



LUND UNIVERSITY

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

A World of Checkpoints:  
Border Crossing Experiences of Palestinian  
Refugees from Syria in Lebanon



*Photo: Doves over Khan el Sheih camp, Walid 2013*

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Author: Mette Lundsryd Heide-Jørgensen  
Advisor: Lory Janelle Dance  
Examiner: Nina Gren  
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## **Abstract**

Through violence, war, and persecution millions of people are forced to cross borders to escape death. Yet, worldwide discriminatory state practices daily deny millions of forced migrants access to safe territory. Among those crossing borders are persons without the right to carry travel documents as members of a state. Most often the group of people is known as stateless refugees. Statelessness, borders and border control are produced by states and given meaning through performances of power over territory.

The thesis inquires border-crossing experiences of Palestinian refugees from Syria who since 2011 have escaped into Lebanon. The inquiry was conducted following the May 2014 closing of the Lebanese-Syrian border for Palestinian refugees from Syria. Based on oral history recordings with five persons and ethnographic participant observation from April to June 2014, the study contests and renegotiates conventional notions of borders as fixed territorial areas. Through the collected accounts it is shown how border-crossing experiences expand in and beyond border spaces, this gives leeway to uncover intertwined levels of discrimination: locally, nationally and internationally. Additionally, the oral history method illuminate how personal memories of escape from Syria intertwine collective memories of uprooting, displacements, and atrocities since the 1948 Nakbe, and till the current-day Syrian crisis.

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## Introduction

I wish to leave to any place now, *inshallah*<sup>1</sup> I can go somewhere else. Even to Somalia - I don't have a problem with that. To a place where they will respect me as a human being. Just respect me as a human being. And let me live. I just need to have the right to live in a place where I can have work and a home. As Palestinian from Syria I feel that the whole world is making fun of my life. So, I hope to leave. At the same time I do not have any chance to leave Lebanon. Don't worry for me! I don't have papers. I don't have a passport from the authorities. I don't have a Syrian passport. I had a document from the state, proving my Palestinian identity, but still I don't have any chance.<sup>2</sup>

In the quote Walid - a young man who escaped Syria in 2013 - expresses his hardship and lamentable experience of being a Palestinian refugee from Syria in Lebanon. The quote reflects Walid's wedged situation, his current immobility and his life without the right to a home, to work, to valid identification documents (ID), and to freedom of movement. His quote resonates consequences of a worldwide phenomenon of discrimination against people who have crossed borders as forced migrants.<sup>3</sup>

Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees from Syria have since 2011 simultaneously escaped war-driven Syria to the neighbouring countries. More than 1.3 million persons have escaped to neighbouring Lebanon, and among them are according to Human Rights Watch's (HRW) statistics 70.000 Palestinians from Syria.<sup>4</sup> As stateless refugees they are in a vulnerable situation with no parallel.<sup>5</sup> Despite the continues and increasing violence in Syria the Lebanese authorities in May 2014 launched a policy *de facto* closing the Lebanese-Syrian border for Palestinians from Syria.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> God willingly

<sup>2</sup> Walid (Appendix, 4.1.1)

<sup>3</sup> Shahram Khosravi. *Illegal Traveller*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Pablo Vila, ed., *Ethnography at the Border*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Ruben Andersson. *Illegality Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. (Oakland: University of California Press).

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Not Welcome. Jordan's Treatment of Palestinians Escaping Syria*, Human Rights Watch, USA, accessed September 12, 2014, [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0814\\_ForUpload\\_0.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0814_ForUpload_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> UNRWA, "PRS in Lebanon", accessed October 21 2014, <http://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon>.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Palestinians Barred, Sent To Syria". Human Rights Watch May 6, 2014, accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/05/lebanon-palestinians-barred-sent-syria>. Amnesty International. *Denied Refuge. Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon* London: Amnesty International Publications, 2014.

This performance of power against an unprotected and rightless population has caused heavy distress and casualties, yet also initiated series of self-organized overt and covert forms of resistance to the discrimination.

My study writes itself into the fields of critical human geography<sup>7</sup>, forced migration, and oral history writing – three intertwined fields of study, which require triangulating theoretical and methodological approaches. Through the methods of oral history, ethnographic observations and grounded theory, the study reflects border-crossing experiences of five Palestinians from Syria and the effects of the movement of crossing the border between Lebanon and Syria since 2011. Oral history's focus on subjective memories helps to show how the present is affected by three generations of forced displacement and reflects experiences of a 66 years on-going catastrophe.<sup>8</sup> Inspired by Kathy Charmaz and her concepts of coding and grounded theory analysis I have found experiences of three intertwined levels of discrimination in the collected material: international, national and local.<sup>9</sup> Further, I have found the need to develop a theoretical grounded terminology, which resonates experiences of borders as pervasive discriminatory spaces<sup>10</sup> reinforced through multiple intersections as race, gender and nationality. Therefore, I theoretically suggest that border crossings ought to be understood in a framework, which includes both the physical borders crossed and the notion of pervasive discriminatory borders beyond conventional border spaces.

