camp's base camp (Arraf 2012, Kadri and Rudoren 2013; see also Clarke 2018), Azraq has addressed this potential threat through its urban planning, keeping the administrative base

² The design of Azraq's shelters, called the T-shelters, was allegedly chosen by a UNHCR official in Geneva from a list of ten options, with little regard to locally available materials and the specific context of Azraq's location.

³ Sameh Mall is accessible only to residents of Villages 2, 3, and 6. At the time of my fieldwork, Village 5 residents received regular food distribution. Aid workers noted that preparation was under way for a grocery store that had already been built in the village but was not operating for unknown reasons.

camp and villages spread apart. Hoffmann (2017) notes a field security adviser in Azraq mentioning that refugees who intend to demonstrate at the base camp would have to walk for an hour and a half before arriving there (106). As I wrote in a study comparing Za'tari and Azraq:

Ironically, the abundance of space in Azraq is designed to limit refugees' movement; political demonstrations are harder to organise when mobilisation is a challenge and the community is physically disconnected. (Gatter 2018b, 23)

Contrary to Za'tari, where 80,000 residents live in twelve condensed districts across a dense five square kilometers, Azraq has used space to keep a population half the size spread out over an area three times the size. Time also plays into keeping residents physically disconnected; where most of Za'tari's residents arrived in the camp in the first two years from one area in Syria, Azraq's residents have been allocated to different villages in stages – Villages 3 and 6 in 2014 and 2 and 5 in 2016 – and have fled various sources of violence and persecution (Syrian President Bashar Assad and extremist group Daesh). Furthering this spatiotemporal dynamic is a classification system that assigns residents to neighborhoods according to perceived vulnerability and threat (i.e., persons with disabilities, elderly people, widows, young single men) instead of city of origin.

Other than its security objectives, what sets Azraq apart from most other refugee camps is its decentralized administration. In each village, there is one community center, a fundamental aspect of refugee life in the camp as it comprises the centralized bureaucracy of the village. Azraq's humanitarian regime is organized on a referral system in which the community center is the first step, and refugees must go to the center to file complaints, register for the cash-for-work Incentive-Based Volunteering (IBV) scheme, make maintenance or other assistance requests, and access case management services. Outreach teams are also deployed from the community centers to visit caravans in order to disseminate information or follow up on specific cases. Any issues from cases are then referred to an NGO that specializes in the relevant area. The referral process can take weeks to be resolved and can create confusion as to who is responsible for a case.

Despite all of this, most of the aid workers employed in humanitarian projects in Azraq believed in the camp's superiority over Za'tari. The director of one NGO told me that while Za'tari is

more “luxurious”, he much prefers the “stability and order” of Azraq. Another aid worker cited both organization and security as making Azraq favorable to Za’tari camp:

In Azraq, there is one [community] center you go to to tell them your needs and then they do the referral. So that is one of the biggest things that is better in Azraq [*hada ishi kan mu’zam ishi akthar wu ahsan bi-Azraq*]. And even security, I mean Azraq is safer, not like Za’tari. Za’tari...there was always a problem and...it was scary [*mukhif*], even for the staff that worked there.

This aid worker had worked in Za’tari before she transferred to another NGO that only operates in Azraq. Still, aid workers who had never before been to Za’tari also hold a firm belief that Azraq is better. One aid worker mentioned how she could not imagine how refugees in Za’tari had been allowed to move their tents around instead of having their home cemented into the ground like in Azraq. Another aid worker did not understand why I described Azraq as ‘prison-like’ in comparison to Za’tari. He said, “Oh, I don’t think the camp is like a prison”, implying that Azraq’s intense security measures were not necessarily indicative of inferiority to Za’tari. On the other hand, outside observers such as researchers and journalists, and even some aid workers whose day-to-day work is not based in the camp, do not view Azraq as the success story that the above humanitarians tell. One researcher likened the camp to “a big factory”; an aid worker who frequently visited both camps for communications work once described Azraq as “a miserable place”.



FIGURE 2. The fence surrounding the community center in Village 6. [Photo by the author, 2017]

Humanitarians do not plan refugee camps on their own; they are often acting within limitations placed upon them by host governments. After refugees in Za'tari took advantage of economic opportunities in the neighboring city of Mafraq, Jordan purposefully allocated Azraq to its remote location precisely because of its isolation and proximity to military bases. This allows the state to present itself to the international community as keeping refugees safe while in actuality limiting refugees' physical and socio-economic mobility. This is the direction that Jordanian response to displacement has taken over the last twenty to thirty years. After Palestinians who fled Israeli occupation in 1948 and 1967 continue to wait in Jordan for future return, all the while claiming a significant political presence in the country, the state has been increasingly reluctant to accept refugees at all. Throughout the 90s and 2000s, three major movements of Iraqi refugees to the country were accepted as 'guests', not granted the rights that come with refugee status, and blended into the country's poorer urban communities. While the Syrian crisis initially attracted the sympathies of the international community, causing a steady flow of financial aid into Jordan, national sentiment came to resent the increasing pressures that refugees were placing on the state's already limited natural resources. After the death of a Jordanian soldier at the Syrian border in 2016, Jordan closed its borders entirely until 2018, at which point movement resumed for nationals but not refugees.

Za'tari's and Azraq's presence demonstrate Jordan's dependence on refugee camps. The refugee camp provides visible evidence of the country's assistance for refugees. As Simon Turner (2016) states, "The refugees in the camp are contained and secluded away from normality while at the same time being made visible as objects of humanitarian governmentalities" (41). On a similar note, a Syrian refugee living in Amman told me:

Really, you don't need the camps. 100,000 plus people, it is not that much. But Jordan will never get rid of the camps or tell people to leave. They need the camps to show every once in a while that they are doing something. And Azraq...Jordan can always get people for that camp. If they need to, they will just open Rukban again and then fill the camp.

He references here the 2016 transfer of 10,000 refugees from the closed Rukban border zone to Azraq. As he implies, Azraq's vacancies, in the tens of thousands, could easily be filled. Refugees have always been Jordan's key to receiving international aid. As an NGO director in a meeting with representatives of another organization said, "With the people [refugees] will come the

[aid] money!” Dawn Chatty, former director of Oxford’s Refugee Studies Centre, told me in 2015 that of the aid that arrives to Jordan through donations to UN organizations,⁴ 40% is directed to national projects. This is accomplished by requiring any humanitarian organization registered in Jordan that a certain percent of their work must directly benefit Jordanian beneficiaries.

During my fieldwork, rumors constantly circulated about Villages 4 and 7 finally being built, hinting at preparations for incoming refugees. It was also common knowledge that Jordan attempts to crack down on urban Syrian refugees by sending those who cause trouble or are caught working illegally to Azraq (see Black 2014, Hoffmann 2017, Human Rights Watch 2017). It seems that the ideal situation for the Jordanian government would see all Syrians living in between two camps, separated from Jordanian society and easily surveilled by the government.

Understanding Azraq from a security perspective

Unlike Za’tari, saturated with researchers and journalists from day one, Azraq has been researched and the subject of publication by only a number of scholars (Albadra *et al* 2017, Dalal *et al* 2018, Gatter 2018b, Hoffmann 2017). This is in part due to preventative measures by the Jordanian government to keep researchers and journalists out of Azraq. Most of the existing literature has on some level dealt with the theme of security in the camp. Sophia Hoffmann (2017) aims to consider the field of humanitarian politics within critical security studies. She argues that Azraq was organized to prioritize the security of aid workers over refugees, and furthermore, to protect aid workers *from* refugees. She describes the camp as occupying a “militarized landscape” (104), which creates contradictory security claims for the state, aid workers, and refugees and ultimately criminalizes those who are dependent on the aid. Hoffmann puts forth a bold but justified claim:

[T]he extremely curtailed and oppressed subjectivity of Azraq’s population raises the question: How can this camp continue as an instance of humanitarianism at all? I argue that humanitarianism’s ability to integrate the three different and competing security (cl)aims...provides one answer. Aid workers narrate Azraq’s design as an enhancement of life quality for refugees and thus as improved protection. (105)

⁴All donations must go through UN organizations (UNOs) before being allocated to partnering NGOs for specific projects and programs.

What Hoffmann asserts here is furthered in a comparative study by Ayham Dalal *et al* (2018), which argues that control camouflages itself as its opposite, care (65). Their study focuses on surveillance, management, and planning. Dalal *et al* use analysis of the camp's material infrastructure and layout in order to make this case, pointing out that the caravan's structure is not conducive to cultural practices but rather acts as an extension of the security apparatus. Albadra *et al* (2017) carried out a scientific study of Azraq's caravan infrastructure, in which their survey found that caravans failed at maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures (461).

During my time in Azraq, I observed examples supporting these scholars' claims that security is the camp's main priority. As Hoffmann notes, refugees employed under the IBV scheme as security guards and receptionists for NGO centers are responsible solely for controlling their own community, especially boys and men. An aid worker told me that there are no trees in the camp because they obstruct vision, becoming a security issue. Additionally, an outreach aid worker acknowledged the precautions taken in order to stay 'safe' in the camp's residential areas:

Your interactions with people need to be better [than inside the centers], you need to have a bit of caution [*hadhar*]. I mean, because maybe you will encounter a problem outside [on outreach] and you need to know how to act [*bidik ta'rifi kif bidik tasrafi*]. When you're walking, there should be someone with you, you know not to be by yourself.

On my first day in the camp, I was told by the NGO director to never leave the community center by myself. It was common for the camp's entrance guards, as well as those at the gates of Village 5 in particular, to require the NGO team to be followed by a security detail, and aid workers often hid any cameras to avoid having to produce permits that they did not have. Such encounters with security measures were unavoidable and not always due to the presence of myself or other Western visitors. Being in Azraq meant preparing for the same kind of security operations one might expect to encounter in a prison complex or state embassy.

There is a reason the few scholars of Azraq have focused so heavily on security. Just as research on refugees is incomplete without a focus also on the aid regime, a study on Azraq is likewise inadequate without a foundational understanding of its security apparatus. In this dissertation, acknowledging Azraq as a security device for the Jordanian government is helpful in a critical analysis of temporality because such operations exist to regulate and manipulate time as much as to assert control over space.

References to Za'tari in this dissertation are intentional and based on master's fieldwork carried out in 2016. While not a comparative project, this research cannot ignore Azraq's inherent relation to Za'tari. Bearing in mind that Azraq is a response to Za'tari's supposed failings, the particularities of Azraq's environment become more pronounced when considered against Za'tari. It was common for both refugee and aid worker interlocutors, including those who had never been to Za'tari, to compare the camps. Referencing Za'tari became a way of subjectively measuring Azraq's successes and failures and also of measuring time. This discourse often placed Za'tari, while only two years older than Azraq, firmly in the past. Azraq is the overwhelming present, and depending on who you ask, also the future of camps.

The 'ideal' camp?: a more complete picture

This research builds upon the work of Hoffmann (2017) and Dalal *et al* (2018) in Azraq. While Dalal *et al* explored the material character of the camp, I examine Azraq's immaterial infrastructure. My research seems to have picked up where Hoffmann left off, touching upon some of the themes she laid out as possible further research:

Future research should focus on both the material and discursive practices through which the collusion between humanitarian care and authoritarian control becomes possible, and on the internal characteristics of the real existing aid sector that make it possible for aid workers to function without becoming personally overwhelmed by the violent paradox they are helping to enforce. (108)

While I had not set out to answer these questions specifically during my time in the camp, this is nonetheless approximately where I have arrived. Answering the questions posed in the beginning of this introduction and those asked here by Hoffmann has led me to address the scholarship on a range of themes co-existing in Azraq camp: emergency, bureaucracy, humanitarian politics, waiting, cynicism, and the future.

The first chapter lays the foundation for this dissertation's analysis of time in the camp. It interrogates the camp as a space of emergency by examining the temporal aspect of the camp administration's emergency response. Within the extreme context of the desert refugee camp, I argue that the day-to-day is just as much a mundane experience, characterized for refugees by simultaneous rush and boredom, crowdedness and emptiness. Azraq's bureaucratic system has

produced the mundane through procedures that undermine any expected sense of urgency that the term ‘emergency’ might elsewhere imply. It is the camp’s bureaucratic procedures that lead me to instead consider the camp a ‘nine-to-five emergency’, asserting that the aid regime’s response to emergency has been limited to the hours of the working day. Within the nine-to-five emergency, short-term humanitarian timelines have given way to longer-term development timelines, further challenging the concept of emergency.

As Rozakou (2012) states, the camp “constitutes a set of methods, of ‘discursive and material sites of power’ (Hyndman 2000:87)” (568). Chapters 2 and 3 build on the first chapter by focusing more particularly on the relationship between time and power through investigating the camp system and the role of its aid workers in it. Both chapters seek to understand how time is manipulated by this system, with a heavy focus on aid worker perspectives and actions. The second chapter examines Azraq’s bureaucracy. It argues that the inefficiency of the camp’s governing system is achieved through proceduralism and the decentralized referral system. Making refugees wait at the whim of a system fronted by aid workers who are trained to deflect responsibility renders the bureaucracy almost impossible to navigate. Ultimately, I argue, aid worker positions only serve to fortify the system, despite aid worker accounts of self-sacrifice and good intentions.

Through a particular focus on the highly secure Village 5, Chapter 3 is an exploration of how aid worker perceptions of the camp and its residents have formed over time. For humanitarian staff, the passing of time in the camp complicates the moral clarity of their work, and they work against this by forming a hierarchy of preference based on a refugees’ newness to the camp, with most aid workers preferring to help those who arrived most recently in 2016 (in Village 5). Such a hierarchy connects the amount of time a refugee has spent in the camp with their perceived vulnerability. This chapter argues that aid worker discourses of newness reveal how the camp system limits refugee-led development in the camp, maintaining refugees’ vulnerability and the camp’s underdevelopment more generally. Therefore, a narrative of Azraq-as-new is one that preserves the camp in a preferred state of order.

Chapters 4 and 5, the final two chapters, examine the camp’s power apparatus from refugee perspectives, examining how camp residents experience the system’s manipulation of time. Chapter 4 analyzes how refugees experience waiting in the camp, whether waiting for services,

waiting out displacement, or waiting to return. I explore refugee attitudes around waiting, arguing that refugees express cynicism about their wait – that is, they wait without believing a future outside of the camp exists. I use the term cynicism in order to capture refugee feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty, fear, and hopelessness as shaped by the camp’s bureaucratic and fear-mongering administration. Distinct from pessimism, cynicism is a complete lack of belief in the possibility for a better outcome, and thus refugees learn to wait *as if* the future they desire will come.

The final chapter explores refugees’ desired futures in depth. It seeks to reconcile refugee beliefs that ‘there is no future’ with their various imaginings for both near and far futures. Many of these imaginings are informed by refugee nostalgia for the past, when they still believed in the Syrian regime’s neoliberal promises for the good life. I argue that refugees’ visions for the future are also reflective of their relationship with the refugee label and its subsequent treatment as exceptional. Both near and far future imaginaries for refugees are attempts to achieve a semblance of ordinariness that is not possible to replicate within the mundane conditions of Azraq.

This dissertation aims to paint a more complicated image of the ‘ideal’ refugee camp through an examination of a particular politics of time, analyzing perspectives of both refugees and aid workers, who may occupy the space at the same time but experience it in vastly different ways. I am not only interested in how the two interact on a daily basis, but also in how each thinks about their situation and the situation of the camp from their distinct but inter-dependent positionalities. This research is one of few studies on camps that focus on both perspectives. This has allowed me to consider both communities together as two parts of an ongoing conversation on time. While camp refugees are inherently the ultimate subjects of time, aid workers too surprised me with their unique subjectivities, including those who left their work in the camp and could thus reflect on Azraq as a part of their past.

Perhaps most importantly, as Sophia Hoffmann (2017) reminds us, “Azraq presents a particularly relevant case for studying what contemporary humanitarian thinking and practice considers an ‘ideal’ refugee camp” (104). By understanding the camp from a temporal lens, we can better perceive how refugees are not only spatially isolated, but also *temporally* isolated. Illustrating a more complete picture of refugee marginalization – one that is spatiotemporal – reveals

arguably more pressing implications as to the social welfare of a dispossessed population that is meant to be protected via universally-recognized rights, not sheltered from the world.

METHODOLOGY

Researching Azraq

INITIALLY, MY PHD FIELDWORK set out to expand on my master's research of Jordan's Za'tari refugee camp, but one of the earliest challenges I faced while on fieldwork was access to the camp. As is typical for this kind of work in Jordan, placements with NGOs where I had connections fell through due to the ever-changing structures of the organizations and those who worked there. I used the first weeks of my fieldwork to familiarize myself with the existing network of journalists and researchers on the topic of displacement in Jordan, and many reminded me that Za'tari has become saturated with researchers, and that if I wanted to make a difference, there was a dire need for research on Azraq refugee camp. During my time in Za'tari in 2016, I heard much about Azraq from aid workers who split their time between the two camps. I realized that there was an opportunity to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork in a vastly under-researched camp that surpasses Za'tari in sheer physical expanse and greatly differs in its administration.

I was grateful to be able to carry out ethnographic research in Azraq, even more difficult to access than Za'tari, over twelve months. Being able to spend so much time in different areas of the camp enabled me to comfortably keep my research "open-ended" (Palmer *et al* 2018, 418) in order to provide space for unexpected insights to emerge naturally. Qualitative data is useful for making sense of the "chaotic" worlds that refugees inhabit" (Mackenzie *et al* 2007, 315), complexities that cannot be captured through surveys or on a tight schedule (Rodgers 2004). The long-term nature of my research allowed room for disruptions, such as medical emergencies or last-minute rescheduling of NGO programming, to arise that could "re-frame" my perspective

entirely. I was not strategically looking for the expected nor digging for specific answers, but rather constantly curious, waiting and observing as potential insights appeared from all angles. My time in Azraq was a privilege, preserving what Mills and Ratcliffe (2012) call the “ethnographic imagination” (160), ethnography that allows for “the unpredictable, the tangential and the creative” (152). I am also aware that a year spent in a desert refugee camp for me is a vastly different experience for those who live in it, and I reflect on this in the final section of the methodology.

The politics of access in a ‘bureaucratic jungle’

While this dissertation in part explores camp bureaucracy in Azraq as it affects refugees and aid workers, it is important to address the state bureaucracy with which researchers attempting to access the camp are inevitably confronted. Academics aiming to enter Azraq without NGO affiliation must apply at the Jordanian Ministry of the Interior, where a permit may or may not be granted after two weeks and must be renewed every three weeks. Visits of this nature are guaranteed to require a police escort within the camp. This is why many researchers, including myself, choose to be hosted by NGOs, who assume the responsibility of obtaining permits. While getting permission this way takes just as long and the researcher must stay with the NGO in the camp at all times, the permit can cover the length of the entire research period and the researcher enters the camp without the cumbersome security detail.

Of course, circumstances can change at any time. In December 2017, my permit with an organization had to be re-investigated and renewed when another NGO was caught bringing journalists into Village 5 without necessary paperwork. The permits for all foreigners were temporarily revoked, and the turnaround time for all permit requests increased to four weeks because of the suddenly large volume. My permit renewal was ultimately never resolved, but luckily this issue occurred at the end of my contract with one NGO, and I was able to begin work with another that provided me with a new permit for the second half of my fieldwork.

With such complicated bureaucratic procedure and little transparency, it is no wonder that researchers have not further infiltrated Azraq’s borders. While the camp has no physical boundaries apart from stationed military vehicles, its symbolic border walls are held together by intricate bureaucratic scaffolding. Indeed, the barren desert of Azraq camp is what Pia Vogler

(2007) might call a lush ‘bureaucratic jungle’ (59). Vogler has chronicled her own experience attempting to access a camp for Burmese refugees in Thailand, describing similar obstacles in the process of entering the camp. She asserts that researchers should refuse to give in to states’ preventative bureaucratic strategies and instead become more transparent in discussions about methodology. She urges, “As refugees are finding their ‘way out’ of camps, we have to be similarly innovative in finding our ‘way in’.”

My ‘way in’ was possible via internships with two organizations over roughly twelve months, and an additional two months were spent conducting interviews with interlocutors, both aid workers and refugees, outside of the camp. The first organization has been well established in Azraq since the camp’s foundation in 2014 and plays an integral role in its political apparatus, while the second organization founded an office in Jordan in 2016 and is still growing its presence in the camp, focusing on development programming. Splitting my ethnographic fieldwork between the two organizations allowed me to be a participant observer without becoming too much of an insider to realize the nuances of such a particular setting. Still, it is worth noting that my experience in Azraq was also confined to the ‘nine-to-five’. While I may have observed my fair share of late nights in the camp, I cannot speak for what happens when the aid ‘disappears’ – between 5pm and 9am and on weekends. And while my positionality as a researcher may have allowed me to transcend the perspectives of an aid worker, I nevertheless inhabited the temporality of one.

The humanitarian organization I supported works closely with the UNHCR to run the camp’s community centers. During my internship, I worked alongside the NGO’s staff, bussed directly from Amman, Zarqa, and Azraq City to the camp every day, and I spent most of my time with this NGO in Villages 2, 3, and 6. I supported three major teams that formed the core of my observations: case management, the Incentive-Based Volunteering scheme, and outreach. Working in these three areas allowed me to observe interactions between refugees and aid workers both inside the centers and among the caravans. Because of the nature of the NGO’s work, I was able to obtain valuable observations of a wide range of interactions and cases, but forming more meaningful relationships with individual refugees was challenging and limited. Thus, I focused my energies during this portion of my fieldwork on observing refugees’ navigation of the humanitarian system and strengthening my relationships with individual aid workers. Through daily conversation with the humanitarian staff alongside whom I worked and

follow-up interviews with the aid workers who emerged as my key interlocutors, I was able to explore themes of time, the camp system, and career trajectories from their humanitarian perspective.

The development organization I worked with during the latter half of my fieldwork offers a different view of life in the camp because they provide programs carried out by Syrian refugee volunteers who they train. I supported communications work based out of Amman through regular visits to centers in Azraq as well as daily work directly with the field team in the camp. The NGO has centers in Villages 3 and 5, and I spent most of my time in Village 5. Throughout my internship, I attended trainings, meetings, and events alongside refugees and observed programs and activities, and I carried out case study interviews with beneficiaries and volunteers. These opportunities allowed me not only to continue observing interactions between refugees and aid workers but also opened up possibilities for creating meaningful relationships with the Syrian refugees on site. In addition to my colleagues in communications and in the field, my primary interlocutors during this period were several of the Syrian refugee volunteers, including cleaners, facilitators, and directors, at each center. I gathered most of my data through daily conversation and observations as well as through in-depth interviews with those with whom I felt I had the strongest relationship and thus would be candid and comfortable upon recording.

These interviews were conducted toward the end of each fieldwork stage to ensure that I had an established relationship with all of those being interviewed. For both aid workers and refugees, I asked questions that explored their experience in the camp from their first day in Azraq through to the present moment before asking them to reflect on the future. These discussions prompted interviewees to reflect on their positionality in the present moment and to think through what has become in Azraq an experience of “enforced presentism” (Guyer 2007, 410). For some, it was clear that they had not vocalized or even considered their feelings regarding certain experiences in the camp prior to our interview. My observations of everyday attitudes, conversations, and expressions – through which interlocutors prompted their own reflections on life and work in the camp – complement the interview discussions.

Additional interlocutors included Syrian refugees living and working in Amman and aid workers at other organizations, including an NGO supporting Levantine heritage education in

Za'tari that at the time was preparing to bring its programs to Azraq. All aspects of my fieldwork, from the internships to the interviews, were conducted in colloquial Jordanian and Syrian Arabic dialects, and my prior experience working with refugee communities in Jordan gave me the cultural fluency needed to respectfully form meaningful relationships with colleagues and refugees. All of my interactions with NGOs and refugees in and outside of the camp have come together to shape this dissertation.

Researching a 'difficult' place: positionalities and transformations

After war and conflict zones, refugee camps top the list of 'difficult' field sites in anthropology. Tobias Kelly (2008) notes that ethnographers have recently become more interested in spaces of emergency and are praised for bringing detailed attention to hard-to-reach communities. But anthropologists in such places must navigate a complicated field with a particular set of complex politics and dynamics. This section is a reflection on my positionality – as a white, female, aid worker-ethnographer – and how I strove to manage my boundaries in the field.

I have elsewhere explored my positionality with respect to my femaleness in greater depth (see Gatter forthcoming). In the essay, I argue that while being a female researcher in a refugee camp in Jordan has its challenges, such as building trust with male interlocutors, it also comes with advantages. I wrote,

[B]eing a female ethnographer in Jordan enabled me to gain insight into a world off limits to men...I could be a part of what men could not, witnessing ordinary moments that male ethnographers would not be privy to.

For me, women in the camp became familiar faces in an otherwise intimidating research landscape. They emerged as “gateways” and sometimes “gatekeepers” (Gatter forthcoming) into a richer understanding of their community. My relationship with these women, established not just through language but also through our shared experiences as women, enabled me to reach a more nuanced understanding of camp life. I learned to embrace my femaleness as a “tactical” maneuver (Halme-Tuomisaari 2018, 459) through which to offset more obvious differences between myself and women in the camp community. In my essay, I continued,

These women became akin to my “fieldwork family”, a term Ann-Christin Wagner (2018) used to describe the human ‘scaffolding’ (Rosaldo 2014) that supported her

throughout fieldwork and appeared during especially difficult and often personal moments. While the fieldwork family is usually composed of those never mentioned in the resulting research, I found that much of the “silent infrastructure” (Wagner 2018) of my work in the field was composed of the women in the very communities I researched. These women made my work a little more manageable, connecting me to other informants and making me feel more at home in the stressful environment.

Aware of the complications of my subjectivities as a female in Azraq, I also had to navigate what for me were my primary identities: ethnographer and aid worker. Because of the nature of my access to the camp, I wore a badge that identified me as an aid worker of an NGO. I would remain always an outsider for refugees but also for aid workers; even though I was given the responsibilities of an aid worker, my colleagues would never truly consider me to be one. This, too, came with advantages. Aid workers knew they could share with me what they might not with a colleague and they would naturally explain aspects of their work that they believed to be new information for me.

However, this positionality also meant that the line between aid worker and ethnographer was constantly changing. Liisa Malkki (2015) describes how she approached a similar duality in her fieldwork. She calls her ethnographic approach “methodological distancing” (190), that is, listening and participating in the community of the researcher’s concern while striving to be a “neutral dictation secretary”, keeping all personal opinions at bay in the moment. Key to this distance is reasonable “relativism” (191), taking interlocutors seriously but being open to the possibility of intervention where appropriate. For example, Malkki describes a situation she encountered in an East African camp in which a diviner blamed a newborn’s death on an elderly woman. She states that her role as an ethnographer meant that she had to take all parties seriously and simply take notes, but, she writes,

This does not mean discarding my own ideas about why the baby died. And it does not absolve me, perhaps, of trying to intervene to stop the people whom the diviner told to drive the old woman out of the camp. It does entail a kind of provisional, improvisational, unstable neutrality, but one that inevitably runs up against its limits. Here, too...the impossibilities of aid work in the field find an uncanny parallel in ethnography.

In my field research, I constantly strove to strike the balance between remaining methodologically distant and objective and participating in the community as if I were an organic member of it. I became involved in situations when I believed I could contribute to an

issue in a meaningful way. This meant that there were times when I perhaps crossed a line as an aid worker, undermining another aid worker's authority or engaging in an emotional conversation with a refugee. On the other hand, there were also moments when my actions were not research-centric:

It was important to me that I took the time to immerse myself in community activities that did not necessarily fall under the theme of my research, drinking tea with refugee volunteers at the NGO centers or responding to invitations of children to dance with them, even at moments when I could have inserted myself elsewhere to gather data...more often than not, the moments when I stepped out of being an ethnographer offered more profound insights for my research. (Gatter forthcoming)

Because of understandable perceptions that members of the refugee community had of myself as a white-passing figure with access to power, refugees would sometimes approach me because they believed I had the ability to change their circumstances. I quickly came to learn how to clearly explain my presence in the camp while also bringing their issue to the attention of an aid worker. However, I also wanted to use my privilege to the benefit of my interlocutors: "My decision to, whenever possible, advocate and be present for individuals in the communities in the moment was crucial to carrying out responsible fieldwork" (Gatter forthcoming).

Throughout the duration of my fieldwork, I experienced a transformation as both an ethnographer and an aid worker as I worked through my positionalities. Malkki reflects on both aid work and fieldwork as being transformative in similar ways:

[A]id work is something like anthropological fieldwork in that both can be transformative life experiences that engage affects, the senses, and the imagination – the whole person – for better and for worse. Both can be creative and re-creative. (2015, 12)

In my experience, I gained new perspectives and left the field with more questions than when I had entered it. At the very end of my fieldwork, my fellow aid workers gifted me with a traditional Jordanian shal and told me, "Khalas, you are Jordanian now!" My induction to their community was a fitting end to fieldwork, a moment of reflection on how I had changed throughout the journey and symbolic of the irony that my 'initiation' could only happen as I was leaving the community.

I have come to realize that an ethnographer's struggles, and the personal transformations that thus result, are as important to her research as her data is, though not included in her final paper or lecture. Wagner (2018) asserts that "the ethnographer's emotions are not only part of the effort she makes, they are also potential 'data'". The transformative experience is what lends itself to in-depth analysis and richer research.

Time for the researcher

This dissertation is concerned with how aid workers and refugees experience the passage of time in Azraq, but here I reflect on how I experienced time as a researcher. Waiting for me, too, was central to my ethnography. My research itself was a year-long wait, allowing time to pass in order for the realities of Azraq's dynamic everyday to be revealed. Much of this time felt idle and mundane, but it was also left open to be filled by spontaneous conversations, natural relationship-building, and even uneventfulness that would later prove significant to my research. As Palmer *et al* (2018) state,

[I]n a fieldwork scenario where there is no waiting by the researcher, where every minute is booked with interviews and scheduled visits to particular sites for photographs and documentation, the researcher's control of the project can produce participants as passive respondents to a pre-determined set of prompts, beginning with the determination of a time and place for every meeting. (424)

I avoided carrying out my research in this manner, and I think this helped to compensate for power relations between myself and my interlocutors. Indeed, I waited along with aid workers filling time before the buses arrived to take them back to Amman. I waited with refugees during training programs and at NGO centers. In my research, time was something I focused on but it was also something I shared with those in the camp, albeit for different reasons. Time was also something I could 'offer' (Palmer *et al*, 426) to my interlocutors when I engaged in conversation or joined them on their mundane tasks. When I conducted interviews, I let aid workers and refugees direct them; they chose the time and place and could speak for the very purpose of being attentively listened to. I aimed for the interview to become a conversation with a natural ending. My time was usually in the hands of my interlocutors, whose time was thus recognized as more valuable.

In the end, my transformations as a female aid worker-ethnographer transpired within a fleeting moment. The liminality (see Wagner 2018, Halme-Tuomisaari 2018) of my work in the field meant that once it was over, I could no longer claim some of the dimensions of the identity I had grown into. Moreover, my presence as a temporary actor in what is supposed to be a temporary space came with a sense of helplessness. A full year into fieldwork, I realized that nothing had changed. I was no longer new to the environment, I had transformed, and yet Azraq seemed to have frozen in time. The same entrance guards rotated through their posts every day. I would pass the bus that used to take me from Amman to the camp's community centers and see that even though I had left that NGO, the buses continued on the same route every day, taking with them aid workers I still recognized. I could no longer think about a near future in which I might be able to help improve refugees' lives because a year into fieldwork *was* the near future when I had first begun. A year had passed by inconspicuously, without anniversaries or celebration, but a year is no small thing in a refugee camp – as it is a year more than anyone wants to be there.

Indeed, I left Azraq with a heavy heart. Not the optimistic researcher who had left Za'tari inspired by its children and hopeful that they might have a chance at the future they desire, I left Azraq wondering what kind of future was in store for its refugees. This dissertation is an exploration of the absence of optimism I encountered in the desert refugee camp, attempting to shed light where there is none.

CHAPTER ONE

Azraq's Emergency

The camp is a time more than it is a place.
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, "The Camp is Time" (2017)

IT WAS MY SECOND DAY in Azraq camp, and it was very hot. I had joined Ghazwan and Samer, aid workers at the community center, on their morning outreach visits in Village 2. We had been walking for fifteen minutes, and they were both visibly sweating through their t-shirts, taking slow strides across the gravel plots of empty space between blocks. The camp terrain is flat, but they looked like they were trekking uphill. Their blocky hiking boots dug into the ground making a crunching sound with every step.

"This must be like Arizona," Ghazwan joked. "I heard it gets so hot there that you can't be outside for more than ten minutes! Is that true?" He turned to me, finally having an American to consult on this.

"I don't know, but I would believe it," I said, squinting to distinguish the blurred landscape ahead. There was not much movement. A few bicycles passed by in seemingly slow motion, the rider wearing a wet towel fastened atop his head like a traditional *kafiyyeh*. When a breeze came through, it carried with it unforgiving blasts of sand. We would turn our backs to the wind until it passed.

We entered a block of caravans looking for a specific address. There was no one in sight, save for a few children playing in the shade between units. Samer told the children that they should be inside on a day like this. Then he asked them if they knew the location of the caravan number we were trying to find. The children pointed to a neighboring plot of six caravans, and we shuffled across the gravel.

“So we’re looking for a woman who has requested assistance for her newborn,” Ghazwan explained. “But we don’t have any more information, so we have to find out more.”

He tapped on the metal door of the caravan with the end of his pen. “*As-salamu ‘alaykum*,” he shouted, before both he and Samer stepped into nearby shade and turned their backs to the door. I would come to witness this routine often among male aid workers on outreach, behavior done out of respect for the limited privacy of women inside the caravan. Samer scribbled some notes on the case’s paperwork on his clipboard.

A man opened the door and welcomed us inside. The caravan contained one room with a few shelves on the walls and cushions on the floor. A car TV and a fan competed for electricity obtained from a small solar panel fastened to the roof. The fan, which functioned only in short bursts, was pointed at a baby lying on a pillow in the middle of the floor. The newborn lay asleep and motionless, covered in damp towels. The heat inside the caravan was more unbearable than it was outside.

When asked where his wife was, the man replied, “Oh, she went to the community center to follow up on the request we put in a few weeks ago. We didn’t know you were going to come by. We could have saved her the trip in this heat.”

As we left, Ghazwan suggested the TV be turned off so that the fan can work continuously, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the baby’s suffering could be credited not to the TV, but to the failure of the ‘best-planned refugee camp’ to provide the village with electricity.

Several months later, the heat and sandstorms turned into cold and rain. An aid worker in Village 5 described the challenges of winter, “The bigger problem than the rain for us is fog [*dabab*]. In the mornings when we head out [for outreach] we sometimes have zero vision [*ar-rya btakun sifr*], we can’t see anything for more than two meters ahead.” With the rain comes mud, “how it swallows everyone up, *haram* [it’s a shame],” she added, echoing a sentiment by another aid worker who had driven a refugee volunteer and her daughter to their appointment at the camp hospital in June, “*Haram*, it’s hot out and the hospital is far away.”

After the first rainfall of Jordan’s winter season in the months after my fieldwork had ended, I received a video from an interlocutor living in Village 5. At first glance, I thought it was a nostalgic video of the beaches in Syria. But as she panned the camera, I realized the water

breaking on the shore was actually a river of rainwater rushing down a designated channel between Azraq's villages. It had enough strength and depth to carry a child with it. Another video captured the rain beating down on her caravan, slipping through the gaps in between the roof and the walls and making a muddy mess. "I can't stand the cold anymore [*ana ma 'ad atahamal*]," she wrote.

These realities reveal the extreme nature of life in Azraq camp. Albadra *et al* (2017) found that while average high temperatures are around 36°C (96.8°F), the interior of a caravan can reach as high as 45°C (113°F) (461). For a journalist who made several visits to Azraq, the camp reminded her of the *Hunger Games*, likening it to a strange dystopian settlement of "people sitting in their hot containers".

Life lived in Azraq is also one living in emergency. The camp is, to use Simon Turner's term, a "time pocket" (2015, 142). Humanitarians prioritize the short term over the mid- to long-term, and thus refugees live in the day-to-day, the "immediate present" (Mbembe and Roitman 1996, 153 in Redfield 2005, 346). This creates a protracted emergency that has persisted for a fifth year. The extreme conditions described above continue on unmitigated, basic needs remain unmet, and humanitarian projects bleed into development programs with no exact parameters.

It is the protraction of the emergency that undermines emergency itself. Bureaucratization of humanitarian aid in Azraq creates a mundane nine-to-five routine. Refugees, and to a certain extent aid workers, must comply with rules and regulations that challenge any sense of urgency. The loss of emotional charge usually associated with crisis extends also to emergencies that occur *within* the emergency of the camp – from fires to medical emergencies, explored in this chapter and the next.

This chapter identifies Azraq's emergency as its spatial and temporal *context* (as opposed to emergency as an event or series of events) in order to understand how it translates into the camp's day-to-day operations and experiences. I argue that the bureaucratized humanitarian response to Azraq's emergency produces the mundane, which exists through moments of rush and boredom and in spaces of crowding and emptiness, by distributing emergency over time into the everyday. By considering the camp's temporality as a 'nine-to-five' emergency, this chapter complicates expectations of emergency response to investigate everyday lived realities in Azraq. The chapter's questioning of Azraq's seemingly incongruent timelines, such as the urgent

need for aid and the protracted and underwhelming humanitarian response, examines also the shifting of NGO projects from short-term humanitarian work to longer-term socio-cultural development.

I aim in this chapter to provide foundational context by interrogating the humanitarian space of the camp as an emergency space (and time) and analyzing the mundane as part and parcel to the emergency. I refer to the camp as an ‘emergency space (and time)’ in order to stress the temporal (not just spatial) quality of the term ‘emergency’ and to emphasize the role that temporality plays in Azraq’s operation. This sets the groundwork for explorations of the relation between time and power in the camp throughout the rest of this dissertation.

This chapter first reviews the literature on emergency spaces in relation to current understandings of refugee camps. It juxtaposes expectations of emergency against telling aid worker narratives of crisis. The chapter then explores Azraq as a nine-to-five emergency and the mundane experiences that are produced within this context. The final section problematizes development work in the camp as incongruent with inadequate humanitarian projects.

Emergency in a refugee camp

In the administrative caravan of the community center in Village 6, staff regularly came through to welcome back Jalal, one of the managers. A stocky man in his forties, Jalal gave the impression that his already boundless energy was renewed after his few weeks away. Work had taken him to the United States for training. Jalal described how the NGO had invited him along with staff from other parts of the world to a remote area, where they were inserted into an emergency simulation for six days and nights to work together in solving problems and distributing aid. Jalal recounted the post-hurricane simulation with intense dramatic emphasis, explaining that they once had to use the ‘safe word’ to have a peer taken to a hospital after an insect crawled in her ear (arguably the only actual emergency to take place during the week). He pulled out his phone to show me a short video of the simulation filmed by the NGO and repeatedly paused to comment on what it was showing. It was clear that Jalal could barely contain his excitement.

“This was the *real thing!*” he exclaimed, gesturing with his hands as if it would help me to visualize the intense reality of the simulation.

It seemed that the irony of this conversation had missed him. Here, a manager of one of the main NGOs in a desert refugee camp felt a rush from being involved in the aftermath of a fake hurricane. This was not Jalal’s first experience providing aid in emergency: “I was in Azraq camp since day one. I was also in Za’tari since day one. I was in many camps since day one, it’s not a good thing,” he had told me on my first day in the camp. This is precisely why I was struck by his thrilling account of a simulated emergency as ‘the real thing.’

Jalal’s animated storytelling illustrates the complexity of emergency, which can include natural disasters, man-made conflicts, and spaces of displacement. Natural and political crises, however, are not all that different when it comes to the logic of emergency response, according to Fassin and Pandolfi (2010):

Disasters and conflicts are embedded in the same global logic of intervention, which rests on two fundamental elements: the temporality of emergency, which is used to justify a state of exception, and the conflation of the political and moral registers manifested in the realization of operations which are at once military and humanitarian. (10)

Fassin and Pandolfi here describe the humanitarian and military response as an inherent part of a state of emergency. It is a state in which aid workers and soldiers share similar tasks on similar timelines, often both in the name of helping people and saving lives (Fassin 2013 in Brun 2016, 401). The politics of the military and the morality of humanitarianism converge within the emergency under an order presumably exceptional to the normal world order.

A refugee camp may seem to be a less overt example of an emergency state. It is helpful to view the camp through the lens of Peter Redfield (2010), who turns his attention away from the ‘dramatic’ emergency and toward ‘uncertain’ crises, those spaces that do not receive as much attention because they are always *about to become* crisis. He argues that with dramatic emergencies comes a “temporary moral clarity” (191) for those who intervene. This clarity is challenged in a chronic or protracted crisis, such as a refugee camp or an underdeveloped community. It is perhaps the certainty of dramatic emergency that led Jalal to find the post-hurricane emergency so stimulating:

The verge of crisis reveals the degree of uncertainty surrounding the very center of humanitarian conviction. It is thus of little surprise that many humanitarian actors, media observers, and even critics have favored certain disaster. (192)

For Jalal, the physical processes of emergency relief after a hurricane were perhaps less morally troubling than the weightier decisions that must be made daily in the camp to lesser tangible results. In Azraq, “bureaucratic work, logistical snafus, and frustrating negotiations with other organizations intrude” (Calhoun 2010, 53) in aid workers’ feelings of accomplishment, as their work in the camp is never complete so long as the emergency on the other side of the border continues.

Jalal’s account brings out the gap between an emergency that has the potential to wash everything away, such as a hurricane, and one that maintains a relatively fair sense of stability, such as a refugee camp. Because a refugee camp lacks the drama of a natural disaster or a warzone emergency, it challenges our spatial and temporal perceptions of emergency. The following two sections analyze how the literature has defined emergency and interrogate these perceptions in the context of Azraq camp.

Emergency in the literature

Emergency is most often defined as an event or episode in exception to everyday life. It is something that ‘emerges’ as a “separation from the familiar” (Solnit 2009, 10). An emergency is “sudden, unpredictable, brief, or at least very urgent” (Calhoun 2010, 31). It is thought of as “a moment outside of the everyday” (Beckett 2013, 92). Perhaps most defining of emergency is its temporality. Emergency comes to an end and is analyzed in ‘post’: ‘post-conflict’, ‘post-war’, ‘post-crisis’.

Calhoun (2010) describes emergency as also a political moment in the current global order, stating,

“Emergency” is now the primary term for referring to catastrophes, conflicts, and settings for human suffering...Use of the word focuses attention on the immediate event, and not on its causes. It calls for a humanitarian response, not political or economic analysis. The emergency has become a basic unit of global affairs, like the nation. ‘Darfur’ is as much the name of an emergency as the name of a place. (30)

Calhoun argues that normalization of the term has allowed for intervention as a popular moral and political response. Emergency is affective, emotional even when not inherently dramatic. Indeed, Fassin and Pandolfi (2010) describe that the “desire” by international leaders and figures for intervention has become “one of the strongest political emotions in contemporary life” (16). The refugee camp is a major example of such intervention, making refugees the “prototypical face of the emergency” (Calhoun 2010, 33).

Emergency response is fueled by images that portray a sense of immediacy and urgency that states and aid organizations rely on for funding:

[T]he humanitarian emergency is new...constituted, made available for a distinctive form of response, by a specific social imaginary. This is circulated in the media, but also informs the work of UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), religious organizations, and other actors. (Calhoun 2010, 31)

Images chosen by NGO marketers and media editors portray a crisis in an unidentifiable place: “They depict the state of emergency more than they depict particular places” (33). Rows of tents, such as in a refugee camp, is popular imagery, suggesting both the vastness of the emergency and the material humanitarian presence. The lives of those refugees in the images are decontextualized (Brun 2016, 402). Such imagery, Calhoun contends, does not somehow falsify the emergency, but rather demonstrates that “emergency imaginary frames these events not as they look to locals, but as they appear to cosmopolitans” (2010, 54). In other words, he writes, “Emergencies are crises from the point of view of the cosmopolis.” Liisa Malkki (2015) provides a striking example of this in her description of media coverage of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. She states that attention was focused on the white expatriate aid worker, usually women with “inexplicably clean T-shirts” (26) and charismatic personalities, paired with nameless victims, “preferably in the figuralities of innocent children, women, or women and children.” Malkki captions such clichéd images as “selfless healers, selfless victims.”

This perception of emergency as viewed from the outside is problematic, Brun (2016) argues, as humanitarianism thus constructs particular futures possible only outside of short-term aid relief. This means that the protracted or long-term crisis neither carries the momentum of a dramatic emergency nor is compatible with humanitarian or global views of a near future return to order. Azraq is one example of a protracted and uncertain crisis, and this dissertation seeks to re-contextualize those living and working in emergency. The emergency that is a ‘basic unit of

global affairs' is what the camp administration narrates to the outside world (further explored in chapter three), but I intend to focus on how this emergency is treated on the inside in the everyday; that is, how does it look to 'locals'?

Azraq as an emergency space (and time)

Refugee camps are established as spaces of emergency, but not much focus has been paid to the temporal aspect of such emergency sites. As camps in recent decades have outlived original plans for temporary shelter, most notably for Palestinians in Jordan, Somalis in Kenya, and Afghans in Pakistan, we must look closer at what happens to emergency in protraction.

Agier (2011) evaluates refugee camps as emergency spaces "where time seems to have been stopped for an undetermined period" (72). Over the long run, emergency and exception are continually reinforced:

It is only the emergency situation and its exceptional character that justify these spaces, but at the same time these factors tend to reproduce themselves, to spread and establish themselves over the long term. (71)

The refugee camp as a response to emergency is self-justifying because it can only perpetuate emergency. The temporality of emergency in long-term refugee camps, Redfield (2005) argues, "becomes truly a state in which humanitarian action can preserve existence while deferring the very dignity or redemption it seeks" (346).

Azraq camp is one such space in which "emergency remains emergent" (Redfield 2010, 191). For a camp that had been kept in a "state of readiness" until it was opened in 2014 (Dalal *et al* 2018, 67), Azraq may not have the typical origin story of a space of emergency. Yet, its very existence is justified by a state of emergency in which crisis is chronic. It is a place in which the needs of the population are urgent. The main crisis here is not conflict nor natural disaster, but displacement; the camp was built to address the absence of shelter, food, medical care, and economic opportunity for Syrians who suddenly had nothing. Those fleeing emergency at home now wait as refugees in another emergency not native to the space, an emergency that is contingent upon the former in order to end.

For the refugee camp, emergency is the context. Rather than analyzing crisis within a context, Vigh (2008) employs an anthropological lens, “seeing crisis *as* context...a terrain of action and meaning rather than an aberration” (8). Viewing crisis as a “condition” rather than trying to place it within a broader normative order releases the term from “temporal confines” (9-10) that anticipate the finitude of crisis. Emergency can be understood as an analytical term useful to exploring the particular context of a community living in such a space. This perspective allows for a reading of emergency as ingrained in Azraq’s terrain, blending “into common forms of suffering and the ethical dilemmas of everyday life” (Redfield 2010, 191).

The significance of establishing ‘emergency as context’ in Azraq is the opportunity to understand the camp’s unique processes and power relations that play out every day *within* the emergency. Considering ‘emergency as context’ from a temporal lens provides the foundation for understanding the relationship between time and power. I argue that bureaucratic proceduralism manages to distribute the state of emergency over time, penetrating the everyday experience of refugees and aid workers and generating the mundane. The urgency of emergency is then lost in Azraq, but nonetheless the camp’s emergency framework justifies humanitarian intervention. Emergency as context enables the camp administration to regulate refugees’ time on its own agenda, most notably through its nine-to-five timetable. Thus, emergency in Azraq is experienced by its residents via a bureaucratic system that requires waiting and compliance with changing regulations. Azraq’s emergency encapsulates both the extremities of life in a desert, illustrated in the chapter’s opening, and the mundanity of life within a humanitarian system, to be explored in the following sections and chapter.

A ‘nine-to-five’ emergency

Aid worker and refugee reactions to disruptions of the nine-to-five routine reveal how the mundane dulls dramatic affect in the camp. When emergencies occur within the space of emergency, responses from bystanders and aid workers, even those who take necessary actions to handle the disruption, are unattached from emotion. For example, fire in any other setting would be considered as what Redford (2010) calls a ‘dramatic’ emergency or a ‘certain’ crisis. In Azraq, however, even fire does not warrant the kinds of dramatic theatrics that Jalal had been so excited about in his retelling of a post-hurricane simulation.

On one particularly warm day in late June, I arrived to an NGO center in Village 3 to find Rawan, an aid worker, running from office to office looking for a fire extinguisher. She cradled the first extinguisher she could find as she hurried to a caravan that had caught fire nearby. Smoke rose up into the sky as a few refugee volunteers gathered outside the center, but most passersby continued about their routes. Some children riding by on bicycles recognized one of the refugee volunteers and asked, “What’s going on? [*Shu fi ya aniseh?*]” but did not seem particularly shocked when she told them that there was a fire. Another volunteer commented, “It’s probably an electrical fire. These caravans, you know, you have a kid who touches the wrong thing and the whole caravan goes up in flames.” What might have been a dramatic situation fizzled into jokes as one volunteer noted how she thought Rawan had run toward the caravan with a baby and not an extinguisher in her arms. Rawan made her way back to the center as the fire truck pulled into the neighborhood. She told us that an entire wall of the caravan was burned, but that everyone inside the caravan, including a baby, emerged unharmed. Rawan returned to her office to finish an email she had started before the fire.

The fire episode reveals how even emergencies within the emergency have been absorbed into the mundane reality of life in Azraq. The volunteers had explained it away with a simple critique of the flawed caravan infrastructure that all refugees must live with. Refugees in the surrounding area of the fire had not seemed concerned, and apart from Rawan, no other aid worker from the center had rushed to the scene. Even Rawan herself seemed unfazed, quickly returning to her mundane tasks of the day without mentioning more than a few words of the emergency. Overall, the entire incident and its response had been underwhelming. In Azraq, the drama of what would be considered elsewhere as a ‘dramatic’ emergency loses emotional charge. Instead, narratives and imagery of emergency in Azraq are saved for the outsider’s gaze, composing campaigns around organizations’ urgent need for continual funding.

Malkki (2015) describes how for Finnish aid workers on international assignments in areas of conflict, the ordinary and the extraordinary interact through both routine and through “jarring” (55) interruptions to the routine. In Rawan’s case, for example, she seamlessly switches between writing emails and putting out a fire as her work demands. Malkki states that these “inescapable” (55) situations are the norm for aid workers in the field: “The extraordinary and the ordinary were out of all proportion to each other, irreconcilable, yet occupied the same impossible space. They intruded into and distorted each other” (74). A caravan catching on fire

epitomizes the blurring of emergencies within emergency in Azraq; it is an urgent situation that is both unexceptional and exceptional for residents and workers in the camp.

As explored below, I refrain from using the term ‘ordinary’ to define the everyday uneventfulness of Azraq in favor of the ‘mundane’, a term informed by Tobias Kelly (2008). This next section explores the mundane – sometimes extreme and sometimes unextraordinary but always boring – as produced by the bureaucratic response to Azraq’s emergency. The endless nine-to-five emergency not only affects refugees as they adapt to the camp but also shapes the work of aid workers.

The mundane

Tobias Kelly’s (2008) study of the unexpected boredom of conflict in the West Bank during the second intifada (2000-2005) aims to complicate what is often viewed in anthropology as a mutually exclusive relationship, in which the mundane and extreme are treated as separate analytical categories. He argues that alongside the “spectacular acts of violence” and extreme aspects of the armed conflict, “for most Palestinians the second *intifada* has been marked by boredom and frustration” (353). Kelly’s ethnography focuses on those Palestinians who, rather than becoming involved in direct politics, attempted to continue their ordinary lives despite the conflict, and highlights the actions of a young man pursuing a career in accountancy.

Kelly’s attention to the mundane in extraordinary circumstances allows for a complication of the notion that the mundane is free of the extreme or the violent, as he states: “We should not assume that the mundane is somehow benign, as it can be saturated with anxieties of its own” (364). He probes into the relationship between violence and the mundane, asserting that the mundane is often fraught with violence, or the anticipation of violence. Indeed, Kelly contends, a lack of violence “should not be seen as the default state” (356) of the mundane, and that nonviolence is not free of crisis. He argues, “Boredom was therefore always potentially slipping over into fear” (384) for Palestinians who had to endure lengthy waits and frustrating encounters at Israeli checkpoints just to go to work or school.

For Azraq’s refugees, I argue that the mundane is a particular experience of boredom, meaninglessness, and routine. It is the quotidian *absence* of ordinariness, a never-ending daily

reminder of their exceptional existence as camp refugees. The mundane in Azraq refers to all that which refugees must ‘put up with’ on a daily basis. It includes the boring, the tiresome, and the frustrating. Much like Palestinians having to pass through checkpoints in the West Bank, the mundane experiences of Syrians in the camp revolve around waiting, in which refugees are dependent upon the person behind the desk or the soldier carrying a gun. While for Kelly’s Palestinians, the ordinary could be reproduced in their particular time-space – for example, getting a degree in accountancy during the intifada *in spite* of the occupation – ordinariness is incompatible with life in Azraq. Refugees may continue their education, work for an NGO, and develop routines in their caravans, but there remains no semblance of ordinariness because the very time-space of the camp is outside of a normative temporality. The mundane is a continual failure to achieve more meaningful biographical lives and lags on, out of the control of those who must put up with it. The following sections examine what the mundane looks like in the day-to-day for refugees and for aid workers.

Extreme context, mundane lives

A walk through the villages reveals residents’ resourcefulness as central to their acclimation. One family dries old bread under the sun to make chicken feed for a family-owned farm in the northern city of Mafraq. Another family works together to fix the filters at the top of their caravan, reached by a young boy on an improvised ladder. Nearby, a couple clears debris from a thin trench dug into the path in their block. A few blocks over, bags that had been stuffed in place of the filters are being replaced. These daily acts can be considered upkeep: refugees taking care of their young but aging neighborhoods. Still, these adaptations, while perhaps replicating aspects of routines from refugees’ pre-war lives, are far from ordinary. Jansen (2014) identifies such acts by residents of post-war Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina as “mundane practices”, adapted to the long-term situation and having become “usual” but never “normal” (S79). Part of what makes everyday routine in the camp mundane is the lack of ‘biographical’ purpose, discussed in the introductory chapter as life which is oriented toward the future and productive in contributing to society or creating a legacy (Arendt 1958 and de Beauvoir 1952 in Brun 2016). Meaningful lives do not fit into Azraq’s “minimalist biopolitics” (Redfield 2005, 329), which Redfield argues saves biological lives but does not preserve the dignity of those suffering. As

Williams (2015) states, humanitarian response “stops at simply holding off death” (17) but does little to address the larger issues of the situation.



FIGURE 3. A plot of caravans in Village 6 featuring residents' customizations. [Photo courtesy of the author, 2017]



FIGURE 4. An improvised Damascene-style fountain designed by refugees in Village 5 using a shisha pipe. [Photo courtesy of the author, 2018]

The mundane experience for refugees sits at the locus of time as abundant and time as scarce. As a volunteer aid worker noted, “Free time is something new for the refugees, it’s something bad,” implying that camp residents have little to pass the time. His comment conveys that having nothing to do is not only new to, but also unwelcomed by, the camp population. As stated in the introduction to this dissertation, free time for Azraq’s refugees is not a luxury, but something they must figure out how to get through and get used to. The boredom of having too much unwanted time is also an experience of waiting. The subject of greater analysis in chapter four, waiting permeates refugee lives in Azraq. While waiting to be able to return to Syria or to move on with their lives, refugees wait in lines for services and distribution.

Contributing to time as a scarce resource are the elements of rush and crowding that are the results of other limited resources in the camp, such as distribution items and economic opportunity. Because of the nature of the camp’s bureaucratic humanitarian system, refugees are forced to rush in order to obtain the services and goods they need. Refugees rush to get their name on the waiting list at the community center, to get in line at a distribution of winter clothing, to approach stray aid workers they may recognize who can help them with their case. They rush in order to cut down on the waiting time that is inevitable, but it is a constrained, inhibited rush. It is the rush of people who do not want to encourage others to rush in competition for limited face time with aid workers or for first-come first-serve distributions. It is also the rush of people who do not want to appear desperate or undignified, but who have no other choice than to take part in a race against time because they greatly depend on the NGOs in charge.

Queues in the camp are interesting places where both boring aspects of the mundane – waiting around – and its tiring aspects – rushing – exist in tandem. The act of waiting in line is both uneventful and anticipatory, boring and stressful, inactive yet energy-consuming. It is physically exhausting, and often humiliating, as those in line must restrain themselves from “becoming too emotional” (Lavie 2014, 102). Areas of waiting in Azraq, whether in lines or on benches, are sites where the complex dynamics of the mundane are married.

Further adding to the temporal aspect of mundanity is a similar dynamic regarding space, which is both in abundance and lacking. Built to host more than 100,000 refugees, Azraq is at less than half capacity. Large sections of caravans in Villages 2 and 5 are unoccupied, and caravans across

the camp are vacant as families leave the camp for a few weeks at a time. The large distance between villages reveals an unremarkable desert landscape that stretches across the physical expanse of the camp. One refugee complained to an aid worker, “Everything is white, white, white, we want a change of scenery! [*Kulu abyad, abyad, abyad, bidna nughayyir al-jaw!*]” Azraq’s monochromatic environment, white caravans against beige sand, interrupted only by colorful murals of NGO centers, gives an impression of infinite space that is as unwanted as the boredom of infinite, meaningless time.



FIGURE 5. The Village 3 community center on a typical day. [Photo courtesy of Omar Hadder, 2015]

Yet, within this vastness, there are also considerable constraints on space. The limited time refugees have to get errands completed during hours of operation leads to limited space and, thus, crowds. Refugees at the community center bring their spouses or children with them, and the twelve benches provided fill up quickly. Sometimes refugees break the order and begin to line up outside each individual caravan office instead of remaining in the general waiting area. The crowds can be overwhelming, and receptionists at the centers, often refugees themselves, spend most of their time attempting crowd control. Crowding also makes its way into the private sphere. Even though many caravans remain unoccupied, occupied caravans are often very crowded. Single males are paired or grouped in one caravan with other single males they do not know. Only families with more than seven members are entitled to two adjacent caravans, but even this is the equivalent of no more than two rooms and a patch of gravel in between. For parents with many young children, having one or at most two caravans makes for a very stressful environment. Syrian culture emphasizes the importance of hosting guests for coffee or larger meals, but the lack of space does not allow for women’s privacy, making this practice more

difficult. An aid worker mentioned a common complaint from young men in Azraq who feel they cannot host their friends for this reason.

For refugees in Azraq, much of the mundane lives in their interactions with aid workers, in which they must engage in the bureaucratic politics of the camp's humanitarian system in order to continue living in the space. As Irit Katz (2017) argues for refugees in Calais, camp inhabitants "live...in an in-between condition of superposition between their *everyday life* and their continuous existence as *bare life*" (10). However, as the scholars cited in this section have insisted, using terms such as 'bare life' is not meant in the Agamben sense that strips refugees of agency. Rather, the terms are used here to portray how refugees are considered and treated by the camp's humanitarian regime and do not exclude the possibility for agentive action on the part of refugees. Honig (2009) suggests conceiving of survival in emergency as including simultaneously *mere* life – that is, the biological focus of biopolitics – and *more* life – following from Derrida's work in *Classics* that understands surviving as surplus, of those who "ought to have died but go on to more life" (in Honig 2009, 10). The aim of this concept is to understand how people can act to survive emergency with integrity. Thus, it is imperative to recognize that while refugees are treated by Azraq's regime as mere life, they are always at the same time producing more life, even in the face of an uncertain tomorrow.

Working in emergency: from shocking to mundane

Aid workers beginning a position in Azraq refugee camp experience something of a shock [*sadmeh*] during their first weeks on the job. Take as examples the following two aid worker accounts:

Aseel: The first time I entered the camp, I felt like I had traveled to a different country far away. I saw how hard it was, even my family told me that it's too scary and too far away. But I told them I would try it out for a month [*ahkilhum bajarib minshuf shahar*]. I mean, if I saw that it was too dangerous, then yes, I would quit [*abatil*]. So that first week was very hard to be honest, I was shocked [*musadameh*] and it was hard to get used to it. And the people here [in Amman] were telling me how scary the work was [*an-nas hun khawwafuni inu wad' hunak byukhawwif*], but I wasn't going to leave. After a month I saw that no, it is safe in the camp, there's nothing scary.

Amal: When I entered Azraq the situation was a bit different. I would look out at the caravans – and I worked in the cold, I mean, November was when it was starting to get cold – and I would wonder how these people are able to live in their steel caravans, how they are able to live in this cold and with their houses full of mud. So the situation was quite bad. So I thought many times that, no, I don't want to finish [*ma bidi akamil*], no, I will just work a short amount of time and that's it [*bas fatra basita wu khalas*], or maybe I will move to another place or different job. But I did finish a full year, a year and one month.

Aseel, who held a position in a bank prior to Azraq, describes her initial expectations about working in a refugee camp before she adjusted to the reality of the camp. Amal, an aid worker in her late twenties with a degree in English literature, not only cites the physical difficulties of working in the extreme climate but also the emotional difficulties: the knowledge that Azraq's refugees live in the harsh environment in which she works. I observed several aid workers like Aseel and Amal during their first days and weeks working at the community centers, and I noticed their transition from overwhelmed and confused to integrated into the team and unfazed within a few weeks. The extreme nature of the work environment would quickly become familiar and normalized to aid workers. The steep learning curve for new aid workers could be overcome in little time because the extreme conditions in which they work are also unsurprising and mundane.

Indeed, many of the mundane challenges of aid work in Azraq camp are reminiscent of those facing workers in any bureaucratic setting. This mundanity may be unexpected based on preconceived notions of refugee camps and emergency response. Yet, as explored in this section, waiting and repetition compose a large part of an aid worker's job between nine and five.

Similar to refugee experiences, aid workers in both NGOs I observed spent much of their time waiting: waiting for an email, waiting for project permission, waiting at the entrance and exit checkpoints, waiting for transport between villages and to and from the camp. What appears to be the most excruciating wait for aid workers at the community center is at the end of the day, around 4pm, when staff should begin to board buses out of the camp. Buses arrive at the centers before 4pm, but boarding begins at different times every day for no apparent reason, leaving aid workers from 3pm onward on break, smoking, chatting, and drinking coffee, waiting to leave. Jalal once mentioned that this time was allocated for much-needed teambuilding for staff who are spread across the camp for much of the day. But this period stretches on for an uncertain

amount of time, sometimes with the buses departing as early as 4:15pm, and sometimes as late as 6pm. It is never really clear exactly who aid workers are waiting for, and who is responsible for calling for departure. Staff from Amman grow restless very quickly, anticipating an hour and a half of congested traffic on the way to Amman, and then as much as a 30- or 45-minute ride from drop-off to home. They are expected to meet back at the pick-up point in East Amman the next day by 7am, when buses would leave for Azraq no later than 7:01.

Rush is also involved in this routine. During my time at the community center, I was grateful to have Yusra, a twenty-six-year-old aid worker with a graphic design degree, who offered to pick me up at the traffic circle near my apartment on the way to the pick-up point. She would usually drive into the circle around 6:50am, which meant that every minute counted as she would push the speed limit to get to the buses before departure. If we did not have a chance at making it, Yusra would be able to get to the *autostrad*, a highway connecting Amman to the northern routes to Zarqa and Mafraq, before the bus and we would catch it there. On one chilly morning waiting for the bus in the Sameh Mall parking lot on the *autostrad*, Yusra, frustrated by the strict departure times in the morning and lax departure times in the evening, recounted her time working for Oxfam in Za'tari camp the year before:

In Za'tari, all the organizations have to leave by 4, so they all leave at 3:30 or 4. If you leave after that you need to have permission. The system [*nizam*] there is, *why are you still there when the UNHCR has left?* I wish it were like this in Azraq. In Azraq you just leave as you want [*zay ma bidak*].

Yusra's comment reveals her preference for a more rigid system regarding departure from the camp. In the community centers, for example, a late departure time does not mean staff are getting more work done, but that they are delayed in getting home each evening. While aid workers at the community center are part of a very sociable team dynamic, many expressed that they would prefer to talk with their colleagues on the ride home instead of in the center to pass the time while they wait. On especially late departure times from the camp, it was customary for aid workers to jokingly suggest that they sleep over in the camp because "by the time we get home, we'll have to leave [for the camp] again!" Waiting is not something those in the field believe they have control over as it is reiterated differently every day, so they resign to the tireless wait.

Another mundane aspect for aid workers in Azraq is the repetitive nature of their work. The tireless grind of early mornings and late nights for aid workers at the community center is not the only repetitive aspect of their mundane experience. During my time at the community center, I sat in on hundreds of case management sessions and IBV registrations and interviews, where I quickly caught on to the patterns of these interactions. For example, a common interaction for an IBV-registered refugee looking for open positions would go something like the following:

Refugee: I've been here for x years and I have not worked once.

Staff: Well, it looks here like you/someone in your family worked last month. It's not your turn yet.

Refugee: I beg of you [*billah 'alayk*]. I need to work. I've been waiting and waiting and our situation is very difficult.

Staff: This is what it is. When it's your turn, you can work. Trust in God [*tawakul 'ala Allah*].

This ritual would often repeat itself from the beginning many times during one session. Each aid worker in each community center would try to make his or her way through the hundreds of refugees on the waiting list for that day, and similar conversations occurred for the vast majority of the people on that list.

Community center staff whose interactions do not occur inside the center also endure repetitive elements. The outreach team heads out into the neighborhoods of a specific village every morning, and as described at the opening of this chapter, these outreach visits require walking for hours unprotected from the elements. Tagging along with Aseel, an outreach staff member in Village 6, I observed as she knocked on row upon row of caravan doors to find eight men and eight women to attend an input meeting at the community center in Village 3 the following morning to discuss cleanliness and maintenance in the camp. It took three hours and several different blocks to find sixteen refugees able and willing to attend the meeting. On another day in October, Aseel took us down one row of caravans from one end of the village to the other, knocking on every door to let residents know to register for gas canisters at the community center to fuel heat in their caravans for the winter season. During this four-hour process, Aseel also took individual maintenance and case referral requests. In the afternoons, Aseel would make her way down a list of hundreds of phone numbers to continue disseminating information.

By following aid workers' navigation of field work in Azraq, I find that the humanitarian response to the camp's emergency has been confined to the working day. Nothing is urgent enough to disrupt the routine. Bureaucratic processing produces the mundane for both refugees and aid workers, and the camp administration thus continues to treat what is supposed to be a short-term emergency as a long-term project: there's always tomorrow, or after the weekend. Of course, while there are similar mundanities for aid workers and refugees, the former are still positioned on the other side of power from the latter. While refugees experience meaninglessness due to the loss of biographical development, aid workers are present in the camp *because* they are building meaningful careers. Thus, the mundane carries different implications for aid workers, who choose their line of work, and refugees, who do not feel they have control over their life trajectories.

The following section investigates the structural elements of the camp administration's response to emergency as it makes an awkward shift from short-term humanitarian aid to longer-term development projects.

Development work in an emergency

NGOs entering the space of Azraq are there to aid the camp as an emergency space. Humanitarian programming is meant to address the short-term needs of the displaced population, involving the provision of caravans, food and non-food distributions, and medical assistance. Miriam Ticktin (2011) evaluates humanitarianism's near-sightedness:

[Humanitarianism's] constituents are clear that it will not – and should not – save the world. It does not act with longer-term political consequences in mind. It avoids precisely this, in the name of immediate, urgent, and temporary care. (63)

Feldman (2018) similarly argues, “Humanitarian practice is designed to be ameliorative rather than transformative” (161). Calhoun (2010) notes that “humanitarians are unabashedly in the fish-for-a-day business. They stress that someone who dies today will not learn to fish tomorrow” (52).

However, in protracted crises such as Azraq, humanitarianism eventually gives way to longer-term projects. Ticktin continues:

[I]n the absence of other types of long-term structural responses...coordinated or enacted by political movements, or even by institutions like the state, humanitarian NGOs end up filling in the gaps; the result is a conservative management of social and political problems, one that works to retain what is already there, rather than to change it or to plan for a different future. (2011, 63)

Indeed, many NGOs in Azraq work on larger societal issues, such as child marriage, gender inequality, and child labor, many of which already existed in the refugees' communities in Syria before the emergency in which they now live.

Amal worked at the community center as a case manager in various villages. Case management at the community centers is the first resource for refugees' immediate needs, but in the year that Amal worked in Azraq, she noted a shift occurring. A few weeks after she completed her contract, she spoke to me about how the camp has changed over time:

What is going on in the camp now is a different situation. I mean, there is still an emergency in the camp, but it's not like before at the beginning. There is more of a focus on how people are creating livelihood...But it won't stay like this for refugees, I mean, there are crises in other places, and no crisis lasts longer than ten years [*fi kawarith bi-amakin taniyeh wu fish azmeh tadil aktar min 'ashara sinin*]. So now the refugees are making a life for themselves and this is very good...People in their cities in Syria were raising sheep or working on the land. But now, no, [organizations] are trying to teach them professions like seamstressing or barbering...They are working on livelihood a lot now...until the refugees can work. I mean, they can live off of their own work and not have to wait for anyone. And this is excellent.

Amal finds the shift from humanitarian to development work in Azraq to be positive, with the eventual product being a self-sustaining refugee community. She does not, however, seem to reflect on limitations placed on refugees by the camp itself, which prevents refugees from achieving independence from aid in the first place.

At a strategic meeting for an NGO held in Amman in April 2018, thirty-five staff from the organization's international headquarters, various national offices, and several still developing country offices in the Middle East, considered various options to expand the NGO's reach in the region. A regional director reflected on the work the organization had accomplished so far: "We were late [to the region], but being late isn't always a bad thing." Being late to the emergency response in Azraq, as the NGO did not establish a presence in the camp until 2017, meant that the organization missed opportunities to make an impact at the humanitarian level but could

get ahead by way of development projects. As the current trend among donors is a push for multisectoral projects that cut across both humanitarian and development worlds, as the director noted, it would be strategic for the organization to continue to invest its time, energy, and resources into development projects rather than immediate emergencies.

However, in Azraq, the shift to development programs occurs even as basic humanitarian needs remain unmet. When Villages 2 and 5 lacked electricity, for example, organizations were turning their focus to what seem to be cultural critiques. The lack of urgency in emergency response has undermined humanitarian purpose, barely providing a fish for a day, in favor of donor-influenced development projects with unclear timelines and even more unclear objectives. The following section explores contradictory humanitarian and development timelines through aid worker discussions on development projects.

Humanitarianism versus development: how long is the short term?

Every week, the community center in each village hosts an information session where representatives of various NGOs make announcements or speak about new programming. These sessions are well attended, especially in Villages 2 and 5, as they are also opportunities for refugees to voice complaints or directly access individual aid workers from other NGOs. Hamoudeh, a twenty-seven-year-old aid worker with several years' experience working for development NGOs in the camp, recalled speaking at the first information session held at the Village 5 community center:

I stopped going [to the information sessions] because it's hard to be like, 'We have this lifeskills program, register your children!' [The refugees] will just stare at you like *get the fuck out, where's NRC and UNHCR to talk about distributions?!*

Hamoudeh, as a representative of a development organization speaking to a group of refugees who were at the time new to Azraq and in its most secluded area, experienced the tension between emergency response and development programs. Lifeskills programming is meant to teach young refugees the necessary skills to succeed in life, yet it ignores the fact that the camp's temporary infrastructure discourages future plan-making. Even though organizations have been making the shift from humanitarianism to development, refugees still must prioritize their basic needs in order to survive.

Each refugee in the camp receives 20 Jordanian dinars (approx. 22 GBP) a month for food. An aid worker explained to me: “If you notice, that is less than 1 JD a day, which is under the global poverty line. Many people run out of money for food after the twentieth of each month and so they go hungry.” Incentive-Based Volunteering (IBV) is a cash-for-work program through which refugees work for NGOs in the camp for minimal pay. Because of Jordan’s complicated regulations on work for Syrian refugees, the camp administration opts to use the term “volunteering” and avoids using terms such as “job” or “work”. There are three levels of IBV positions: semi-skilled (i.e. manual work not requiring specific skills) for one month at 1 JD per hour, skilled (i.e. technical work requiring specific skills) for three months at 1.5 JD per hour, and highly skilled (i.e. teaching and managerial positions) for three months at 2.5 JD per hour.¹ Refugees in these positions “volunteer” for six hours a day, five or six days per week. About 14,000 refugees are registered in the IBV scheme, but it is difficult to calculate how many of these refugees actually hold positions in any given month due to varying rotation periods.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the IBV scheme state that the program “is aimed at providing refugees living in Azraq refugee camp with basic means for their self-reliance” (CARE 2016). However, the scheme’s low wages contest this idea. Another aid worker mentioned:

Work here is not enough to give people a livelihood [*ma’ash*], but it gives them a little to be able to buy things, like cigarettes. People don’t have money to smoke, minutes for their phone, clothes. People don’t have everything they need. The UNHCR does not think that things like cigarettes and phone cards to call their families outside the camp are necessary, these things are extra. Organizations don’t give the refugees these things.

This aid worker uses the term ‘livelihood’, a popular humanitarian term, connecting economic opportunity with a biographical component. It is unclear whether the IBV scheme is intended as a humanitarian or development project, seeing as it provides ‘basic means’, a humanitarian term, for ‘self-reliance’, a development goal that echoes Amal’s comments above. However, as the above aid worker notes, ‘basic means’ according to the camp administration does not include items that refugees find necessary. The scheme also occupies an unclear timeline, one in which a refugee may work for a month and then must wait, according to the SOPs, at least two months and often more to be eligible for another position. Many of the refugee volunteers I spoke to

¹ As of early 2018, the lengths of the semi-skilled positions increased to two months.

seemed to pursue IBV positions more for the sake of working than for the money, as many referred to IBV salaries as “symbolic” [*ramzi*], tokens of appreciation from NGOs that rely on their refugee volunteers to carry out their programming. The IBV scheme then appears to work as a development project that fails to meet humanitarian needs.

The provision of electricity, a basic need, to the camp’s caravans is a humanitarian project that has seemingly followed a development timeline. The Azraq Camp Solar Project is a partnership between the UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation to power the camp using renewable energy harvested from a plot of solar panels at the edge of the camp. Although the camp may have appeared ready in 2014, this energy project, broken down into three phases, was planned to not be fully completed for five years (UNHCR 2018b). Electricity did not reach Villages 3 and 6, built in 2014, until June 2017, taking three years to cover around 40% of the camp’s electrical needs. Phase 2, which began to connect Villages 2 and 5 to the electrical grid, was completed at the end of 2018, but this connection was not finalized until mid 2019 and the completion of Phase 3. The UNHCR estimates that solar power covers about 70% of the camp’s electrical needs. While Azraq is now the “first refugee camp in the world powered by renewable energy” (UNHCR 2018b), no other means of electricity was provided to caravans in the years that it took solar power to reach them. Generators, a device usually used during emergencies, were run every day for years in order to power NGO centers. During my time at the community centers, the generator was fired up every morning, releasing a puff of black smoke into the air, and usually petered out in the mid afternoon, enveloping the center in deafening silence before roaring up again when an aid worker restarted it. Refugees from all four villages would often cite the lack of electricity as the hardest aspect of adapting to Azraq. Ahlam, a resident of Village 3, told me that before there was electricity in the village, she and her colleagues used to stay late at the NGO center where they worked to enjoy the air conditioning in the summer months and to charge their phones. A survey conducted in 2015 found that “90.2% of 600 respondents were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied by the temperature in their shelters in the summer and 44.8% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied by the temperature in their shelters in winter” (Albadra *et al* 2017, 461).

This long-term electricity project is another example of the contradictory timelines in Azraq. That provision of a basic necessity would be spread across five years again undermines the camp as an emergency space (and time). Both the IBV scheme and the solar project are presented to the outside world as accomplishments. The IBV scheme is lauded as an “income-generating opportunity” (CARE 2016) that accommodates thousands of individuals. The solar project “does not only generate savings for UNHCR, an estimated \$8.5 million a year, but also brings dignity to thousands of refugees,” read a post on UNHCR Jordan’s Facebook page (UNHCR Jordan 2019). However, within the camp, both programs have only added to the complications of living in emergency for Syrian refugees.



FIGURE 6. A charging station for refugees’ phones in a community center. [Photo courtesy of Omar Hadder, 2015]



FIGURE 7. The solar farm at the edge of the camp as seen from above. [Photo courtesy of the UNHCR, 2019]



FIGURE 8. A Facebook post about Azraq's solar project by the IKEA Foundation, dated October 18, 2018.

NGOs focusing on a greater quality of life for refugees overlook the fact that the infrastructure of the camp still struggles to meet the population's basic needs. Development work in Azraq targets aspects of its residents' culture that have nothing to do with the emergency at all. At a lifeskills session taking place at Hamoudeh's NGO in Village 3, Malak, a refugee volunteer in her forties, led a discussion for a group of adolescent girls on choice. "Your father does not choose what you wear, you get to choose what you want to wear," Malak stated. While this is a good message for young girls to hear, it is unclear if many of them would be able to incorporate this into their lives in Azraq, where women have told me they feel pressured by camp society to dress more conservatively, even in extreme heat conditions. Another issue facing women in particular is early marriage. Yusra, the aid worker with whom I often carpooled, feels that the time has come to challenge this Syrian tradition:

I feel like we have arrived at the stage where we really have to be working on this. We really, really need to...there are organizations working on this, of course, but at the same time we're talking about culture. [Refugees] say, *All my life I have known this way [khalas ana muta'awid tul 'umri bi-hada ishi]*, and it's a bit difficult. The issue is not going to take a month or two or three, no, it's going to take years before it changes...I mean, it's their right, I have to respect this, this is their culture. I'm not going to come and force Jordanian culture on them, and anyway we also have this, where people here are still getting married early...I want to work on it, but I also want to be respectful [of their culture].

Yusra here embodies the shift between humanitarian and development work. In this case, she sees this traditional practice of early marriage to be a pressing issue, and she asserts that 'we

have arrived at the stage' in which now is the time to address it. As has been the pattern in Azraq, upon establishing presence in the camp to address the emergency, NGOs encounter sensitive issues that existed in the Syrian society before the war. Yusra admits there is a fine line between helping a vulnerable displaced population and changing the population's culture. It is arguable that the young girls in Malak's session would not be learning about choice nor warned against early marriage by NGOs had the conflict in Syria never happened. Calhoun (2010) captures this awkward tension between humanitarianism and development in emergency:

How should emergency relief give way to development assistance? Can humanitarian care be provided in ways that encourage respect for human rights? Can the situation of women be improved in lasting ways, *taking the very disruption of the humanitarian emergency as an occasion for remaking culture?* (52-53, my emphasis)

For the reasons Calhoun mentions here, the concept of development has been critiqued as "Eurocentric, depoliticizing, and authoritarian" (Ziai 2013, 124). Rawan, the aid worker who attended to the caravan fire, uses optimistic vocabulary to describe what Calhoun calls 'remaking culture':

What is nice is that they [the refugees] are developing [*am byutawwiru*], not that they are leaving [*byatriku*] their culture, but that they are enhancing it, increasing their awareness...learning that for example there are things that aren't right [*ghalat, mish sahiha*] in their culture.

By 'things that aren't right,' Rawan is referring mainly to misogyny and restrictions on women in the camp's Syrian society. The vocabulary that aid workers use to discuss a transforming culture, particularly one changing 'for the better', aligns with 'aid speak', regularly used vocabulary that hold specific meaning in the humanitarian and development world. Such perspectives of the changing culture in Azraq follow Western humanitarian-development narratives of teleological progression.

To be sure, the point being made is not that girls should continue being married at a young age against their will nor that they should dress to please others. Rather, I hope to highlight how development work in emergency spaces can be confusing and self-contradicting, unclear as to the future it is promoting. Take, for example, a conversation I had with Maher, another manager at the community center, in which he explained that the NGO was planning to organize a debate club to train youth in debate and conflict management. Maher stated that this would

require convincing both youth and their parents that these skills would benefit them and is important enough to take valuable time away from opportunities to work. “You know, maybe [the youth] will become community representatives someday,” he said, nonchalantly. Community representatives are members of each village who serve as intermediaries between residents and the NGOs, meeting every month with select aid workers at the community centers to share grievances on behalf of their neighborhoods. Maher’s passing thought about the open possibility of current adolescents in Azraq eventually becoming representatives for their villages is an unfortunate glimpse into future plans for the camp. Here, a senior member of the field team at the community center is essentially looking ahead to a future in the camp on a long-term scale while the camp’s infrastructure was designed from the beginning to discourage long-term settlement. Maher’s seemingly harmless comment illustrates how development work operates on timelines that conflict with the emergency setting of the camp.

Furthermore, development work is often ignorant of the problems caused by the humanitarian response to emergency. I was surprised to learn on my first day in Azraq that child labor is a prevalent issue in the camp. I had been under the impression that Azraq had been effectively planned to avoid the problem of child labor that is so prominent in Za’tari. Samer, the aid worker who I joined on outreach visits in Village 2, told me, “We need to start going around and spreading awareness about child labor.” There is a disconnect here between development work – putting an end to child labor – and the emergency setting – a lack of viable economic opportunities for adults. This lack of opportunity has been created by the humanitarian administration of Azraq, which has limited options for self-sustaining support for refugees. But development programming either does not realize these greater issues, or it ignores them, leaving the responsibility to the humanitarian sector. It is problematic that those NGOs in the humanitarian sector, including the organization running the community center, are moving onto development, as Amal, Yusra, Rawan, and Samer describe above. As these organizations focus more on early marriage, child labor, and even family planning, the basic humanitarian needs of this emergency are treated with less urgency and priority by aid workers. As Feldman (2018) notes, this kind of development promotion “makes little sense in contexts where there are few economic opportunities anyway” (88; see also Ferguson 2015)

In emergency spaces such as Azraq camp, development programming often unintentionally undermines itself as plans for long-term positive impacts on the community are betrayed by the

short-term conditions in which these plans are made. A development NGO designing programs for a girls' empowerment campaign produced a tagline that would have its beneficiaries take control of their decisions by setting intentions for their self-growth starting with the words, "I will...", a follow-up campaign of a former one in which girls stated, "I can..." However, these declarations were limited to the possibilities available in Village 5, from which none of the beneficiaries can leave. Plans to bring these young girls on a trip outside the camp were scrapped as soon as they were mentioned aloud: "We can't take girls out of Village 5 for activities, right?" "Of course not," was the automatic reply. While the development organization prides itself on empowering *girls*, these beneficiaries are simultaneously disempowered by the very same humanitarian apparatus because they are *refugees*.