The circumstances of pervasive borders reveal that the movement of crossing borders can be seen as a nexus of social struggles, survival strategies, and forms of resistance to an immensity of immediate dangers. Driven by the participants' strengths and capacities to resist their current racialized rightless<sup>11</sup> and stateless circumstances<sup>12</sup> the presentation of their lived experiences is formed by a circular approach of combining researcher- and participant-ascribed categories in the analysis. The strengths and capacities of the participants indicate multiple forms of resistance and an incessant willingness to keep attempting to cross borders to be able to live. Therefore, the final chapter of the thesis presents the various forms of resistance to the current situation developed by each participant.

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<sup>7</sup> Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004)

<sup>8</sup> Linda Shopes, "What Oral History Is, and Isn't", in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013),

<sup>9</sup> Kathy Charmaz, "The Grounded Theory Method: An Explication and Interpretation", in *Contemporary Field Research*, ed. R.M. Emerson. (Boston: Little Brown, 1983).

<sup>10</sup> Gregory, *The Colonial*, 17-19.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death. Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*, (London: New York University Press, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Meridian Books, 1951).

## Research Question and Disposition

The thesis aims to answer the overarching research question:

*What are the border crossing experiences of Palestinian refugees from Syria, who have escaped war-driven Syria to Lebanon since 2011?*

Through seven chapters answers to the research question are provided. Chapter one presents the historical and legal background for the creation of the stateless Palestinian refugees and the current circumstances of visa and entry regulations to Lebanon. Chapter two provides a literature review, which in turn brings different historical and ethnographic approaches in dialogue. Chapter three presents the research design and the approach taken by the use of oral history method<sup>13</sup>, ethnographic participant-observation<sup>14</sup> and grounded theory.<sup>15</sup> Chapter four presents the theoretical framework. Theoretically an intracategorical intersectional approach is combined with three levels of societal analysis: macro, meso and micro.<sup>16</sup> Further, the framework combines theory on borders and border crossing<sup>17</sup>, statelessness and rightlessness,<sup>18</sup> and racialization and social death<sup>19</sup>. Chapter five presents the findings: Part One introduces the finding of discrimination at macro-, meso- and micro-level, whereas Part Two presents three memory connected findings. Chapter six provides an analytical re-interpretation of the oral history accounts and observations. First the narratives of *before*, *during* and *after* escape are presented. Secondly, the analysis suggests that borders for a stateless refugee are experienced both *within* and *beyond* border territory. Finally, memories of crossing borders are found to transcend historical time and territories. The latter influences interpretations of past and present while inflicting imagined futures of borders yet to be crossed. Finally, chapter seven briefly reflects on possible future studies and forms of resistance.

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<sup>13</sup>Paula Hamilton & Linda Shopes, *Oral History and Public Memories*. (Philadelphia: Tempel University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup>Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics", in *Turning Points in Qualitative Research. Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*, ed. Lincoln, Yvonna S. and Denzin, Norman K. (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2003)

<sup>15</sup> Charmaz, "Grounded"

<sup>16</sup> Shubha Bhattacharya, "Reflections of Intersectionality: belle hooks". *Daltri Journals* 1, (2012), accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.daltrijournals.org/IJDTSW/article4.html>. Coretta Phillips, "Institutional Racism and Ethnic Equalities". *Journal of Social Policy*. 40 (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Derek Gregory, "Imaginative geographies", *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (1995). Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

<sup>18</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origin of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1951.

<sup>19</sup> David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race. Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2009). Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death. Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (London: New York University Press, 2013).



## 1.0.0 Historical Background

This chapter provides a historical review into the creation of “the refugee problem”, which roots in the mass eviction from Palestine in 1948, known in Arabic as *Al-Nakba* – the catastrophe. Thereafter the legal framework, which was created in post-Nakba agreements and resolutions, is presented. Finally, the current situation for Palestinians in Lebanon and the visa and entry regulations for Palestinian refugees from Syria entering Lebanon are explained.

### 1.1.0 “The Refugee Problem”

The oral history based testimonies can only be understood when seen in a larger political and historical perspective of the fluctuation that has characterized the Palestinian refugees’ histories. What happened to the Palestinian people in 1948 was and still is truly a catastrophe of immeasurable calibre.

The areas, which include the hyperreal<sup>20</sup> terms “Palestine”, “Syria” and “Lebanon” between 1917 and 1920 became the entities we know of today, but were hitherto parts of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>21</sup> France and Great Britain were assigned to “advance nations” and separated by contested borders the British occupied Palestine and the French occupied Syria and Lebanon as Mandates.<sup>22</sup> However, on November 29th 1947, the United Nations General Assembly’s (UNGA) Resolution 181 – known as the UN Partition Plan, passed and 56.4 per cent of Mandate Palestine was given the Jewish state and the stateless Jewish population.<sup>23</sup> On November 30th 1947 war broke out between Zionist paramilitary groups - primarily Haganah and the Settlement Police (supported by the British military) - and the disorganized and ineffective leadership of the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>24</sup> In a few months three-quarters of a million people were evicted from their homes and displaced from their land, and a new group of stateless people created, i.e. “Arab refugees”.<sup>25</sup> The main part of the refugees sought refuge in the West Bank, Gaza and the neighbouring countries Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The three latter have in the order mentioned absorbed the highest number of Palestine

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<sup>20</sup> I borrow the phrase “hyperreal terms” from Dipesh Chakrabarty as an indicator of geographies whose geographical referents remain contested. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for “Indian” Past”, *Representations* 37, (1992): 1.

<sup>21</sup> Illan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine, One Land, Two Peoples*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 95.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory, *Colonial Present*, 80.

<sup>23</sup> Dawn Chatty, *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 201-3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 204. Rosemary Sayigh, “The Nakba’s Exclusion from the “Trauma Genre”,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* XLIII (2013), 55.

refugees outside Palestine.<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 11 in UNGA Resolution 194 of December 11 1948 gives Palestinian refugees an “absolute right of return to their original places of origin and obtain full restitution and compensation for properties taken and destroyed”.<sup>27</sup> However, the outrageous destruction of Palestine and the uprooting of its people were overshadowed by a Western-driven grand narrative of “birth” and “rebirth” of the Jewish state of Israel.<sup>28</sup> “Bringing good out of evil” became a mantra in the post-Nazi genocide area and the Palestinian Nakba and the traumas it unleashed were excluded, and at best Palestinians’ situation was perceived as “a humanitarian case”.<sup>29</sup>

Displacement continued between late 1947 and the mid-1950s.<sup>30</sup> Yet, a second large wave of displacement of Palestinians was unleashed by the June 1967-war, between Israel and the Arab States. The Arabs were defeated and again the neighbouring countries absorbed stateless Palestinian refugees. A third wave of displacement was provoked by Jordan through the bloody “Black September” campaign in September 1970 and the ousting of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to Lebanon. Since 2011 a fourth wave of displacement has been released by the multi-levelled simultaneous attacks on Syrians including the Palestinian communities in war-driven Syria. Today “the refugee problem” is still highly relevant and the situation for Palestinians in the region is extremely critical.

### 1.2.0 “The Protection Gap”

I now describe the legal labyrinth, which constitutes the rights regime governing Palestinian refugees in the “Near East”.<sup>31</sup> The framework is relevant for the study of border crossing since it creates the core for the lack of protection of and discrimination against Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon and Palestinians in general. Legal experts have dubbed the matter “the protection gap”,<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Chatty, *Displacement*, 212-17.

<sup>27</sup> Susan M. Akram, “Myths and Realities of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: Reframing the Right of Return”, in *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. A Right-Based Approach to Middle East Peace*, eds., Susan M. Akram, et al, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ahmad Sa’di, & Lila Abu-Lughod, eds. *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. (New York: Colombia University Press, 2007), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Sayigh, “Nakba’s Exclusion”, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Salman Abu Sitta, “Living Land: Population Transfer and the Mawat Pretext in the Naqab1”, *Badil*, 2012, accessed October 23 2014, <http://www.badil.org/en/al-majdal/item/1765-art6>.

<sup>31</sup> Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Occupied Territories of Palestine.

<sup>32</sup> Akram, “Myths”. Are Knudsen, “The Law, the Loss and the Lives of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”. *Chr. Michelsen Institute*. (Working Paper, 2007), 2.

which refers to the international community's on-going failure to guarantee access to safe territory and international protection of Palestinian refugees.<sup>33</sup>

"The gap" is found to have roots in the following four developments. Primarily, "the gap" is based on the on-going failure of the repatriation of Palestinians to Palestine after 1948, i.e. the failure to meet "the right of return".<sup>34</sup> Secondly, a protection mandate is omitted from the agency, which "handles" Palestinian refugees in the region,<sup>35</sup> i.e. United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In December 1949 UNRWA was formed, and unusually created separate to the International Refugee Organization (IOR), which was the organisation providing protection and humanitarian relief for refugees at the time.<sup>36</sup> The wording of the initial constituting documents of UNRWA is still valid and implies that UNRWA shall help to provide the material needs of refugees, not the legal protection.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) was the only UN agency with the actual "protection mandate" written into its principles by UNGA in 1950.<sup>38</sup> However, post-1952 financial cut back of donor's support for the UNCCP made the agency unable to function and thus no effectual agency has a protection mandate.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the protection gap builds on the dual exclusion clauses implicit in the so-called universal 1951 Refugee Convention (RC) guarded by United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Firstly, the exclusion clauses of Article 1(2) (i) deprives stateless Palestinian refugees from legal protection both by the UNHCR and also by the 1954 Convention of the Status of Stateless Persons (CSSP), since the conventions cease to apply "to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance [...]".<sup>40</sup> The Palestinians in Lebanon and Syria are *de facto* receiving assistance from UNRWA and therefore excluded. Secondly, it is prescribed in the UN body that Palestinians can only seek repatriation (to Palestine) not asylum in a third

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<sup>33</sup> Magda Qandil, "Palestinian Refugees Fleeing Syria: Restricted Access to Safe Territory and Protection in The Middle East," *Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies* 3 (2013), 33.