Thus, in Azraq we witness a space in which the timelines of humanitarianism and development are confused and intertwined. Development programs overlook the inadequacy of the camp's humanitarian work. While the camp itself is defined as an emergency – and therefore a temporary – space, plans are made for the future of the camp in one- to five-year increments. The urgency of emergency is lost as refugees, still having unmet basic needs five years later, are instead given tools to 'enhance', but not leave, their culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has set a foundation for understanding the complexity of time within Azraq camp. By complicating perceptions of the camp as an emergency space (and time), I have demonstrated how emergency as projected to the outside world vastly differs from the emergency that has been distributed into the everyday, experienced by both refugees and aid workers as the mundane. This loss of urgency has also caused the blurring of humanitarian and development projects and their timelines, confusing priorities for basic needs with unclear socio-cultural projects.

Azraq is an emergency with a particular timeline, as captured by the term 'nine-to-five emergency'. The following chapter closely examines the operation of Azraq's bureaucracy and interactions between refugee petitioners and street-level aid worker bureaucrats between nine and five.

CHAPTER TWO

A Humanitarian Bureaucracy

The incinerator of time is the camp.
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, “The Camp is Time” (2017)

I MET HADIYA, a twenty-year-old Dar’a native and volunteer at an NGO center in Village 5, on my last day in Azraq. It was a Thursday, the last day of the workweek, and also orientation day for a new cohort of kindergarteners at the center’s Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program. Children were reluctant to let go of their parents and older siblings, and some were already mid-tantrum. Um Yaseen, a strong-minded woman in her sixties who I knew from the NGO’s craftmaking course, had marched into the center with her granddaughter in tow, demanding to know why she had not made it off the kindergarten waitlist.

On this Thursday, the center was also hosting a small carnival in honor of World Refugee Day. In the administrative office, the field coordinator from Amman and the director of the center from Village 5 were arguing over what time the festivities were scheduled to begin. In the confusion, the refugee volunteer staff rushed through the center’s morning activities, trying to free the space so the carnival could be set up. The field coordinator left the admin office to diffuse the situation with Um Yaseen. The director of the center wanted to avoid the confrontation altogether to attend to the logistical issues of the carnival. I also left the office to check in on the new kindergarteners before classes began. A program participant ran past me crying. One of the volunteers did the same in a different direction.

It felt like the center was on the verge of imploding when I was intercepted by Hadiya on my mission to make it to the kindergarten. She asked if I could translate some lab results she had received from one of the medical NGO centers in the village. Refugees are often given medical

results and prescriptions in English, sometimes with little explanation from a nurse or doctor. While I struggled to understand the results, a list of hormone levels with no other context given, Hadiya explained to me her symptoms. For the past five months, she had been living in increasing discomfort as her belly swelled and she stopped menstruating. Having already experienced one pregnancy, Hadiya knew she was not pregnant, and the lab results confirmed this. I was aware from past experiences of friends and family that she urgently needed more serious examining in a hospital setting, and I calmly explained to Hadiya that it was best for her to go to the hospital as soon as possible.

“You know how it is in Village 5,” Hadiya replied. “You have to be dead for them to take you to the emergency room.”

I took her to see the field coordinator, who was already back at his desk inside the admin office. He was smoking a cigarette and punching numbers from a pile of documents into his laptop.

“Hamoudeh,” I stated, without waiting for him to look up. “Hadiya has a serious medical issue and you need to make sure she gets to a hospital as soon as possible.” I spoke in English in an even tone so that I could be blunt without worrying Hadiya. She explained her situation and Hamoudeh flipped through the pages of her lab results.

“Are you sure you’re not just pregnant?” he inquired earnestly, and from her expression it was clear she had been asked this numerous times in the past months. I reiterated the fact that this was an urgent matter, once again in English, and Hamoudeh reached for a sticky note.

“Ok, I can take you to the IMC [International Medical Corps], but it’ll have to wait until Sunday. I’m a bit busy today and have meetings all afternoon,” Hamoudeh said as he scrawled Hadiya’s name and phone number on the yellow post-it. He wrote “URGENT” in capital letters, underlined it twice, and stuck the note to the wall behind him. “How does that sound?”

“Thank you, *yu’tik al-‘afiyeh ustaz Hamoudeh* [God grant you strength, sir],” Hadiya replied and hurried out of the office.

I sat down in a chair next to Hamoudeh’s desk and thanked him for being receptive to such a sensitive issue. Hamoudeh had spent ten years of his childhood in Austin, Texas before returning with his family to Jordan. He spoke English with an American accent, and we often

communicated in English because it felt more natural. Because of our mutual cultural understanding, I felt that I could be more frank with him than with some of the other aid workers. I explained some of the horror stories of women I knew who had experienced similar symptoms to Hadiya. He seemed shocked, admitting he did not know much about feminine health risks.

“I just thought it was one of those phantom pregnancies! Or like a demon baby,” he joked. I feigned a laugh and told him I would be calling him on Sunday to remind him to take Hadiya to the IMC.

I left the office disappointed that I had not conveyed the matter urgently enough to have Hadiya make it to a hospital that same day. *Should I have fought harder?* I wondered. *How could an emergency ‘have to wait’ until after the weekend?* I felt as though I had failed Hadiya. I had always believed my position as an ethnographer-aid worker gave me the power to undermine the bureaucratic nonsense that jumbles all sense of urgency, as discussed in the previous chapter. And yet, after twelve months navigating the camp’s bureaucratic bells and whistles, the most I could do was to ‘follow up’ with a phone call. I had unwillingly become yet another ‘cog’ in Azraq’s bureaucratic wheel.

I made the call to Hamoudeh at 8:15am on Sunday in a last attempt to disrupt the ‘nine-to-five emergency’ of the camp. A few days later, when I returned to the NGO’s office in Amman to complete final paperwork and last goodbyes, I was able to speak to Hamoudeh before he departed for the camp. He told me that because a trip to the hospital outside Village 5 required a referral, they had brought the Child Protection officer from the Amman office on Monday to take over the situation. “Everything’s fine,” he said.

A few weeks later I messaged the director of the center, who told me Hadiya had seen a doctor who had given her medicine.

“She’s fine, *alhamdulillah*,” she said.

“So there was nothing?” I asked.

“Hopefully there isn’t anything [*inshallah ma fi shi*],” was the reply.

Months after leaving Jordan, I recounted the story to a fellow researcher, who exclaimed that she had read about Hadiya in the Jordan INGO (International Non-Governmental Organization) Forum newsletter. “It turned out she had a tumor,” she said. It quickly became clear that the woman my colleague had read about was not Hadiya but a different Azraq resident, years older and from Homs, with the same symptoms.

This scene is not a critique of a particular aid worker’s actions but instead revealing of the system within which the aid worker functions. Hadiya’s case follows a pattern of interactions between aid workers and refugees in Azraq camp in which issues, whether trivial or urgent, are processed according to the logic of bureaucracy. Her emergency had been molded into the nine-to-five of Azraq’s emergency, confined to a 1.5-by-2-inch sticky note. For Hamoudeh, Hadiya’s medical concern was just another aspect of the disordered order taking place on that Thursday. The authenticity of Hadiya’s emergency, of her need to receive urgent care, was constantly being questioned. The amount of dramatic language I could use to convey the urgency, the number of follow-up calls I could make, the size of Hadiya’s swelling; none of it would ever circumvent the process of the camp’s bureaucracy. Any episode of crisis, from Hadiya’s medical issues to the fire discussed in the previous chapter, is simply absorbed into the camp’s machinery.

Humanitarians have provided a narrative of the camp as orderly, efficient, and well-managed while also conveying the never-ending need for international funds: resources are limited, aid workers are overwhelmed, and demand for aid is constant. Such descriptions of the camp as a mechanism of care for a vulnerable community have masked the reality of Azraq’s immaterial infrastructure: a cumbersome bureaucratic machine that works to keep a population under control.

This chapter investigates Azraq’s day-to-day bureaucratic operations and its implications for lives lived and jobs worked in the camp. It argues that the camp’s bureaucracy reproduces emergency by continuously failing to meet the needs of camp residents. Through tactical governance, the bureaucracy functions via its own inefficiencies, which regulates time across spaces of waiting. Run on the front lines by aid workers, the bureaucracy nevertheless operates as an impersonal system, indestructible and impenetrable, that defies the logic of temporary emergency response.

This chapter begins with a review of literature on bureaucracy as it informs my understanding of Azraq's governance as bureaucratic. It then illustrates the camp's administrative structure before examining aid workers' roles within this structure. The chapter subsequently analyzes how this bureaucracy underperforms through manipulations of time, space, and emotion. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of how this underperformance reiterates emergency.

Bureaucracy and refugee camps

Aid workers must carry their badges at all times, and official entrance permits are kept in the vehicles of NGOs in the event that entrance security personnel requests to see them. Entering and exiting the camp can be simple, with just a flashing of badges for the guard to open the gates. It can also be time-consuming, with guards asking to look over permits for anything inside the vehicle or sometimes even documents that no aid worker has ever heard of. Vehicles can be pulled aside while guards make phone calls to confirm the legitimacy of permits or to request a police escort for a group of aid workers throughout their visit to the camp. The level of strictness on a given day is random and unpredictable, entirely dependent on the individual who is on main guard duty. Another checkpoint within Azraq is positioned at the entrance to Village 5 and can further delay aid workers' movements. Often, the Village 5 entrance guards would conduct a more thorough investigation than the main entrance officers, taking our permits and papers back to their police vehicle, where they would sit for sometimes a half hour making various phone calls before letting us through. Aid workers have no choice but to put up with these 'charades', as many have called it. "They just want to make a show of the fact that they're in control and doing work," one aid worker muttered during one of many waits spent in the car at the entrance.

These entrance and exit routines, though sporadically different, are processes of a larger bureaucracy run by Jordan. They are reminders of the fact that while aid workers and Jordanian security forces work together to operate Azraq, Jordan ultimately claims the upper hand. Such bordering practices signify for all who enter the established power hierarchy, as Salter (2008) describes for anyone who must cross any border:

[B]orders represent a legal admission by a sovereign into the domain of his/her authority and protection...Entry is a moment of crisis – a moment of absolute

surrender to the sovereign power of the state, within a particular governmental machinery of border, customs, and immigration officers. (371)

For refugees, and to a lesser extent aid workers, entrance to the camp requires obeisance of both established and fluctuating rules and regulations. Quite contrary to the Agambenian perspective of the camp as a state of suspension and lawlessness, bureaucratic governance in Azraq illustrates an image of imposed, almost authoritarian, order.



FIGURE 9. The checkpoint at Azraq's entrance, accessible only via vehicle. [Photo by the author, 2017]



FIGURE 10. To the right of the checkpoint sits a parking lot and a stationed army vehicle. [Photo by the author, 2017]



FIGURE 11. Aid workers arriving at the entrance to the administrative base camp. [Photo by the author, 2017]

Literature on bureaucracy and refugee camps most often refers to the dynamics of host state restrictions on camp governance and the researcher's access to the camp (see Saltsman 2014, Vogler 2007). Adam Saltsman's (2014) ethnography of Thai state bureaucracy in a Burmese refugee camp argues that bureaucracy is a tool of control. He describes aid workers, security officials, and state authorities as "power brokers" (458) who cooperate in "[enacting] their interpretations of asylum space, refugee identity, and state sovereignty upon the bodies of forced migrants" (460). For Saltsman, bureaucracy in the camp is both a political and physical operation, an organized assertion of power that dominates the governed, "demonstrat[ing] and inscrib[ing] upon bodies and minds conceptions of the self and the refugee as categories mediated by the power of discourse, institutions, and socio-political structures" (459). Pia Vogler describes her attempts to negotiate access to other Burmese camps in Thailand, where she argues the state bureaucracy polices both time and space through the imposition of curfews and intrusive checkpoints. She writes,

[B]y locating camps in remote border zones, by policing their access, and by refusing to improve the infrastructure of the area, administrative power is not only exercised over refugees, but also over aid-agencies and others seeking to enter refugee camps. (57)

Vogler's work is a crucial examination into how state bureaucracy supervises, regulates, and ultimately limits time and mobility for aid workers and refugees, but also for researchers.

Here I focus on the *camp* bureaucracy – the bureaucracy of the camp – that may work with the Jordanian state bureaucracy but is primarily composed of humanitarian organizations running the day-to-day camp operations. My analysis of Azraq’s bureaucracy is informed by Vogler’s and Saltsman’s work, but also by the literature on state bureaucracies outside of migration governance.

Michael Lipsky (1980) provides a foundational examination of state bureaucracy at the ground level, in which “street-level bureaucrats” such as police and welfare officers and other ‘desk bureaucrats’ represent the larger processes of the bureaucracy. Those who must navigate the bureaucracy in order to obtain aid depend on these ‘street-level’ individuals who decide on their case, and Lipsky argues that these decisions are political because they reiterate law and policy (84). The routinization of such acts socialize the governed “to expectations of government services” (4) and their place in society. Javier Auyero’s (2012) ethnographic exploration of welfare services in Argentina offers a concrete example of this. He writes, “In their apparent ordinariness, state practices provide the poor with political education or daily crash courses on the workings of power” (7). Bureaucracy, he argues, establishes authority and reasserts power over the governed through repetition and, often, inconvenience.

An insightful framework through which to understand Azraq is provided by Feldman’s (2008) historical ethnography of Gaza under the British Mandate (1917-1948) and the Egyptian Administration (1948-1967). Feldman describes that while both the British and Egyptians employed their own governing techniques, both fell into the category of what she calls a “tactical government” (3), which

focused more on coping with current conditions than with long-range planning, took actions based on partial understandings rather than comprehensive analysis, and could count only on limited resources and often tenuous authority as it did so. (18)

Intended for only temporary governance, the British Mandate and Egyptian Administration both relied upon the quotidian day-to-day regulations of their bureaucratic institutions in order to endure the instability of Gaza’s transitioning environment. Similar to Feldman’s ‘tactical government’, Azraq’s bureaucracy is concerned with short- to mid-term operations. The bureaucracy is an effective façade of order and stability that the humanitarian administration is

otherwise not guaranteed in the desert refugee camp. Procedures, routines, documents, spreadsheets, and aid workers produce a sense of legitimacy and authority where it is lacking.

Weber conceives of bureaucracy as “stable, strict, intensive, and calculable...capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency” (1978, 223). Despite orderly rows of caravans and benches in community center waiting areas, Azraq’s bureaucracy is far from efficient and is constantly overwhelmed by demand for limited services. That Azraq’s emergency response appears burdened with bureaucracy at the ground level, as opposed to Za’tari’s more ad hoc operation, may at first be surprising considering the camp’s temporary status. Bureaucracies are unwieldy permanent structures that may seem out of place in a refugee camp. This chapter breaks down Azraq’s façade of efficiency and organization to understand exactly how the camp bureaucracy functions and what it looks like in such a particular setting. The following sections analyze in-depth the bureaucracy’s structure and material infrastructure, the role of aid workers, and how the system regulates time and space, all components of Azraq’s tactical bureaucracy.

Azraq’s administrative structure

Hoffmann (2017) notes that “decentralization is a key logic behind Azraq’s architecture” (105). As explained in the introductory chapter, Azraq’s decentralized services compose what is known as the ‘referral system’. Aid workers employed at each community center refer refugee cases either to the community police or to an NGO in the village specializing in the matter of concern. The referral system is intended to make navigating the humanitarian government easier for the camp’s population, who only have to go to one place within their neighborhood for their needs – a “one-stop shop”, as Jalal once described it. The existence of referral-based aid in Azraq allows aid workers to present the camp as organized and efficient, plainly legible to the visitor as an improvement from past approaches to refugee camp infrastructure.

However, the referral process can take weeks or months to be resolved, and hundreds of refugees pass through the community center every day and end up waiting for hours to be seen by an aid worker. Instead of enabling a simplified process for refugees to receive care, the referral system only adds layers of bureaucracy that complicate and delay the resolution of issues. Thus, while claiming to lighten the weight of the camp bureaucracy, the referral system merely presents it

differently, hiding much of its scaffolding behind the façade of the ‘one-stop shop’ community center.

Such processes compose what is considered to be the ‘proceduralism’ or ‘routinization’ that defines a bureaucracy’s operation. The repetitive adherence to rules in a bureaucracy – from forming a waiting list at the community center, requiring specific paperwork to process a case, and maintaining opening and closing hours – characterizes the governing system of the camp. Reiterating bureaucratic rules through routine is “central to ‘how the state comes to be imagined, encountered, and reimagined by the population’” (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 12 in Hull 2012, 26). Refugees learn the character of the governing humanitarian apparatus through repeated interactions with aid workers who represent the system. For aid workers, routine is in many ways a mechanism of coping with the weight and complexity of their work, as Lipsky (1980) argues, “Routines and simplifications aid the management of complexity; environmental structuring limits the complexity to be managed” (83). Approaching ethically difficult work through routine helps to create a sense of fairness and divide complicated cases into a manageable process of steps. The following section investigates aid workers’ role in operating the camp bureaucracy more closely.

Aid workers: the faces of a faceless system

The literature on those who perform aid work often focuses its attention on the purportedly powerful and cosmopolitan international ‘expat’ while denying agency to the local aid worker, which has begun to be challenged by a growing group of scholars (Fradejas-García 2019, Ong and Combinido 2018, Pascucci 2018, Ward forthcoming). This dissertation has been greatly informed by the local Jordanian aid worker of Azraq, who stands in a position of power as a distributor of aid. I argue that the systematic bureaucratization of aid in Azraq has created “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky 1980) out of aid workers. Although they wield individual discretion, aid workers’ actions and decisions can only ever reinforce the bureaucracy as a durable institution. By simply existing in the position, an aid worker becomes a “small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism” (Weber 1978, 988) that enables the camp to function as a bureaucracy. This section explores how aid workers embody the positionality of camp bureaucrats, acting as operating arms of the humanitarian administration while equally subject

to it. It analyzes how this positionality creates a buffer between refugees and decision-making levels of the aid regime.

Aid workers who report to the camp daily sit at the bottom of the “aid chain”, what Swidler and Watkins (2017, 80) call the hierarchy of careers in the humanitarian sector. Generally, entry-level aid workers are bussed to Azraq from Amman and northern Jordan by their respective NGOs and work in the camp Sundays through Thursdays from 8am to 4pm. At a slightly higher level, aid workers travel to the camp every day at any time during working hours but are based primarily at NGO offices in Amman. Even though they are positioned at the lowest level of the aid chain, both groups of aid workers exercise a great amount of individual discretion regarding “allocation of assistance” (Saltsman 2014, 460). At the camp’s NGO centers, and especially at the community centers, these aid workers act similarly to the street-level employees of a state bureaucracy in that their decisions and actions compose the policies and services of the administration (Lipsky 1980). As Fassin (2011b) illustrates within the context of border control, such street-level bureaucrats “routinely generate decisions affecting the lives of others” (218), decisions that are often made “on the spot” (Lipsky 1980, 8) and are extremely personal for the refugee on the other side of the desk. This is especially true for community center aid workers, who evaluate the requests of hundreds of refugees when the centers are open for new referral requests twice a week.

At first, it may appear that aid workers can undermine camp bureaucracy authority through their own discretion. At one NGO center, the aid worker who coordinated refugee volunteers hired through the IBV program explained to me that he allowed all of them to stay on longer than their designated rotation in the scheme:

According to the IBV rules at the community center, I have to let everyone go, except for her [pointing in the direction of the center’s director]. I won’t do it, they can’t make me, and I’ll just keep ignoring them. And it’s not like we’re the only ones doing this.

As this aid worker mentions, what he describes doing is common practice in Azraq. This aid worker is one of many in the camp who prefer not to have to train new cohorts every few months. Additionally, he told me that he holds a personal belief that paid work should be considered a privilege and not a right; that in the case of Azraq, refugees with employable skills should not have to lose job opportunities to less qualified refugees in the name of fairness. His

position in the camp system as a street-level bureaucrat allowed him the individual discretion to act on this personal belief with the intention of helping his refugee staff keep their jobs. This aid worker's actions directly compete with the bureaucratic Standard Operating Procedures of the IBV scheme, in line with what Lipsky (1980) identifies is part of what renders a bureaucracy unpredictable:

At times routines and simplifications will be entirely informal and contrary to agency policy. At other times they will be consistent with agency policy and may even be promoted by the agency. (86)

Consequently, while the aid worker's decision to retain his staff past their eligible working period seems to undermine the system in favor of those refugees, his exercise of discretion still manages to work in a way that fortifies the camp bureaucracy. By keeping forty or so positions filled, he denies many more refugees the opportunity to work, lengthening the amount of time those on the IBV rota must wait. The aid worker's actions can only ever reaffirm the power of the bureaucratic system, whether or not he chooses to comply with standard procedures. Ultimately, refugees can only find work or keep a position if an aid worker rules in their favor, and so the act of discretionary decision-making by individual aid workers consistently reproduces these power relations (see Saltsman 2014, 459).

Because these aid workers sit at the bottom of the aid chain, they interact directly with refugees more than other actors in the sector of aid provision, hence why I liken them to 'street-level' bureaucrats. They are to refugees the "face of aid" (Arar 2017) and simultaneously the face of a bureaucratic administration. Because they represent the camp's humanitarian system, aid workers become the face of an otherwise mechanic and "impersonal machine" (Fassin 2011b, 218). At the same time, because of their position in the aid chain, these aid workers are not aware of nor are they involved in decision-making that happens at higher levels. Manning the front lines of aid in Azraq with individuals who lack knowledge and influence on policy creates a barrier between refugees and the camp administration, a buffer that sustains the bureaucracy. For refugees, the bureaucracy itself is inaccessible beyond the street-level bureaucrats at NGO centers. This was made clear when a group of refugees who wanted to bring up an issue about camp structure approached me because they thought I could convey their petition to power-wielding individuals in the administration, cutting out the street-level aid workers who would likely only delay or deny their request. When I asked these refugees who they would normally

petition for matters that were greater than those dealt with by the referral system (that is, less to do with day-to-day matters and more to do with life in the camp), they told me they did not know.

Besides aid workers acting as filters for Azraq's intricate bureaucratic system, the administration's inaccessibility is manifested in other ways. Until 2019, the UNHCR did not even have a physical office in Village 5, rendering the main governing organization completely inaccessible to those quarantined there other than through vehicles circulating on its behalf. Aid workers are in the camp on short-term contracts (usually no longer than twelve months) and such positions hold notoriously high turnover rates, meaning that bureaucrats with whom refugees eventually become familiar are never there for long.¹ Furthermore, aid workers in the community centers are so preoccupied with getting through the hundreds of refugees on the waiting list within the hours of operation that they do not get much face time with any one refugee in particular. Aid workers who would leave their caravan office temporarily would be swarmed by refugees hoping to get their attention, and sometimes staff would hide away in one of the unused offices in order to avoid this. I was surprised to see how easy it was for aid workers in the community centers to not even interact with refugees on days when referrals were not being processed.

Indeed, the bureaucracy in the camp has created a separation between refugees and aid workers, who effectively become gatekeepers of the aid regime. This assertion of power through everyday interactions between street-level bureaucrat aid workers and refugees establishes the omnipresence of the humanitarian government. The following section further examines aid workers' roles in an underperforming bureaucracy.

Underperforming aid: how the camp bureaucracy operates

Fisher (1997) claims that humanitarians see a potential for NGOs to be “everything that governments are not”, including “unburdened with large bureaucracies” (444). However, as this chapter demonstrates, I witnessed in Azraq a refugee camp burdened with bureaucracy. The power apparatus has the makings of a ‘tactical’ government, concerned with the unavoidable

¹ The majority of my aid worker interlocutors are no longer posted in the positions they occupied during the duration of my fieldwork.

quotidian matters brought to its attention by refugees, but still evading the greater issues surrounding ongoing life in the desert camp. I have argued that the processing of these matters has limited Azraq's emergency situation to the 'nine-to-five' working day. Despite the projected image of order that this produces, on-the-ground functioning may appear much more improvised, deferring and deflecting refugee concerns with seemingly little rhyme or reason. Nassar and Stel (2019) argue that such "institutional ambiguity" (44) is part and parcel of a bureaucratic response to refugees, as they explore in the case of Lebanon, where unpredictable and changing aid regulations are a strategic component of maintaining a situation of uncertainty and precariousness for the country's Syrian refugees. Parkinson and Behrouzan (2015) describe how bureaucratic procedures for Syrian refugees in Lebanon have complicated a "politics of access" (324) to healthcare services, exposing refugees to further violence by discouraging them from seeking life-saving care. While Azraq's governance may not outright aim to further destabilize the lives of its residents, its policies work in a similar way to Lebanon's government, a care-control dynamic to be explored in depth in the next chapter.

What does remain consistent in Azraq's bureaucratic operation is its underperformance. I argue that the humanitarian bureaucracy is not equipped to respond to refugees' grievances about 'big picture' issues and instead distracts from these issues through the systematic and convoluted processing of mundane concerns. This section examines the material, immaterial, and affective dimensions of the bureaucracy to convey how its failure to support refugees relentlessly reproduces emergency.

Spaces of waiting: the human and material landscape

While the NGO that operates the community center offers livelihood programs, children's activities, and some recreational space, most at the center are congregated in the space just at the entrance. This is where IBV and case management offices are located, each occupying part of a large caravan that has been divided into three sections, two for case management and one for IBV. In each center, twelve benches are bolted down to the cement and directly face the three-office caravan in neat rows of four. Unsheltered apart from a corrugated roof, the waiting area leaves refugees enduring both extreme heat and cold weather.



FIGURE 12. The Village 2 community center during interviews for IBV positions. [Photo courtesy of Omar Hadder, 2015]



FIGURE 13. The Village 6 community center waiting area after closing hours. [Photo by the author, 2017]

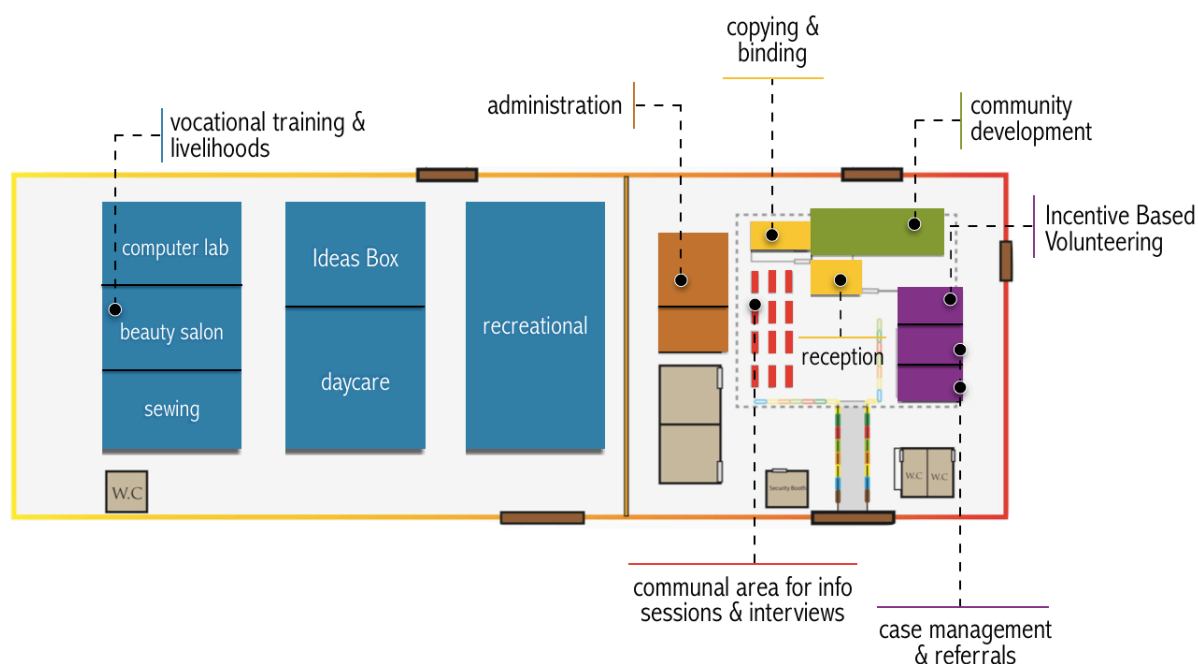


FIGURE 14. A diagram of the Village 6 community center layout. [Diagram by author, 2017]

Between 8:30am and 2:30pm every weekday, refugees fill the benches, with women generally occupying one side of the benches, and men, the other half. Some people crowd at the reception desk, trying to get their names on the waiting list. Children play on metal railings, creating thunderous echoes when jumping on the ramp to the case management offices. Refugees employed as security guards keep young kids from causing trouble. For the most part, those waiting on the benches look straight ahead, seemingly too bored to make meaningful conversation with their neighbors. Aid workers mostly stay in their respective offices, often with four or five to a half caravan. Sometimes they open the door or call out to signal to the receptionist that they are ready to receive the next refugee on the waiting list. Waiting in the centers appears still and uneventful, but there is always a buzz of movement: people coming and going, getting up to take phone calls, using paperwork to fan themselves, and sometimes storming off in frustration or loudly issuing their particular grievance at an aid worker for all to hear.

Each caravan office is weighed down by unwieldy furnishings. A clunky wooden desk digs into the floor. A large metal filing cabinet occupies one corner and a matching metal cabinet, another. These harsh and overpowering items sit opposite lightweight plastic ones. A number of plastic chairs and a small activity table for children, upon which aid worker backpacks and

jackets are often piled, are strewn on the other side of the office. The heavy, colorless furnishings are designated for aid workers; the flimsy, colorful plastic ones for refugees. A dry erase board hangs on the wall that connects both sides. Sometimes a few informational posters are displayed.

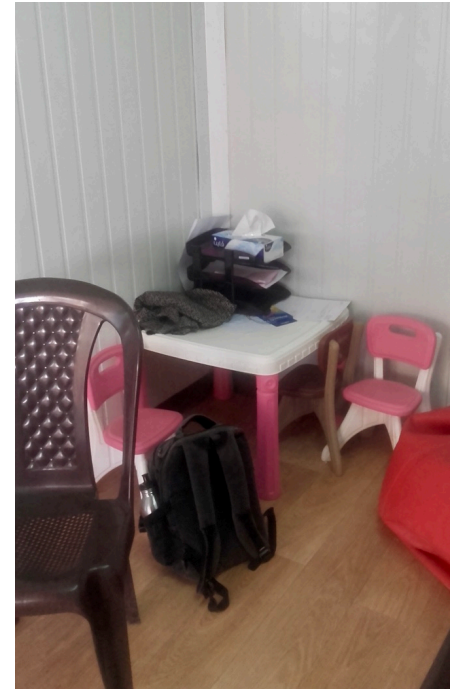


FIGURE 15. The interior of the IBV office in the Village 6 community center featuring a wooden desk, office chair, and dry erase board. Opposite the desk above is a table for kids and an array of plastic chairs and a beanbag chair. [Photos by the author, 2017]

The materiality of the community centers, from the benches to sticky notes and spreadsheets, is a visual aspect of how Azraq's bureaucracy functions. These materials are central agents of the processes and procedures of a bureau. The community center and its strange mix of concrete foundation, metal structures, wooden desks, and plastic chairs establish the street-level face of aid for refugees. This environment mirrors what Hull (2012) describes as the material makings of any bureaucracy:

Face-to-face meetings, the paragon within social science of the unmediated encounter, are shaped by the layouts of offices, chairs, desks, buzzers, and teacups, the things that form the material infrastructure of the social relationships in the bureaucratic arena. (66)

A wooden desk in a metal caravan offers a strong signal of aid's bureaucratic presence to refugees and acts as a physical barrier between the two. Aid workers who receive refugees at the desk fill the role of the bureaucrat, or "one who rules from a desk" (Graham 2002, 209). Every

aspect of the environment confronts refugees with the reality of the system to which they must comply in order to survive life in the camp. Successfully navigating the camp bureaucracy promises a more comfortable experience in the camp, at least for the immediate future, but this is no easy task. Refugees must be physically present, wait their turn, produce the necessary paperwork, and follow the rules, and yet this does not guarantee success.

What is striking about these material objects in the community centers is the environment in which they are used. A refugee camp purports to be a temporary place carrying a light and disposable material footprint. The physical presence and weight of Azraq's bureaucracy is unnatural and surprising. The blatant design of the center's forward-facing benches as nothing more than a waiting area undermine a supposed humanitarian mission to create a sense of community through these centers. Instead, the camp's street-level bureaus establish an overwhelming sense of authority and control over the refugee population.

Beyond furniture, paper is a particularly telling materiality through which to interrogate the dynamics of the community center. Many Syrians who fled to Jordan did so because the country does not require identification papers, unlike Lebanon. Birth certificates and passports are often lost or unattainable during conflict, and the lack of official documentation for Syrians has posed a large problem (Clutterbuck *et al* 2018). Life in Azraq has produced for refugees a new stack of required paperwork, including the *basmat al-'ayn*, similar to the family book used in Syria and Jordan and the most important form of identification for camp residents, and permits to enter or exit the camp. These papers are living, breathing documents. Permits that have been corrected are stapled on top of the original permits. The *basmat al-'ayn* for many refugees is often in a fragile state, ripping along the folds and unreadable. It makes little sense for a document of such importance to exist on a thin sheet of paper, so refugees make copies of it and have the originals laminated at NGO centers. Aid workers rely on their own paper materials. Large maps of the camp are taped to office walls and annotated with markers and sticky notes.



FIGURE 16. An annotated map of Village 3 used by aid workers in the community center there. [Photo by the author, 2017]

Papers in Azraq become “mediators” (Hull 2012, 13) of bureaucracy and carry meaning in how they are used. Documents that are required and produced in a bureau “bear the double sign of the state’s distance and its penetration into the life of the everyday” (Das and Poole 2004, 15). Residents of Azraq depend on identity documents and permits that can be provided only by camp governance. Even sticky notes offer interesting insight into the dynamics of a bureau. Hull (2012) discusses a post-it note’s “detachability” (159), which allows it a certain informality and temporariness. As was the case with the sticky note that Hamoudeh made regarding Hadiya’s medical emergency, the act of sticking the note to the wall of the office visually signals something that is meant to be dealt with before the note can be thrown away. For something to be added to a lone sticky note, it must be a matter of outlying importance, something that would otherwise become overshadowed among the contents of a file. Most of the time, the note remains on the wall even after its contents have been attended to and hangs by one corner as the other has peeled up and collected dust.

As Hull (2012) notes for Pakistani bureaucracy, a case must be placed in a file in order for a bureaucrat to begin work on it (116). In Azraq, bureaucratic procedure relies upon a refugee’s *basmat al-‘ayn* number being added to an Excel spreadsheet. While paper is a major tool of bureaucratic operations, Azraq camp sits at the fore of a technological movement in the

humanitarian world. ‘Big data’, iris scanning machines, and information sharing are driving the aid sector in what humanitarians believe is a more efficient direction but what scholars have pointed out as a problematic intrusion of refugee privacy (Behnam and Crabtree 2019, Carlisle 2019, Hoffmann 2017, Mahmoudi 2019, Molnar 2019, Staton 2016; see also Scheel and Ustek-Spilda 2018). Filing cabinets in the community center offices are filled to the brim and impossible to open, and yet they are barely touched on a daily basis. Most of an aid worker’s day is spent on her laptop working within a shared drive. Google Docs and shared spreadsheets have replaced paper files, meaning that refugees become not another file, but another row on a spreadsheet.

Outside the community centers, the hyper-organization of villages is another bureaucratic tactic of the camp’s complex spatial politics. A caravan address is composed of four geographical locators: village, neighborhood, plot, and caravan number (i.e. Village 2, Neighborhood 10, Plot 5, Caravan 3). On most occasions spent with experienced aid workers in various villages, locating a specific caravan was never straightforward. While caravans are laid out on a grid format, one aid worker noted that “you need experience to navigate each village”. In extreme weather conditions, not being able to find the proper caravan is even more frustrating. Sometimes, due to bureaucratic errors in address, aid workers would resort to asking neighbors if they knew which caravan belonged to the family they were trying to find. But this could also be tricky; during one outreach visit in Village 6, even the name the aid workers had on file was incorrect because the dots had been placed above and below the wrong letters, producing an entirely different name altogether. These spatial constraints also affect aid workers’ whereabouts. A manager at the community center explained that his staff “like to be out in the field” rather than in the base camp, which is mostly unused apart from inter-organization administrative meetings. However, I noticed that it was distance more than devotion that keep aid workers in the field, as the base camp is too far away and irrelevant to spend much time of the working day there. Waiting for NGO vehicles to move around the camp can waste much of an aid worker’s day.

The regulation of space inside and outside the community centers has shaped how refugees navigate the camp bureaucracy and how aid workers perform their work. The following section explores the temporal dimension that works alongside the spatial and material one.

Delays and disruption: the temporal dimension

Alongside governing space and movement in Azraq, the administration also asserts its control over time, particularly in its regulations of the working day. While there is no strict curfew for NGO staff to leave the camp, most NGO centers close at 4pm and Azraq security must be aware of any organization's plans to stay into the evening hours. Even the entrance and exit guards, officers of the Jordanian police and military, must not stay in the camp past their scheduled shifts. Within the community center, the aid worker bureaucrats control the context of their interactions with clients, "when they will take place, with what frequency, under what circumstances, with what resources" (Lipsky 1980, 61). Shaping the environment in which they work via temporal regulations allows NGOs to preserve their position of power in the camp.

Azraq's bureaucracy continuously reasserts its authority through a technique that Feldman (2008) has called 'deferral and distraction' (20). This mechanism is effective for temporary bureaucracies, such as those of the British Mandate and Egyptian Administration in Gaza, to establish authority. Feldman states,

Deferral meant putting aside questions of legitimacy to a vaguely imagined future time when there would be Palestinian self-determination in Gaza. Distraction meant that the attention of government, of civil service, of the population was averted from the challenges of consent and coercion and focused on the mundane, the day to day, the getting by. In this way the stakes, and the possible outcomes, of practices and policies were often not discerned, by either practitioners or the public. The dynamics of abeyance permitted the persistence of rule, under always fraught and uncertain conditions, in Gaza. (20)

Considering this in Azraq, deferral and distraction both clouds visions for a better present and constantly pushes attention away from the actual bureaucracy towards something else. Deferral and distraction mechanisms work for the façade of stability created by a government that is concerned only with the operation of the present situation. Feldman argues that deferral and distraction worked for Gazans because the foreign governing bureaucracies were just that: foreign, in-the-meantime, understudy governments that would soon be replaced by one native to the land. Gazans did not need to concern themselves with exactly *how* good the temporary government was, and thus authority overruled accountability. For Azraq's residents, a similar dynamic plays out. Refugees understand that the humanitarian government is only standing in for another, better Syrian one. Their daily navigation of the bureaucracy that underpins their

survival – from applying for a cash-for-work position to making sure their caravan heating gets fixed before winter – takes precedence over the larger grievances that refugees may have toward the humanitarian governance, such as the meager quality of life in the camp or the almost nonexistent economic opportunity.

The camp's referral system enables the NGO operating the community center to deflect responsibility for cases by referring them to another organization. When I mentioned my previous work with the NGO that runs the community centers to an aid worker at a development organization in the camp, he replied, "Ah, the most hated organization." I asked whether he meant if it is hated by refugees or by aid workers, to which he laughed and responded, "I think both." He cited the amount of rules the referral system implements in order to maintain central power in the community center, explaining that whenever his NGO attempts circumventing the community center by making direct hires for IBV positions or managing cases, "it would cause a big problem with them and the UNHCR", slowing down the NGO's work. This introduces a question of blurred accountability brought about by aid workers acting on their own discretion, just like the aid worker who chose to keep IBV volunteers in their positions in violation of the SOPs. During my time with IBV teams, I heard similar stories from the community center perspective in which they often complained that other NGOs were breaking the rules. From both sides, I noted a ping-ponging of responsibility, with emails often ignored or used in passive aggression, drawing out issues that arose between the community centers and other NGOs. These discrepancies reveal not just tensions in the camp structure, but how these flaws work to consistently deflect accountability.

While the community center is the only designated place for refugees to submit input or complaints about life in the camp, the center is set up so that such feedback is not absorbed but rather bounces back at the petitioner in the form of yet another responsibility she must take on. For example, during an information session in Village 6, aid workers representing several of the camp's NGOs were present when refugees brought up the poor quality of bread provided during daily bread distributions. The response by a community center aid worker was, "When you're at the window, tell them you want different bread." Not only is this response an inadequate attempt at addressing the complaint, it deflects the responsibility of distributing quality bread onto the NGO in charge of distributions and onto the refugees. While the community center would ideally be the most effective mediator of this issue between both parties, it instead plays

no part. Convoluted processes of the camp's bureaucracy distract refugees from challenging the camp's larger structural issues.

Deflection of responsibility is wrapped up in the bureaucracy's unspoken ideology of self-help. Aid workers usually speak about self-help through a self-sustainability discourse discussed in the previous chapter. However, self-help has become central to how the bureaucracy reassigns responsibility for refugees' wellbeing. During one particular instance in an IBV office, a refugee wanting to apply for a semi-skilled position that required a skill he did not have was refused on the spot by the aid worker, who told him, "Go take a course on [the particular skill] and learn how to do it so you can come back and reapply. That's what these other people did, you have to go and learn." Such a statement overlooks the fact that refugees do not have time to learn new skills for free and that IBV positions do not remain open for very long. Indeed, this type of refusal makes refugees responsible for adapting to a set of jobs that do not align with the general skillset of the camp population (i.e., manufacturing). The time refugees invest in learning other skills is yet another distraction from the inadequate economic opportunities available in Azraq. As previously mentioned, Wagner (2018) makes the case that Syrian youth in Mafraq engage in endless training courses provided by NGOs that ignore refugees' unpromising prospects to be able to put such learned skills to use. In Azraq, refugees experience a similar dynamic. The refugee who was denied the semi-skilled position in Azraq would have most likely found that the job was no longer for hire by the time he would have completed the training program, at which point he would need to look for a different position that may require yet another set of specific skills.