<sup>34</sup> Akram, "Myths", 3.

<sup>35</sup> Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the West bank and Gaza.

<sup>36</sup> Chatty, *Displacement*, 204.

<sup>37</sup> Akram, "Myths", 22.

<sup>38</sup> Scott Jr. Custer, "United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): Protection and Assistance to Palestine Refugees", in *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. A Right-Based Approach to Middle East Peace*, eds., Susan M. Akram et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 47.

<sup>39</sup> Akram, "Myths".

<sup>40</sup> Lena El-Malek, "Palestinian Refugees in International Law: Status, Challenges, and Solutions". *Immigration, Asylum, and Nationality Law* 20 (2006), 194.

country.<sup>41</sup> By law Palestinian refugees cannot be a part of the RC or the CSSP, even though Palestinians constitute one of the largest stateless refugee population worldwide.<sup>42</sup> In short, Palestinians in Lebanon whether born in Palestine, Syria or Lebanon are not protected by UNHCR, since Lebanon has not ratified the RC and even if they had Lebanon is UNRWA-area and thereby exclude Palestinians from the RC. All this leaves the plight of protecting and responsibility on the national and local hosting communities. The Palestinians in Lebanon, whether from Syria or Lebanon, suffer from local discriminatory practices. Lebanon denies to abide by its ratification of the Casablanca Protocol of the League of Arab States from 1965, which “guarantees Palestinians in the states of signatories equality in employment, freedom of movement between Arab states, granting and renewing travel documents, freedom of residence and rights to leave and return as given the host countries nationals”.<sup>43</sup> Stateless Palestinian refugees, who are on Lebanese territory, hover in an “ill-defined space, out of place and between states.”<sup>44</sup> Lebanon denies their naturalization while Israel rejects their return; Syria is a warzone, and Europe a fortress of closed borders.<sup>45</sup>

Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon now find themselves on a territory where at least three lager groups of refugees are struggling to survive and struggling for resources from the international legal aide regime, i.e. UNHCR, UNRWA and INGOs. The three groups are Syrian nationals, Palestinians already living in Lebanon,<sup>46</sup> and Palestinians from Syria. Both Palestinian refugees from Syria and Syrian nationals have found temporary shelter in the pre-established Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon, private homes or in so called spontaneous unofficial tent camps mainly in the Beqaa Valley close to the Lebanese-Syrian borders.<sup>47</sup> All groups experience and live through immensities of discriminations and deprivations of rights on Lebanese soil. Yet, this study focuses on the group of Palestinians from Syria and their experiences. The narrators of this study are Palestinians from Syria and fall into “the protection gap”. They are in a disadvantaged situation with no parallel since UNRWA in Lebanon is financially limited and do not have the

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<sup>41</sup> Diana Allan, *Refugees of the Revolution. Experiences of Palestinian Exile*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 169. UNRWA, “UNRWA Figures”, accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2013042435340.pdf>. UNHCR, “Who is Stateless and Where?”, accessed September 12 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c15e.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Knudsen, “The Law”, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Allan, *Refugees*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Andersson. *Illegality*.

<sup>46</sup> According to UNRWA’s figures 474.053 Palestinians are registered in Lebanon and are either 1948 refugees or direct descendant of 1948 or 1967 Palestinian refugees. UNRWA, “UNRWA Figures”, accessed September 12, 2014, <http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2013042435340.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Author’s observations and information collected through numerous conversations.

resources to cover “relief and work” for both Palestinians from Syria and the Palestinians already in Lebanon.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the help provided by UNRWA is limited and arbitrarily distributed.

As described, Lebanon has not ratified the 1951 RC and therefore neither Syrian nationals nor Palestinians are protected by the convention. Yet, the difference between “Syrian nationals” and “Palestinians” as categories of identification are stark and manifest through the levels of discrimination. For instance, the entry ban and visa regulations - known as the closing of the border - launched by the Lebanese authorities in May 2014 is solely targeting Palestinian refugees from Syria.<sup>49</sup> The participants of this study have not directly been subjected to the regulations of the entry ban, but the discriminatory policy plays a large role in their narratives and experiences of borders. The entry and visa regulations for Palestinian refugees from Syria into Lebanon are arbitrary and has since 2011 been subject to incessant *ad hoc* regulations. Through my time spent with different groups of persons who escaped Syria I gathered the following information on entry and visa regulations between 2011 and April 2014. Before the entry ban policy of May 2013 Palestinians from Syria either arrived in Lebanon via clandestine border crossing or via the official administrative border crossings.<sup>50</sup> Yet, by entry to Lebanon via public borders Palestinians needed to buy a “tourist visa”. To get the visa issued they were demanded to pay around 17 dollars more for a visa than Syrian nationals.<sup>51</sup> The visa was issued for 48 hours, which means that the majority, in the eyes of the authorities, would be “illegal aliens” in Lebanon within 48 hours of stay. Already from August 6 2013 Lebanon, implemented *bush backs*, i.e. denial of entry to Lebanon towards Palestinians from Syria.<sup>52</sup> This is a clear violation of refugee, customary and crucial laws of nations via the key facet of *non-refoulement* written in the RC.<sup>53</sup> However, bear in mind that this law does

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<sup>48</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, “The Price of Statelessness: Palestinian Refugees from Syria”, May 15, 2013, accessed September 12, 2014, <http://al-shabaka.org/price-statelessness-palestinian-refugees-syria?page=show#footnoteref3>

<sup>49</sup> More details about the entry ban and the new requirements for Palestinians from Syria entering Lebanon will be described in chapter five, section 5.2.1

<sup>50</sup> Today both Syrian nationals and Palestinians from Syria continuously arrive to Lebanon, yet Palestinians are forced to escape via clandestine border crossings.

<sup>51</sup> 17 dollars might sound like a small sum of money in some ears, yet in this context of 17 dollars are a lot of money and families and individuals spent all their savings on crossing the border.

<sup>52</sup> Magda Qandil, “Side Event Palestinian Refugees in Diaspora and Their Right to Return”, United Nations, Geneva. 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, accessed September 12, 2014

[http://www.gicj.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=330&Itemid=41](http://www.gicj.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=330&Itemid=41).

<sup>53</sup> *Refouler* means to return or to expel. Article 33 (i) of the Refugee Convention of 1951 states that “No Contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion”. The principal of *non-refoulement* means abiding to not deporting refugees to war zones. UNHCR, “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of the Refugees”, Article 33 (i), accessed December 15 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

<sup>53</sup> IOR in 1951 was replaced by the United Nations Higher Comity for Refugees (UNHCR)

not apply on Lebanese territory. Since August 2013 a Palestinian from Syria could only enter Lebanon if she or he had a valid airplane ticket out of Lebanon within 24 hours or was lucky enough to get a 15 days tourist visa. Yet, the tourist visa applied another hardship for the person since it contests the refugee status. After 15 days one needed to go to the Lebanese General Security (LGS), which many fear both because they have fear of being extradited to the Syrian regime, fear of imprisonment, fear of deportation, fear of denial of extension of the visa or because they do not have money to pay for the visa. The lucky ones were issued a three months visa. However, today this visa is no longer issued fro Palestinians from Syria. Nevertheless, whether holding the tourist visa, the extended three months visa or without valid documents the Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon are constrained by the local, national and international protection gap.

## 2.0.0 Literature Review

The review will first focus on borders and border crossing literature. Flowingly, a subset of historical and ethnographic studies on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is brought in dialogue. Subsequently, a review on the cross-border literature and inquires into Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon since 2011 is presented. These topics are selected since the thesis writes itself into a nexus of border crossing studies, critical geography and ethnography, and studies of stateless populations in Lebanon.

### 2.1.0 Border Crossing Literature

Discriminatory state and border control behaviour towards refugees, migrants and stateless populations are documented worldwide. Border crossing and displacement through violence is not a “postmodern” phenomenon, all though it is an ever-increasing postmodern paradox. Western-driven studies have in a wide range placed physical fixed borders at the centre of analysis and thus been part of a process of territorialisation where borders are simplified as military enforcements of territory and commercial regulations.<sup>54</sup> However, borders and displacement are evidently linked and borders are proven to regulate individuals within and beyond border territory.<sup>55</sup> Whether the displacement is through desire or violence, *borders* will be crossed and disorganise familiarities. Since the early 1990s scholars have increasingly called for a shift in borders analysis as simply reinforcements of territorial divide to analysis of regulations of displacement and hybrid border crossers as refugees, migrants and stateless populations.<sup>56</sup> In 1992 Liisa Malkki called for a new sociology of displacement, i.e. a normadology - a sociology that appreciates that deterritorialization and memories, place, identity and imaginations are intimately linked and that an increasing number of people are “categorized according to deterritorialized “homelands”” and/or displacement.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, ethnographic literature on borders and border crossings has according to William Walters increasingly focused on borders as “spaces and instruments for the policing of a variety of actors, objects and processes whose common denominator is their ‘mobility’”.<sup>58</sup> Scholars as Pablo Vila, Nick Megoran and Sharam Khosravi have contributed with grounded ethnographies of fixed

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<sup>54</sup> Liisa Malkki, “National Geographic. The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorilazation of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees. *Cultural Antropology* 7 (1992), 24 +38.

<sup>55</sup> Andersson. *Illegality Inc.* Khosravi, *Illegal Traveller*.

<sup>56</sup> Malkki. “National”, 38. Philip E. Steinberg, “Sovereignty, Territory and the Mapping of Mobility: A View from the Outside”. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99 (2009), 467. Gregory, *Colonial*.

<sup>57</sup> Malkki. “National”, 24 +38.