During another instance, an aid worker from case management complained over lunch about refugees who ask for help claiming that they have nothing:

I'm sorry, but us Arabs, you know, we sell gold jewelry to get money, right? Well, there are people who come in saying they have nothing, and they'll be wearing a gold bracelet or wedding ring [*dibleh*]. I wanted to tell this one woman today, *why don't you sell that to help your son?* You know, that's our society!

Several of the aid workers who overheard this comment agreed with the sentiment. The aid workers seemed unaware of the power relations at play in the community center bureaucracy, in which the refugee learns to use a specific language of need in order to more successfully request services (Lipsky 1980, 59). Furthermore, a well-organized camp might have eliminated the need

for refugees to sell items, especially those of sentimental value, for cash. That a humanitarian would suggest such a short-term solution to a more complicated structural problem reveals how refugees are: 1) socialized to believe they are responsible for helping themselves, and 2) distracted from demanding better aid by having to first exhaust a never-ending set of useless alternative options.

The deferral and distraction mechanism also relies on inefficiency. Stationing only one or two case workers and IBV specialists in each community center means that aid worker bureaucrats will never be able to attend to all refugees who show up and the wait for refugees will always be hours long. A major source of inefficiency in bureaucracies is a lack of resources. Lipsky (1980) argues that bureaucracy depends on a low supply of services and human resources, as greater efficiency would require an increase in supply, which would always be met by demand. Aid workers would usually point to a lack of resources as a reason for their inability to meet a refugee's request; for example, explaining to applicants who are denied an IBV position that there are 14,000 other people in the rotation for such work in the camp.

Related to inefficiency, the most common means of deferral in Azraq's bureaucratic system is requesting that refugees 'come back' on another day. Refugees were often told by aid workers at the community centers to come back later for various reasons: they had insufficient paperwork, no IBV positions were available or the refugee would not be eligible for work until certain prerequisites were met, or there were no new updates on their case. On days when aid workers participate in training activities, little notice is given to refugees that the center will be closed to referrals, and those who show up to wait are then told to come back another day. This 'come back later' mechanism extends beyond the street-level bureaus of the community centers, as seen in the example of Hadiya being told to 'come back after the weekend' to be attended to for an emergency medical issue. Another extreme instance of this occurred during an interview day for adolescent boys who were applying to take part in a training program at a development NGO. Interviews were scheduled to begin at 10am, and many of the applicants had arrived much earlier to prepare; however, the aid workers were late in arriving to the camp and were unable to begin interviewing until 1pm. By 4pm, six boys who remained after having waited since the morning unsheltered from the sun were told to come back after the Eid holiday to be interviewed. These delays are a major aspect of a bureaucracy's control over time, and as Auyero (2012) describes for welfare recipients in Argentina, those who depend on the bureaucracy have

no choice but to “[surrender] to the time frame of the state” (74). Auyero argues that time delays are an integral part of a bureaucratic system that is not meant to be predictable. With no reason given, he notes, processes can be delayed, canceled, or abruptly rushed. Similarly in Azraq, such unpredictability renders the bureaucracy difficult to understand and, more importantly, to navigate. A simple request to ‘come back tomorrow’ reiterates the authority of the community center bureaucracy over its refugee constituents.

Woven into the spatiotemporal dimension of Azraq’s bureaucracy is an emotional one. As the previous chapter argued that emergency has lost its emotional charge in the camp, the loss of affect permeates interactions between aid workers and refugees in NGO centers, examined in the following section.

The unfeeling aid worker: the affective dimension

“Bureaucratic indifference” (Herzfeld 1992, 211 in Graham 2002, 209), or the emotionless response to an emotional petitioner, is protocol for community center aid workers, who are trained to stay focused on the request and not allow emotions to loosen their control over the situation. For refugees, this indifference often comes across as “tough love” (Lavie 2014, 100), unfeeling, or even rude. During one interaction between a refugee seeking an IBV position and an IBV specialist, the refugee ultimately had no choice but to settle for a lower-paying one-month job instead of the three-month position he had been hoping to get. The aid worker attempted to justify this, saying, “You’ll get seventy to eighty dinars for one month of work, that’s good!” These comments imply that the aid worker is sympathetic to the refugee’s situation, but they ultimately come from a place of indifference for the refugee as an individual. Because demand in a bureaucracy always meets supply, and in Azraq far surpasses it, aid workers in the community center bureaus “usually have nothing to lose by failing to satisfy clients” (Lipsky 1980, 55).

Moreover, comments and responses by unsympathetic aid worker bureaucrats can border on condescension or rudeness. Refugees would often be spoken to in blunt or patronizing tones. One refugee who mistakingly went to the human resources office looking for a “Fatima” was received by aid workers who unnecessarily gave her a hard time, pretending not to gather from context that she meant another aid worker with a similar name. After several minutes of

humiliating questioning, aid workers finally told her to go to another office. In another encounter, an aid worker called into the office a refugee hired as a cleaner through the IBV scheme. The aid worker held up two bottles of cleaning supplies and gestured in a condescending manner, “*This* is Clorox, and *this* is Flash [a toilet cleaner].” This patronizing lecture toward a refugee who had already been cleaning the center for several weeks caught the attention of everyone in the office. Later, the refugee told me that the aid worker had made her clean the bathroom a second time that same morning.

Street-level bureaucrats generally believe that they are working in the best interest of those seeking their services (Lipsky 1980, 6). This is true for aid workers in Azraq, who view themselves as humanitarians carrying out noble work, which will be discussed in the next chapter. I gathered that aid workers are mostly unaware of any further troubles they may cause refugees precisely because their job exists in service to the camp population, similar to the views of Israeli welfare bureaucrats as outlined by Lavie (2014, 102). Azraq’s aid workers are well-intentioned, having gone into the profession out of a desire to ‘do good’.

The bureaucracy depends on aid worker management of emotions, both their own and refugees’. Many aid workers in the street-level bureaus of the community center spoke about their work using a vocabulary of emotion and intention. Take, for instance, the following two accounts in which Aseel and Yusra describe having to restrain their natural emotional response for the sake of professionalism:

Aseel: There are cases that, when I go home, I keep thinking about what I can do for them [*adil afakir hadol shu bidi ‘amilhum*]. Like these old people who are living by themselves – what do they do? There is no electricity, there is no water...And honestly when I first started working, it hit me that this is the reality. I was shocked, to be honest. But after a while I started to acclimate and realize that no, I need to help them. I don’t need them to see how upset I am. No, I just need to help them.

Yusra: I’ve started to see my work in the camp as...really trying not to live in a case, you know? I can *try* to help, but the worst thing is when you really get into the details of the details of a case and you begin to feel that it is *your* case. But now I can separate myself from a case, or at least I am trying. I am helping and at the same time I sympathize but I don’t get emotional. One of the things that can help you in a case is that you sympathize or you show that you are sympathetic [*ino inta tat’atíf au tubayyin ino inta mut’atíf*].

Aseel discusses getting over the initial shock of the condition of the refugees who sought her services. Yusra in case management speaks about having to maintain emotional distance from her cases. What both aid workers emphasize is the desire to help without showing emotion. Both feel that their work can be more effective when they maintain composure. Yusra in particular notes the importance of sympathy, the most basic response an aid worker can have, without showing emotion. Othman, an IBV aid worker, recalls the challenge of dealing with the emotional toll of his work on his personal life:

Even the biggest manliest men come in here, they start crying, they don't have bread for their family. Do you think this doesn't affect me? I used to go home and my head would be [indicates a large size with his hands]. I would start eating and remember the guy who started crying because he doesn't have bread. I wouldn't sleep at night.

Othman, too, employs a discourse of emotional affect similar to his colleagues, Aseel and Yusra. All three imply an inability to wholly fulfill a refugee's needs (due to the street-level bureaucrat's powerlessness within the regime as illustrated in the previous section), and speaking about their emotions works to shore up the guilt or helplessness they may feel. Othman and Aseel mention their case issues following them to their home life and Yusra describes 'living in' her cases, all emotional responses that indicate they are 'good' people.²

Aid workers also discuss honing communications skills as another major aspect of their work. One aid worker noted that she aims to make refugees feel that they are equals, "that you have to work for them, that it's their right [*haqhum*], that you are there because of them until you gain their trust." Another aid worker spoke about being able to diffuse tension when refugees come asking for work:

You have to have communication skills. You've seen how people come in, they are frustrated, they tell us they need to work. So when they get angry we have to speak with them in a way that calms them down. People come in saying they need to work, but they've just finished a month of work last month and it's not their turn yet. But we can't tell them go, get out of the office. No, that's not allowed [*mamnu'*], we have to deal with them in the appropriate way.

An aid worker mentioned that successful case management was dependent on the communication skills mentioned above and also the act of listening to the refugee petitioner:

² In a way, we can consider these aid workers to exhibit what Robert Meister in *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (2010) states is 'feeling good about feeling bad'.

The most important thing really is that you listen. Even if there are cases that come to you, and this is something I noticed in case management, maybe cases come to you and they don't want anything, they just want to talk, to get out what's inside [*bas bido yufarigh ili juwwato*]. With regards to case management at the community centers, the first step is counseling, so you try to listen and let them talk. Something I am very proud of myself is that any case that came to me, however angry or stressed out [*mudayyiq*] the person was, in my whole time as a case manager I never raised my voice and the person always left happy. They might have come in upset, but they left happy [*dakhal za'lan yatla' mabsut*].

This aid worker had spoken with a sense of earnest pride for maintaining control over both hers and the refugees' emotions in a case. Another case manager described how even her facial expressions could keep emotions in check: "Many refugees, when they see your face is at ease, they relax and feel that someone is listening to them and looking them in the eye, and they speak more calmly." Aseel found similarities with her previous work in a bank:

In the bank, I was in customer service so I would see customers and hear their problems and work to solve them. And case management, it's almost the same thing, but the type of service is what is different. So I felt that I could take the experience from customer service in how I dealt with customers and listened to them and solved their problems quickly...I found a lot of things from my work [in the bank] to be useful in case management.

The act of listening is a main thread among all of these aid worker accounts. The common goal seems to be maintaining control in their interactions with refugees, which can easily be lost were an aid worker to reveal an emotional response.

However, during my time in the community centers, I gathered that listening was often the most an aid worker did during interactions with refugees. Beyond listening and either working to address the case or dismissing it altogether, aid workers rarely acknowledged the refugee's situation. This became clear during the numerous times I had been approached by refugees asking for help. While I had to refer them to aid workers, who would most likely refer them to another organization, I always made sure to acknowledge the difficulty of the issue with which they were dealing. Even just a simple "*fahimt 'alayk(i)* [I understand]" would cause a change of expression and a look of gratitude or relief, as if someone had finally affirmed their suffering. Aid workers, even those who emphasized the importance of listening, spent most of their interactions with refugees seemingly defensive, concerned that any acknowledgement of the

system's inadequacy would threaten their assertions of authority over the population that depends upon them.

Thus far, I have included aid worker comments about selling gold, retaining IBV volunteers past their eligible work period, and emotional affect. It is clear from these conversations that the aid workers included here are for the most part unaware of their position within a power apparatus, much less within a bureaucracy. An aid worker would never consider herself a bureaucrat or even a political individual. Aid work is supposed to be apolitical and pure (Audet 2015, Fisher 1997, Weiss and Barnett 2008, Yanacopulos 2016), not inextricably wound up in power politics. I have also shown how aid workers have attempted to undermine the aid regime policy by acting on individual discretion, arguing that even such rebellion only fortifies the camp bureaucracy.

To be fair, bureaucratic work in the aid world of Azraq presents arguably greater moral and emotional dilemmas than that of a state bureaucracy. Street-level positions in the camp can be “an all-encompassing endeavor, constantly seeping into practitioners’ personal and social lives” (Fechter 2012, 1391 in Pascucci 2018, 11). To this extent, aid workers must distance themselves from the emotions of their cases in order to survive the demanding nature of camp work. None of this is to say that aid workers in Azraq are not dedicated individuals, and I knew many colleagues who took their work home with them and went above and beyond. Rather, I am considering aid workers in Azraq as street-level bureaucrats in order to illustrate the role they ultimately play in the camp’s powerful and disempowering bureaucracy, regardless of their intentions.

As shown in this section, the bureaucracy’s operation relies on regulations – enforced daily by aid worker bureaucrats – of space, time, and emotions. The final section explores the implications of such governance, a discussion to be continued throughout the rest of this dissertation.

Implications of the camp bureaucracy

This chapter has thus far established the dynamics of Azraq’s bureaucratic administration through an exploration of the community centers and their aid workers as agents in a street-level bureaucracy. This section furthers the previous chapter’s discussion on the everyday

experience in Azraq as something simultaneously extreme and mundane and not necessarily free of violence. While the physical violence of conflict may be nonexistent in the camp, structural violence is inherent to Azraq's thriving bureaucratic system. As we see in the extreme case of Hadiya, the nine-to-five nature of the humanitarian bureaucracy can pose a threat to the physical wellbeing of refugees. However, structural violence is more commonly situated in the refugee's simple visit to the community center to request a service or follow up on a case.

Smadar Lavie's (2014) ethnography of Mizrahi Israeli single mothers who depend on welfare services provides an insightful understanding of what she calls bureaucratic violence. A form of structural violence, bureaucratic violence is a tool of the Israeli welfare bureaucracy, Lavie argues, that stems from a structural bias against Mizrahi Jews. This bureaucracy, similar to Azraq's, is unpredictable with constantly changing rules, and is an "inflictor of pain" (94) on single mothers who depend on the system. Lavie describes how the power relations of the Israeli welfare bureaucracy are reiterated through a mother's every interaction in a bureau:

The single mother depends on the bureaucrat. She rushes from bureau to bureau. She waits in long lines at each one. When she steps through the limen into the bureau time-space, she attempts to accomplish certain linear goals, narrow in scope and vital to her and her family's survival...she must keep returning and returning, day after day, until the goal is accomplished and a cyclical interval for her visits is established – once a week, twice a month, etc. (98)

Changes in rules and regulations at a bureaucracy disrupt any sense of stability or control that the single welfare mother may gain over repeated visits. In her interactions with a street-level welfare bureaucrat, the mother must "perform her suffering" over and over in order to achieve that which she needs. These performances are required within such a bureaucratic system for one's case to be taken seriously. Repeated acts of revealing one's vulnerability to a bureaucrat can be humiliating and physically exhausting, a constant balance of showing a restrained amount of emotion, lest a colorful display of true emotion work against the welfare seeker (102). Lavie writes,

For whatever reason, when the bureaucrat is unable to give or willfully denies the mother what she needs, the bureaucrat effectively becomes the administrator of torture. At the same time, the bureaucrat is convinced that all her or his actions are in the service of the mother. Because the mother needs the deliverance that only the bureaucrat can offer, she has no choice but to enter this zone of repulsion again and

again – and suffer the same torture again and again – just to accomplish basic goals related to daily survival. (102)

Lavie notes that scholars rarely explore bureaucracy as a “system of torture” (94). As a single mother who has endured the Israeli welfare bureaucracy herself, Lavie’s assertion of bureaucratic violence is helpful in my understanding of the workings of bureaucracy in Azraq. While I stop short of likening a humanitarian aid worker to an ‘administrator of torture’, I find that Lavie’s accounts of bureaucratic encounters share a foundation of power relations and time-space dynamics with Azraq’s bureaus.

The act of asking for help in the camp subjects refugees to bureaucratic violence. Being referred elsewhere for help, having to ‘come back tomorrow’, and being refused services on the grounds of changing regulations are all experiences that refugees in Azraq share. Lipsky (1980) notes that requesting help is deeply personal for the petitioner, and while a case is usually processed according to general categorizations, a decision by a street-level bureaucrat can feel even more personal:

It is one thing to be treated neglectfully and routinely by the telephone company, the motor vehicle bureau, or other government agencies whose agents know nothing of the personal circumstances surrounding a claim or request. It is quite another thing to be shuffled, categorized, treated ‘bureaucratically,’ by someone to whom one is directly talking and from whom one expects at least an open and sympathetic hearing...in street-level bureaucracies the objects of critical decisions – *people* – actually change as a result of the decisions. (9)

In Azraq, refugees must navigate an impersonal system for what can be very personal matters. Nothing about the process of seeking support in the camp is convenient or comfortable. We see this in Azraq’s immaterial infrastructure, from less than empathetic aid workers and scenes of bored refugees waiting. This is also embodied in the materiality of the camp – metal caravans, hard benches, wood office furnishings, cement – all nonmalleable and angular, reflecting the discomfort of refugees’ forced settlement and immobility.

Indeed, this physical materiality points to the general indestructibility of bureaucracy. Weber (1946) argues that bureaucracy is “practically unshatterable” (228) because the system does not rely on the performance of its employees but rather sustains itself through procedure, inefficiency, and inaccessibility. Bureaucracies are built to resist transformation as the system

overpowers the actions of individuals who compose it. We can be almost certain that the humanitarian planners who built the system did not intend to affect more harm than good, but I argue that their endeavor for order in Azraq has created a mechanism that plays out in favor of the aid regime, often to the detriment of refugees.

The fact that the bureaucracy as both a material structure and a system is indestructible defies the logic of emergency as a condition implying an urgent and immediate need for aid. By downplaying the emergency through proceduralism and routinization, as has been illustrated in this chapter, the bureaucracy then reproduces emergency, justifying the continual need for an efficient (and thus, bureaucratic) response. Through persistent underperformance, the bureaucracy is always needed to respond to this never-ending emergency.



FIGURE 17. An abandoned caravan in Village 6 showing the interior structure. [Photo by the author, 2017]

Conclusion

This chapter has closely examined the camp's power structure as a bureaucratic apparatus that regulates both time and space. It has imagined aid workers as street-level bureaucrats whose positions serve the system more than they serve refugees. Refugee needs are questioned and deflected, deferred to a future time in an endless nine-to-five emergency. The following chapter places the camp's bureaucratic treatment of emergency into a dynamic of care, control, and order in Azraq.

CHAPTER THREE

Preserving Order

Who writes the camp and what is it that ought to be written in a time where the plurality of lives has traversed the place itself to become its own time?
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, “The Camp is Time” (2017)

WHEN I FIRST MET AYA, refugee director of a development NGO center in Village 5, she had been several months pregnant. We would often talk while working at the two desks in the administrative office. Months later, nothing had changed in our routine, except now she was holding a baby. He was a few months old and currently had a case of the hiccups. She adjusted the baby so he was lying on his stomach and balanced on her arm while she patted his back with her other hand. It was clear she was quite experienced, having already had five children before him. By the time this baby was a few months old in mid 2018, Aya had spent a little more than two years in Village 5, the same amount of time – almost exactly – that her second youngest had been alive.

In 2016, Aya gave birth to her fifth child in a tent in the Rukban border camp between Jordan and Syria. For the next three days, a sandstorm relentlessly hit the settlement, and Aya and her family approached the border crossing as soon as the storm cleared. Jordan had closed the border earlier that year, and Aya’s family was just one of thousands stuck in this neutral zone. When a Jordanian border guard saw Aya’s newborn daughter covered in sand, the family was allowed to enter Jordan as a “humanitarian emergency”. They were brought directly to Azraq camp and then bussed from the camp’s reception center to Village 5, where they have been waiting for security clearance ever since.

“You’re coming here on the basis of being a refugee, and the word refugee only has to do with security,” Aya says. “Yes, I fled from war, and I came here scared for my children and scared for my life and for my husband, and they call me a security threat [*yusamuni tahdid amani*]? A criminal [*mujrimeh*]?”

Unable to leave Village 5 for the third year, Aya and her family find themselves effectively imprisoned and criminalized, suspected guilty until proven innocent to be allowed freedom of movement within Azraq. Their presence as refugees has been securitized because of where they came from; the Rukban is a refuge for those who fled ISIS-controlled areas. And yet, Aya’s circumstances in the Rukban are what granted her entry to Jordan on humanitarian grounds. Her vulnerability had been measured by the border guard who identified physical suffering: that of her baby covered in sand as well as herself, still visibly recovering from childbirth. In the eyes of border control, this level of vulnerability made Aya and her family worthy of humanitarian assistance. That Aya’s and the baby’s physical conditions had been deemed a “humanitarian emergency” essentially ruled thousands of others in the Rukban – a zone completely inaccessible to aid organizations – as less deserving of humanitarian assistance.

Aya’s story exemplifies what scholars have identified as a new humanitarian order, that “the legitimacy of the suffering body has become greater than that of the threatened body” (Fassin 2005, 371). Aya’s and her daughter’s physical weaknesses were recognizable and easily measured by the military official as vulnerabilities that “render borders irrelevant” (Ticktin 2011, 63). Their medical emergency enabled a mobility that was denied to Rukban’s other refugees, until of course they were once again contained within another set of borders, this time in Village 5.

For aid workers, Village 5’s residents are the most vulnerable in Azraq because of their limited mobility, which, along with being the newest group to the camp, renders them the least experienced in navigating the camp system. Those living in Village 5 are thus the most vulnerable and the most controlled, deemed as both having the most *needs* as well as presenting the greatest *threat*. Aya, for example, has gained enough trust by the development organization to direct its center, an experience the organization believes addresses her financial needs, but she also continues to be considered a threat until she receives security clearance to move out of the village. Village 5 embodies what Miriam Ticktin (2011) might call “a form of ‘armed love’” (5), that is, “instituting repressive measures in the name of care” (20). While the whole of Azraq is a

lesson in implementing armed love, or what Didier Fassin (2005) might term “compassionate repression” (362), Village 5 provides a particularly interesting site through which to explore the care-control dichotomy through an analysis of vulnerability over time.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the camp system regulates time through a wielding of bureaucratic power. This chapter examines how aid worker discourse of vulnerability build on perceptions of newness, understanding the ‘newest’ refugees – who have been in Azraq for two or three years – to be in the most need of aid. An unofficial hierarchy of need has been formed through aid workers’ village preferences, and Village 5 residents have been granted a perpetual ‘newness’, and in turn, everlasting vulnerability. But vulnerability and need fall into the timeline of emergency discussed in chapter one, and by “focusing on the time of emergency, regimes of care render invisible other forms of suffering and violence that extend beyond the immediate present” (Ticktin 2011, 23). Indeed, in Azraq the significance of evaluating vulnerability lies in its relation to control, as an ideal refugee is one with basic needs who is still under the camp’s control – and thus poses less of a threat to power. Aid workers engaging in this discourse of vulnerability and newness thus play into the camp’s regime of securitization.

I argue that the camp’s power apparatus has taken advantage of its monopoly over time by maintaining a dual narrative of Village 5 residents’ vulnerability and, simultaneously, their potential to become a threat: Village 5, and Azraq as a whole, is thus forever new and in need of being controlled. By presenting an image of a humanitarian space frozen in time, such discourse justifies the level of ‘armed love’ that involves what refugees often call an ‘open-air prison’ to preserve a preferable sense of order and control.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the literature on humanitarianism’s politics of care and control and then provides a contextual depiction of Village 5 and its security problematic. I then review the term ‘vulnerability’ and analyze how aid workers evaluate refugees’ vulnerability based on their newness to the camp. I examine aid workers’ own need to be needed and preference for refugees with the most perceived vulnerability. Finally, I tie these assessments of vulnerability into the camp’s politics of care and control, which works to preserve order through maintaining refugees’ vulnerability and the camp’s underdevelopment. I end with a discussion of the implications of this argument within Jordan’s politics of care, within which Azraq and Za’tari camp each play distinct roles for the similar purpose of controlling refugee populations.

Care and control

Scholars have located the rise of the care-control dynamic within new humanitarianism, marked by the founding of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) in 1971, and especially in humanitarian spaces such as refugee camps. Malkki (1992) describes the care and control machine as “a technology of power entailing the management of space and movement – for peoples out of space” (34). Fassin and Pandolfi (2010) establish the militarization of humanitarianism: “Even dressed up in the cloak of humanitarian morality, intervention is always a military action” (22). Agier (2011) asserts that within humanitarian intervention “[t]here is no care without control” (4). Katz (2016) states that the refugee camp has historically been established as a way to restore order out of chaos. This chapter locates a dynamic of care and control in Azraq, and especially in Village 5, within the camp’s securitized power apparatus. My analysis is informed by the works discussed in this section.

Scott Watson (2011) reconceptualizes humanitarianism as a “sector of securitization” (3) in his examination of the humanitarian response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. He argues that “the power of humanitarianism to legitimize extraordinary measures and the problem of its ambiguity and manipulability are best understood by approaching it as a form of securitization” (5). In other words, humanitarianism sees the human as under threat and requiring security just as state security sees the sovereign as such. It operates on its own set of norms and principles and is self-justifying, carrying “its own logic of threats and vulnerability” (5). Humanitarianism re-conceived as securitization is an effective foundation from which to understand how humanitarian projects work to fulfill security objectives.

Miriam Ticktin explores a politics of care in her ethnography, *Casualties of Care* (2011), an exploration of French immigration policy based on fieldwork in Parisian suburbs in the early 2000s. She establishes a politics of care as carried out by humanitarian systems of compassion that are always “accompanied by a form of policing or surveillance” (5). French immigration policy distinguishes between “the morally legitimate suffering body” (3) – that is, the *exceptional* physically ill body that provides biological evidence that it is “worthy of compassion” (13) – and the unworthy, who is then “not simply ignored but...criminalized and condemned” (23). Ticktin argues that these biological requisites underpinning French hospitality reveal that “regimes of care have as their flip side regimes of surveillance and policing.” She writes that

brutal measures may accompany actions in the name of care and rescue – measures that ultimately work to reinforce an oppressive order. As such, these regimes of care end up reproducing inequalities and racial, gendered, and geopolitical hierarchies.
(5)

Ticktin's volume emphasizes that today's humanitarianism prioritizes the body that is in physical emergency and thus asylum seekers learn to use their bodies to convey physical suffering unrelated to their reasons for fleeing in order to obtain legal papers. The repercussions of this politics of care, Ticktin asserts, is that "longer term improvement in life conditions is displaced in favor of emergency response" (62), the latter of which addresses only the exceptional case.

In Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin's introduction to their edited volume, *In the Name of Humanity* (2010), they explore a universal idea of humanity that enables systems of governance to intervene on its behalf. This includes humanitarian organizations that supposedly work outside of politics to ease suffering. However, threats to humanity, Feldman and Ticktin argue, can often be identified as other human beings (i.e. genocide and terrorism). This paradox leads to the editors' central argument about humanitarian governance:

So what is humanity as an object of governance? It appears as both sentiment and threat – *an object of care and a source of anxiety* – though the latter often seems more pressing. Claims that humanity is being threatened – whether by environmental catastrophe, moral failure, or political upheaval – provide a justification for the elaboration of new governing techniques. At the same time, humanity is also identified as itself a *threat* – to nature, to nation, to global peace – which governance must contain. These apparently contradictory understandings of the relation of the threat to the category of humanity coexist and remain in persistent tension. This state of ambiguous yet *ever present threat* helps maintain the dynamic coproduction of governance and humanity. (6, my emphasis)

Humanity must be cared for but must also be treated as a threat, and furthermore, humanitarian governance depends on conceptualizations of humanity as an 'ever present threat' in order to justify its intervention. Humanitarian forces that work to care for humanity also work to govern and contain humanity.

Didier Fassin (2005) analyzes the relationship between humanitarianism and security in France's policing of the Calais and Sangatte settlements in the late 1990s. When refugees fleeing violence in Kosovo, Kurdistan, and Afghanistan set up camp in Calais, France with the hope of making it

to Britain, the French government employed a discourse that both appealed to humanity but also emphasized the need to contain the threat posed by this population. In 1999, the state announced it was time for a switch from humanitarianism to security and closed the Calais settlement, evicting some refugees and arresting others. The Sangatte Center was then established in an empty warehouse and run by the French Red Cross, as the crackdown on Calais “had to be counterbalanced by more humane measures” (363). At first, the Sangatte functioned as a transit center as most refugees made the journey to England after only a short stay in the emergency center, but over time, due to changing policies in the UK, Fassin notes that “getting out of Sangatte became more and more difficult for immigrants, and the Red Cross center increasingly turned into a place of confinement.” He describes the overwhelming presence of French police in the Sangatte, during which time French visitors noted an internment-camp-like feel to the securitization of the emergency center. Fassin argues that the “drama of Sangatte is paradigmatic of tensions between the discourses and practices of compassion and repression in the policies of immigration and more specifically of asylum in Europe” (365). Fassin’s political anthropology explores the moral economy of French immigration policy in which there is an interesting and contradictory relationship between compassion – “a sense of common humanity collectively expressed through attention paid to human needs and suffering” (366) – and repression – a hostility toward immigrants who are treated as a threat to the French population. In Fassin’s work, the Sangatte stands as a poignant example of this contradiction, as an emergency refuge that became also a prison.

In her study of humanitarianism at the contemporary US-Mexican border, Jill Williams (2015) has noted a shift from “humanitarian exceptionalism to a policy of contingent care” (12). She locates the intersection of care and control in such humanitarian spaces as the hospitals in border camps, where the state extends its control over physical bodies through Border Patrol officers. She argues that thus, “care increasingly functions as a technology of border enforcement” (12). Williams discusses these tensions between care and control as ‘contingent care’.

Lewis Turner (2019a) gives a history of securitization within Jordan's humanitarian response in Za'tari camp. While Za'tari presents a different image of camp governance to Azraq,¹ Turner's analysis of humanitarian and military operations is relevant to these operations in Azraq. Turner seeks to disrupt the notion that Michel Agier (2011) has put forth of humanitarianism being the empire's "hand that heals" while the other hand, the military, is the one that strikes. He argues that while Agier points to the interconnectedness of humanitarianism and the military, the two hands are not separate but act as one: "the supposedly healing hand also strikes" (9).

These analyses of the duality of care and containment is central to understanding interlinked dynamics of care and control in Azraq. Both Hoffmann (2017) and Dalal *et al* (2018) have noted Azraq's controlling mechanisms in their work. Hoffmann states that according to a UNHCR field security adviser: "Azraq was from the get-go designed to offer a better way of controlling a potentially unruly population, both within and outside the camp" (2017, 106). The use of the word 'potentially' here falls in line with the aforementioned vulnerable-threat duality that refugees embody in today's humanitarianism. Dalal *et al* argue that Azraq was planned with the "purpose of camouflaging, aestheticizing, and neutralizing disciplinary planning and control over refugees" (2018, 65). Indeed, even the terminology of the camp – *shelter, village, neighborhood, community center* – provides a narrative of order and structure that seems to mask the reality of control through a language of care and hospitality.

Turner's image of a healing and striking hand can be representative of Azraq's securitized humanitarianism – or even humanitarianized security – apparatus. Village 5 stands in the camp as a sign of Jordan's aid to the most vulnerable, but it also looms over the rest of the camp as a symbol of the administration's power, a reminder to refugees of their place within the system. The particularities of Azraq's security regime provide for a nuanced perspective on the care-control dichotomy. I build on the foundation of the above scholars' works to argue that in Azraq it is aid workers' discourse of newness, not necessarily visible suffering, that shape evaluations of needs and vulnerabilities, justifying a politics of securitization. The following section is an in-depth examination of Village 5, which I consider to be the physical manifestation of this politics.

¹ Interestingly, it would seem that elements of Za'tari's administrative policies began to mirror Azraq's after the latter's opening, something I noted not just with security measures but also with the eventual creation of a referral system in Za'tari.

Village 5

Village 5 sits in Azraq camp's southwest corner. It is surrounded by an outer chain-link fence and contains a maze of fences within that designate the organization of its neighborhoods. When I asked a Jordanian security officer about the purpose of the inner fences, he did not know but seemed to think that they were there due to "past security reasons". There is one entrance to Village 5, a sliding gate that remains open during working hours, to the side of which is stationed a Jordanian police vehicle and several police officers. NGO vehicles entering and exiting the village must show proper permits and IDs to these police border guards. There is no foot traffic.

The fence along both sides of the gate is usually dotted with people in Village 5 meeting friends and relatives gathered on the Village 6 side. Some sit, while others stand and lean on the fence. Refugees outside of Village 5 often bring goods with them to these meetings. Once, a mother and children in Village 5 met with two women on the other side. One of the small children, maybe no more than three years old, started wandering along the fence to the gate, where he gripped the chain link fence and leaned out curiously, his feet teetering on the strip of metal upon which the gate slides open and closed. He lost his balance and tipped into Village 6 just as a van approached to enter Village 5. By the time the van passed into the village, the young boy was making his way over to the two women sitting opposite his family. His mother turned to see him on the other side but looked unsurprised, and one of the women passed the child some containers of food and motioned for him to take it back to his mother's side of the fence. He grabbed the containers and sprinted back to Village 5 as the women continued passing smaller items of food through the fence. The policemen did not seem to notice, or if they did, they did not react. But it was clear that this boy was experienced in sneaking across the Village 5 border, already socialized to the limits of his mobility.² In another instance, a young woman passed a potted plant to a man in Village 5, both of them moving to the open gate to do so but remaining on their respective sides before returning to their previous spot to continue their conversation through the fence. These meet-ups make for an interesting image: even though the gate is open, refugees keep themselves separated by the fence.

² Children are also able to avoid consequences of transgressing rules in a way that adults cannot. The police would be unlikely to intervene in such minor transgressions by children.



FIGURE 18. Refugees meeting from both sides of the Village 5 border. [Photo courtesy of Hassan Hijazi, 2019]

Residents of Village 5 are “always-already guilty” (Secor 2007, 43), waiting either to be accepted into the camp or deported to Syria, what Haas (2017) calls an “ambiguous dual positionality” (76) for asylum seekers in a similar position in the US. Aya often mentioned that fellow Village 5 refugees live in fear of possible deportation daily, and for this reason no one is looking to cause any trouble. Refugees follow the rules, avoid transgressing the boundaries imposed on them supposedly for their sake, and continue to wait, forced into compliance by the threat of deportation.

Security and a culture of fear

Sitting in Rumi, the popular sidewalk cafe in a West Amman neighborhood overrun by ‘expats’, Ammar spoke of his journey from Dar’a to Amman, which included a two-day stint in Za’tari before he escaped the camp to Zarqa. He had never been to Azraq camp but had heard stories that highlighted the differences between the two camps.

“People in Azraq are terrified,” he told me.

“Of what?” I asked, thinking of stories I heard from refugees that Syrian government operatives had, on social media, found and tormented residents of the camp in the past.

“Of...deportation,” Ammar replied, as if it were obvious. “*Qazaf*.”³

I had myself observed how Azraq’s refugee population in general emitted a sense of tenseness and hesitation. People in Azraq are scared, too scared to engage in the kind of organizing and protests that occurred in Za’tari’s early days, but also fearful of standing out in any way. This section examines what I argue is a culture of fear in the camp and especially in Village 5, driven by Azraq’s intrusive surveillance methods.

Azzouz (2019) argues that “the destruction of home is also a ‘powerful symbolic erosion of security, social wellbeing and place attachment’ (Boano 2011, 38 in Azzouz 2019, 2). It is unsurprising that refugees emphasized the primary importance of security from violence, especially once they had arrived to Azraq. Ahlam had told me, “We came here because *alhamdulillah* it is safe here. The most important thing is that one comes to safety for him and for his children.” An aid worker stated that many refugees appreciated the ability to sleep in peace during their first weeks in Azraq:

They would all say that the camp, that they are comfortable in the camp, that there is security. I mean they talk about what this place is, that in that period of time that their lives were threatened...and now, this period where ‘we are safe now and that’s the most important thing’, you know, that ‘safety is provided for us, that’s the most important thing’...when they were over there [Syria], they were still scared and living in horror and not feeling safe, so here they say that ‘we feel safe, when we first came that was the most important thing [*haseyna bi-aman awwal ma ijina, hada aham shi*]. Even with the dust and sand and that, and the fact that there was nothing at all, like electricity, in the beginning, they say that they felt safe. ‘We were able to sleep’, this was the thing I heard the most, that ‘when we first arrived, we went right to sleep maybe for a week we were just sleeping like the rest of the world [*awwal ma wasalna kuna sari‘ mumkin isbu‘ nawayyimin zay an-nas*], we weren’t in fear.’ You know the camp, you know how everything gets covered in sand, they feel that they are in a place that requires patience. So the biggest thing, the biggest problem they said they faced was cash, for example, for bread, for normal things, but the most important thing is that...when they came to the camp they felt safe: ‘We became happy [*farahna*] because we slept in peace’.

³ Deportation is often referred to by refugees and aid workers as *qazaf* from the Standard Arabic *qadhaf*, meaning ‘to expel’.

At the most basic level, Azraq's purpose is to provide refuge for those fleeing the violence of war. Camp residents do not take this safety for granted, often bringing up how much worse the situation is back home or on the border in the Rukban camp.

Ironically, while the camp provides one kind of security – shelter from war at home – its security regime is also the cause of intense concerns surrounding deportation. As Ammar states above, one of the biggest fears that refugees share is being forcibly returned to Syria by the very same security apparatus. A Human Rights Watch report (2017) found that refugees in Azraq were deported to Syria for unclear reasons, including 'troublemaking'. The report cites a refugee who worked as a security guard in Azraq:

If you cause problems, and you don't heed the warnings, they send you back. They will warn a troublemaker several times and then send him back to Syria with his family...[For refugees outside of Azraq who commit a minor offense] like overstaying your leave passes, they send you to Azraq. It is a punishment to send someone to Azraq. If only one person misbehaves and he has a wife and children, they send the family to Azraq. If they sympathize with your situation, they send you to Azraq; if they don't sympathize, they send you to Syria. (16)

This refugee references a tactic that the Jordanian government employs to control refugees living outside of Azraq. By using Azraq as a space of punishment, Jordan establishes the camp as being just one step away from deportation. Azraq-as-punishment also works to keep its own camp residents, even closer to the threat of deportation, in order.

The legitimacy of this fear is confirmed by refugees' sense of constant surveillance. During outreach visits in Village 2, I would watch as Ghazwan called out to people right and left, citing that what they were doing was not allowed [*mamnu'*]. We passed a caravan that had connected one of the shared water taps from the main faucets in that block directly into their kitchen, a common practice throughout the camp. We also saw a ditch that had been dug into the ground next to another caravan. In every such instance, Ghazwan would knock on the caravan door or speak to any refugee standing nearby to tell them that the action in question is not allowed. Later we came across a refugee who had a hole in his throat performing manual labor through an IBV position with ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development). Ghazwan pulled the supervisor aside to ask that this man be given a less physically intense task. In Village 6, a resident requested Aseel's intervention in a dispute between herself and her neighbor, as she

complained her months-old baby had fallen into a hole dug by her neighbors and so she wanted Aseel to enforce the rule against digging trenches.

Such interactions demonstrate how outreach from the community centers is not merely a performance of care for refugees by checking in on individuals, but also a tool of extending control into refugees' private lives. Dalal *et al* (2018) argue that the cookie-cutter homes in the camp's villages are a crucial part "of a controlling, disciplining educative landscape, personified in the constant presence of security guards, fences, social workers, and health and safety patrols" (76). Aid workers' daily presence in residential areas of the camp exacerbates residents' feeling of constantly being watched and surveilled. In his examination of the Sangatte settlement in France, Fassin (2011a) describes a scene in which a man trying to sell apples at the mosque was confronted not by police officers, but by aid workers. He writes, "This kind of episode happened every day: not only did the aid workers find themselves 'policing' the center, but the most trivial events took on enormous significance and gave rise to a permanent state of readiness to intervene" (139). In Azraq, as seen above, a similar policing is performed through outreach and at the community centers, and the fact that refugees sometimes purposefully request aid worker intervention in private matters related to rules and regulations shows that refugees have a firm understanding of this surveillance system.

Village 5 features the most intensified sense of surveillance, and the stakes – the threat of being deported if one does not pass security clearance – are higher. A refugee described fearsome imagery of circulating white trucks in the village:

[Deportation] is the biggest thing people from Village 5 are afraid of, I mean anyone is threatened with the fact that they could be returned to death. Why are people scared? They don't want Village 5...Trucks, white trucks that disappear people and the *mukhabarat* [secret police], why? What have I done?...Village 5, it's horror. The people can't...they can't...here are thousands, thousands in 5. If you've lived here, you can't forget it for the rest of your life. They tell you the white pick-up truck [*bikam abyad*], maybe you can forget them, but people will tell you that they will never buy – if they returned to Syria and had enough money – they would never buy a white truck. I ask them, why? They say, because it is like the white truck that goes around here knocking on doors. They aren't afraid of the truck itself, nor are they scared of the secret police or anything. They are scared...the situation in Syria is bad, they are scared that he [in the truck] will return me to Syria, return me to death [*yuraji'ni 'al-mawt*], that is my horror [*ru'bi*]. He's not scared of the man in the truck, no. He's not

scared that they have anything on him or anything like that, but if they return him to Syria...

Having never seen a white pick-up truck in the camp myself, it is unclear with whom these trucks are associated and when they make their rounds of the village. The refugee, requesting full anonymity, did not wish to speak in further detail of the trucks, and this was a subject that I chose not to bring up with others so as not to cause unnecessary fear through my questioning. Regardless of the full story of the white pick-up trucks, the fear is real. The security apparatus in the village has the ability to return refugees to 'death' just as much as it can give refugees clearance to be moved to another village in the camp.

Constant surveillance, either by aid workers or security forces, is the main driver of refugees' behavior. Camp dwellers, especially those in Village 5, must always be on their best behavior. Life in Village 5 is about not standing out or making a spectacle in any way. Hamoudeh, the aid worker in a Village 5 NGO center, told me:

People are very afraid here. They are very well behaved because they are afraid of being sent back to Syria. If there is a dispute, they try to solve it without involving police. If their neighbor yells at them or something, they'll just keep quiet about it. And people outside of Village 5 could get sent to Village 5 if they get in trouble. Imagine, I've been here almost two years, and I've only seen two fights ever. And they were like teenage boys. You would think that in this kind of place there would be fights breaking out all the time because everyone is feeling so much tension and pressure. I guess that's a good thing about Azraq – not that people are afraid, but that it's peaceful.