<sup>58</sup> William Walters. “Border/Control”. *European Journal of Social Theory* 9 (2006), 188.

border spaces in different geographical areas.<sup>59</sup> However, their studies remain focused on the territorialized border areas and single-axis analysis, i.e. emphasize on one dimension of inequality.<sup>60</sup>

### 2.2.0 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

The review will now move into presenting literature created on the country-specific context that the Palestinians from Syria have moved into. Therefore historical and political inflicted work on Palestinians in Lebanon is now brought in dialogue. Consequently, reviews on important contributions covering Palestinians' history in Syria as those by Laurie Brand and Nabil Bitrai are omitted.<sup>61</sup> For a future study, which compares Palestinians' experiences in Syria and Lebanon inclusion of this literature would be crucial.

Farid El Khazen and Farwaz Traboulsi are conventional historians in the Lebanese elitist respectively anti and pro-Palestinian nexus.<sup>62</sup> Rosemary Sayigh is an example of un-conventional historian, since she covers Palestinians' history in Lebanon through her use of oral history collecting.<sup>63</sup> Khazen resume the history of the relation between Palestinians and Lebanese through official and non-official sources on positions on permanent settlement of Palestinians.<sup>64</sup> Khazen explain how permanent settlement of Palestinians would be harmful for Lebanon and argue that most Lebanese would be against *de facto* or *de jure* settlement of Palestinians, since they are to blame for the unrest in the country.<sup>65</sup>

Traboulsi's book *A Modern History of Lebanon*, helps to illustrate complexity of the Lebanese political system and the complexity of political alliances.<sup>66</sup> Traboulsi shows how Palestinians were used as scapegoats for the political parties' negotiation processes during the Civil War.<sup>67</sup> Opposite Khazen, Traboulsi displays the complexity of the political circumstances in Lebanon. The latter tells that the perception of Palestinians in Lebanon and the willingness to

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<sup>59</sup> Vila, *Ethnography*. Nick Megoran, "For Ethnography". Shahram Khosravi, *Illegal Traveller*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Patrick R. Grzanka, ed., *Interscetonality. A Foundations and Frontiers Reader*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014), XV.

<sup>61</sup> Laurie Brand, "Palestinians in Syria. The Politics of Integration", *The Middle East Journal* 42, (1988).

Nidal Bitari, "Yarmouk Refugee Camp and the Syrian Uprising: A View from Within". *Journal of Palestine Studies* XL III (2013).

<sup>62</sup> Farid El Khazen, "Permanent Settlement of Refugees in Lebanon: A Recipe for Conflict". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 10 (1997). Farwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*. (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies. The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994).

<sup>64</sup> Khazen, "Permanent Settlement", 275.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>66</sup> Traboulsi, *A History*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.



include them in national politics and give them basic rights historically has changed and been dependent on the position of the armed resistance – a point also proven by other historians.<sup>68</sup>

One of the most influential works both for this thesis and for the general historical inflicted literature on Palestinians' experiences in Lebanon is Sayigh's *Too Many Enemies. The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*. Her work is an oral-history based inquiry into Shatila camp-dwellers' experiences from 1949 to 1982 including the Israeli Invasion and massacre in 1982.<sup>69</sup> The work combines oral accounts and historical perspectives on the attacks and sieges of the camp. Sayigh contests grand narrative history writing and contributes to extended knowledge about survival strategies and social struggles in the sectarian and violent framework. Moreover, she contributes to a wider understanding of the hostile Palestinian-Lebanese relations, through articulating the subjective narrative experiences of living under extreme restrictions, siege, massacres and deprivation of basic needs.

None of the approaches mentioned here can mutually exclude each other, but have to be understood in a framework of truth claims and discourses of knowledge production of anti-and pro Palestinianism.

### 2.3.0 From Identity to Experience Studies

Here, I go one step deeper into the studies of Palestinians in Lebanon. I juxtapose seminal work on identity studies and labelling of refugees with two essential empirical ethnographic contributions to the study of Palestinians' "identity" and experiences in Lebanon.

Identity studies have had great impact on social analysis and with it studies of forced migration.<sup>70</sup> Roger Zetter's crucial work on labelling refugees proved that "refugee" is a bureaucratic label, and the label carries implications for the individual, which bestow exclusion or inclusion, ineligibility or privilege.<sup>71</sup> The refugee-label is at once powerful and conveys an "extremely complex set of values", which can affect but cannot clarify identity.<sup>72</sup> Claiming that "a refugee" has a specific identity is nonetheless a simplification, which omits particularities. However, Lisa Malkki suggests that displacement and being a refugee includes social struggles determined by territorializing language, which might affect particular identity formation.<sup>73</sup> The multi-faceted concept of identity is ill suited for social analytical inquiry, since it simplifies

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<sup>68</sup> Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival. The PLO in Lebanon*, (San Francisco: Westview Press), 1990.

<sup>69</sup> Sayigh, *Too Many*.

<sup>70</sup> Roger Broubaker & Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'identity'". *Theory and Society* 29 (2000). Roger Zetter, "Labelling Refugees. Forming and Transforming of Bureaucratic Identity", *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4 (1991).

<sup>71</sup> Zetter, "Labelling".

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Malkki, "National", 25.

individualities and is used ambiguously.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argues for analytical tools in social analysis that goes “beyond identity”.<sup>75</sup> When labels and “identities” are problematized the structural powers, which create them, are drawn into the limelight.<sup>76</sup>

Julie Peteet’s anthropological inquiries add to a complex take on how displacement of Palestinians has developed into “a random agglomeration of atomized individuals with no fixed identity”.<sup>77</sup> Particularly significant is her argument that the situation of Palestinians in the refugee camps creates *places of living* through which identities are continuously reinvented. Peteet argues that identity and place mutually constitute one another and that identity differs and can transform via movement, personal, and political events.<sup>78</sup> In the case of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon it is important to make this analysis, since the Palestinians through three generations have lived and been oppressed in these camps, which is also what Sari Hanafi from a governance perspective argues.<sup>79</sup> Through a Foucauldian analysis Peteet emphasizes that the creation of *place* and *space* includes political power. The fact that Palestinians have not had the right to a *place* is an important part of their particular identities and this is rebuilt through camps. However, Peteet’s work remains focused on the concept of identity as the signifier of Palestinian displacement, instead of giving way to analysis of social struggles. Peteet’s analysis includes what she calls “refugees’ creativity capacity”.<sup>80</sup> I find this notion important because it shows that individual particularities, resistance and the will to live are not strangled through systemic othering or violence. This is what scholar Sylvain Perdigon in his work on Palestinians in Lebanon calls “pessoptimism” - a capability to resist created by the passing of time in oppressing circumstances.<sup>81</sup>

Diana Allan’s 2014 publication suggests a focus on experiences and daily struggles instead of identity formation.<sup>82</sup> Allan’s book points to the territory of “Lebanon” experienced as a space of transit, from which camp dwellers through more than 60 years have tried to find “[f]utures

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<sup>74</sup> Brubaker & Cooper, “Beyond”, 34.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>76</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, “Palestinian Camp Women as Tellers of History”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27 (1998). Ilana Feldman, “The Challenge of Categorising: UNRWA and the definition of a ‘Palestine Refugee’”, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25 (2012).

<sup>77</sup> Julie Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Peteet. “Transforming Trust”, 178.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>79</sup> Sari Hanafi, “Enclaves and Fortressed Archipelago: Violence and Governance in Lebanon’s Palestinian Refugee Camps”, in *Lebanon. After the Cedar Revolution*, edited by Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr, (London: Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2012) 105.

<sup>80</sup> Peteet, *Landscape*, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Sylvain Perdigon, “Yet another Lesson in Pessoptimism – A Short Ethnography of Hope and Despair with One Palestinian Refugee in Lebanon”. *REVUE Asylon(s)* 5 (2008). Accessed September 12, 2014. <http://www.reseau-terra.eu/article805.html>

<sup>82</sup> Allan, *Refugees*.

[e]lsewhere”.<sup>83</sup> Allan shows how the permanence and provisionality of the prolonged statelessness is affecting everyday life.<sup>84</sup> Through oral testimonies and observations Allan describes the experiences of discrimination, rightlessness and juridical limbo for the camp dwellers. They cannot be allowed asylum in the West, since they are “assumed to have been afforded protection in Lebanon” and at the same time cannot use persecution by Israel as a refugee status claim.<sup>85</sup> This leaves a generation with severe experiences of unemployment, discrimination and feelings of no chance to reach futures elsewhere. Finally, through her study Allan provides a suggestion of the meaning of borders and border crossings as *always already* present - a finding, which resonates in my study. She emphasises that a border sustains asymmetrical power relations between the individual and the state exercising performativity of power at the public border crossings. Allan concludes that “[t]he mechanisms of state control, [remind] us that a border is not simply a physical line [...] but an interactive space whose form is determined by the person crossing it”.<sup>86</sup>

This section is crucial to this thesis since the studies presented have both worked as inspiration and made leeway for changing methodologies through learning from scholars’ mistakes. Further, since this thesis distance itself from identity as a fixed concept, and rather looks into experiences of incessant social struggles and survival strategies.

#### **2.4.0 Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon**

Finally, I move into the literary field focusing on Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon as a resent phenomenon. The forced migration of Palestinians from Syria to Lebanon writes the beginning of a new chapter of Palestinian exile in Lebanon – a chapter strongly affected by the Syrian uprising and the change of space in Syria. The literature on Palestinians in exile and their displacement is plentiful in terms of analysis of Lebanese attitudes towards Palestinians, analysis of the refugee camps, identity formation, and the armed resistance. However, studies of Palestinians experiences of borders and control are scarce. Documented experiences show that the Syrian-Lebanese border area has historically been porous and contested; nonetheless, allowed flexible movement between the two different yet interconnected nation-states.<sup>87</sup> The distinction between

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>87</sup> Giovanni Bochi, “Mobility and Social Relations among the Dom travelling between Syria and Lebanon”, *Antropology of the Middle East* 6, (2011): 52.

crossing borders as, migrants, labour migrants or refugees is important to incorporate because these groups interact differently with the hosting society.