Hamoudeh here describes an environment of suppression. Residents do not have much room for mistakes, as conveyed in a common phrase used in the camp by refugees: "It's either Village 5 or deportation [*ya bi-qariyeh khamseh ya bil-qazaf*]".

Village 5 embodies Azraq's politics of care as the 'exception' that Ticktin (2011) describes is the focus of new humanitarianism. Those living in Village 5 are exceptional – brought into Jordan because of exceptional suffering, like that of Aya and her newborn, and now considered to be the camp's exceptionally vulnerable because they live in lock-down. Everything about Village 5 is an exception to the camp's common law, but it is also the driving force behind how the camp is run. Not only does the village stand as a constant reminder of the power forces at play in Azraq, it is also an effective tool for maintaining order in the rest of the camp: as Hamoudeh noted,

acts of insubordination in the other three villages come with the threat of imprisonment in Village 5.

The exception of Village 5 also creates in the village a state of emergency. Throughout the duration of my fieldwork, about two to three years after the village had been constructed in 2015, basic needs such as electricity were still unmet. Food was provided via daily distribution as the market had been built but was not operational, and caravans did not include functional kitchens. The village, intended to provide temporary housing for refugees awaiting security clearance – a process that may now take until October 2020 to complete for all residents (Laub and Su 2018) – can be compared to a temporary housing project for rescued slaves in France that Ticktin (2011) notes was meant to house girls for only days or months but became a long-term home where some girls stayed for years. She writes that the project was “imagined as an emergency in order...to engage” (171) in it, and likewise, Village 5’s state of emergency⁴ provides reason for the camp’s exceptional security practices. Thus, we see in Village 5 a conflation of humanitarianism and security, care and control, a hand that heals but also strikes. The following section explores the central role that vulnerability and perceived deservingness plays within this dichotomy.

To need and be needed

Humanitarian discourse of emergency and exception surrounding Village 5 has also created the illusion that refugee life in the village remains in its nascent state. While the first and last arrivals to Village 5 were admitted to Azraq in 2016, aid workers I spoke to consistently referred to residents of the village as new and consequently unfamiliar to their surroundings. This newness and underdevelopment carries with it implications of vulnerability and prompts aid workers’ evaluations about the legitimacy of suffering in the camp. This section analyzes how aid workers compare Village 5 to the other three villages in this regard, creating a hierarchy of need. It then seeks to understand aid workers’ own needs that drive their perceptions of vulnerability and deservingness.

⁴ While I liken Village 5 to a state of emergency, I do not mean that this has given humanitarian work in this village a force of urgency, as has been argued in the first chapter. Rather, my point here is that the emergency situation of Village 5 justifies a certain securitized humanitarian response.

Vulnerability

Barbara Harrell-Bond (2002) examined shockingly inhumane actions of humanitarian regimes in refugee camps across Africa, arguing that the refugee camps depend on an understanding and portrayal of refugee communities as “helpless and desperately in need of international assistance” (57). The power regime affects how aid workers, or as she terms them, “helpers”, perform their roles within camp spaces:

This image [of refugees as helpless] reinforces the view that outsiders are needed to help them. It also conditions the behavior of helpers, whose interests are served by pathologizing, medicalizing, and labeling the refugee as helpless and vulnerable. (57)

Furthermore, Harrell-Bond notes, aid workers take it upon themselves to “decide who *deserves to receive*” (56), creating distinctions between the ‘good’ refugee – one who is “starving and helpless” (58) – and the ‘bad’ refugee: “thankless, ungrateful, cheating, conniving, aggressive, demanding, manipulative, and even dangerous persons who are out to subvert the aid system.” For aid workers, the strategic refugee, who Harrell-Bond points out is merely trying to compete for aid as the system requires, threatens the helper’s power. She draws a connection between a refugee’s vulnerability and his lack of threat to the aid regime.

Didier Fassin (2010) looks at three different cases of humanitarianism (in Angola, Iraq, and Palestine) to understand how humanitarians navigate ethical decision-making. He illustrates “hierarchies of humanity” (239) that humanitarians form to categorize those who need help. Within the contexts he analyzes, all of which put aid worker lives at risk, Fassin argues that the “inequalities of lives and hierarchies of humanity surreptitiously reappear” (255), often prioritizing aid worker lives in particularly pressing danger. Inequalities and hierarchies appear among those who need aid but also within the ranks of humanitarians themselves. These processes of evaluating worth, Fassin notes, is intrinsic to the structure of humanitarian aid that relies on aforementioned universal notions of suffering, and thus creates and recreates difference in a way that values certain lives over others. Such hierarchies serve humanitarianism as they benefit aid workers, not those whose vulnerability is being categorized.

Lewis Turner (2019b) problematizes the use of the term vulnerability within humanitarian politics. While he lauds organizations for their increasing recognition of oft-ignored refugee men, not just women and children, as having needs, he questions the usefulness of identifying

refugees as ‘vulnerable’. Turner argues that the vulnerability framework “facilitates humanitarian control over refugees’ lives and bodies” (2). He writes,

Rather than perpetuating systems that encourage refugees to perform powerlessness, scholars should seek to understand the modes of control and violence enabled and enacted through humanitarian uses of ‘vulnerability,’ and to highlight and support refugees’ resistance to humanitarian governance, and to the imposed categories, such as ‘vulnerability,’ to which their lives are subjected.

Following from Turner’s argument, I aim to highlight to what end the vulnerability term functions for humanitarianism in Azraq. While Turner states that humanitarianism aims to turn vulnerability into ‘resilience’ (6), as has been showcased in Azraq through its development projects, I argue that at the same time aid worker assessments of vulnerability reveal how the camp administration actually aims to *preserve* vulnerability.

Azraq staff use the term as an official indicator of a community’s classification in both Arabic [*al-mustad‘afin*] and more often in English, even among those aid workers with limited English skills. The less official but more succinct Arabic term, *misakin* [*lit.* poor ones], is more commonly used by aid workers in informal settings to denote their sympathy, and often pity, for the refugee population. I contend that vulnerability is not only used to acknowledge neediness, but it is discursively categorized into a hierarchy through which aid workers rank their villages of preference. The vulnerable refugee, one who lives in the newer villages (5 and 2), fits the trope of the most deserving (Harrell-Bond 2002; Saltsman 2014, 460), frequently contrasted by the strategizing, manipulative refugee of the older villages (3 and 6). These perceptions of vulnerability and worth, based on a refugee’s newness to the camp, are closely connected to one’s controllability, demonstrated later in this chapter.

A hierarchy of need

In Azraq, aid workers perceive a refugee’s vulnerability as tied to the amount of time that refugee has spent in the camp. Aid workers have created an informal hierarchy of Azraq’s villages, in order of decreasing vulnerability: Village 5, then 2, and finally 3 and 6 together. Aid workers on the ground expressed a preference for working with refugees whose time in the camp falls within Village 5 and 2’s “honeymoon period” (Gatter 2018a). Aid workers often engage in a

“discourse of deservingness” (Holmes and Castañeda 2016, 13), which will be depicted throughout this chapter.

A former caseworker at the community center in Village 5 explained that she was glad to continue being stationed in the village even after she transferred from one NGO to another:

You really feel like you are helping them. They are closed off from the outside, they can't come or go or leave. And really, if he doesn't need you for anything he won't come to you [*law huwe ma byihtajik, ma byiji 'andik*]. So that to me is good, that I can help, even if it's just one case a day. And *alhamdulillah* it was very nice in Village 5, and still today, I still love it because the work comes with more pressure.

Her comment suggests that refugees in Village 5 do not approach aid unless they *need* it [*muhtaj*], implying that she views refugees outside of Village 5 who have their basic necessities met as making superfluous and less legitimate demands.

Village 2, built just before Village 5, houses the largest number of disabled and elderly refugees of all the villages. Aid workers consider Villages 5 and 2 to be very similar because they are roughly the same age and both lacked electricity and caravan kitchens for several years. Residents of Village 2, however, can come and go as they please and access the supermarket. But because there are so many disabled and elderly refugees in the village, many need the aid to come to them. An aid worker who preferred working in Village 2 explained:

[Village 2] is actually a very particular village. The people who live in it, they are very special cases. There are widows, most of them have disabilities, most of them are elderly. They are people who really need help [*jad nas muhtajin bil-musa'ada*], more than Village 3 and 6. With Village 3 and 6, you feel that, with the electricity and with...well, they have been around a lot longer than Village 5 and 2.

This aid worker first emphasizes the ‘true’ need of Village 2 residents, especially as compared to those in the older villages. She then connects a lack of vulnerability in Villages 3 and 6 with the fact that refugees in those villages have spent more time in Azraq. Another aid worker mentioned that refugees in Village 2 are often new to the village itself, transferred there after receiving security clearance from Village 5, and so he felt that many of them are confused as to how the camp system works and need guidance.

These types of comments about need never applied to conversations about those in Villages 3 and 6, who have been living in Azraq since 2014 or 2015. Aid workers consider their basic needs

met, but do not consider that refugees who have spent now four or five years in a camp can also be vulnerable in a different way – perhaps having better adapted to the camp but still equally unable to restore their normal prewar lives. Indeed, when the needs of refugees start to stretch beyond basic needs and beyond the capacity of aid workers to address their needs, these demands are simply no longer considered legitimate needs. One aid worker in the Village 6 community center distinguished between legitimate and superfluous needs:

Khalas, the people in Village 3 and Village 6 think they are outside the camp now. They all have TVs and refrigerators! Every single caravan has a TV, it's like a requirement now! People in Village 3 used to complain that they didn't have shoes, now they complain that they don't have refrigerators and TVs.

This aid worker's comment was expressed in a disapproving tone to convey that residents of the two oldest villages no longer have legitimate needs but continue making demands. Refrigerators and televisions, deemed by the aid worker as luxury goods, have no place in her perception of a refugee camp, no matter how long it has been around. She seems to lament their lost vulnerability over time and the fact that they no longer fit the role of the ideal refugee. In his conceptualization of hierarchies found within humanitarianism, Fassin asks, "What sort of life is implied for which human beings?" (2010, 239) to which this aid worker seems to respond in other words: *Don't refugees know that common household items, like televisions and refrigerators, are incompatible with the environment of a refugee camp, even after three or four years of habitation?*

Following Ticktin's (2011) argument, the hierarchy of need that aid workers envision not only favors the most vulnerable, but then also casts those who are not as unworthy and undeserving because their suffering is deemed illegitimate. Ticktin describes that the act of assessing the legitimacy of migrants' suffering in search of the exceptional case leads to a default skepticism among humanitarians. Vulnerability always needs and produces a lesser vulnerable, often what the asylum seeker is to the refugee or the politically persecuted refugee to the one who is physically ill, and in Azraq's case, the more established refugees of Villages 3 and 6 to those in Villages 5 and 2. The creation of such hierarchies generates a "slippery terrain that both [those considered legitimate and illegitimate sufferers]...inhabit between victims and criminals" (168). In Azraq, we find that this terrain exposes aid worker beliefs and judgments that do not sound very humanitarian at all, such as the above comment about TVs and refrigerators.

Aid workers have their own needs and expectations regarding their work, and their preference for aiding those they consider to be the most vulnerable is also underpinned by their own capacity to address this type of exceptional vulnerability. This is the focus of the following section.

The need to be needed

Maria, a Zarqa native who was a few months into her position as a caseworker in the Village 5 community center, would typically be seen shuffling from office to office, managing cases and occasionally going on outreach. We would usually grab a Nescafé around 3:30pm, when the centers were closed for the day and all of the NGO's aid workers gathered in one of the community centers. Maria always had a plethora of snacks, both healthy and less so, to pass around at this time. She had learned that the stock of 3-in-1 Nescafé sachets was usually out in the centers and would carry a handful of packets to share.

One afternoon, I found her kneeling on the ground hunched over an array of solar lights trying to match identification tags with a list of maintenance requests for faulty lights.

"I thought you were going to go to the staff meeting," I said, bearing two warm paper cups of Nescafé.

"Oh no, I left. They were just bickering [*tabahdalu ba'd*]," she replied, with a dismissing wave of her hand. "I have too many solar lights to check."

Maria explained that replacing broken solar lights, the only source of light at that time for caravans in Village 5, had an immediate impact on residents of the village. Refugees depended on her to receive working lights, and they needed them as early as that very evening. She compared meeting this type of need to her previous position working with urban refugees:

In the camp, the environment, it's very difficult. In the camp, you are working in caravans, in the desert, there's sand. The home visits that you are conducting, you have to walk there, while there [in her previous work in urban settings] cars pick you up and drop you off...Of course it is more comfortable in the urban setting, which is only ten minutes from my house, whereas the camp is an hour and a half away, and the conditions of your work are very hard. I mean, you've seen it, we delay in leaving [the camp every afternoon] and there's dust and everything, and how do

you go to the bathroom, and how do you travel from village to village, and transportation and all. I feel that there is a greater humanitarian mission [*risala insaniyyeh*] [in the camp]. If I wanted to think about it personally, where would I rather be, of course one would choose the more comfortable setting [i.e., the urban office]. But the nature of the work [*tabi'at al-'amal*], you feel that people in the camp need you more [*muhtajinik aktar*]. You feel that you are growing more on the inside [*'am turabi nafsik min juwwa aktar*], or as they say, 'self-satisfaction'.

Maria expresses fulfillment from being needed by the most vulnerable, a 'self-satisfaction' that she believes is worth the sacrifice of comfort. She states that refugees' needs and vulnerabilities in the camp carry with them a 'greater humanitarian mission', in which she participates as a main source of aid for those in Village 5.

Aseel, the outreach aid worker who left a bank position for one in Maria's NGO, described a similar feeling toward her work in Village 2. On one particular morning, as community center staff were being dropped off at their respective villages, Aseel was especially excited. She had been stationed in Village 6 for the past several months until a new manager reassigned some of the aid workers to different villages. On this day, she would finally be returning to her original post in Village 2, her preferred area. As she hopped out of the bus and walked into the community center, she stood at the entrance, beaming. Her colleagues laughed from the vehicle at the sight, exclaiming, "Look how happy she is!" Months later, after she decided not to renew her contract with the organization, Aseel explained to me why she was happiest when working in Village 2:

I worked in Village 5, but not for long, so I don't know the nature of the people there. But Village 2, the situations there are really...you know, every house you go to, they really need that visit, *they need you to visit them and to always be visiting them* [*bidik dayman tazurihum*]. There isn't a house that doesn't have a special case [*ma fi bayt ma fihi hal khas*]. In my time there, I maybe visited almost the entire village because it's small and it's not full, there are six unoccupied neighborhoods. When you go on outreach in a village, you are just two people [in the outreach team], but when you are in a smaller village, you can go back to the same people once or twice or three times. I loved it, and I grew attached to the people [*ta'alaqit fin-nas ili fiha*] and it really is a village that needs a lot of help. I mean, in the same house, you'll find there is a family with four disabilities or elderly people living alone. These people, you need to be visiting them every day [*hadol kul yawm bidik truhi 'alayhum*]. How do they shower? How do they do things? How do they get water? You need to be thinking about these things [*hadol al-ashiya bidik tsiri tufakiri fiha*].

Aseel emphasizes what she considers to be ‘true’ needs by people who are physically unable to fulfill everyday needs, such as getting bread, and cannot go to the community center for help. She cites exceptional cases, such as a family of disabled people or elderly widows. Her comments reveal that the visible and extreme suffering of Village 2 – vulnerabilities that are usually physical as Ticktin (2011) and Fassin (2005) have both emphasized as the prioritized category of suffering in humanitarianism – satisfies *her need* to be needed: ‘they need you to visit them and to always be visiting them’.

Malkki’s *The Need to Help* (2015) examines the motivations of Finnish aid workers deployed in emergencies abroad, including Rwanda and Afghanistan. While she began her research with the assumption that the aid workers pursued their work with savior-like or cosmopolitan motivations, she discovered that her subjects rather perceived of themselves as highly trained professionals who strive to do a good job in impossible circumstances. Malkki argues that the aid workers in question exhibit a neediness to help by honing their professional skills rather than a need to save the world as pure humanitarians. Because Malkki’s subject is international staff deployed to emergencies around the world, the skillset of the Finnish aid worker is higher than that of the Jordanian field staff in Azraq. The Finn is highly trained and her humanitarian position is professionalized in order to safely navigate dramatic crises such as genocide and terrorism, whereas the Jordanian is trained on the job, part of humanitarian work that is routinized within the camp’s nine-to-five emergency. I highlight Malkki’s work as a lens through which we may understand the precise position of the local aid worker in the camp. Aid workers in Azraq are part of a broader camp structure of securitization, within which their motivations are tied not to professionalism but to self-fulfillment, achieved through assessments of vulnerability and need. It is clear from how they speak about their work that the Jordanian aid workers considers their motive to be doing good, self-identifying as *de facto* humanitarians by way of their position in the refugee camp. Thus, I suggest a variant of Malkki’s ‘need to help’, arguing that Jordanian aid workers exhibit a ‘need to be needed’.

Azraq’s aid workers need to fulfill their sense of moral purpose. Fassin and Pandolfi (2010) argue that direct contact with recipients of aid provides meaning for humanitarians that carries them through the more challenging or mundane aspects of their work (53). Refugees come to embody the aid worker’s “moral purpose”, they argue, and thus work with them “gives meaning to the long hours; it gives a kind of fullness to the days and to life.” One aid worker noted how “you

feel like you're doing more when you're with the [refugees]," and a case manager felt that through her position, her help gives a refugee hope when "everything in his life is gone [*kul shi bi-hayatu rah*]". The exceptional vulnerabilities of refugees in Villages 5 and 2 in particular provide aid workers with the feeling that they can do the 'most good' for them. For example, aid workers do not appear to feel as heroic when the services asked of them are not as material as a new solar light or as straightforward as teaching a child a basic skill. Indeed, demands for access to work in the camp and lower prices in the supermarket – even the provision of televisions and refrigerators – are harder for the aid worker to address, confronting her with the inadequacies of humanitarianism, which she would prefer to be a fulfilling experience. It is the difference between being needed to ease visible suffering and being held accountable for the less certain crises. Their need to be needed is what drives aid workers to seek out the most vulnerable.

The following section examines how aid workers' formation of a hierarchy of need and vulnerability works to preserve order in the camp by effectively keeping Azraq 'frozen' in time.

Vulnerability and control

Azraq's physical terrain reflects daily adaptations by its residents through signs of wear and tear. Gravel has worn down into informal pathways that cut across the stretches of land separating the villages. Unoccupied caravans have been stripped down to their skeletons as neighbors make use of the materials. As kitchens are added to Village 2 caravans, the white metal of the new extensions makes the rest of the caravan look yellow and weathered in comparison. The landscape is dotted with fenced-in concrete slabs created by NGOs for projects that were never completed. Basketball courts feature basket-less rims. Azraq's environment gives the impression of being both unchanged and abandoned. While the camp population has spent years adapting to the space, their acclimation seems to have made only a small dent in the campscape. Indeed, Azraq was designed to be preserved as it had been originally planned and to resist urbanization.

In comparison to Za'tari, which experienced rapid urbanization and refugee-led development from its first days, Azraq does not emit a similar sense of being 'lived in'. The overwhelming crowds of Za'tari's market far outnumber the modest foot traffic in Azraq's markets. The organic layout of neighborhoods in Za'tari feels much less regimented than Azraq's endless rows of caravans. Za'tari's celebrated culture of resilience and innovation as conveyed through social

media contrast Azraq's nonexistent culture, replaced instead with news about the camp's latest technological advancement.



FIGURE 19. Azraq marketplace (Village 6, left) and Za'tari's market (right). [Left photo by the author (2017), right photo courtesy of UN News (2012)]



FIGURE 20. A view of Azraq Village 5 (left) and Za'tari (right) from afar. [Left photo courtesy of Reem Al-Zubi (2018), right photo by the author (2016)]



FIGURE 21. Residential areas of Azraq Village 5 (top) and Za'tari (bottom). [Top photo courtesy of Reem Al-Zubi (2018), bottom photo by the author (2016)]

Even time itself seems to be treated differently from one camp to the other; whereas NGOs in Za'tari would mark anniversaries of the camp's opening as a reminder to donors of the tragic persistence of the Syrian war, I did not observe any such activities in Azraq. At one point, I myself passed the one-year mark of my being in Azraq and, making observations of the

environment with this in mind, I realized that everything was exactly the same as when I had entered the camp for the first time. The NGO buses driven by the same drivers were making their usual rounds, the refugees were the same, the police officers kept to their rotations, and the infrastructure had persisted in its underdevelopment. It felt as if the physical landscape of Azraq had been frozen in time – not because its residents are somehow less ‘resilient’ than their Za‘tari counterparts, but because the camp system has worked to ensure that time does not bring with it the disorder of urban development.

The following section deconstructs the connection between vulnerability, time, and control; that is, how a discourse of vulnerability and newness enables security measures that control.

The good refugee: new, vulnerable, and powerless

Aid workers often hinted to the likeability of Village 5’s residents, conveying the idea that refugees in Village 5 are nicer *because* they are more vulnerable. Maria had once noted that “they always say ‘*wala yahimik*’ and are very polite”. That she highlights the particular phrase, *wala yahim(ak/ik)*, is telling of the type of refugee behavior she values. This phrase respectfully expresses a desire to fulfill one’s request or command, similar to the English ‘of course’ or ‘no problem’. Maria’s comment reveals that obedience and respect toward aid workers is a major quality of the ideal beneficiary. I argue that the hierarchy of vulnerability in Azraq is more than simply a discourse of deservingness – that aid workers want to help those most visibly suffering – but is also about power: a refugee who is still ‘new’ and thus vulnerable still depends on the aid system to survive, a dependence that renders the refugee still under control. Put simply, a good refugee is one who can be controlled.

Conversations with aid workers about their village preferences illustrate the significance of the amount of time a refugee has lived in Azraq. Newness to the camp is not just a numerical measurement in months or years, but more importantly how familiar one has become with the system and how capable they are of navigating the complicated power apparatus. This hierarchy of need and vulnerability exposes the connection between time and power: the less time one has been in the camp, the less knowledge they have about the system, and the less power they wield as actors within it. This is made clear in the following comments made by aid workers:

Amal: Village 5, for example, people who are entering there are new [*jdideh*], they don't know anything. So these people, their awareness [*wa'ihum*] of things in the camp is still not like those who have been in the camp for three or four years. So the nice thing [about work in Village 5] is that we are taking them and working with them from the beginning [*min al-awwal wal-jdid*], showing them what they can do and orienting them to the organizations that can help them.

Yusra: The level of the people in Village 5 is the basic of basic needs, for example, birth certificates, death certificates, things that are very simple, solar lights. But, for instance, in Village 3, no, *khalas*, they have gotten used to the situation [*muta'awideh 'al-wad'*], and they have become more easily angered [*'asabiyyeh aktar*]. So you need to know how to approach them, how to talk to them. Not like the people in Village 5 where you say a few nice words [*kilmitayn hilwin*] and they do what you say.

Rawan: In Village 3, if you want to convince them of something, you have to really convince them because they really know the NGOs and what they do in the camp [*hume 'an jad 'arifin NGOs wu shu btashtaghil bil-makhayyam*], not like in Village 5 where it's closed off [*musakir 'alayhum*], so most of them don't know.

Amal emphasizes the opportunity in Village 5 to work with refugees “from the beginning” in order to shape how they learn to navigate the camp system. She uses a vocabulary of care (‘orienting them to the organizations that can help them’) to describe a mechanism of control, socializing refugees to act in a way that primarily benefits the system. Yusra contrasts Village 3 residents, who she describes as having less patience because they are used to the system, to refugees in Village 5, who do not challenge the aid worker’s authority (‘you say a few nice words and they do what you say’). Rawan echoes Yusra’s comment, expressing the difficulty of interacting with residents in Village 3, whose time spent in the camp has taught them about NGOs beyond the community centers. Having knowledge of the different functions of each organization means that these refugees are more aware of the type of bureaucratic tactics used to deflect their requests as described in the previous chapter. All three aid workers link Village 5 residents’ newness to their ignorance and compliance, speaking of vulnerability in the same breath as controllability. They fall in line with Voutira and Harrell-Bond’s argument that “for the helpers, the ultimate ‘good’ is the maintenance of their exercise of authority” (1995, 216).

The unofficial hierarchy of need generated by aid workers results in the perpetuation of a system of control that depends on refugees’ dependence. The language of vulnerability allows for a politics of care outlined by Ticktin above, one that “engages and reproduces a set of power relations” and “does not change the dominant order” (2011, 20). The aid regime’s emphasis on

vulnerability makes possible a care-control dynamic in which needs must be met through practices that reiterate the established system of power. It is a politics of care that, as Neikirk (2017) argues, maintains the dependence of refugees, and specifically in Azraq, the camp's underdevelopment.

The argument can then also be made that once a refugee is moved out of Village 5, he is no longer considered new nor vulnerable. Transferring refugees out of Village 5 once they have been granted security clearance reveals a continuous (re-)classification of vulnerability and an intrusive practice of forced mobility. One aid worker noted that the camp administration had even moved refugees from one part of Village 5 to another without much reason given. Interlocutors who had been moved out of Village 5 all expressed sadness at being distanced from the social networks and routines they had formed in order to make the camp more livable. A young refugee named Tamara told me that when her family was transferred out of Village 5 to 2, she lamented not being able to see her friends and missed the refugee volunteers who had mentored her at an NGO center. Her family had been reassigned to an empty and secluded part of Village 2 that was a twenty-minute walk to the closest NGO centers in the village, and she felt somehow less integrated than she had in Village 5 because of this social isolation. Tamara found ways to regularly sneak into Village 5 – “there’s a part of the fence across from Village 2 that I can climb under” – to visit her friends at the NGO center, but this is a risky practice and would not absolve her feelings of loneliness in Village 2. Aid workers encouraged Tamara to instead try out the NGO’s center in Village 3, but it was clear that she would rather make a longer journey to Village 5 – not for the NGO’s programming, but for the people. Stories like Tamara’s illustrate that the practice of relocating refugees to suit hierarchies of need does not only keep sectors of the population in a favorable order but also enforces camp residents’ nonattachment to place, keeping refugees from becoming too comfortable in the camp.

Village 5 in particular is the ultimate symbol of Azraq’s dual politics of care and control. Its presence is a marriage of humanitarianism and security, a relationship that is justified because its residents, like Aya discussed in the beginning of this chapter, are new and vulnerable but also always a potential threat. That refugees continue to be treated as new more than two years later reveals how the political apparatus seeks to preserve a camp order in which refugees are vulnerable and thus controllable. For refugees outside of Village 5 who have lived in Azraq

longer, the village serves as a warning to those who may challenge the camp order by resisting control.

Azraq as new

Within the context of Jordanian state politics, Azraq is to Za'tari what Village 5 is to the other villages in Azraq's camp politics. Azraq at five years old continues to be referred to as the *new* camp by humanitarians, often rendering Za'tari as a failure through the language of 'learning lessons' from the older camp's first year. Aid workers often cite the refugee-led demonstrations against Za'tari's administration that took place within that first year as evidence of Za'tari's lack of order. Aid workers of both camps would speak of Za'tari as being out of control and unsafe for humanitarian staff, but would also highlight this as a sign of its refugees' 'freedom'. During fieldwork in Za'tari in 2016, four years after demonstrations had ceased to take place there, aid workers would show visible signs of nervousness to merely drive through District 1, the oldest and "most dangerous" area, but they would also celebrate the resilience of that district's residents for creating the camp's main marketplace.

This discursive relationship between resilience and threat, development and danger, and 'oldness' and uncontrollability continues to describe Za'tari today, years after any violence in the camp, and establishes the older camp as the failed precedent that justifies Azraq's securitized system. The language of resilience so common in Za'tari has been replaced by a language of vulnerability in Azraq, where refugees are treated as being incapable of the type of development and innovation exhibited in Za'tari (precisely because it is the system that suppresses such 'resilience'). Vulnerability is the gateway vocabulary into the conflation of care and control: Azraq is a response to Za'tari's supposed disorder more than it is a response to refugees' needs. For the sake of being the solution to Za'tari's problem, Azraq requires that its refugees always be the "less developed *other*" (Wagner 2017, 109) – the exceptional, vulnerable, and controllable. While Za'tari has changed since its demonstration days and, according to Turner (2019a), has since implemented security measures that mimic those in Azraq, it continues to be described as a chaotic urbanized camp, an early reputation it seems unable to shake. Azraq, too, has always been depicted as its first impressions: designed as an optimistic model of order and organization. Even as the camps continue to be portrayed as contrasting spaces, like the villages

within Azraq, the two today may appear much more alike in security and organization. By considering Za'tari to be forever plagued by a lack of administrative control and Azraq to be the new and improved camp, both camps warrant their politics of care: for Za'tari, it is about *getting* the camp under control, and for Azraq, *keeping* it under control. Thus the newness of Azraq, like that of its residents, is not just a measurement in years, as the camp is only two years younger than Za'tari, but also about a sense of unchanging control and order over an always exceptionally vulnerable population.

The imposition of vulnerability onto refugees through a hierarchy of need within a politics of care is what Malkki (1996) would argue renders refugees “speechless” about their own histories, replaced by the humanitarian-produced “authoritative narratives about the refugees” (386). Controlling the narrative around vulnerability and visible suffering allows the humanitarian regime to justify its presence. In Azraq, this narrative is closely linked with time and how it is measured and regulated and by whom: refugees cannot adapt and ‘develop’ in a space supposedly frozen in time. For Azraq to succeed within the humanitarian realm, it relies on a narrative that ignores on-the-ground realities of refugee capabilities and thus reinforces power over the dispossessed.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the vulnerability discourse and perceptions of newness play into mechanisms of control in Azraq. I have shown how vulnerability in the camp is uniquely linked to measures of time, which inform aid workers’ central roles in a regime of securitization. The intrusiveness of this regime into refugees’ private lives is perceived by aid workers and the outside world as an efficient and caring humanitarian system, while it is experienced by camp residents as a source of anxiety and authoritarian control. Along with the previous chapter, this chapter has implicated the camp administration’s disempowering mechanism, operated by unknowing but well-intentioned aid workers. The following two chapters take a close look at accounts from the receiving end of this aid apparatus in order to understand how refugees’ everyday lives are shaped by Azraq’s particular politics. The next chapter is an in-depth examination of refugee experiences of waiting produced directly by the camp’s bureaucracy and the situation of displacement.

CHAPTER FOUR

Waiting for What?

*Time gives birth to nothing.
The nothing that is raging nearby is our only time.*
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, “The Camp is Time” (2017)

DURING A TRAINING of IBV volunteers at a development organization’s Village 5 center, there was a knock at the door. Mahmoud, a resident who had been a youth sports coach at the center, had come by to bid farewell to his fellow volunteers as he and his family had finally received clearance to move out of the village. Omran, the aid worker who was providing translation for the training, congratulated Mahmoud and then turned to the facilitator, asking, “Can we take a five-minute break so everyone can say goodbye to him? Because they will never see him again...”

The facilitator, a Dutch man who conducts trainings around the world, was confused, but sensing the weight of the situation, he allowed the unscheduled break despite his strict adherence to the agenda. While Mahmoud’s peers gathered around him to exchange farewells, I explained the system of Village 5 to the facilitator, who responded, “I guess we’re working in a very unique context.” He seemed to understand that while his main concern was to lead an ambitious four-day training program for refugees in Azraq, there were far greater concerns.

A few months prior, Mahmoud had broken his jaw while coaching a sports team at the center. While he had made a complete recovery, Mahmoud’s injury had been considered a disability, speeding up the clearance process to relocate him to Village 2, where the majority of disability cases are assigned. Shaza, a young IBV volunteer attending the training, remarked half-jokingly, “I wish we could all break our jaws to move out of this village!” The refugees in the room laughed in agreement.

For Shaza, Mahmoud, with his broken jaw, was lucky. In fact, the pain of the injury for him could also be seen as a blessing, putting an end to the miserable wait to get out of Village 5, to be incorporated at least into the rest of the camp. While everyone in Village 5 is technically on a waiting list for security clearance, Shaza's dark humor shows that she and her colleagues have lost faith in the system. Her comment reveals the uncertainty of waiting, her loss of control over the future and lack of agency within the camp system to change her situation. After all, it seemed that a broken jaw was a more reliable means of being transferred out of Village 5 than waiting one's turn on a list thousands of people long. Shaza here expresses not pessimism about the camp system, but *cynicism*.

As will be explored in this chapter, Lisa Wedeen's (1998, 1999) foundational work on 'as if' politics in Syria under Hafez Assad illuminates the cynicism of unbelief in a system paired with non-resistance. Informed by Wedeen's work, I posit that what makes Shaza's comment cynical is her implied lack of faith in the camp administration coupled with her inaction. Shaza will not break her own jaw but will continue to wait for her family to be granted clearance, waiting in Village 5 *as if* – but without belief that – she will be moved out eventually. She will not rebel against the system but will continue to comply with its rules and regulations nonetheless.

Throughout my time in Azraq, I was struck by just how visible forms of waiting are, challenging my desire to avoid the stereotyped trope of refugees 'sitting around and waiting'. Everywhere, the "indignities of waiting" (Auyero 2012, 76) are on display: people lining up in the corrals of the distribution center, crowding on the hard benches in the community centers, sitting in a cold caravan waiting weeks for a broken window to be repaired, enduring the discomfort of a medical issue until granted a permit to the emergency room, and so on. However, I never once heard a refugee use the word 'waiting' when speaking of her time in Azraq; rather, I observed waiting through conversations, critical remarks, and visible signs of boredom.

When considered against images of compliance, these attitudes and asides are not rebellious but merely cynical. In this chapter, I argue that refugees in Azraq camp endure the wait – for services and to return home – cynically, *as if* their patience will bring about a better outcome. Refugees continue to approach the community centers with their needs, waiting in line and restraining emotion, *as if* their requests will be fulfilled. Unable to build a meaningful future in

the camp and limited in their biographical pursuits, refugees patiently wait out displacement *as if* a future outside the camp is possible.

Ultimately, cynicism in Azraq has been shaped by the camp's power politics, a regime of aid that not just fails to empower refugees but *disempowers* them. Refugees are socialized by their navigations of the camp bureaucracy to understand their place within it, quickly learning that the apparatus that is supposed to value their lives actually takes away their hope for a meaningful, biographical future. The good humanitarians of the refugee camp, a space of protection, are instead revealed as actors within yet another authoritarian system that ensures compliance through threats of deportation.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the three layers of waiting I observed in Azraq – waiting *out*, waiting *for*, and waiting *to* – to understand the various ways that the camp's refugees wait. It explores refugee participation in NGO programming as another form of waiting, which resists passivity but finds meaning only in the benefit of filling time. The chapter will subsequently explore the elements of cynical waiting, namely, uncertainty, hopelessness, powerlessness, and fear. The final section examines the aspect of hope in detail through a discourse of both 'not yet' and 'no longer'.

Waiting

Harold Schweizer's (2005) essay on waiting weaves together themes of boredom, desire, and temporal isolation. He proposes that waiting is "situated between boredom and desire" (777), carrying the vague quality of boredom's "empty" time without the drive of desire. Waiting, he writes, is simply "not very interesting." However, Schweizer maintains the peculiarity of the waiting experience, in which "we enter into a temporality different from that time in which we daily strive to accomplish our tasks and meet our appointments" (778). He writes,

The person who waits is out of sync with time, that is, outside of the moral and economic community of those whose time is synchronized and who act predictably and in unison. (779)

This temporal estrangement, Schweizer argues, enables us to "awaken to the repressed rhythms of duration and thus also to the deeper dimensions of our being" (778). He is here describing waiting as an existential experience that confronts the waiter with time, a "phenomenon so

quotidian and familiar”, in an uncomfortably precarious manner. Schweizer cites Henri Bergson’s philosophical work on time, stating that the measurement of waiting cannot simply be quantified by an amount of time (i.e., hours or years), but must also acknowledge the “*qualitative* temporal consciousness” (781), that is, an immeasurable duration. The quantifiable and qualitative aspects of one’s wait are two temporalities, no longer harmonious as they may be when one is ‘in sync’ with calendar time.

Numerous works have explored the theme of waiting for refugees and migrants. Waiting has been discussed as time that is filled, wasted, or killed (Lucht 2012, Wagner 2017), as strategic on the part of refugees (Khosravi 2014, Omata 2013, Turner 2016), as a tool or weapon of power by state institutions (Andersson 2014, Griffiths 2014, Haas 2017), as an experience of being stuck (Brun 2016, El-Shaarawi 2015, Hage 2009b), as something that is lived (Feldman 2018), as dynamic and agentive (Brun 2015, Kohli and Kaukko 2017), and as revealing of (im)mobilities (Conlon 2011, Hyndman and Giles 2011). While many scholars have studied waiting for refugees, migrants, and other marginalized groups, few ethnographies have dealt with the topic as an analytical category itself. Craig Jeffrey’s (2010) study of middle class Indian youth waiting for employment, Javier Auyero’s (2012) exploration of waiting inflicted upon welfare-seeking Argentinians, Shahram Khosravi’s (2017) examination of precarious existence for young people in Iran, and Bandak and Janeja’s (2018) edited volume on waiting, hope, and uncertainty are a few such examples. In this chapter, I rely on their analytical treatment of the topic in my own attempt to investigate waiting as an unspoken-of, yet inherent experience for Azraq’s refugees.

Waiting as an analytical category

Auyero (2012) focuses on the politics of waiting in Argentina to examine the state’s domination over its citizens, particularly those who rely on welfare services. He analyzes these citizens’ interactions with the state through bureaucratic institutions, which he argues force them into submission through mundane and arbitrary practices of making them wait. Auyero’s ethnographic accounts “look microscopically at the foundations of political institutions” (13) and their power politics. Waiting, he posits, is a “*process*, not a single event” (72) through which welfare citizens are socialized to their powerless position in society. In a similar vein, Khosravi (2017) also looks at the intersection of waiting and state power. His work on the politics of

waiting in Iran centers on youth who feel increasingly exiled from within their own country due to precarious socioeconomic conditions. This feeling of exile, he states, stems from being temporally, not physically, distant from Iran, as their suspension is one that excludes them from “national time” (Allison 2012, 354 in Khosravi, 5). These youth are essentially waiting on the state, which Khosravi argues itself promotes a “culture of waiting” (79). Waiting has become a central aspect of life for Iranian citizens, as he notes how during the war in the 1980s, “the lives of Iranians were organized by and with queues” (80), and today those lines are still there, no longer for rations but for “university admission, employment, housing, loans, marriage, or emigration.” These queues cement the population’s dependence on the state. Khosravi understands waiting to be “a particular experience of time” (81) through which to analyze how Iranians navigate their youth in precarity. Similar to Schweizer’s analysis of waiting, Khosravi describes waiting as a symbol of waste and emptiness. But waiting can be productive, he argues, as through “waithood” (89) young Iranians “construct a generational identity, exchange information, build networks, and construct youth cultures.” By employing waiting as his analytical lens, Khosravi is able to examine the daily politics of living in precarity as well as the domination of the state. Both Auyero and Khosravi are interested in the dominance of the state over its citizens in spaces and cultures of waiting. The wait is uncomfortable, but interlocutors in both studies must wait because of their situations of precarity, which the state reinforces through bureaucratic proceduralism. Both works provide informative frameworks through which to consider Azraq refugees’ experiences navigating the camp bureaucracy.

In *Timepass*, Jeffrey (2010) asks:

But what of long-term waiting? What of situations in which people have been compelled to wait for years, generations or whole lifetimes, not as a result of their voluntary movement through modern spaces but because they are durably unable to realize their goals? (3)

As noted in the dissertation’s introduction, Jeffrey seeks to answer this question in the case of young middle-class men in India who feel stuck between university and employment. Though Jeffrey’s interlocutors had relative mobility in terms of being able to go to neighboring towns and cities, they often remained in their university town, loitering on street corners and on campus, participating in corrupt politics against which they also protested, attempting to move up from the rigid middle class to which they had been assigned from birth. The term ‘timepass’

was used by some of Jeffrey's interlocutors to situate themselves within an uncertain and chronic temporality of waiting for opportunities. Timepass is not only a "combination of panic and inertia – the need to 'hurry up and wait'" (77), but also an activity in itself, "what one *had to do* in a context in which other more meaningful and 'serious' ways of engaging with the world were unavailable" (80, emphasis added). Timepass both threatened one's employability and created opportunities for political involvement and social connections with others in similar situations of precarity. Jeffrey captures the tensions between boredom and rush that these Indian youth experience as they wait; 'timepass' is at once an activity and a non-activity.

All three author's conceptualizations of waiting allow for productivity to exist alongside and within emptiness. Indeed, I emphasize that in Azraq, waiting likewise allows for creativity in the everyday (Eriksen 2005) and is not merely an empty gap between events (Gasparini 2005). Waiting is dynamic because "everyday time' continues to flow through routinized practices and different survival strategies" (Brun 2015, 19). It is also a "full-time activity" requiring energy (Diski 2006, 143). However tempting it may be to describe refugees as being 'stuck' – "they are stuck in a status of being displaced or stuck in a war zone without the ability to escape, they feel stuck because they cannot develop their lives, stuck because they cannot control their future and because the future they often dream of is located in the past" (Brun 2016, 393) – there is also "always some kind of movement in people's lives." This juxtaposition of busyness and stagnancy, as I describe in chapter one, is what Wagner (2017) calls 'frantic waiting', in which "keeping oneself busy coincides with forever delayed and meaningful futures" (118). The element of rush in the mundane character of Azraq-living is central to the act of waiting in the camp and will be explored in this chapter alongside a discussion of boredom.

However, Auyero, Khosravi, and Jeffrey all focus on communities that have been born into situations of precarity via systemic inequalities in each country. Azraq's residents, on the other hand, have been placed into precarity, a circumstance with similarly little power to mobilize, and this difference is important to note in considering how it impacts refugees' experiences of waiting. How might refugees reflect on waiting when it is imposed not by a state – as they certainly dealt with Syrian bureaucracy before the war – but by a temporary *humanitarian* system? In this chapter, I treat the theme of waiting as an analytical category in order to answer this question, revealing how the camp's power structure directly shapes refugee outlooks on their future.

Performing patience

Residents of Azraq often use the terms *juwwa* [inside] to refer to the camp and *barra* [outside] to refer to the world beyond the camp's borders. Other times, *juwwa* would refer to Amman while refugees referred to the camp as *barra*. Either way, this distinction signifies the refugees' isolation from society. In Kohli and Kaukko's (2017) study of unaccompanied asylum-seeking girls in residential care in Finland, they note that one of the girls had become aware of the "interaction between 'outside' linear time and 'inside' experienced time due to the mismatch between decisions that had an impact on her and her own ability to influence them" (497). Cathrine Brun cites Bammer (1994) to describe the experience of displacement as spreading across "multiple ruptures between 'here' and 'there'" (Bammer 1994, xii in Brun 2015, 21).

The act of waiting in Azraq underscores the disconnect between camp time and national time. Daily routines are formed, children are born, caravans are customized within limit, but nothing comes to fruition. Everyday acts, work, and waiting result in more of the same. Scholars have described the refugee camp as a "waiting room" (Chakrabarty 2008, 8; Kohli and Kaukko 2017, 491; Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005, 335), asserting that refugees have been "relegated to the 'waiting room of history', never quite developed enough to govern themselves" (Chakrabarty 2008, 8 in Wagner 2017, 109). As argued in the previous chapter, the Azraq refugee never graduates from her dependence on someone else, whether the street-level bureaucrat aid worker, the camp manager, the Jordanian soldier, or the Jordanian member of parliament.

In Azraq, refugees endure multiple layers of waiting, most often simultaneously. These layers can be categorized as such: waiting *out*, waiting *for*, and waiting *to*, all described below.

1. WAITING OUT. Refugees in Azraq wait out displacement and war. The idea of waiting *out* often refers to something that has already come and is particularly unpleasant, like a cold or rainy weather. Jeffrey (2010) implies that there is an element of choice in waiting out as a response to whatever has come, as he states that some people choose to wait in favor of investing in their future (4-5). Choice allows agency to those who are waiting out a situation where something unfortunate is happening to them. For camp dwellers, displacement due to war is endured, and while village assignments are often not a choice, residents' decisions to not yet return to Syria are made because they believe that waiting out the conflict is the best investment in their future, even as the Syrian regime encourages their return. Waiting out also implies a temporary quality

to displacement in Azraq; refugees can wait out the war because war has an eventual end. However, waiting out for camp dwellers does not carry optimism. Waiting out prevents plans for continuing their lives in Jordan but also in Syria. It is a strategic, wait-and-see response that neither secures visions for the present nor the future.

2. WAITING *FOR*. While waiting *out* is at once agentive and passive, waiting *for* is the waiting that occurs in the meantime. Waiting *for* highlights the dependence of refugees on the aid structure in Azraq. Life in a camp means that refugees must wait *for* aid. They wait for their turn to speak to an aid worker at the community centers, for a service to reach them, for an opportunity to work in the IBV scheme. While ‘waiting for’ seems to be passive on the surface, it is actually a passive *activity*. It is as Secor (2007) writes regarding bureaucracies, how “the state in everyday life provokes running around uselessly and waiting” (41). The camp system that enables a constant ‘waiting for’ requires passivity and often physical discomfort. For Auyero (2012), queues were “an excellent opportunity to study the daily exercise of the denial of rights” (8). In Azraq, queues provide a particularly acute site for understanding how residents must ‘hurry up and wait’. As described in the first two chapters, refugees in Azraq spend a lot of time waiting in line. During the training exercise depicted in the beginning of this chapter, the facilitator had been astounded at how quickly and accurately the refugees had been able to complete an activity that required arranging themselves by age into a line without speaking. One of the participants had responded sarcastically, “In the camp we’re made to wait in so many lines that we’re really good at getting in line.” I described in the second chapter how the queue is at once stagnant and slowly moving, highly stressful and anticlimactic. In the community center waiting areas, one can observe slouched shoulders, disengaged stares, and a general restlessness sometimes complemented with an audible sigh. Refugees forced to passively wait must also remain alert until it is their turn, at which point they must be persistent in their interaction with the aid worker. Still, after sometimes many hours of waiting to see an aid worker, refugees must continue to perform patience, having to keep their emotions in check in order to be deemed worthy of their request. Auyero (2012) notes a similar struggle in the Argentinian welfare bureaucracy:

My comparative ethnographic work in three different ‘waiting sites’ portrays poor people who know through repeated encounters that if they are to obtain the much needed ‘aid’...they have to show that they are worthy of it by dutifully waiting. They

know that they have to avoid making trouble, and they know, as many people told me, that they have to ‘keep coming and wait, wait, wait’. (9)

Similarly, camp residents’ time spent waiting out the war is also filled with waiting for services. Even as a refugee has had her turn after hours of queuing to make a request, she must continue to wait for the outcome to this request for weeks and sometimes months. The request may never be fulfilled, but refugees continue to display their (albeit tried) patience.

3. *WAITING TO*. In many ways, waiting *to* is a bookend to waiting *out*. In Azraq, refugees are primarily waiting to return to Syria. While waiting *out* requires strategic patience, waiting *to* is impatient. A resident of Village 5 messages me every so often saying she has grown tired of the camp, that her hometown is now safe. Still, she does not return, merely posting artistic pictures she finds online of people standing behind fences to her WhatsApp status, sometimes adding sad-face emojis and scribbling “V. 5” over it with her finger. Waiting *to* implies a desire to act, to physically go back to Syria, and an inability to do so. The return is the strongest desire for many camp dwellers, yet it is never spoken of as something they are waiting to do but rather as the main reason for their presence in the camp.

For all of these layers, waiting is often measured by time passed. Some residents have kept exact count of their time in Azraq, and many keep track of how long they have waited for a requested service. Others, especially residents of the older villages, seem to lose track of time. I once asked a resident of Village 3 how long his family had been in Azraq, and he responded, seemingly thinking aloud, “We came in June of 2014. So at the end of this month it will be five years? 2014 to 2015, 2015 to 2016, 2016 to 2017, 2017 to 2018,” he counted on his fingers. “I guess four years then.” Bredeloup (2012) notes a similar lost sense of time for sub-Saharan migrants who have crossed the Sahara Desert. When migrants do not feel that they have control over time, she argues, they lose all sense of it. Azraq’s residents have not lost *all* sense of time per se, but time becomes confused, blurring urgency with meaninglessness. Important markers of time are often anniversaries of one’s arrival to the camp. Refugees would usually offer, unprompted, their stories of how they arrived to Azraq in great detail, including the hour they fled, the number of days spent at the border, and the total number of months it took to arrive in Azraq since fleeing home. These stories would usually end with, “And that was x years ago now,” skipping from their first day in Azraq to the present moment, as if nothing worth noting took place in that time.

In the camp, the act of waiting, in all its layers, is an act of compliance. Azraq's refugees continue to queue where regulations require it, and they continue to wait in every step of their bureaucratic interactions. Where Za'tari's residents would demonstrate, sometimes violently, against the inadequacies of their camp's services, Azraq's residents continue to perform patience. In Ticktin's (2011) study, she describes even more extreme measures taken by asylum seekers looking to take control over their own situation by infecting themselves with HIV in order to obtain legal status in France (192). Yet, the closest a refugee in Azraq may get to taking such action would be in the form of Shaza's comment that introduced this chapter. It is the fact that Azraq's refugees consciously choose to wait (knowingly to no avail) over taking any other action, choosing to comply rather than risk the threat of being deported, that makes their performance of patience a cynical one. The following section explores another way refugees wait, by engaging in endless NGO programming that simulates the building of meaningful biographical lives.

Filling time to avoid it

Holidays are also significant markers of time spent in the camp. Holidays, like Ramadan and Eid, are difficult for residents, as celebrations are a challenge to reenact in the space of the camp. Refugees would often ask me with exasperation, "Melissa, how much longer until Ramadan is over?!" Unlike similar comments by fasting Jordanians who could not wait for the end of fasting, refugees waiting for Ramadan to end was not just about the tiresome aspects of fasting, but about the holiday itself.

"Everything is boring during Ramadan [*kil ishi mumil bi-Ramadan*]," a Village 5 resident told me. "Nothing happens, and it goes by so slowly."

Waiting *out*, waiting *for*, and waiting *to* make for a painfully slow experience, and Ramadan slows time down even more, as not allowing food or drink to create breaks of time throughout the day further challenges residents' endurance and patience. Holidays exacerbate the tiresomeness of waiting, confronting refugees with passivity. Indeed, as the refugee who noted the boredom of Ramadan, the Arabic word meaning boredom, *malal*, carries with it a connotation of the subject being both physically and mentally tired of a situation.

Brun (2015) writes of two layers of boredom that coincide with layers of waiting I discussed above:

We may speak of two scales of boredom related to the slowing down of rhythms in everyday time: people are bored with the routines and mundanity but also with their overall situation. It is the meaninglessness of their everyday time that gives rise to their feelings of boredom, along with the feeling of not being able to escape a stigmatized status. (30)

‘Meaninglessness’, as Brun describes, is central to feelings of boredom in displacement. In Azraq, the very same system that creates a sense of purpose for aid workers has a destructive effect on that of refugees. Waiting takes up refugees’ time and energy, and yet they have little to show for their efforts. Boredom, writes Brun, “involves an element of active discomfort; it is a restless and irritable feeling, with the additional dimension of a sense of agitation that conveys the subject’s distress” (29).

The anxieties and physical exhaustion that accompanying one who waits out displacement occur alongside daily routines. Bissell (2007) writes that

when focusing on the corporeal engagement with this generic anticipation over larger temporal periods, the body itself is of course engaged in and enacting a whole kaleidoscope of different everyday practices and forms during this course of waiting. (282)

Indeed, a common way of resisting boredom and meaninglessness is to fill time with activities. Kohli and Kaukko (2017) and Wagner (2017) describe how the subjects of their studies would busy themselves by participating in NGO-run activities, taking courses and receiving endless certificates in a diverse range of random skills, like sewing, lifeskills, or computer skills. I found that getting involved in activities is likewise a coping mechanism in Azraq. Visiting a women’s craftmaking program, I saw women in their forties to sixties hunched over around a long table covered with colorful construction paper, scissors, glue, and glitter. Their main concern, however, seemed to be that the six-week course would end just a few days later. Women turned to me to show me their crafts, and suddenly the whole room was a chorus of lamentations about the program ending.

“What do we do next?!”

“We don’t want to go back to sitting in our caravans.”

“Some of us, like Um Ali here, have to deal with husbands at home who hit us. We don’t want to sit at home all day.”

“We want a second level of this course! And then after that a third, and a fourth!”

For these women, the content of the programming courses does not matter so much as the courses themselves. For others, working an IBV position functioned in a similar way of filling time. Lara, an aid worker at a development organization, once reflected from a humanitarian perspective on keeping refugees busy:

I thought about this every time we would go to the camp and then leave, that we as an organization are in the camp from nine or eight in the morning to three in the afternoon, and that’s it. After this, we’re not there. So what happens? It’s important that we think, are we just filling time [*nu’abi wa’t-hum*]? Or do we, when we fill time, when they give us this platform to fill their time, actually are we giving them, we are giving them this knowledge or information to be used after we leave as well? So these are my thoughts, this is my everyday thoughts. Am I giving them the knowledge to be transferred, or just filling their time? And this is important, these are important questions to be asked for everyone who’s going to the camp.

Among all the aid workers I spoke with, Lara was alone in this sentiment, or at least, the only one who brought it up. I focus here not on the critique of development programming, as I have previously examined this, but rather on how refugees seem less concerned with obtaining transferrable skills and more so with avoiding passivity and simulating meaning in their everyday lives. The skills learned in programming may not hold intrinsic value, but the activities themselves challenge the passivity of waiting by offering opportunities to feel productive – by simulating meaningful personal development – and less isolated – by being part of a social environment, especially for women who might not otherwise have a reason to leave their neighborhoods. Indeed, it seems that the main reason refugees engage in programs is precisely to fill time.

For those who can access it, IBV positions and informal work is sought after by many of Azraq’s residents for reasons that extend beyond the monetary advantages, especially as work in the camp is not paid well. Ahlam, a young kindergarten teacher in Village 3, noted that work not only informed her daily routine but also “changed a lot in my life [*taghayyirat ktir ashiya bi-*

hayati]. Work provides a sense of purpose in uncertainty, productivity in what otherwise feels like pointless timepass. Aya told me:

My work is enjoyable [*sali*]. If I didn't have my job, I wouldn't stay here one minute. Death and death, I'd go back to Syria [*mawt wu mawt wu barja 'ala Suriya*]. [Military] planes, planes...I can't sit in my caravan! I would die if I stopped working [*bamut iza batilt min ash-shughl*]. I cannot sit in my caravan! It's an oven!

Aya would probably not return to Syria if she stopped working in Azraq, and she too laments the idea of having to wait out displacement in boredom. Malkin (2015) argues that for refugees, work in NGOs enables them to “expand the meaning of refugee life, giving it value in ways often overlooked” (47). Working and engaging in activities often allow migrants to feel what Hage (2005) calls “existential movement” (470), the feeling that life is “going somewhere.” But for refugees in Azraq, part of this meaning is exactly that it distracts from the mundane experience of waiting. Refugees know IBV positions are not financially lucrative, and they are aware that the skills they learn may not translate into positions in the outside world (and for many, these skills are irrelevant to their pre-war careers), and yet they choose to continue pursuing these opportunities. Indeed, this is apparent in the following comment by an aid worker:

When I would go and visit people, young guys who were studied, finished university, finished *tawjihi*, they would say, ‘we studied and worked hard and earned diplomas and in the end we're just sitting around’, they say, ‘why wouldn't we want to work?’ I mean, they were working in the camp, and the salary wasn't...it wasn't...they say it is just ‘symbolic [*mablagh ramzi*]. They tell me ‘we want to feel that we are doing something with our lives [*bidna nuhis halna inu ihna mna'mal ishi bi-hayatna*], you know, ‘producing something [*mnintij*]. You go and see them like this, I mean young guys, maybe twenty-five, thirty years old, they tell you that they're just sitting around, ‘what can we do, what can we do in the camp? Ok, we get food and we go receive [aid], we go to distributions, we go get bread, we get goods for the house, but then what?’ They tell us that ‘we need to work’.

By referring to the IBV scheme salaries as ‘symbolic’, refugees reveal their own awareness of their participation as being merely a simulation of existential movement. They work not for the sake of their post-camp and post-conflict lives, but for the endless present. Time-filling activities and jobs are then not creating opportunities for refugee futures but are merely another form of waiting. Refugees' engagement in such programs is also symbolic of their awareness that these activities do not offer biographical meaning and their willingness to continue pursuing these activities *as if* they do.

The following section argues that the forms and layers of waiting discussed above can be considered through a framework of ‘as if’ cynicism.

Cynical waiting

My use of the word cynicism is informed by a group of works. Lisa Wedeen (1998, 1999) identified a politics of ‘as if’ in Syria under Hafez Assad, and Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) examines a similar ‘as if’ politics in 90s Turkey. Lori Allen (2013) explores cynicism regarding Palestinian outlooks on human rights. Additionally, Lauren Berlant’s (2011) essay on cruel optimism and Jane Guyer’s (2007) analysis of an evacuated near future, both critiques of neoliberalism, hope, and temporality, also feed into my understanding of cynicism among Syrians in Azraq.

In “Acting ‘As If’” (1998), Wedeen’s exploration of expressions of loyalty in 90s Syria, she describes Hafez Assad as leader of a “cult whose rituals of obeisance are often transparently phony” (504). Images of the regime illustrated the senior Assad as a superior icon, and Syrians were expected to contribute to such a narrative. She states,

Citizens in Syria are not required to believe the cult’s flagrantly fictitious statements and, as a rule, do not. But they are required to act *as if* they do. (506)

Wedeen argues that by relying on external displays of loyalty rather than internal belief, the Syrian state employs “language and symbols...to exemplify and to produce political power” (506). External obedience renders individual belief in the system irrelevant, building on Stephen Greenblatt’s argument: “Power manifests itself in the ability to impose one’s fictions upon the world....The point is not that anyone is deceived by the charade, but that everyone is forced either to participate in it or to watch it silently” (1980, 3 in Wedeen, 510). Wedeen notes that Syrians’ “performative behavior” (506) renders the system “self-enforcing” (512) because citizens are aware of their participation in contributing to the regime’s mythical narrative: “people have internalized the control,” a Syrian professor told her.

While in this article Wedeen only implies cynicism, her book that develops this discourse, *Ambiguities of Domination* (1999), explicitly names the politics of ‘as if’ as so. She discusses citizens’ performative practices in further depth, writing,

The effect of the regime's power is manifest in the active compliance of mobilized citizens, but also in citizen's passive compliance, in the cynical apathy of those who obey because they have become habituated to the cult or in order to be left in peace. (147)

Citizens are physically exhausted by an endless fanfare of regime propaganda and rituals, and so they resign to complicity. Because the system is self-enforcing as noted above, Wedeen argues that this production of cynicism is "a tool of the regime for control" (149) because a cynical citizen must over-perform loyalty to compensate for its absence in order to survive authoritarian rule.

In *Faces of the State*, Navaro-Yashin engages in a similar study of cynicism within the realm of public political life in Turkey in the 1990s. She applies the term as an approach to understanding cynicism as a "feeling...a more common way of managing existence in a realm of state power" (5) and as a "mechanism employed" by citizens navigating the politics of the public. Navaro-Yashin defines cynicism through the politics of 'as if', arguing that cynical citizens of the Turkish state are aware of the "falsity of ideology" (159), but still act "as if ideology were reality" (160). Like Wedeen, she finds that "the contemporary state power needs cynical subjects to maintain itself...cynicism does not help us to achieve emancipation from the chains of statism, but to remain forever (foreseeably) locked into it" (159). Navaro-Yashin focuses in on what she calls "mundane cynicism" (166), or that which is practiced in everyday life through everyday criticisms of the state. She describes the story of Saniye, a janitor in a municipal building in Istanbul who disagreed with the state ideology:

She organizes her everyday activities *as if* the state were there to deliver justice, *as if* it were an institution, a person, something tangible, *as if* it were a wholesome entity. She reproduces and reinstates statecraft as it is through her everyday actions upon the world: she works for the state, negotiates with municipal officers and doctors, solicits social benefits, and so forth. In her daily life, she goes through the motions of state practice. The Turkish state endures in the domain of these sorts of habitual everyday practices for the state, as if nothing happened, as if all were normal, or as though one were unaware. (171)

While Saniye may be cynical about the Turkish state, Navaro-Yashin argues, the state remains a material reality because Saniye and people like her enable it to persist. Echoing Wedeen, she states, "Despite our consciousness about it as farce, the state as an object persists" (187).

Wedeen's and Navaro-Yashin's readings of cynicism depicts it as an "unbelief"¹ (Wedeen 1999, 121) in the system by those who consciously choose to comply, usually for the sake of safety. In this way, it is a non-act, a refusal to participate in politics in rebellion against the system. The consciousness of the cynic is crucial (invoking a common critique of capitalism, Navaro-Yashin (2002, 162, my emphasis) writes, "we are automatons and *we know it*"). For both, cynicism also involves a dichotomy of the private and public sphere. The state regimes described above are concerned only with how people behave in public, regardless of how they feel in private, which lends cynicism its performative nature. These regimes rely on people's fear of the state over their individual conviction, and thus an effective means of disrupting state power is a collective declaration of a willingness to sacrifice safety to act on shared unbelief. In the context of Syria, this has played out gruesomely. At the risk of over-simplifying the conflict for the sake of applying Wedeen's work to the events since 2011, one can trace a discourse of loyalty that has to an extent narrated the ensuing division of Syria's territory. Still, Bashar Assad's use of extreme forms of violence (see Ismail 2018) against those who have revolted points to the fact that the regime's issue lies not with the fact that so-called 'rebels' do not believe, but that they took actions to show it. If Syrians under Bashar Assad were cynical, they stopped being cynical as soon as they began demonstrating and demanding the fall of the regime.

The Rise and Fall of Human Rights, Allen's (2013) ethnography of the human rights industry and cynicism in Palestine, argues that Palestinians exhibit cynicism when they have lost faith in human rights and yet still employ human rights discourse to communicate their suffering. She cites Wedeen's discussion of 'as if' cynicism in that people's "shared condition of unbelief" (Wedeen 1999, 121) also make them "complicit in perpetuating" (Allen 2013, 25) state dominance. With Palestinians acting "as if the human rights industry could stop abuses outside of real political, structural change," Allen argues, they "end up taking part in a system of symbols and rhetoric that has not lived up to its liberatory claims." She notes that while there is no Arabic equivalent to 'cynicism', she believes that Palestinians would identify with a "sense of shared disappointment and fed-upness" (26) as an important aspect of "how they have been feeling, thinking, and reacting to their political situation." Similar to Navaro-Yashin, who notes that cynicism is more than an attitude of "brooding" (Navaro-Yashin 2002, 170), Allen describes cynicism as a "motor of action" (Allen 2013, 16) for some who attempt to resist domination even

¹ I have chosen to use Lisa Wedeen's term of 'unbelief' to convey a complete absence of belief.

if it causes inaction in others. However, Allen notes that cynicism in Palestine departs from that which Wedeen describes in Syria because of the “sincerity” of the “Palestinian national narrative” (26). Because of the unique quality of the Palestinian situation, cynicism can be more productive than in the two cases outlined by Wedeen and Navaro-Yashin above:

[I]n contrast to some other researchers who have explored the dynamics of cynicism in politics and seen it functioning to maintain hegemonic systems of power, the Palestinian case shows that cynicism can be not only a way that power is reproduced and political stasis maintained, but also part of how people continue to critique and search, or at least hope, for something better. (27)

A key aspect of creating possibility within Palestinian cynicism is the role of the international community. Palestinians are not subject only to the power of the state, they have also been failed by a global politics; however, this very involvement of the international can just as well provide an additional outlet to resist the Israeli state in favor for a Palestinian nation.

Shifting to works that deal less overtly with cynicism, I include both Berlant’s and Guyer’s essays to provide a temporal framing for my reading of cynicism in Azraq. Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism* (2011) is a philosophical essay that looks at people’s attachments to “conventional good-life fantasies” (20) in post-war neoliberal US and Europe. Her central point toys with temporality of the present as an “impasse” (4) during which people continue to desire something (i.e., careers, relationships, objects of neoliberal promise, etc) that is “actually an obstacle to [their] flourishing” (1). Optimism is “not inherently cruel,” Berlant notes, but the cruelty comes into play when those objects of desire work against that which one sought from the object. In other words, the expectation of ‘the good life’ can impede one’s ability to enjoy life free of pressure in a constant search for the unattainable better. This is caused by an environment in which the rules and standards are relentlessly changing and the imagined good life is always threatened, creating overwhelming crisis in the ongoing present. For Berlant, crisis is “embedded in the ordinary” (10), which has become a “landfill for overwhelming and impending crises of life-building and expectation” (3). When these fantasies and desires inevitably disappoint, people adjust to new rules but continue to be problematically optimistic (hence, the cruelty). Berlant argues that these adjustments can involve negative emotions, including depression and cynicism, but can also lead to activism.

Guyer's "Prophecy and the Near Future" (2007) is a similar critique of neoliberalism based in 1950s and 1960s Britain. She observes an "evacuation" (410) of the near future caused by an overwhelming present and renewed visions for a distant future. Guyer argues that the near future has become instead "reinhabited by forms of punctuated time" (409), filled with plans for far away futures and struggles toward always out-of-reach goals. Similar to Berlant's understanding of the present as impasse, Guyer's punctuated time transforms the present into a constant struggle for a future that remains relentlessly distant. I will return to Guyer's framing of time in greater depth in the following chapter.

Both Berlant's and Guyer's temporal framing involve a distancing of a future 'good life' and a present filled with striving to reach that future. The subjects of both essays are always initially optimistic because they believe in the neoliberal narrative that there is always something better that they can obtain. People are not necessarily conscious that they are optimists for the unattainable nor have they noted what Guyer has identified as a widening gap between the present and far future. But optimists who do realize the cruelty in their aspirations can become cynics, continuing to work for a future they do not believe is possible. As Feldman (2016) states, "the loss of hope is not the opposite of cruel optimism, it is one of its outcomes" (425).

Wedeen writes, "The habituation to obedience – the combination of cynical lack of belief and compliant behavior – may be characteristic of authoritarian regimes, but it is not confined to those settings" (1999, 154). Indeed, I am bringing cynicism, influenced by the scholars above, to the setting of Azraq in order to convey resident's negative future outlooks that are shaped by the camp's power structures. The term encapsulates feelings of loss – loss of power, certainty, security, and hope – that do not provide refugees any reason to believe there is a better future. It is an orientation completely shaped by the present circumstances of life under Azraq's humanitarian regime. While refugees do not believe in the future, they are socialized by humanitarians into waiting *as if* there is a future outside of the camp.

Waiting from a position of loss

'*Ah wu ba'dayn?* [ok, and then what?],' refugees would say or write as captions accompanying depressing images of the camp on social media. The phrase expresses exhaustion at the never-ending wait. It conveys having gotten used to broken promises or unmet expectations, as if

saying in just a few words: *Okay, we have aid and safety, and then? Is there really nothing else? Are we really supposed to keep waiting?* It is a declaration of ‘enough’ that is nonetheless resigned to a continuing endurance. Usually paired with impatience, this snarky commentary is often muttered by people waiting in bureaucratic settings both inside and outside the camp, sometimes followed by *‘la hawla wala quwwata ila billah* [there is no might or power except in God]’.

Brun (2015) argues that “even during this uncertainty of not knowing and not being able to control the future, people do anticipate the possibility of alternative futures, and waiting becomes a particular way of experiencing this link between time and power” (24). This captures the functionality of waiting in Azraq as something that persists with cynicism. Shaza’s remark at the beginning of this chapter, while not serious about bringing herself physical harm to escape the confines of her village, reveals the situation in which she and her fellow residents have found themselves. Her cynical quip points to her lack of power to change her situation and her lack of faith in the system that has that power, but also to her non-action in the face of this unbelief. Shaza continues “going through the motions” (Allen 2013, 25), waiting in lines, waiting for services, and waiting to return *as if* she is waiting for something and not nothing. This section depicts how refugees like Shaza wait cynically in Azraq through an analysis of loss: powerlessness, uncertainty, fear, and hopelessness.

1. POWERLESSNESS. Power, as discussed in chapter two, dictates the allocation of space and time in Azraq. Barnett and Duvall (2005) define power as “the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate” (42). The role that waiting has played in this production of social capacity has been well established in the literature. Bendixsen and Eriksen (2018) state, “waiting...entails powerlessness” (92). Bridgette Haas (2017) argues that for asylum seekers in the US, “waiting is informed by particular constellations of power that in turn critically shape the lived contours of time and space” (77). Waiting is a form of “manipulation of other’s time” (Khosravi 2017, 81). Ghassan Hage (2009a) has argued that waiting can be a particular socioeconomic experience “in the very obvious sense of ‘who waits for whom’ which also means: who has the power to make their time appear more valuable than somebody else’s time” (2). Schweizer (2005) asserts that waiting is something “assigned to the poor and powerless” (779). Lucht (2012) describes the power of

making one wait as a “testimony to one’s social insignificance” (72). Auyero writes of the ‘waiters’ of welfare in Argentina:

Shanty residents *are always waiting for something to happen*. Those poisoned outcasts...are living in a time oriented to and manipulated by powerful agents. They live in an alienated time, and are obliged, as Pierre Bourdieu so eloquently puts it, ‘to wait for everything to come from others’ (2000: 237). Domination works, we contend, through yielding to the power of others; and it is experienced as waiting time: waiting hopefully and then frustratedly for others to make decisions, and in effect surrendering to the authority of others. (2012, 4)

As Auyero notes, in order for power over others to work, the ‘others’ must submit to it. This occurs because both Argentinian welfare seekers and Azraq residents have little choice but to depend on those who provide aid. The provision of aid in itself reproduces this order, as shanty residents are born into their condition and camp dwellers remain isolated from ‘outside’ opportunities through which they might overcome their situation.

Making people wait, argue Bendixsen and Eriksen (2018), is “a familiar way of exerting power by bureaucrats and businesspeople worldwide (Schwartz 1975)” (92). Harrell-Bond (2002) argued that refugees in camps are “symbolically disempowered through becoming clients of those upon whom they are dependent for the means of survival and security” (55). The power of bureaucracy and humanitarianism is inherent to the camp, as I have argued. Waiting is the ultimate tool of power holders in the camp, “an instrument to elicit particular forms of subjectivities” (Bandak and Janeja 2018, 3), employed through bureaucratic procedures, distraction and deferral techniques, and the undermining of urgency discussed in the second chapter. When refugees wait – whether at the everyday level of ‘inside time’ or the longer term ‘waiting to’ and ‘waiting out’ – they are performing dependence and surrendering power. Auyero describes the compliance of waiting that conjures images of obedience described by Wedeen above:

[W]aiting (re)creates subordination. It does so, I argue, by *producing uncertainty and arbitrariness*. The uncertainty and arbitrariness engenders one particular subjective effect among those who need the state to survive: they silently comply (*ply* from the Latin *plicare*, to bend) with the authorities’ usually capricious commands. To put it bluntly, everyday political domination is what happens when nothing apparently happens, when people ‘just wait.’ (2012, 20)

What makes the practice of waiting in Azraq a cynical act by refugees is that they are aware of these power dynamics and their place within them. Camp residents are confronted with their

powerlessness every time they must request help, accepting the reality of having to queue and to behave in the expected manner when interacting with aid workers, and every day that they must wait. Refugees choose to continue waiting, filling up the community and NGO centers on a daily basis, even while they complain of long lines or of being stuck in Village 5 awaiting security clearance. They choose to continue bringing their grievances to aid workers despite knowing that nothing will change, similar to Navaro-Yashin's (2002) description of cynical Turkish citizens going "to the state to complain about the state" (167). Refugees' persistence in waiting despite their lack of faith in the system only serves to replicate power of the aid over the aided.

2. UNCERTAINTY. Khosravi (2017) notes that "another consequence of waiting is the feeling that one is not fully in command of one's life" (81). With a loss of power comes a loss of control and certainty, as Brun (2015) writes, "power determines whether a preferred future is reachable" (24). Life in Azraq is replete with uncertainty. Aseel, the outreach aid worker at the community center, describes what she believes is a major source of uncertainty for refugees:

They are always scared for their future, you know, they speak about the future as something unknown [*majhul*]. When I was out [on outreach], I would tell them, for example Eid, that *inshallah* the next Eid they will be in Syria, and they say *inshallah ya rab*, but it's a situation that...their houses are gone, and, how do I say this, no one knows what the future would be. You know, even us [aid workers], we don't know, no one knows [*ma hada 'arif*].

What strikes me about Aseel's comments is her emphasis on those in positions of power, including herself, being just as uncertain about the future as refugees are. It points to the fact that the power to determine what that future looks like lies in the hands of others. Waiting, especially in the setting of a refugee camp, is fraught with "existential insecurity" (Haas 2017, 76). For the asylum seekers in Haas's study, their daily lives involved navigating bureaucracy and waiting endlessly. Haas describes an asylum seeker who "located the source of her pain and suffering in the uncertainty of the present."

Because of the uncertainty of this 'meantime', refugees in Azraq have *adapted*, as has been discussed, but not *settled*. One aid worker said, "It's a temporary thing, even for the families there in Village 5, it's a temporary situation. They're not settled like they will stay there for long, they never know when they are going to be out or when there'll be more people coming in."

Another noted, “People, especially in Village 5, are not settled. You see them today, but maybe tomorrow they are back in Syria or they left the camp or the village.” Both aid workers imply a connection between uncertainty and temporality, expressing the belief that not much can be planned in advance. El-Shaarawi (2015), using uncertainty as an analytical frame to understand experiences of protracted exile for Iraqi refugees in Egypt, argues, “Uncertainty and the suffering associated with it were caught up in refugees’ notion of time, especially when imagining the future, as much as they were about place” (52). Kohli and Kaukko (2017) argue, “Particularly when time is measured only in reference to future outcome, dread and hope are noted to combine (Conlon 2011, Kohli 2014, Allsopp et al 2015, Rotter 2016), creating vortexes of uncertainty” (489). Indeed, dread was apparent whenever I asked about the future, as future-oriented questions prompted prolonged silences in my interlocutors who seemed at a loss as to how to discuss the future. It was much easier for refugees to look at their life in the camp from the perspective of how much time had passed rather than how much time in Azraq may still be ahead of them. Brun (2015) argues that “even when people are ‘moving on’ and developing their lives in displacement, they remain fixed within a political status and a humanitarian category that continues to produce uncertain futures” (20). Uncertainty is a defining feature of the Azraq existence.

3. FEAR. Fear underscores refugees’ cynicism in the same way it did for Syrians who chose to comply under Hafez Assad rather than risk their lives by demonstrating. The constant threat of deportation means that Azraq’s administration will not itself inflict violence on refugees, but it has the power to expose refugees to violence by returning them to the Syrian state. As illustrated in the previous chapter, residents of Village 5 are one decision away from receiving security clearance to move out of the village, but they are also one decision away from being deported to Syria. Camp dwellers in the other three villages may be more secure but are also threatened with the possibility of forced return, or even with being transferred to Village 5 if they cause trouble. For this reason, uncertainty of the future and powerlessness within the camp’s humanitarian and security system instills fear in refugees. Accepting the situation of the camp – and choosing not to rebel against the system out of fear that they may be deported – grants refugees security in the present. Every moment in which refugees in Azraq ‘behave’, performing patience – a *‘wala yahimak’*-type respect towards aid worker bureaucrats – they are performing “acts of recognition of the established political order” (Auyero 2012, 9). Refugees “ultimately put up with the

uncertainty, confusion, and arbitrariness of waiting” (73) because there is simply less risk in submission.

4. HOPELESSNESS. “Hope is never too far from hopelessness,” writes Zigon (2018, 70). As is the focus of the following chapter, refugees in Azraq do not picture a life in the camp when they think about the future, but having visions of a future outside the camp does not necessarily mean they are hopeful. Rather, there is a sense that hope has ‘collapsed’ (Bryant 2015). The absence of hope in Azraq is central to cynical attitudes because it enables refugees to ‘go through the motions’ without conviction – to act *as if* they are waiting for a better future when in reality many expressed to me that Azraq does not provide a future. Brun (2015) asserts that hope is what connects “everyday time” and “future time” (30), and the lack of hope creates a chasm between the two temporalities, leaving everyday time to be experienced endlessly.

Along with hopelessness comes resignation. Auyero (2012) depicts ‘waiters’ as “resign[ing] themselves to wait until someone at some point decides it is time for them to enter the office” (90). There is a feeling of resignation in Azraq, conveyed through the blank faces of those waiting in lines, sensed in the tiresome repetition of everyday life in inside time, and communicated through patient pleas to aid workers at the community centers. I have dedicated the following section solely to a deeper analysis of hopelessness and its centrality to displays of cynicism in Azraq.

Not yet and no longer

In the fall of 2017, as the camp was preparing for a harsh winter, the community center in Village 6 was getting a makeover. The NGO running the center commissioned a camp resident to paint over the blocks of primary colors that originally covered the exterior of the caravan offices. The result was a series of breathtaking murals. One mural in particular stood out, if not for its visibility from the center’s entrance, then for its meaning. In it, a woman lights a gas lantern with a match, illuminating a message in both English and Arabic reading, “Remember the greatest failure is to not try [*tadhakur ana al-fashal al-akbar huwe ‘adam al-mahawwala*]”. It is unclear who is responsible for choosing this message, but whether the idea came from the community center director or the refugee artist is irrelevant. Considering the context of refugee dependence in the camp, the message itself appears to fit neatly within a humanitarian politics

that encourages refugees to be proactive through motivational posters and programming but then limits their capacity to do so through its very system of power. That the artist either agreed to the message or created it himself is revealing of the refugee's compliance within this system, painting the words that as a camp resident he has been socialized to not believe. The message encapsulates a hopefulness that according to Hage (2003) is defined as “a disposition to be confident in the face of the future, to be open to it and welcoming to what it will bring, even if one does not know for sure what it will bring” (24). But considering remarks of refugees throughout this chapter, it is hard to believe that the message itself does not reveal an element of cynicism. This section analyzes the complexity of hope as a product of waiting in the camp, a fluctuating scale of hopelessness that underscores refugees' cynical attitudes.

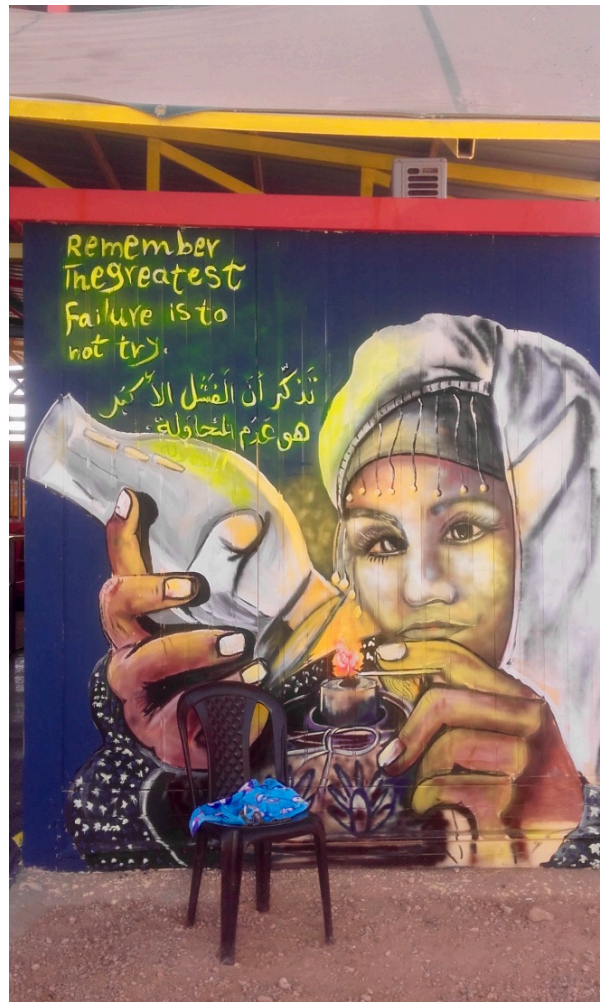


FIGURE 22. The mural in the Village 6 community center painted by a refugee. [Photo by the author, 2017]

Returning to Khosravi's (2017) work, he describes Iranian youth who are experiencing immobility from a temporal, spatial, and social angle (219). This precarity, he argues, is not necessarily existential but tied to the political and legal restrictions that cause feelings of isolation in certain groups of Iranian citizens. Khosravi uses precarity as an analytical lens to reveal how the state uses hope and waiting to marginalize and control sectors of its population: "to keep people waiting hopefully has been part of the mechanism of domination" (79). His examination of hope builds on Bloch, who writes of a 'not-yet' anticipation. Hope for Bloch is agentive, a "dreaming forward" (14). Khosravi argues: "The 'not-yet' approach highlights how hope (emotion) and waiting (act) intersect...To keep people waiting and enduring hardship without ruining their hope is an exercise of power over their time" (14). Because, according to Bloch, "hope is materialized in home" (Bloch 1996 [1959] in Khosravi 2017, 221), hopelessness occurs when people no longer consider their home to be "safe, protective, or hospitable."

Hirokazu Miyazaki (2010) outlines a "temporality of no longer" (241), arguing that hope is sometimes considered either as Bloch's 'not yet' or as Freud's 'no longer'. Simon Turner (2005) has considered this within the context of camp sovereignty, writing, "Apart from being a place of 'no longer,' the camp is also a place of 'not yet'" (331). I argue that hope can be viewed in this way within Azraq, as simultaneously 'not yet' and 'no longer'. Agier (2011) states that "keeping people in the political and legal out-place of the camp fosters the justification of return as the only solution for recognition" (188). In other words, because NGOs follow host state objectives to encourage repatriation (Fresia and von Känel 2015), refugees are discouraged from envisioning a future in Jordan and forced to be forward-looking "in preparation for another – hopefully fuller – life in the future, beyond the camp" (Turner 2015, 145). Refugee desires of inclusion – temporal, social, political, and legal – are assigned by humanitarians to the 'not yet' category. Vigh (2009) writes that for would-be migrants wishing for mobility, "positive social being and becoming are imagined as only possible elsewhere" (103), and Turner maintains that in order for refugees to "remain socially alive, they need to be able to imagine a meaningful future for themselves" (145).

'Not yet' allows refugees to endure the present situation of camp life, but they are simultaneously socialized by the power system in the camp to believe that hope for a better future is 'no longer'. Considering the refugee camp a waiting room, and the community centers as waiting rooms, it is clear how cynical attitudes in the camp are shaped by a disempowering

aid regime. Thus, like Lisa Wedeen noted for Syrians under Hafez Assad, refugees share a condition of unbelief in the camp system and in the future, but they still act *as if* they are waiting for the future that NGOs have prescribed for them. As Khosravi (2017) describes in Iran,

Everyday emergencies, uncertainties, and a possible futureless tomorrow (Abélès 2010) forces people to take refuge *from* the oppressor *in* the oppressor. (235)

While Azraq camp management may not be a repressive state regime, this assertion still applies to the experiences of refugees living there. By choosing to comply over risking deportation, refugees quite literally ‘take refuge’ in the very aid regime that disempowers them. A power system that is meant to aid refugees is continuously experienced as one that suppresses; a humanitarian regime meant to preserve a good future for its residents – by cruelly reminding refugees that ‘the greatest failure is to not try’ – has only taken that hope away. There is a cruelty here similar to Berlant’s cruel optimism: refugees’ absence of belief in the potentiality for good is caused by a system that exists precisely to ‘do good’.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered refugees as waiting cynically, lacking faith in the camp’s inadequate administration but nonetheless complying with the camp’s power system if only for fear of deportation. Having been socialized, shaped, and disempowered by the camp’s government to remain dependent, refugees have learned to not expect that anything will come of their waiting, and yet they continue to wait *as if* they do. Even NGO activities and work positions – which seem to resist meaninglessness – appear to be valued by refugees for the fact that they simply fill time, a mere simulation of a more meaningful biographical life that would otherwise be possible outside the camp.

Thus, to wait cynically means to do so without the hope that a future elsewhere is possible, but to nonetheless continue a performance of patience *as if* it is. But refugees – waiting out the war, waiting to return, and waiting for services – are not sure what they are waiting for in reality. There is fear that they are waiting for nothing. The next and final chapter follows refugees’ future visions to understand what exactly they might wait for when they believe there is no future.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ordinary Futures

How will the camp stare at itself in the coming time, look itself in the eye; the eye of time, the coming that is continually pending, but with a face – human or otherwise – that is defaced?
– Yousif Qasmiyeh, “The Camp is Time” (2017)

I SAT WITH AHLAM, a twenty-three-year-old native of Al-Shaykh Sa’d, Dar’a, in a Village 3 NGO center as she breastfed her newborn. She fled Syria in 2015 with her husband, two-year-old daughter, and twenty-eight-day-old son. At that time she was twenty years old, just starting her first year of university in child development studies. Now, three years into a future different from the one she expected, Ahlam works as a kindergarten teacher for an NGO just a few blocks from her caravan.

If nothing had happened in Syria, “I would have finished my studies [*kunit kamalit darasti*],” she tells me. “I would have gotten the same type of job.” She shifts in a bright red beanbag chair as the conversation shifts to the future.

“Our future, it doesn’t...there is no future [*ma fi mustaqbal*],” Ahlam says, as if thinking aloud. “I mean, the future is for our children, not for us. Our chance at a future has passed, but for our kids, I hope that their future is possible [*rahat ‘alayna bas awladna, batamana inu ma yuruh mustaqbal awladna*].” She pauses, looking down at her baby, and then continues, “The most important thing is our children – we won’t be able to finish our studies and specialize in something new. No, our children, *inshallah*. The most important thing is the children.”

Ahlam seems to come to terms with the loss of her previously imagined life trajectory, of earning her degree and becoming a schoolteacher in Dar’a. Even though she is still young, Ahlam speaks of her aspiration as a missed opportunity, turning her attention to a far-off future in

which her children are grown and pursuing their own dreams. She fondly remembers Dar'a's lush environment as a place full of life and still dreams of an eventual return. As she steers the conversation away from the loss of one kind of future, Ahlam reveals that she also often thinks of another place, the Jordanian city of Madaba southwest of Amman. She mentions wanting to join her brother, who lives in Madaba with his family: "I've visited before, it's like a paradise!" While dreams of a distant future return to Dar'a are fueled by Ahlam's life in Syria, her imaginings of Madaba – and a potential near future there – have been shaped by her circumstances in Jordan.

Accompanying these visions is her belief that the future does not exist at all, informed by the power relations that shape her present life in Azraq, as discussed in the previous chapter. This unbelief in the future was echoed by countless other residents in the camp. Indeed, Ahlam's boss, Farah, a middle-aged woman with a deep raspy voice, had overheard our conversation and added in a straight-forward tone: "There is no future. We had plans for the future, but the chance has passed us by [*bas rah 'alayna*]. We have to start over from the beginning [*min al-awwal wal-jdid*]." As I argued in chapter four, refugees are forced to believe in a future elsewhere, thus rendering their time in the camp as always the temporary present, but they do not hold the conviction that they are working toward a future at all – as conveyed by Farah's seemingly contradictory statement that they must start over in planning for the future but that the future is also nonexistent.

Discussing the future with Azraq's refugees like Ahlam and Farah would often conjure up various time imaginings and expressions of hope that bled into hopelessness. Ahlam does not believe in a future because of her current situation, but she imagines a near future in Madaba in which she feels less like a refugee but is still displaced; however, she also wants to someday return to Syria, a past which she remembers as "heaven" before the conflict and also "hell" during the conflict. What Ahlam envisions for the future may seem contradictory or incompatible, but I argue that it reveals a more existential crisis. Across all imagined futures, Ahlam would replace her exceptional and mundane life as a refugee with an (unextra)ordinary life as a schoolteacher.

Returning to the theme of the mundane first introduced in chapter one, I argue that the mundane is the meaningless boredom of living a life in exception, from waiting for hours at the community center to filling time with endless activities. The mundane is a feature of the

present, only concerned with sustaining biological lives. This chapter seeks to understand refugees' relationship to the *ordinary*, which I argue departs from the mundane in that it is the meaningful development of one's biographical life, unexceptional and taken for granted. Refugees' conceptualizations of various futures show that they strive for the ordinary and unexceptional, only possible outside of camp life and outside of displacement entirely. For Azraq's refugees, the ordinary lies in the future.

Of course, the future is an uncertain time and place. Arjun Appadurai (2013) writes,

To most ordinary people – and certainly to those who lead lives in conditions of poverty, exclusion, displacement, violence, and repression – the future often presents itself as a luxury, a nightmare, a doubt, or a shrinking possibility. (299)

Appadurai treats the future as not a “neutral space”, but one “shot through with affect and sensation” (287); that is, the future is a product of one's emotions and desires in the present. Future imaginings, he argues, are manifested through the everyday. More than dreams and fantasies, such imaginings are of a “quotidian energy” and are a routine aspect of life. Appadurai's reading of the future is helpful in understanding how the mundane present in Azraq produces imaginaries of ordinary futures.

This chapter analyzes refugee discussions of multiple futures: “foreclosed” (Feldman 2017, 45) or “collapsed” (Nielsen and Pedersen 2015), near, and far. I examine how refugees try to make sense of disrupted trajectories and the loss of previously meaningful biographical lives, imagining futures of a timeline in which Azraq is an eventual past or not imagining a future at all. Such future imaginings, however contradictory or fantastical they may seem, reveal how refugees reconcile their present deviation from their past selves and once-promised future selves. I demonstrate that Azraq's refugees, quarantined in an extreme environment of covert control, long to feel unexceptional, to restore time as something that can be taken for granted and left to pass unquestioned.

This chapter begins with an examination of humanitarianism's role in foreclosing futures. I then explore refugees' relations with their pre-war lives to understand how their perceptions of ordinariness in Syria informs their future desires to return to it. I analyze imaginings of the future – both near and far – as these visions relate to attitudes toward the exceptional label of

being a camp refugee. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the mundane and the ordinary and the significance of this distinction in refugee desires for the return.

The future in humanitarianism

Humanitarianism promotes a particular future, encapsulated by posters hung in NGO caravans in Azraq. In the community centers, these posters feature inspirational messages in English, including one in Village 6 promoting the UNHCR, which captions the image of a young defiant-looking boy with his arms crossed: “You can take away my home but you can’t take away my future.” Similar to the mural depicted in the previous chapter, such posters compose a narrative of refugee resilience – for later and elsewhere, not for the present – and are meant for donor consumption, hence the use of English.

Humanitarianism is meant to prepare refugees by orienting them toward a future when they have repatriated and their rights and duties as citizens of their home state are restored (Fresia and von Känel 2015, Turner 2014). Sophia Hoffmann (2017) writes:

Refugee security not only means ensuring the very basic survival of refugees, but also includes the aspiration to make refugees’ day-to-day lives as pleasant and ‘normal’ as aid budgets and contextual constraints allow. An awareness of the importance of time and temporality also shapes the humanitarian provision of protection: educational and training programmes aim to prepare refugees for the ‘day after’ of their humanitarian present, when they are expected to rejoin the workforce or re-enter regular schools. (101)

The temporary nature of humanitarianism necessitates framing the future as a time when refugees are no longer under camp jurisdiction because they are no longer refugees. However, as I have argued, the organization of humanitarian aid around the concept of ‘emergency’ simultaneously forecloses the future. By understanding displacement from a temporal perspective, Brun (2015, 2016) asserts that humanitarianism undermines the potential for a future by constructing itself around the temporality of emergency:

This notion of ‘emergency’ then tends to ‘defuturize’ – or empty – the future because it presents us with a heightened sense of discontinuity, rendering the future more contingent. (2016, 402)

Even though Azraq's system undermines any sense of urgency in supporting refugees, it still exists within a framework of emergency and thus an "enforced presentism" (Guyer 2007, 410). Furthermore, Bourdieu notes that it is the "annihilation of chances" that "leads to...the disappearance of any coherent vision of the future" (2000, 211). By prioritizing the sustenance of biological life and classifying the legitimacy of suffering within its borders, Azraq's system has left little room for opportunity of any kind – economic, educational, social – and its power politics have led refugees to consider their futures foreclosed. The only future that Azraq humanitarianism actually ensures is a biological one, and the sense of hopelessness that refugees express is tied to the loss of a biographical one.

The role of humanitarian intervention in foreclosing futures is clear in the following anecdote by a refugee who entered the camp in 2016:

We had been thinking of going outside first, I mean, when we first came here. I did not plan [*ma takhtit*] for us to stay here, in an Arab region, but instead we would go on the basis of seeking asylum [*bil-asas malji*] to a foreign region or country. We came here so that we could go...it was a dream that we would go to Canada, a dream [*halam*] to migrate to Canada from Syria. We have relatives in Canada, so we said, let's go. At first, people were migrating to Germany or to Canada and such, and they would go to these places specifically. You go on a boat in the sea. We got our things ready, and the people who left before us, they made it. The boat trip after that, they said a lot of people drowned in the sea. So we became afraid, scared for our children and the little ones. They said you could, if you go as refugees to Amman, that you go from there and register and then go to a foreign country, and specifically the country that you want to go to. That's what we heard in Syria. So we came on this basis, looking for a better future for our children [*mdawwir 'ala mustaqbal ahsan li-awladna*]. We came here and they put us in Village 5 [*hatuna bil-khamsa*], and we haven't left and we can't come or go. We didn't even get to Amman to then go to Canada! [*ma shufna Amman 'ashan nashuf Canada!*]

This refugee perceives a move westward as providing opportunities for an alternative future that she feels she has lost since being brought to Azraq. She lamented the life trajectories of her six sisters, all of whom left Syria before she did: "all of them are doing great except me [*kulhin amurhin bijanin ila ani*]" in various places, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Sweden. While her sisters are also all displaced, all of them have managed to continue their careers in some way and none of them lives with humanitarian support, which she identifies as the impediment to her chance at a similar life and a "better future". She expressed pain at the missed opportunity to

travel West and the poor timing of her arrival at the Jordanian border just after it closed when refugees allowed in were brought straight to Village 5: “No one knew about Village 5. If people knew about it, me being one of those people, they would die in the Rukban before coming here [*tamut ‘as-Satir, la tiji hun*].”

Albeit within a condition of fading hope, caused by humanitarian foreclosure of biographical futures, refugees do look elsewhere beyond the camp for potential futures. Feldman (2016) argues that for Palestinians living in protracted displacement in camps across the Middle East, the passing of time has created the sense that the future is “foreclosed” (412), and yet, refugees still have various ways of envisioning that future. In Azraq, I was confronted with a similar sense of utter hopelessness. And still, refugees discussed visions for a future. I attempt to reconcile these seemingly contradictory emotions to understand how refugees do not have hope but may still have *hopes*. Just as we see with Ahlam at the beginning of this chapter, various future imaginings are informed by refugee relations to their past and present circumstances. The following section explores one kind of future imagining produced from discourses of nostalgic yearning.

Nostalgic longing and unkept promises for the future

Migration, argues Frances Pine, is “both future oriented and (nearly always) backward looking” (2014, S99). She states that those who are on the move envision themselves in different times and spaces at once. Brun (2015) writes that the unattainable future for refugees “lies in the past and is represented by the places and lives they were forced to leave” (23). While those who have remained in Syria, having witnessed the physical destruction of their surroundings, have felt “exiled in their own city” (Azzouz 2019, 2), Syrians who have been displaced might more easily be able to reimagine the spaces and faces they cherished from the past through intensified nostalgic recollection. Displacement enables the refugee to maintain imaginings of the best version of home without the interruption of time, progress, or destruction (Boym 2001).

Indeed, as this section explores, many of Azraq’s residents seem to have mentally preserved Syria in a golden age. Ahlam described her past life in Syria: “We were living in heaven, we were living the best life [*kuna ‘ayyishin y’ani jana, kuna ‘ayyishin ahla ‘isha*].” Aya, the director of the NGO center in Village 5, also used the word ‘heaven’ when she recalled her home city of Aleppo:

Life was...I feel myself in terms of the camp that I went from heaven to hell [*iltaqit min al-jana ila an-nar*]. Aleppo...we were living the best life. Firstly, we were with family; secondly, our matters were dignified. We've lost a lot of respect here. In Syria, we were living...we would head out in the morning to work – this is after I married – we would come back after work and return to our children and be with them at home. And with our families and relatives and our people [*sha'bna*]...even on the street, even if you're not related, you're from Aleppo, you know each other, you feel that they are even more than your family, your close family I mean [*hasihum akthar min ahlik ahlik*]. It's not like that here. Here in Jordan, there's no one you know, and it's not your country, there's no respect, no hospitality, nothing. Here in the camp, the people are not your people [*ash-sha'b ghayr sha'bak*]. The situation is different, the environment is different, and the life is different and it means...there is none.

Like Ahlam, Aya contrasts her home country with her current life, which seems to lack everything necessary for a good life: family, community, and dignity. Her comparisons extend beyond home versus camp to critique Jordan as well, despite never having seen Jordan beyond Azraq. What is important in Aya's discussion is that Syria is preserved in her mind as home to a united people. She later described that even though each city in Syria has its unique traditions in folklore, "you know about the other cities", but even this sense of connection she believes is missing from the camp, in which 'the people are not your people' despite all residents being Syrian.

Analyzing nostalgic sentiment, like these comments by Ahlam and Aya, allows for a better understanding of how refugees orient themselves toward and away from various pasts and futures. The literature on nostalgia generally understands it as a "longing for what is lacking in a changed present...a yearning for what is now unattainable, simply because of the irreversibility of time" (Pickering and Keightley 2006, 920); a "reaction against the irreversible" (Jankélévitch 1983 in Angé and Berliner 2015, 2); the result of a "new phase of accelerated, nostalgia-producing globalization" (Robertson 1992 in *ibid*); and a "specific poster vis-à-vis the past seen as irreversible" (Berliner 2015, 2). According to Bissell (2005), nostalgia requires that

The present must be compared to other moments and marked as a moment of decline – as in the fall of empires, for example, or national eclipse, or a loss of power and position by a particular social group. (221)

Experiencing the present as a ‘moment of decline’ from a glorious past that can never be revisited is what gives nostalgic feeling its painful sense of loss and leads the nostalgic individual to seek out a future that looks like the past.

Refugees regularly make nostalgic comments that respond to the difficulties of everyday life in the camp, preserving Syria as superior to Azraq – and Jordan in general. Ahlam showed me a video on her phone of children bathing and playing in a water reservoir in Dar’a, saying, “See, water was never an issue for us in Dar’a. We had so much water we didn’t even think twice about it.” Abundance of water deeply contrasts her water-poor host country of Jordan. In the camp, water is supplied via taps located in every block, and Ahlam mentioned that she has developed shoulder problems from carrying jugs of water to her caravan. Hadiya, the young woman in Village 5 who was waiting for a referral to the emergency room, recalled to me her experience giving birth to her first child in Dar’a: “The hospital here does not give you any care. At least in Syria, if the hospital itself was bad they still attended to you well.” What she distinguishes here is not the quality of medical services, but the quality of *care*.



FIGURE 23. Camp residents fill jugs at the neighborhood water tap. [Photo courtesy of Alisa Reznick/*Al Jazeera*, 2015]

Returning to my conversation with Ammar at Rumi cafe, he expressed similar nostalgic memories about Syria. He chuckled when he recounted a popular story in which the Syrian army arrived to take his hometown of Bosra Al-Sham, an affluent Dar’awi village of villas and wheat

fields that “look like gold”, and “they asked, ‘Do you really want freedom?’” Having experienced both camp and urban life as a Syrian refugee in Jordan, Ammar observed how Syrian pride has fed nostalgic renderings of home:

Syrians never really thought of Jordan as somewhere they would stay for more than just temporary work. It was always: go for some time, work, and then come back. When Syrians first came here [at the beginning of the conflict in 2012], they had this idea that they are better than Jordanians. Syria has always thought of itself as the best in the Middle East. We are more educated, more cultured, we are the only country to have peace relations with Israel. Especially Jordan, which we considered as Bedouins. So when we came here, a lot of Syrians had to receive help from Jordanians while sticking their noses up. The situation has changed now. Jordan can now say ‘we are in a better situation than you are’.

Refugees’ belief that Syria is superior to Jordan stems not from their poor experiences in Azraq but from a patriotic confidence cultivated in Syria and merely bolstered by the camp’s many shortcomings. During conversations about mass protests across Jordan against a proposed income tax increase in May and June 2018, refugee participants of NGO training programs in Villages 3 and 5 expressed fear that the situation would turn violent. No one wished their fate upon Jordanians, but one resident commented, tongue-in-cheek:

Honestly, and God forgive me for saying this, but if it came to it, Syria would never accept you Jordanians!

Considering Syria’s rich history of accepting refugees from neighboring countries (Chatty 2018), this comment conjures an image of Syria as not only in a condition that would allow the country to take in refugees at all, but also as superior to Jordan, whose citizens would not be good enough to obtain Syrian refuge. This refugee’s remarks look toward a particular future – one in which demonstrations lead to Jordanians fleeing the country – that is constructed in the form of a particular past – one in which Syria was a “refuge state” (Chatty 2018). The commentator reinstates a previously perceived world order in which Syria is better off than Jordan, attempting to overcome present discontinuity with the past.

Such nostalgic discourse is revealing of refugees’ relations to various temporalities. Nostalgia is more about a lost time than a lost place; it is a *temporal* displacement, exacerbated in this case by spatial dislocation. As Svetlana Boym (2001) argues, the desire to return to a specific place is actually the desire to return to a specific time when one was in that space. It is the desire for a

time when one was ‘at home’ – whatever that may be – and, therefore, not nostalgic. Nostalgia is the hope that return is possible and that a “final belonging” will render nostalgia unnecessary, all in the context of impossible return. Ultimately, she states, while return to a physical place may be possible, going back in time, the object of nostalgic longing, is not. Following from Boym’s work, my analysis of refugees’ nostalgic commentary is not meant to critique a glorified or inaccurate telling of the past, but rather to examine the significance of how present, past, and future is juxtaposed in the contemporary space.

For refugees in Azraq, reconciling the past with the present involves reckoning with the figure of Bashar Assad. Many of my interlocutors who did not support Assad did this by leaving him out of their narrative entirely, failing to even acknowledge the repressive regime that forced them to flee. Nostalgic recollections tend to paint over the past’s dark periods, as Safadi’s (2016) study on nostalgia among Damascenes during the conflict cites Boym (2001): “the war has generated a ‘gilded aura’ around the pre-uprising form of the Assad regime – ‘the kinder, gentler version of autocracy’ – that perhaps may still be perceived as salvageable and desirable” (31). In this way, he asserts, citizens’ nostalgia has become a mechanism for the Assad regime’s survival:

Nostalgia for the past, then, involves forgetting the horrors of authoritarianism and the terror it inspired in the hearts of its citizens, while remembering and celebrating the prosperity made possible by neoliberal autocracy. (34)

My interlocutors certainly have not forgotten the violence they fled; however, nostalgic imagery described by Ahlam, Aya, Ammar, and others above is of course based in past lifestyles shaped by Assad’s regime. Bashar, like his father before him, runs a secular, neoliberal regime that has created a state narrative of prosperity and promises its citizens a future of endless opportunities (see Wedeen 1998, 1999). While neoliberalism has led to the tiresome grind for a rewarding life that is always out of reach (Berlant 2011, Guyer 2007), the Syrian conflict has punished those who did not buy into the regime’s promises, abruptly halting the grind and leaving the future golden age precariously distant. A Syrian future of affluence has been left unrealized, an unkept promise of the Assad regime. Nostalgic refugees may want to return to a time when they (perhaps cynically) allowed themselves to believe in this promise. It is possible that what Lisa Wedeen (1998) identified as an ‘as if’ cynicism in everyday Syria is preferable to the ‘as if’ cynicism in everyday Azraq.

But perhaps not – when asked to imagine a future scenario in which she would return to Syria, Aya responded with a weary laugh, “When they come to an agreement [*bas yatafqu*].” She refers here to the regime and the opposing armed factions. Already at this time in mid 2018, the news spoke of Assad’s gradual gaining of territory and possibilities for peace talks between the warring factions. Aya’s comment admits that she would like to believe that an agreement is possible but in reality is unlikely, an inconvenient practicality that cuts through nostalgic discourse. It is a reminder that refugees may be nostalgic but still require a change to the Syria of the past in order to return in the future. Thus, refugee visions of a future Syria do depart from its past – revealing how quickly hope slides into hopelessness, how nostalgia for the past quickly cedes to the reality of the present and its unlikely future.

The near future

To return to the work of Jane Guyer introduced in the previous chapter, she notes that people have begun to respond to the immediate present and orient themselves toward a distant future: “the shift in temporal framing has involved a double move, toward both very short and very long sightedness, with a symmetrical evacuation of the near past and the near future” (2007, 410). She nuances the common anthropological focus on how people live out their pasts in the present with an economic lens, analyzing the concept of the ‘long run’ regarding economic growth. Providing the example of 1990s Nigeria under military rule, Guyer notes that the state promises fiscal growth in the long run while in the meantime, citizens endure hard work to get there: “a combination of fantasyfuturism and enforced presentism.” She argues that this vacates the near future, leaving the ‘long run’ in a continuously distant future.

Engaging in Guyer’s work within the context of Azraq can enlighten refugees’ seemingly contradictory visions for the future. We have seen how NGOs promote a distant future return to Syria as they operate within the everyday with no in-between. Refugees may not believe in the future at all, but they do still express a desire to achieve the return home. However, camp residents also speak of different, closer futures that do not threaten the integrity of far future visions: less grandeur futures in which they are still displaced but might be able to feel less like a refugee – and less exceptional. These unexceptional futures take place between the present and the far future, harmlessly indulged as plans for the meantime from the present situation. I

identify this ‘meantime’, an alternative everyday to the everyday of Azraq life, as the near future. The following section examines how Azraq’s residents bear an exceptional weight of the refugee label.

The refugee label

A Village 5 resident once explained to me:

‘Refugee’. Your name is ‘refugee’. It really hurts. The word ‘refugee’ hurts, and it hurts in all meanings of the word [*tajrah fi kil ma’na al-kilmeh*].

While the label of refugee is meant to recognize one’s rights when one is no longer under the protection of the home state, camp dwellers often lamented the term. During a meeting in an NGO center in Village 5, aid workers brainstormed ideas for celebrating World Refugee Day. One of the refugee volunteers present remarked,

Isn’t it strange that we have to celebrate this day? It’s a sad day, isn’t it weird? [*Mu gharib inu lazim nahtafil fi hada al-‘id? Shway hazin, mu gharib?*]

This refugee seemed to be asking, *what’s to celebrate?* Every NGO in the camp is obligated to mark World Refugee Day in some way, most importantly to produce content for donor consumption. The refugee’s remark points to the fact that NGOs for some reason view this day as one that must be celebrated, similarly to activities organized in the camp for Mother’s Day and International Women’s Day, as opposed to a day that should remind the international community that refugees are still waiting to return home. The strange nature of celebrating the exceptional marginalization of Azraq’s population is indeed curious. Some NGOs partner together to organize a sports competition, and this particular NGO opted for a small carnival. During the carnival, which brought games, face painting, cotton candy, and popcorn to Village 5, I overheard a teenage girl telling her friends, “I really feel like I am outside the camp! [*an jad hasis hali inu barra!*]”. And yet, the basis of the carnival was precisely her presence in the camp. Furthermore, aid workers chose Village 5 to be the site for the carnival as a “treat” to the most vulnerable residents, and it was only open to girls, the most vulnerable group in the village. While the carnival in the end may not have been a painful experience for attendees, the reason behind it was based entirely in the exceptional, namely, refugees, Village 5 residents, and youth

girls. Held on the last day of the girls' programming, the carnival's end meant that the girls returned to their lives in Azraq with even less to occupy their time.



FIGURE 24. Scenes from the World Refugee Day carnival in Village 5. [Photos by the author, 2018]



Feldman (2018) describes the pain associated with the refugee label for Palestinian refugees living in camps across the Levant (35). She notes that loss is central to the experience of the refugee, but especially so for camp refugees. Changing rules and regulations constantly challenge camp dwellers' efforts to recreate a sense of stability, "returning [refugees] repeatedly to the experience of loss that is a core feature of displacement" (22). To be a camp refugee is to exist defined by loss of home, status, stability, and control at once. Living in a camp is a daily reminder of one's status as a refugee, she writes:

In the asylum and resettlement process, the refugee is a threshold category, a means of changing one's position, an exit strategy. In extended displacement, whether in a camp, an informal settlement, or a city, it is a life category, by which people are constrained and from within which people act. (37)

By occupying refugeehood as a life category, camp residents are restrained more than they are mobilized by the label. As discussed in the third chapter, the label classifies people in the camp by their dependency and power: refugees are dependent upon aid, and aid workers are those who wield power.

Wendy Pearlman (2018) analyzes how Syrians' relationships with the refugee label have changed throughout the duration of the conflict based on their situation. For Syrian refugees in the Middle East and Europe, she finds, the label has more to do with how individuals identify and less to do with their location:

[F]orced migration does not only signify displacement from a specific physical place, but also dislocation from the aspects of one's identity which were built in that place and can be difficult (or impossible) to recuperate elsewhere. (305)

In a similar vein to nostalgia, the label reflects one's identity, and "becoming a refugee...means forging a new relationship to one's prior sense of self." For Pearlman's interlocutors, the label could show either that one was in 'legitimate' need of assistance, or it revealed that the status conflicted with one's ability to integrate or continue a career. For many, not being able to succeed in a career while in displacement implies that they are perceived by the state and society as a refugee, whereas successful career-building allows them to see themselves as they were before (i.e., a doctor, teacher, lawyer, etc) instead of as a refugee (306). Thus, Pearlman concludes,

Syrian experiences illustrate how individuals' self-understandings as refugees evolve over time as a contingent process not necessarily coterminous with actual physical displacement. (302)

For refugees in Azraq camp, the correlation between their situation in time and attitudes toward the refugee label informs my analysis of their near future imaginings. I argue that these imaginings, while framed around a specific place, are equally about transporting to a different time. That is, near future imaginings sometimes involve places that do not exist, and, more importantly, they offer a timeline less constrained by the refugee label. These visions of a near future promise liberation from Azraq's temporal, as well as spatial, confines without compromising far future imaginings of return. The following section explores such near future visions that take refugees to alternative but unexceptional places in time.

Escaping exception

Camp residents often expressed a longing to be in a different space – not just in Syria, but anywhere else. Khosravi (2017) writes of a similar yearning for Iranian youth:

Multiple precarities trigger a desire to escape both from here and from now. A longing to be somewhere else (emigration) and some time else (in a future that would replace the untoward present) is a symptom of the precarious life that Iranians live. (7)

He argues that youth express a desire to migrate because they believe “there is no future here” in Iran (87-88). He states that “*spatial* movement” (88) to the West “is believed to be a solution for their *temporal* immobility” (my emphasis). For Azraq’s dwellers, near future imaginings carry a similar function.

When Ahlam spoke about moving to Madaba, she drew on the ordinary quality of her brother’s life there.

My brother is two years younger than me and already has a newborn baby and a nice house. He lives with my family in a nice area where they can feel like they have family around [*inu fi hawwalihum ahl*]. If I could just be outside of the camp, maybe living in Madaba...I wouldn’t feel like I’m a refugee [*lan ahis inu fi ishi ismu laji*].

Similar to the refugee who spoke of her sisters as being better off, Ahlam envies her brother’s seemingly ordinary life. Even though her brother is also a refugee, she lists the aspects of his life that are not available to her as a camp refugee, namely, a house and nearby family. Both siblings have experienced the loss of home and encounter limitations as Syrian refugees living in Jordan, but Ahlam’s brother has been able to adjust his life goals from having a house and family in Syria to having both in Jordan. Ahlam perceives Madaba as a space where she could seek refuge from the burdensome refugee label that comes with life in Azraq. The physical environment of Madaba may also allow her to reach ‘outside’ time – perhaps even to join national time – a temporality unregulated by her refugeehood and independent of humanitarian-run time.

In an NGO center in Village 3, I sat with a group of refugee volunteers in the empty kindergarten space. They were enjoying a week off from teaching in between semesters, and the heat outside drew the group to the coolest caravan at the center. At this moment, the women drank tea and discussed horoscopes that had been sent around a WhatsApp group. The topic transitioned to clothing and how they preferred to dress for this extreme weather. Then Fadwa spoke up, “You know where I would like to go? I wish there was a public park [*muntaza*] here where we could go for a change of scenery [*nughayyir al-jaw*].” The other women in the room agreed. Fadwa continued,

Where can we go to take our kids to play? All we can do is go to this little hill and then it's just more rocks and sand, and when we come back we don't feel like we've gotten a break because now the kids are just covered in sand. We want a place where we can go, bring a picnic, drink coffee for a few hours, some trees and greenery, so we feel like we've gotten a break [*nahis halna inu rayyihna*]. There's an area near Village 2 with a few trees, and I told my husband, it looks like they are maybe building us a park! But that was three years ago, so I guess not.

Another volunteer interjected, "I thought the same thing, I told my husband the same thing! We didn't know we were both thinking about having a park until now!"

Fadwa and the other volunteers desire a physical change from the monotonous desert scenery within their current space of residence. They anticipate the feeling of returning to their caravans at the end of the day feeling rested. But the volunteers also long for a temporal break from the camp's unchanging environment. Time passed leisurely in a park assumes that refugees have a moment to breathe but are not overwhelmed with too much meaningless time. A park would enable refugees to structure their day around intentional breaks, granting them temporal independence from the camp system's monopoly over time. Being a refugee excludes the possibility of engaging in any activity that goes beyond tolerating and surviving, and thus an escape to the park restores a sense of pre-displacement life, continuing the Syrian tradition of enjoying family picnics and outings. Ultimately, these imaginings of a green oasis in the Azraq desert are centered on a nonexistent park, one that would have to be provided by the humanitarian administration that considers trees to be an obstruction to security.

Whenever Aya felt an extreme amount of pressure in her job at the NGO center in Village 5, she entertained the idea of going back to Syria. During one instance, the center had been struggling to meet the quota for the lifeskills program because she felt the outreach team of refugee staff failed to make enough of an effort. To add to the stress, the refugee staff had recently discovered that working the lifeskills course would pay an additional two dinars per session, and the competition to teach the course had become more intense. Fingers had been pointed in all directions during a staff meeting that afternoon led by a Jordanian staff member who came in from Amman to mediate. Aya, feeling isolated between the Syrian staff in positions below her and the Jordanian staff above her, had left the meeting and found me in the administrative office, where she slumped into a chair and started to cry. "I'm tired of this, I can't take it anymore. I'll find another organization to work with, and if I can't find work, I'll go back to

Syria,” she told me, as if talking herself through a way out of the stressful situation. It was clear that for Aya, living in a camp, cooped up in a caravan with her husband and six small children in a secluded village, is an experience of intense pressure. When her job, a managerial position that she works six days a week, added to the pressure, it was always threatening to be the final straw. With Aya’s work usually being the one aspect that makes camp living manageable, she considers Syria to be the failsafe; always an alternative option. Indeed, for refugees in Village 5, Syria is the only place they can choose to go, a decision that for Aya may help her feel more in control of her circumstances. Several months after I left fieldwork, Aya told me that she sometimes thinks more seriously of going back to Syria. I asked if she meant she would return to her mother and her home in Aleppo. “No, my mother is too old to worry her with this,” she replied. “If I build a tent in Syria it would be better than the situation we’re in now [*law abni khayma bi-Suriya ahsan min hal al-wad*].” Aya regularly envisions a near future in which she is in Syria but has not returned home, lives in a tent but not a refugee camp, and is internally displaced but not a refugee. The physical space of Syria, though likely unattainable, would bring with it a temporality unconstrained by a camp system. It would mean shedding the refugee label but not absolving her of displacement entirely, still preserving the possibility for a far future return home.

Regardless of where one might imagine a near future, merely imagining it helps refugees to cope with the actual, lived present. Just as nostalgic longing for the return can never be realized, escaping to the near future is never acted upon, only imagined at times of heightened pressure and anxiety and reactionary to one’s current situation, following from Pearlman. Still, while never acted upon, these kinds of mental escapes from the temporal constraints of the exceptional refugee label can be reassuring during times when one lacks resources to be able to change the current situation.

The following section explores imaginaries of a more distant future in which a return to the ordinary is possible.

The far future

Although the previous chapter described a population that is waiting cynically for a time when they can leave the camp – having little choice but to expect a future elsewhere in a time of

uncertainty, hopelessness, powerlessness, and fear – cynicism does not omit the possibility that a refugee may still dream about the future they desire. Indeed, the state of hopelessness in Azraq seems to have refugees left with only their imaginings of alternative temporalities.

As previously mentioned, I understand the near future as an alternative meantime in which refugees seek ordinariness, a close future that is still compatible with the distant future about which refugees like Aya dream. If we explore dreams for the distant future, allowing for fantastical imaginings of grandeur, what does this future look like and what do aspirations for the return to Syria tell us about refugees' relationship to the present? In these final sections, I argue that even dreams for an impossible return are neither fantastical nor do they involve the affluence promised to them by Assad's neoliberal regime. Rather, like near future visions, dreams for the future return to Syria pursue the ordinary and unexceptional.

The ordinary

As discussed in the first chapter, Tobias Kelly (2008) argues that the mundane is an inherent aspect of the extreme condition of life in the West Bank during the second intifada. While Palestinians continued to strive for ordinary lives – going to school or work, for instance – Kelly demonstrates that their sense of the ordinary was “always fragile” (365). For them, the ordinary was an aspiration, and thus, a source of both hope and anxiety, “shot through with a residual hope that it may still be possible, and a fear that it might not” (354). The ordinary is something that West Bank Palestinians worked toward, a way to fight against the oppression that sought to shut down all means of living an ordinary life. Kelly's interlocutors go to extreme lengths to achieve the ordinary, which carries with it an air of rebellion in the face of perceived injustice.

In Feldman's (2008) analysis of bureaucratic institutions under both the British Mandate and the Egyptian administration of Gaza, she similarly understands the mundanity of crisis as leading Palestinians to strive for ordinary lives. She writes,

The daily struggles of doing a job, of procuring a service, serve as a reminder that Gaza is more than a stage for conflict and violence. It is as real—if also surreal—a place as any in which we live, and people there continued to be concerned with and to strive to better their mundane quotidian lives. Gazans are not simply martyrs and victims...but also ordinary people with common concerns. (26-27)

Gazans worked through the mundane to recreate ordinariness within extreme circumstances. From both Kelly's and Feldman's work, there is a sense that Palestinians could still continue to develop their biographical lives within that same space, that the ordinary was still possible despite mundane circumstances. However, in Azraq, I posit that the ordinary cannot be recreated. The environment is unfamiliar and unproductive, and refugees are marginalized both temporally and spatially – their entire existence is now confined to an exceptional experience. Although refugees may form routines as they adapt to the camp, continuing cultural practices and traditions that may seem ordinary, all of these can be considered tools of survival – part of the mundane they must put up with – not a Palestinian-like declaration of rebellion against the extreme by continuing with their ordinary lives. The ordinary, the pursuit of biographical progress, is simply incompatible with Azraq's mundanity.

For camp dwellers, the ordinary can only exist outside of Azraq's borders, specifically in their home in Syria. The ordinary looks like the everyday studied by Liebelt and Werbner (2018) in their work on 'everyday Islam': "familiar, taken-for-granted, naturalized, commonsensical, unreflective, embodied" (5). Syrians strive for an uneventful life that can be taken for granted, and no matter how uneventful Azraq dwelling is, it is never familiar, taken-for-granted, nor free of anxiety. The final section looks at the return as the restoration of ordinariness.

Return to the ordinary

Months after I left Jordan, I noticed that Aya had posted a status on WhatsApp of a video filmed by someone returning to Syria, on a bus looking out at the desert, then passing through a checkpoint, then getting on another bus. "And finally [*wu akhiran*]," Aya had captioned the video. I thought to myself, *had Aya actually made the journey back to Syria? After making regular remarks about returning, had she finally gone?* I feared for her safety, but I also knew that she would not risk her children's lives with premature return. I messaged her, thankful that texts could mask my concern: "Is it true?"

She responded with a reassuring but bittersweet voice message, "*am nahlam ya Melissa* [we're only dreaming, Melissa]". It was as if, while hope was fading, she might still experience the return through the person who filmed the video, to imagine how she would feel if she were on that bus, and to dream that one day she might reenact it in reality.

For refugees, the return absolves them of their exceptional status. Feldman (2018) writes,

Th[e] reference to return does not necessarily mean that people think it likely or plausible that an actual return to lost lands will happen, but that the notion of restoration and redress is central to both refugee politics and refugee identity. (63)

The return is tied to the refugee label, which for Syrians has carried a sense of loss and marginalization. When refugees spoke to me of the return, they were often speaking about returning to their ordinary lives.

Visions for the return are part of the “everyday disenchantment” (Bryant 2015, 155) of life in Azraq in which refugees may be nostalgic for a past Syria but do not believe they will return. It is this disenchantment that leads to what can come across as confused ideas for the future. One aid worker noted,

Mostly in regards to the future, people tell me ‘we don’t believe we will return [*mish musadi’in narja*’], and ‘it’s not in our hands when we require safety or if maybe we will be in danger or won’t be able to go back to our home’. But most of them, I think, the future is uncertain in their eyes [*ghamid fi ‘aynayhum*]. Often they are thinking, or at least they think about fleeing for example to Turkey or about migrating outside. And most of them don’t know what they are going to do, they say, ‘we just want to get through today, and that’s it’.

The simultaneous and conflicted visions to leave the camp, go elsewhere, return to Syria, or just take life one day at a time create a powerful sense of tension and set an unclear way forward. Azraq’s refugees can perform nostalgic acts and express nostalgia for the future return while also engaging in imaginings of near futures. Camp dwellers can both believe that there is no future and envision one outside of the camp. They can have dreams for the future without having hope, and they can long for the return to Syria while fearing forced return. Feldman (2016) writes of generations of Palestinian refugees in exile in Lebanon, “In these conditions some people profess no hope for the future, indicating that the relenting and repeated difficulties of life have made this sentiment impossible” (412). At the same time, she emphasizes the complexity of hopelessness in protracted displacement, asserting that people may still “express hopes, even in an era of hopelessness”; that is, having *hopes*, but not hope.

While they may not believe that they will return to Syria, as the aid worker above noted, refugees resist preparing for any other type of future, especially one within Azraq, which they do

not perceive to be a space in which to build a future. Rawan, the development NGO aid worker, commented on refugees' future plans, demonstrating how camp dwellers navigate this space:

They speak about the future, yes. I mean none of them ever say that they want to build up their caravan or they want to make a house in Jordan. No, all of them say that they will do that 'when we return to Syria, when we return to Syria'. So they, they don't think about the subject of staying at all [*ma byufakiru inu yudilu aslan*], just that they want to return, or at least get out of the camp.

Simon Turner describes a similar dynamic for Burundian refugees in Tanzania, stating that they "remain displaced in order to achieve future emplacement" (Turner 2016, 38). While his Burundian interlocutors perceivably expressed more belief in the return than Syrians in Azraq, there is still some form of emplacement that camp residents engage in. This timepass of holding out for a future in Syria while not having reason to believe in this future puts Azraq's residents into the negotiating space between "potentiality and exhaustion" (Povinelli 2012, 454). It is perhaps along this potentiality-exhaustion continuum that we can understand the possibility of dreaming without hope. Refugees are constantly shifting along this continuum, responding to their situation with different visions of different futures. A comment by a resident of Village 5 exemplifies this shift:

We will go back, and on the contrary, we will build because they have destroyed a lot in Syria. If we don't return – we, the communities at the countryside level, at the educated level, at the manufacturing level – if these groups don't go back to Syria, who will, who will rebuild Syria [*min bido yu'amir Suriya*]?...God, we were happy, and our country was fine [*wallah kuna mabsutin, kan baladna balad khayr*].

The refugee starts out defiant in her promise of the return but then concludes by mourning the loss of aspects central to ordinariness – of being 'happy' and 'fine'. She is both nostalgic and fearful – nostalgic for a past Syria in which 'we were happy' and fearful that no one will rebuild and ordinary life will not be restored. She believes that reconstruction, and her participation in this project, is the way to resurrect ordinary life.

Connected to the return, physically rebuilding the environment that used to compose the pillars of ordinary Syrian life not only recreates the familiarity of non-emergency but is also a drastically contrasting atmosphere to the material structures void of history and meaning that compose Azraq. Returning and rebuilding puts refugees in control of their time and space. Norum *et al* (2016) state,

[T]he future is perceived by Burmese exiles to be a space of security...Additionally, the future may also be seen as a space of role reversal where dependence on aid agencies and NGOs will be inverted. (75)

In Azraq, refugees envision the future as ordinary life restored in the absence of humanitarianism. The ordinary is the real, pragmatic time when things work out, when ex-refugees can take its very ordinariness for granted. Set ideally in Syria, the ordinary restores the potential for the good life.

Kelly (2008) notes that hope is usually accompanied by fear. Indeed, underlining Azraq refugees' visions of the future as ordinary is fear. As Bendixsen and Eriksen (2018) state in their ethnographic study of an informal Palestinian tented camp in Oslo, the future can be a "time when everything falls into place" (90), but it can also be "a time of collapse and disaster." For refugees, the potential for a future good life is not only threatened by the ongoing emergency in Azraq, but also by the ongoing emergency in Syria. When the border between Syria and Jordan reopened in December 2018, some 4,000 Syrians did return (*Jordan Times* 2018), with another 15,000 following as of July 2019 (Turnbull 2019). For those remaining – more than half a million – the decision to stay has been rooted in fear and distrust of the regime's capacity to forgive their having fled (Hamou and Edwards 2018). There are also other more practical issues beyond "a simple reversal of the threats to physical safety" (Omata 2013, 1282) that keep Syrians from return. Identification is a major concern for Syrians in Jordan, as expired Syrian passports are extremely expensive and difficult to renew. In 2017, Syria barred Jordan, Turkey, Kuwait, and Sudan from renewing Syrian passports at all, forcing displaced Syrians to obtain passports that are valid for only two years (*Syria Call* 2018). In Jordan, all Syrians requesting passports must make multiple visits to the embassy in West Amman. Furthermore, those who try to return to Syria carrying UNHCR documents are quickly identified as having fled as refugees. Indeed, the increasing difficulty of maintaining up-to-date Syrian identification can further delay any plans to return.

As has been established throughout this dissertation, life in Azraq is shaped in part by the fear of deportation. Forced repatriation delivers refugees to a reality far from their imaginings of a past and future Syria. The danger of premature return not only threatens their biological lives, but also their visions for future ordinary biographical lives. A return to life in Syria under conflict is a return to yet another exception. Aya told me that what first prompted her and her

family's plans to flee was not a fear for their biological lives – though coming home to their house under rubble was the final reason – but the death of their biographical lives.

When the crisis started in Syria, the salaries were cut off [*inqata'at ar-rawatib*], so where did we go? We [her siblings and their families] gathered in my mother's house, us and the men and the children [laughing]. They were telling me...anyone who works on the land and in building construction, he had it easier because there is still work for him. He can find work. But for us, that was it, as an employee cut off from the salary, everything came to a halt, what can we do? So my mother gets up, she's a strong woman with a strong personality, she says: 'That's it, you should all leave Syria. There is nothing left here for us [*Suriya ma dal lana wala ishi*]. One by one you should leave.'

With salaries cut off, Aya's and her sibling's professions – spanning education, journalism, and engineering sectors – no longer held value and career development was no longer a priority. The decision to leave stemmed from a conversation about job opportunity. The encouragement from Aya's mother came from an understanding that her children's and grandchildren's biographical lives had no where to go within Syria. Moreso than a matter of survival, fleeing was about seeking opportunity.

An ordinary life is a meaningful one. At its center is the ability to develop one's biographical purpose via a career and social life. The desire to return to Syria is a desire to restore biographical life and to feel supported beyond the humanitarian sustenance of biological life.

Conclusion

This chapter has complicated refugees' future visions within a context of hopelessness and powerlessness. I have demonstrated how refugee perceptions of the future are shaped in response to their current lives in exception as camp refugees in spatiotemporal isolation. Refugee appreciation for their pre-war past has centered completely on the ordinary lives they could take for granted more so than on neoliberal promises for grandeur futures. Similarly, yearnings for both near and distant futures seek a return to this ordinariness through an alternate 'meantime' spent feeling less like a refugee and an eventual return to Syrian life.

For many refugees in Azraq, the return to the ordinary is the restoration of legacy-building, positively ensuring the lives and futures of their children, as Ahlam expressed at the beginning

of this chapter. Within the spatiotemporal confines of the camp, refugees like Ahlam no longer have control over whether their children's lives and futures can be ensured. It is now in the hands of a power system that cannot even ensure the future of refugees like Ahlam herself.



“WHAT IF ?” EXHIBITION

معرض “ماذا لو؟”



What if ...all efforts were unified to provide needed support to all refugees, what if... safe solutions were introduced to all risks children and adolescents are exposed to, what if... a bright future is guaranteed to all children in a safe place full of hope? What would their lives be?

Join us at the “WHAT IF” exhibition to meet children from Azraq camp and understand more about the challenges and the solutions through their eyes.

ماذا لو.... توحدت الجهود لتوفير الدعم اللازم داخل مخيمات اللاجئين، ماذا لو... وجدت حلول آمنة وفورية لحل جميع التحديات التي يتعرض لها الأطفال والبالغين ، ماذا لو... عملنا معاً لتوفير مكان آمن مليء بالأمل لمستقبل مشرق للأطفال؟ كيف سيكون شكل الحياة عندها؟

شاركونا في معرض “ماذا لو؟” الذي سيعتد بمشاركة أطفال مخيم الأزرق لمعرفة المشاكل والحلول من وجهة نظرهم.

Location: Haya Cultural Center - Al Shmeisani
 Date: Sunday and Monday, April 21th and 22th
 Time: 5:30 PM
Open invitation

المكان: مركز هيا الثقافي - الشميمساني
 الزمان: الأحد و الاثنين بتاريخ 21 و 22 نيسان
 الساعة: 5:30 مساءً
الدعوة عامة

FIGURE 25. An NGO operating in Azraq imagines a different kind of camp. [Photo courtesy of Plan International, 2018]

CONCLUSION

Azraq in the Past Tense

A FEW MONTHS AFTER going on outreach visits together in Azraq, Aseel and I met up at a cafe in Abdoun, an affluent neighborhood home to the American and Saudi embassies and Taj Mall in West Amman. It was strange to get together in a space outside the camp, wearing something other than the usual aid worker gear. Our time in the community centers was behind us. I had moved on to a development NGO, and Aseel was looking for a new position and had a job interview the following day with an NGO based in Amman. She wanted work that was fulfilling but not physically taxing in the way that her post in Azraq had been. We talked about her work in the community centers and the camp in the past tense, and yet Azraq was still there, operations ongoing, as we sat and sipped coffee in a nice area of the city.

Honestly, it was maybe the best experience in my life. There were many nice things about it. I helped people, and the part I loved most was outreach. It was very nice, you help them, they tell you their problems, it was a very cool experience. So outreach was great, the thing I miss the most [*aktar ishi bishta' lahu*]. The people, I got to know a lot of people very well. There are people who are like friends [*fi nas zay asdaq*], you know, I give them my number and they can call me if anything happens. That's why I felt a relationship [*hasayt 'alaqa*] with some of the cases. Sometimes, they didn't even have a problem, but they would tell me 'come stop by', 'stop by for a coffee [*murri wu ishrabi 'ahweh*]' and that's it.

She paused, reaching for her coffee, and then continued:

When I left, I grieved [*'azinit*]. I felt this feeling of *how can I leave this place*, you know, that I felt so attached to [*ta'alaqit fihi al-makan nafsu*]? Even my coworkers, we were very good friends, I mean, I saw them more than my family. My male and female

coworkers, all of them, were like siblings [*kulhum zay ikhwan*], every day you see them and half of your day is with them. And also the refugees, and the place itself, the camp, and also my colleagues from other organizations with whom I had a direct relationship with, so I felt that I really honestly grieved when I left.

Aseel seemed overwhelmed by her thoughts, suddenly remembering she was still holding her cup of coffee. Her nostalgia for the people and place of Azraq, despite its problematic conditions, was apparent. Malkki (2015) notes a similar nostalgia among Finnish aid workers for their international field sites:

For those I worked with, the world at the other end of the bridge *was* always somewhere in particular, with many practical frustrations, technical difficulties, bureaucratic paperwork, and significant dangers, most definitely so, but even in the midst of terrible circumstances, it was also an elsewhere, a promise of being-in-the-world-differently. (207)

This 'elsewhereness' particularly strikes a chord with aid workers who feel that their work makes them part of something bigger. Young local aid workers are chasing opportunity, after all, for more meaningful work. Jordanians in general who spoke to me about their lives in the country felt stuck in a place where nothing happens, and many expressed an unattainable desire to live elsewhere. For young aid workers, Azraq offers the feeling of traveling every day to a faraway space in which their presence is valued and they are in control. Work in the camp, while challenging, precarious, and exhausting, is also an escape from mundane life in Jordan.

Hip Amman cafes were often the setting in which Azraq was discussed as a thing of the past – and an object of nostalgia – by aid workers from the community centers. Homesick descriptions of Azraq were a pattern among those who had moved on from the camp completely. One who has left work in Azraq is able to look *back* at the camp as an experience with a clear ending point.

At the time of writing – more than a year after leaving the field – very few of the aid workers included and cited in this dissertation still work in Azraq. On the other hand, all the refugees whose stories are included here are still there.

Aya's son, not yet born when I first met her, now walks and talks and sports a full head of hair. His only reality has been the world of Village 5. Within a camp apparatus that seeks to preserve time, the temporal confines of humanitarianism are challenged when they must not only

maintain the lives of those already displaced, but also take on the care of new lives that did not exist when the camp opened. Azraq, while certainly not the kind of place where life is encouraged to flourish, has produced new forms of life, whole lives that exist entirely within the camp's temporality. While children may fall into the biological continuation of life and death in Azraq, babies may also be a source of hope for many, embodying the potential for future *biographical* development – just as Ahlam was unable to envision her own future, but had hope for her children's. Perhaps partly for this reason, family-building (through marriage and having children) has flourished in the camp as a natural biological process that carries biographical significance; children, too, can extend someone's legacy when careers are unavailable.

Only one of my interlocutors in Village 5 has been transferred out of the village. In early 2019, Shaza's family was cleared to be relocated in Village 2. Jaw still intact, Shaza described to me how she missed her friends in Village 5 and how her new location was more boring without her social network. Not long after, she became engaged to a distant relative who lives in Amman. As she prepares to move out of Azraq, where her family will remain and where she lived out her late teens, Shaza is looking to begin her early twenties in a new world.

All of these individuals have experienced Azraq at the same time, and yet the multiplicity of stories, thoughts, opinions, and outlooks has become a jumble of contradictions. I began this dissertation with refugee accounts of having too much and not enough time in Azraq. All subsequent chapters have worked to understand these contradictions by complicating themes that are often taken for granted in refugee camp spaces, such as emergency, vulnerability, hope, and the future.

This research set out to explore everyday realities for both refugees and aid workers in Azraq through an analytical lens of time. This perspective has revealed a particular politics of power that asserts itself through both time and space. The first chapter interrogated the humanitarian space of the camp as a spatiotemporal emergency. It argued that the bureaucratized humanitarian response to Azraq's emergency creates mundane daily experiences for both refugees and aid workers. I used the term 'nine-to-five emergency' to describe the camp's particular temporality in which urgency and affect do not apply to aid workers' treatment of refugees' needs. The second chapter examined the camp bureaucracy as an operation that reproduces emergency through continuous underperformance. It illustrated how the

decentralized referral system dictates refugees' time and space according to bureaucratic proceduralism. Aid worker roles in this system were also explored in this chapter as well as the third chapter, which argued that humanitarian staff promote camp securitization through narratives of vulnerability and newness. Identifying a dynamic of care and control in Azraq, chapter three examined how perceived hierarchies of need are used to preserve the camp's underdevelopment and thus its control over refugees. The fourth chapter turned its focus to refugee experiences within this power politics. It argued that refugees are socialized by the camp system to wait patiently for services and for a future elsewhere. Refugees thus become cynical, continuing to comply with the camp's regulations out of fear of deportation without believing that they are actually waiting for anything. The final chapter further analyzed refugee visions for the future, putting these imaginaries in conversation with general unbelief in the future. I showed how refugees look into the future for a restoration of meaning and ordinariness in their lives, whether in an alternative present or an eventual return to Syria.

This dissertation has found time to be an important but often overlooked aspect of the displacement experience for refugees in camps. The camp administration's manipulation of time within Azraq's spatial boundaries has revealed another source of power wielded over refugees, who fear the security apparatus too much to rebel against it. Within greater geopolitics, I have emphasized how Jordan has used not only spatial but temporal isolation of Azraq's residents in order to prevent attempts at integration.

Azraq since 2016 has remained closed to newcomers, but thousands still struggle to survive at the border of Rukban as political actors fail to create for them a safe passage home. Villages 4 and 7 have been planned in Azraq's blueprint since the beginning but have yet to be built for this population. Further research should track how the camp's power dynamics may transform if these villages are ever created, and especially implications this may have for the situation in Village 5. More attention should also be paid to smaller hidden forms of refugee rebellion against the system, such as the account of Tamara who would trespass into Village 5 as mentioned in the third chapter. This research has also raised questions of what might go on between 5pm and 9am and what kind of local notions of time may exist among the camp's population.

I hope that this dissertation has challenged common humanitarian narratives of Azraq as the ideal refugee camp. A more nuanced discourse of refugee camps is needed in the humanitarian sector that goes beyond oversimplified terms such as ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’. Za’tari’s perceived failures need to be reconsidered through thorough investigations of Azraq’s attempts to remedy these failures. We should be asking how to improve the bottom-up organization of Za’tari instead of imposing strict top-down measures as we see in Azraq. We should listen to what camp residents have to say rather than continuing to plan NGO programming and camp organization without them. We must also ask, what are alternative solutions to displacement apart from refugee camps? How can we ensure the good intentions of humanitarianism and development do not become lost in an unwieldy system?

I considered these questions while on a trip with aid workers to an NGO center in Mafraq. We passed an overlook on a route I had taken numerous times on the way to Za’tari in 2016. The road curves just enough that passengers can get a glimpse of Za’tari camp in the distance. It was the first time I had seen this view since leaving Za’tari two years earlier, and I realized that all this time, the camp was still there, and in it, many of the refugees I had met. I had changed, moved on with my life, received my master’s degree, and was in the middle of my PhD, and yet Za’tari was still there. And as I write this more than a year after leaving Azraq – and as you, the reader, read this – Azraq, too, is still there, and its refugees live out lifetimes. Azraq is still their present. We stand on the outside looking in and they on the inside looking back, waiting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AGIER, MICHEL. (2002) "Still Stuck Between War and City: A Response to Bauman and Malkki." Translated by Richard Nice and Loïc Wacquant. *Ethnography* 3, no. 3: 361–366.
- . (2011) *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*. Translated by David Fernbach. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- . (2016) *Borderlands: Towards an Anthropology of the Cosmopolitan Condition*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- ALBADRA, DIMA., MARIKA VELLEI, DAVID COLEY, and JASON HART. (2017) "Thermal Comfort in Desert Refugee Camps: An Interdisciplinary Approach." *Building and Environment* 124: 460–477.
- ALLEN, LORI. (2013) *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- ANDERSSON, RUBEN. (2014) "Time and the Migrant Other: European Border Controls and the Temporal Economics of Illegality." *American Anthropologist* 116, no. 4: 795–809.
- ANGÉ, OLIVIA, and DAVID BERLINER, eds. (2015) *Anthropology and Nostalgia*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- APPADURAI, ARJUN. (2013) *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*. London: Verso.
- ARAR, RAWAN. (2017) "Bearing Witness to the Refugee Crisis: Western Audiences and Jordanian Humanitarian Workers." Middle East Institute, February 14. <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/bearing-witness-refugee-crisis>.

- ARENDT, HANNAH. (1958) *The Human Condition*. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ARRAF, JANE. (2012) "Protest Rocks Jordan Refugee Camp." *Al Jazeera*, September 25. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/09/2012925113236322283.html>. [Accessed 1 Oct 2012]
- AUDET, FRANCOIS. (2015) "Humanitarian Space." In *The Routledge Companion to Humanitarian Action*, by Jenny H Peterson and Roger MacGinty. Routledge Companions. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- AUGÉ, MARC. (1995) *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.
- AUYERO, JAVIER. (2012) *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- AZZOUZ, AMMAR. (2019) "A Tale of a Syrian City at War." *City* 23, no. 1: 107–122.
- BANDAK, ANDREAS, and MANPREET JANEJA. (2018) "Introduction: Worth the Wait." In *Ethnographies of Waiting: Doubt, Hope and Uncertainty*, edited by Andreas Bandak, 1–40. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- BECKETT, GREG. (2013) "The Politics of Emergency." *Reviews in Anthropology* 42, no. 2: 85–101.
- BEHNAM, NICOLE, and KRISTY CRABTREE. (2019) "Big Data, Little Ethics: Confidentiality and Consent." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 61: 4–6.
- BENDIXSEN, SYNNOVE, and JARRETT ERIKSEN. (2018) "Time and the Other: Waiting and Hope among Irregular Migrants." In *Ethnographies of Waiting: Doubt, Hope and Uncertainty*, edited by Andreas Bandak, 87–112. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- BERGSON, HENRI. (1911) *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- BERLANT, LAUREN. (2011) *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- BERLINER, DAVID. (2015) "Are Anthropologists Nostalgist?" In *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, edited by Olivia Angé and David Berliner, 17–34. New York: Berghahn Books.

- BISSELL, DAVID. (2007) "Animating Suspension: Waiting for Mobilities." *Mobilities* 2, no. 2: 277–298.
- BISSELL, WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM. (2005) "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 2: 215–248.
- BLACK, IAN. (2014) "Patience Running out in Jordan after Influx of Syrian Refugees." *The Guardian*, December 1, sec. World news.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/01/jordan-syrian-refugees-patience-running-out>. [Accessed 21 May 2019]
- BOURDIEU, PIERRE. (2000) *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- BOYM, SVETLANA. (2001) *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- BREDELOUP, SYLVIE. (2012) "Sahara Transit: Times, Spaces, People." *Population, Space and Place* 18: 457–467.
- BRUN, CATHRINE. (2015) "Active Waiting and Changing Hopes: Toward a Time Perspective on Protracted Displacement." *Social Analysis* 59, no. 1: 19–37.
- . (2016) "There Is No Future in Humanitarianism: Emergency, Temporality and Protracted Displacement." *History and Anthropology* 27, no. 4: 393–410.
- BRYANT, REBECCA. (2015) "Nostalgia and the Discovery of Loss: Essentializing the Turkish Cypriot Past." In *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, edited by Olivia Angé and David Berliner, 155–177. New York: Berghahn Books.
- CALHOUN, CRAIG. (2010) "The Idea of Emergency: Humanitarian Action and Global (Dis)Order." In *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, edited by Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, 29–58. New York: Zone Books.
- CARE. (2015) "CARE Factsheet April 2015: Azraq Refugee Camp." Factsheet, April 2015.
https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/CARE_Factsheet_Syria_azraq_camp_April_2015.pdf.
- CARE. (2016) "Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Incentive-Based Volunteering Scheme." Report, November 14.

- CARLISLE, LILLY. (2019) "It's so Simple, Even My Nine-Year-Old Daughter Can Do It." UNHCR Jordan (blog), January 22. <https://www.unhcr.org/jo/11281-its-so-simple-even-my-nine-year-old-daughter-can-do-it.html>. [Accessed 11 Aug 2019]
- CHAKRABARTY, DIPESH. (2008) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- CHATTY, DAWN. (2018) *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State*. London: Hurst and Co.
- CLARKE, KILLIAN. (2018) "When Do the Dispossessed Protest? Informal Leadership and Mobilization in Syrian Refugee Camps." *Perspectives on Politics*, 16, no. 3: 617–633.
- CLUTTERBUCK, MARTIN, LAURA CUNIAL, PAOLA BARSANTI, and TINA GEWIS. (2018) "Establishing Legal Identity for Displaced Syrians." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 57: 59–61.
- CONLON, DEIRDRE. (2011) "Waiting: Feminist Perspectives on the Spacings/Timings of Migrant (Im)Mobility." *Gender, Place & Culture* 18, no. 3: 353–360.
- CWERNER, SAULO. (2001) "The Times of Migration." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, no. 1: 7–36.
- DALAL, AYHAM, AMER DARWEESH, PHILIPP MISSELWITZ, and ANNA STEIGEMANN. (2018) "Planning the Ideal Refugee Camp? A Critical Interrogation of Recent Planning Innovations in Jordan and Germany." *Urban Planning* 3, no. 4: 64–78.
- DAS, VEENA, and DEBORAH POOLE, eds. (2004) *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- DE BEAUVOIR, SIMONE. (1952) *Second Sex*. Reprint (1988). London: Cape.
- DISKI, JENNY. (2006) *On Trying to Keep Still*. London: Virago Press.
- DOUCET, LYSE. (2013) "Life in Zaatari Refugee Camp." *BBC News*, July 29, sec. World. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-23492481>. [Accessed 8 May 2019]
- EL-SHAARAWI, NADIA. (2015) "Living an Uncertain Future: Temporality, Uncertainty, and Well-Being among Iraqi Refugees in Egypt." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 59, no. 1: 38–56.

- ERIKSEN, THOMAS HYLLAND. (2005) "Mind the Gap: Flexibility, Epistemology and the Rhetoric of New Work." *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* 12, no. 1-2: 50-60.
- FASSIN, DIDIER. (2005) "Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3: 362-87.
- . (2010) "Inequality of Lives, Hierarchies of Humanity: Moral Commitments and Ethical Dilemmas of Humanitarianism." In *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care*, edited by Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . (2011a) *Humanitarian Reason*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . (2011b) "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 213-226.
- FASSIN, DIDIER, and MARIELLA PANDOLFI. (2010) "Introduction: Military and Humanitarian Government in the Age of Intervention." In *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, edited by Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, 9-25. New York: Zone Books.
- FELDMAN, ILANA. (2008) *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917-1967*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . (2016) "Reaction, Experimentation, and Refusal: Palestinian Refugees Confront the Future." *History and Anthropology* 27, no. 4: 411-429.
- . (2017) "Humanitarian Care and the Ends of Life: The Politics of Aging and Dying in a Palestinian Refugee Camp." *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 1: 42-67.
- . (2018) *Life Lived in Relief: Humanitarian Predicaments and Palestinian Refugee Politics*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- FELDMAN, ILANA, and MIRIAM TICKTIN. (2010) *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- FERGUSON, JAMES. (2015) *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- FISHER, WILLIAM. (1997) "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 439-464.

- FRADEJAS-GARCÍA, IGNACIO. (2019) "Humanitarian Remoteness: Aid Worker Practices from 'Little Aleppo.'" *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 27, no. 2: 286–303.
- FRESIA, MARION, and ANDREAS VON KÄNEL. (2015) "Beyond Space of Exception? Reflections on the Camp through the Prism of Refugee Schools." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29, no. 2: 250–272.
- GASPARINI, GIOVANNI. (1995) "On Waiting." *Time and Society* 4, no. 1: 29–45.
- GATTER, MELISSA. (2018a) "Adapting to Azraq: Syrian Heritage, Vulnerability, and Being New in a Refugee Camp." Council for British Research in the Levant, October 5. <http://cbirl.ac.uk/news/item/name/adapting-to-azraq-syrian-heritage-vulnerability-and-being-new-in-a-refugee-camp>.
- . (2018b) "Rethinking the Lessons from Za'atari Refugee Camp." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 57: 22–24.
- . (Forthcoming) "Thinking Beyond Gendered Challenges: Experiences of a (Female) Aid Worker-Ethnographer in Jordan's Refugee Camps." *Refugee Review*.
- GRAHAM, MARK. (2002) "Emotional Bureaucracies: Emotions, Civil Servants, and Immigrants in the Swedish Welfare State." *Ethos* 30, no. 3: 199–226.
- GRIFFITHS, MELANIE. (2014) "Out of Time: The Temporal Uncertainties of Refused Asylum Seekers and Immigration Detainees." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no. 12: 1991–2009.
- GUYER, JANE. (2007) "Prophecy and the Near Future: Thoughts on Macroeconomic, Evangelical, and Punctuated Time." *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 3: 409–421.
- HAAS, BRIDGET. (2017) "Citizens-in-Waiting, Deportees-in-Waiting: Power, Temporality, and Suffering in the U.S. Asylum System." *Ethos* 45, no. 1: 75–97.
- HAGE, GHASSAN. (2003) *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society*. Australia: Pluto Press.
- . (2005) "A Not so Multi-Sited Ethnography of a Not so Imagined Community." *Anthropological Theory* 5, no. 4: 463–475.
- . (2009a) "Introduction." In *Waiting*, edited by Ghassan Hage, 1–17. Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing.

- . (2009b) “Waiting Out the Crisis: On Stuckness and Governmentality.” In *Waiting*, edited by Ghassan Hage, 97–106. Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing.
- . (2016) “Questions Concerning a Future-Politics.” *History and Anthropology* 27, no. 4: 465–467.
- HALME-TUOMISAARI, MIIA. (2018) “Methodologically Blonde at the UN in a Tactical Quest for Inclusion.” *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 36, no. 4: 456–470.
- HAMOU, AMMAR, and MADELINE EDWARDS. (2018) “In Jordan’s Capital, Syrian Refugees Mull a Complicated Return Home across Recently Reopened Border.” *Syria Direct*, November 5. <https://syriadirect.org/news/in-jordan%e2%80%99s-capital-syrian-refugees-mull-a-return-home-across-recently-reopened-border/>.
- HARRELL-BOND, BARBARA. (2002) “Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees Be Humane?” *Human Rights Quarterly* 24, no. 1: 51–85.
- HERLINGER, CHRIS. (2016) “World Refugee Day: Life in Jordan’s Fourth Largest City.” *Global Sisters Report*, June 20. <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/blog/gsr-today/migration/world-refugee-day-life-jordans-fourth-largest-city-40441>. [Accessed 8 May 2019]
- HOFFMANN, SOPHIA. (2017) “Humanitarian Security in Jordan’s Azraq Camp.” *Security Dialogue* 48, no. 2: 97–112.
- HOLMES, SETH, and HEIDE CASTAÑEDA. (2016) “Representing the ‘European Refugee Crisis’ in Germany and beyond: Deservingness and Difference, Life and Death.” *American Ethnologist* 43, no. 1: 12–24.
- HONIG, BONNIE. (2009) *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- HULL, MATTHEW. (2012) *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. (2017) “‘I Have No Idea Why They Sent Us Back’: Jordanian Deportations and Expulsions of Syrian Refugees,” October.

- HYNDMAN, JENNIFER, and WENONA GILES. (2011) "Waiting for What? The Feminization of Asylum in Protracted Situations." *Gender, Place & Culture* 18, no. 3: 361–379.
- ISMAIL, SALWA. (2018) *The Rule of Violence: Subjectivity, Memory, and Government in Syria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- JANSEN, STEF. (2014) "On Not Moving Well Enough: Temporal Reasoning in Sarajevo Yearnings for 'Normal Lives.'" *Current Anthropology* 55, no. S9: S74–78.
- JEFFREY, CRAIG. (2010) *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- JORDAN TIMES. (2014) "Azraq Refugee Camp Officially Opened," April 30.
www.jordantimes.com/news/local/azraq-refugee-camp-officially-opened.
[Accessed 1 May 2017]
- . (2018) "Only Some 4,000 Syrian Refugees Return since Border Opening,"
December 12. <http://jordantimes.com/news/local/%E2%80%98only-some-4000-syrian-refugees-return-border-reopening>. [Accessed 12 Dec 2018]
- KADRI, RANYA, and JODI RUDOREN. (2013) "Tensions High After Riot at Syrian Refugee Camp in Jordan." *New York Times*, April 20, sec. World.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/21/world/middleeast/tensions-high-after-riot-at-syrian-refugee-camp-in-jordan.html>. [Accessed 15 May 2013]
- KATZ, IRIT. (2016) "Camp Evolution and Israel's Creation: Between 'State of Emergency' and 'Emergence of State.'" *Political Geography* 55: 144–155.
- . (2017) "Between Bare Life and Everyday Life: Spatializing Europe's Migrant Camps." *Architecture, Media, Politics, Society* 12, no. 2: 1–20.
- KATZ, IRIT, DIANA MARTIN, and CLAUDIO MINCA, eds. (2018) *Camps Revisited: Multifaceted Spatialities of a Modern Political Technology*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.
- KELLY, TOBIAS. (2008) "The Attractions of Accountancy: Living an Ordinary Life during the Second Palestinian Intifada." *Ethnography* 9, no. 3: 351–376.
- KHOSRAVI, SHAHRAM. (2017) *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- KOHLI, RAVIK, and MERVI KAUKKO. (2017) "The Management of Time and Waiting by Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Girls in Finland." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 31, no. 4: 488–506.
- LAUB, KARIN, and ALICE SU. (2018) "Aid Groups: 8,500 Syrians Still Held in Jordanian No-Go Camp." AP News, January 30.
<https://apnews.com/5782dcbf32af4fb19f78de317717bd1b>. [Accessed 30 Jan 2018]
- LAVIE, SMADAR. (2014) *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- LAVIE, SMADAR, and TED SWEDENBURG, eds. (1996) *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- LIEBELT, CLAUDIA, and PNINA WERBNER. (2018) "Gendering 'Everyday Islam': An Introduction." *Contemporary Levant* 3, no. 1: 2–9.
- LIPSKY, MICHAEL. (1980) *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- LUCHT, HANS. (2012) *Darkness Before Daybreak: African Migrants Living on the Margins in Southern Italy Today*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- MACKENZIE, CATRIONA, CHRISTOPHER MCDOWELL, and EILEEN PITTAWAY. (2007) "Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2: 299–319.
- MAHMOUDI, MATTHEW. (2019) "Race in the Digital Periphery: The New (Old) Politics of Refugee Representation." *The Sociological Review* (blog), July 3.
<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/race-in-the-digital-periphery-the-new-old-politics-of-refugee-representation/>. [Accessed 4 Jul 2019]
- MALKIN, NOGA. (2015) "My Brother's Keeper: The Double Experience of Refugee Aid-Workers." *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 10, no. 3: 46–59.
- MALKKI, LIISA. (1992) "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees." *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1: 24–44.

- . (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . (1996) “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3: 377–404.
- . (2015) *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- MARCEL, GABRIEL. (1967) “Desire and Hope.” In *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, edited by Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O’Connor, 277–85. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- MARTIN, DIANA. (2015) “From Spaces of Exception to ‘Campscares’: Palestinian and Informal Settlements in Beirut.” *Political Geography* 44: 9–18.
- MEISTER, ROBERT. (2010) *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- MILLS, DAVID, and RICHARD RATCLIFFE. (2012) “After Method? Ethnography in the Knowledge Economy.” *Qualitative Research* 12, no. 2: 147–164.
- MIYAZAKI, HIROKAZU. (2010) “The Temporality of No Hope.” In *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*, edited by Carol Greenhouse, 238–250. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- MOLNAR, PETRA. (2019) “New Technologies in Migration: Human Rights Impacts.” *Forced Migration Review*, no. 61: 7–9.
- NASSAR, JESSY, and NORA STEL. (2019) “Lebanon’s Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Institutional Ambiguity as a Governance Strategy.” *Political Geography* 70: 44–54.
- NAVARO-YASHIN, Yael. (2002) *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- NEIKIRK, ALICE. (2017). “Expectations of Vulnerability in Australia.” *Forced Migration Review*, no. 54: 63–65.
- NIELSEN, MORTEN, and MORTEN AXEL PEDERSEN. (2015) “Infrastructural Imaginaries: Collapsed Futures in Mozambique and Mongolia.” In *Reflections on Imagination:*

Human Capacity and Ethnographic Method, edited by Mark Harris and Nigel Rapport. Abingdon: Routledge.

NORUM, ROGER, MARY MOSTAFANEZHAD, and TANI SEBRO. (2016) "The Chronopolitics of Exile: Hope, Heterotemporality and NGO Economics along the Thai-Burma Border." *Critique of Anthropology* 36, no. 1: 61–83.

OMATA, NAOHIKO. (2013) "The Complexity of Refugees' Return Decision-Making in a Protracted Exile: Beyond the Home-Coming Model and Durable Solutions." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39, no. 8: 1281–1297.

ONG, JONATHAN, and PAMELA COMBINIDO. (2018) "Local Aid Workers in the Digital Humanitarian Project: Between 'Second Class Citizens' and 'Entrepreneurial Survivors.'" *Critical Asian Studies* 50, no. 1: 86–102.

PALMER, JANE, CELMARA POCOCK, and LORELLE BURTON. (2018) "Waiting, Power and Time in Ethnographic and Community-Based Research." *Qualitative Research* 18, no. 4: 416–432.

PARKINSON, SARAH, and ORKIDEH BEHROUZAN. (2015) "Negotiating Health and Life: Syrian Refugees and the Politics of Access in Lebanon." *Social Science and Medicine* 146: 324–331.

PASCUCCI, ELISA. (2018) "The Local Labour Building the International Community: Precarious Work within Humanitarian Spaces." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 50, no. 6: 1–18.

PEARLMAN, WENDY. (2018) "Becoming a Refugee: Reflections on Self-Understandings of Displacement from the Syrian Case." *Review of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 2: 299–309.

PICKER, GIOVANNI, and SILVIA PASQUETTI. (2015) "Durable Camps: The State, the Urban, the Everyday." *City* 19, no. 5: 681–688.

PICKERING, MICHAEL, and EMILY KEIGHTLEY. (2006) "The Modalities of Nostalgia." *Current Sociology* 54: 919–941.

PINE, FRANCES. (2014) "Migration as Hope: Space, Time, and Imagining the Future." *Current Anthropology* 55, no. 9: S95–104.

- POVINELLI, ELIZABETH. (2012) "The Will to Be Otherwise/The Effort of Endurance." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 111, no. 3: 453–475.
- QASMIYEH, YOUSIF. (2017) "The Camp Is Time." *Refugee Hosts* (blog), January 15. <https://refugeehosts.org/2017/01/15/the-camp-is-time/>.
- RAMADAN, ADAM. (2013) "Spatialising the Refugee Camp." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38: 65–77.
- REDFIELD, PETER. (2005) "Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3: 328–61.
- . (2010) "The Verge of Crisis: Doctors Without Borders in Uganda." In *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, edited by Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, 173–195. New York: Zone Books.
- REZNICK, ALISA. (2015) "Jordan's Azraq Syrian Refugee Camp Stands Largely Empty." *Al Jazeera*, June 1. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/05/jordan-azraq-syrian-refugee-camp-stands-largely-empty-150526084850543.html>. [Accessed 6 Sep 2016]
- RODGERS, GRAEME. (2004) "'Hanging Out' with Forced Migrants: Methodological and Ethical Challenges." *Forced Migration Review*, no. 21: 48–49.
- ROZAKOU, KATERINA. (2012) "The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees." *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 3: 562–577.
- SAFADI, OMAR. (2016) "Apolitical Citizenship and the Authoritarian Survival: A Damascene Experience of the Syrian Civil War." Bachelors Thesis, University of Chicago.
- SALTER, MARK. (2008) "When the Exception Becomes the Rule: Borders, Sovereignty, and Citizenship." *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 4: 365–380.
- SALTSMAN, ADAM. (2014) "Beyond the Law: Power, Discretion, and Bureaucracy in the Management of Asylum Space in Thailand." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27, no. 3: 457–476.

- SCHEEL, STEPHAN, and FUNDA USTEK-SPILDA. (2018) "Why Big Data Cannot Fix Migration Statistics." *Refugees Deeply* (blog), June 5.
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/06/05/why-big-data-cannot-fix-migration-statistics>. [Accessed 10 Jun 2018]
- SCHWEIZER, HAROLD. (2005) "On Waiting." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74, no. 3: 777–792.
- . (2008) *On Waiting*. New York: Routledge.
- SECOR, ANNA. (2007) "Between Longing and Despair: State, Space, and Subjectivity in Turkey." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25, no. 1: 33–52.
- SIGONA, NANDO. (2015) "Campzenship: Reimagining the Camp as a Social and Political Space." *Citizenship Studies* 19, no. 1: 1–15.
- SOLNIT, REBECCA. (2009) *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster*. New York: Viking Press.
- STATON, BETHAN. (2016) "Eye Spy: Biometric Aid System Trials in Jordan." *The New Humanitarian*, May 18.
<http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2016/05/18/eye-spy-biometric-aid-system-trials-jordan>. [Accessed 8 May 2019]
- SWIDLER, ANN, and SUSAN COTTS WATKINS. (2017) *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance and Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- SYRIA CALL. (2018) "The Crisis of Formal Documents and Identity Papers Haunts the Syrians in the Diaspora," December 29. http://nedaa-sy.com/en/week_issues/65. [Accessed 30 Dec 2018]
- TICKTIN, MIRIAM. (2011) *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- TURNBULL, ELIZABETH. (2019) "20,000 Syrians Have Returned Home since Border Reopening — UNHCR." *Jordan Times*, July 5.
<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/20000-syrians-have-returned-home-border-reopening---unhcr>. [Accessed 6 Jul 2019]

- TURNER, LEWIS. (2019a) "Humanitarianism and Masculinities in the Syria Refugee Response." Conference Paper. University of Leeds.
- . (2019b) "The Politics of Labeling Refugee Men as 'Vulnerable.'" *Social Politics* 0, no. 0: 1–23.
- TURNER, SIMON. (2005) "Suspended Spaces: Contesting Sovereignties in a Refugee Camp." In *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World*, edited by Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat, 312–332. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . (2014) "Making Good Citizens from Bad Life in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *Development and Change* 45, no. 3: 415–434.
- . (2015) "What Is a Refugee Camp? Explorations of the Limits and Effects of the Camp." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29, no. 2: 139–148.
- . (2016) "Staying Out of Place: The Being and Becoming of Burundian Refugees in the Camp and the City." *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* 2: 37–51.
- UNHCR. (2018a) "Jordan: Azraq Refugee Camp Factsheet June 2018." Factsheet, June 2018. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64120>.
- . (2018b) "UNHCR Electrification Factsheet: Azraq Camp-Jordan." Factsheet, June 2018.
- UNHCR JORDAN. (2019) "In Jordan, Using Solar Energy Does Not Only Generate Savings for UNHCR, an Estimated \$8.5 Million a Year, but Also Brings Dignity to Thousands of Refugees.," October 8. <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRJordan/videos/1317061425153011/>. [Accessed 8 Oct 2019]
- VERDIRAME, GUGLIEMO, and BARBARA HARRELL-BOND. (2005) *Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- VIGH, HENRIK. (2008) "Crisis and Chronicity: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline." *Ethnos* 73, no. 1: 5–24.
- VOGLER, PIA. (2007) "Into the Jungle of Bureaucracy: Negotiating Access to Camps at the Thai-Burma Border." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26, no. 3: 51–60.

- VOUTIRA, EFTIHIA, and BARBARA HARRELL-BOND. (1995) "In Search of the Locus of Trust: The Social World of the Refugee Camp." In *Mistrusting Refugees*, edited by E. Valentina Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen, 207–224. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- WAGNER, ANN-CHRISTIN. (2017) "Frantic Waiting: NGO Anti-Politics and 'Timepass' for Young Syrian Refugees in Jordan." *Middle East - Topics and Arguments* 9: 107–121.
- . (2018) "In Praise of the Scaffolding." *Allegra*, July 12.
<http://allegralaboratory.net/in-praise-of-the-scaffolding/>. [Accessed 25 Sep 2018]
- WARD, TRISH. (Forthcoming) "What Do They Want From Us? Rethinking How Locals 'Work' to Meet Their Employers' Expectations in Jordan's Aid Sector." *Sociology of Development*.
- WATSON, SCOTT. (2011) "The 'Human' as Referent Object? Humanitarianism as Securitization." *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 1: 3–20.
- WEBER, MAX. (1946) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . (1978) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- WEDEEN, LISA. (1998) "Acting 'As If': Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 3: 503–523.
- . (1999) *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- WEISS, THOMAS, and MICHAEL BARNETT. (2008) *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- WESTON, PHOEBE. (2015) "Inside Zaatari Refugee Camp: The Fourth Largest City in Jordan." *The Telegraph*, August 5, sec. World.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/jordan/11782770/What-is-life-like-inside-the-largest-Syrian-refugee-camp-Zaatari-in-Jordan.html>.
 [Accessed 8 May 2019]

- WILLIAMS, JILL. (2015) "From Humanitarian Exceptionalism to Contingent Care: Care and Enforcement at the Humanitarian Border." *Political Geography* 27: 11–20.
- WILLIAMSON, REBECCA. (2016) "Everyday Space, Mobile Subjects and Place-Based Belonging in Suburban Sydney." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 14: 2319–2335.
- YANACOPULOS, HELEN. (2015) *International NGO Engagement, Advocacy, Activism: The Faces and Spaces of Change*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- ZIAI, ARAM. (2013) "The Discourse of 'Development' and Why the Concept Should Be Abandoned." *Development in Practice* 23, no. 1: 123–36.
- ZIGON, JARRETT. (2007) "Moral Breakdown and the Ethical Demand: A Theoretical Framework for an Anthropology of Moralities." *Anthropological Theory* 7, no. 2: 131–150.
- . (2018) "Hope and Waiting in Post-Soviet Moscow." In *Ethnographies of Waiting: Doubt, Hope and Uncertainty*, edited by Andreas Bandak, 65–86. London: Bloomsbury Academic.