Sherifa Shafie notes that Palestinians in possession of the Palestinian Travel Document issued by the Syrian General Administration for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR) has since 1999 been allowed to travel between Lebanon and Syria.<sup>88</sup> Palestinians and their counterparts of Syrian or Lebanese nationality have simultaneously escaped across the borders in times of unrest and war through the 1970s, 1980s and 2000s. For example, a large amount of Palestinians from Lebanon escaped to Syria during the 1982 and 2006 Israeli attacks.<sup>89</sup> However, literature document difficulties and discrimination when persons of Palestinian identity, whether from Syria or Lebanon attempt to cross the porous borders whether as visitors, migrants or war-refugees, which is partly due to the legal lacuna described in chapter one. Nonetheless, Palestinians from Syria have on a large scale between 1999 and 2012 been able to enter Lebanon when holding an exit document issued by GAPAR.<sup>90</sup>

Escape from Syria is a new and on-going phenomenon and consequently the literature is limited. Four sources of INGO's, a UN agency and two scholars have provided documentation of the issue of discrimination of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon. These are reports by American Near East Aide (ANERA), UNRWA, Amnesty International's (AI) and Human Right Watch's (HRW), and scholarly inquires by Rosemary Sayigh and Magda Qandil.<sup>91</sup> Yet, UNRWA's report focus on assessments, funding and refugee figures, while ANERA focus on figures and treatment of refugees in Lebanon. Sayigh focuses on a critique of discrimination on an international, national and local level, which Qandil's work concert, while she also inquires into the dispersal of the Palestinians refugee community from Yarmouk camp. Only the HRW and AI reports are published after May 2014 and their quest is to document the discriminatory border

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<sup>88</sup> Sherifa Shafie, "FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria," Forced Migration Online, accessed September 20 2014, <http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo017/fmo017.pdf> .

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> ANERA, *Palestinian Refugees From Syria in Lebanon*. ANERA Reports, 2013. Amnesty International, *Denied Refuge. Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon*, London: Amnesty International Publications, 2014. UNRWA. *Syria Regional Crisis Response – December 2014 Midyear Review*, 2014. Accessed September 12, 2014 [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/syria\\_regional\\_crisis\\_response\\_midyear\\_review\\_2014.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/syria_regional_crisis_response_midyear_review_2014.pdf). Human Rights Watch, *Not Welcome. Jordan's Treatment of Palestinians Escaping Syria*. Human Rights Watch, USA, 2014. Accessed September 12, 2014. [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0814\\_ForUpload\\_0.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/jordan0814_ForUpload_0.pdf). Rosemary Sayigh, "The Price of Statelessness: Palestinian Refugees from Syria". Al-Shabaka May 15, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2014. <http://al-shabaka.org/price-statelessness-palestinian-refugees-syria?page=show#footnoteref3>. Magda Qandil, "Palestinian Refugees Fleeing Syria: Restricted Access to Safe Territory and Protection in The Middle East". *Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies* 3 (2013). Magda Qandil, "Side Event Palestinian Refugees in Diaspora and Their Right to Return", United Nations. Geneva. 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, accessed September 12, 2014 [http://www.gicj.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=330&Itemid=41](http://www.gicj.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=330&Itemid=41).

policies of Jordan and Lebanon. HRW's report focus on Jordan's border practises and only mentions Lebanon briefly, whereas, AI's report focuses specifically on the May 2014 entry ban. None of them contribute with in-depth studies of subjective experiences and consequences of the discrimination, but are still crucial to prove the increasing discrimination against a vulnerable population on an international, national and local level. Likewise they document discriminatory state-behaviour towards Palestinians from Syria in all host countries.<sup>92</sup>

Concluding, I wish to add a comment on the fact that three ethnographical pieces mentioned in this review are conducted in Shatila camp (Sayigh, Peteet and Allan). According to Maysoun Sukarieh and Stuart Tanock Shatila camp is one of the most heavily researched communities worldwide.<sup>93</sup> Over-research has implications on the persons "studied" who might experience being "objectified" by researchers. Further, it has implications in reference to camp dwellers expectation of social change.<sup>94</sup> Journalist Moe-Ali Nayel likewise critiqued Harvard University human rights students and their professor for "take[ing] the classroom to the refugee camp".<sup>95</sup> An insensitive and humiliating research approach, which dishonours persons, stuck in incessant predicament and calls for all researcher and teachers to uphold critical self-reflexivity.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.

<sup>93</sup> Maysoun Sukarieh & Stuart Tanock, "On the Problem of Over-Researched Communities: The Case of Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon", *Sociology* (2012), 1.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>95</sup> Moe-Ali Nayel, "Palestinian Refugees are Not at Your Service". *Electronic Intifada*. 2013, accessed September 21 2014. <http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-refugees-are-not-your-service/12464>.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.0.0 Methods

The following chapter presents a decolonizing and deterritorializing methodological approach to the study of border crossing experiences of Palestinian refugees from Syria. The individuals, whose voices are echoed here, are subjects of a colonial history, a contemporary coloniality and a stateless community. Edward Said critiqued the discourse of orientalism and pinpointed an obligation inherited by the consequences of centuries of superior Western power/knowledge production about “the other”.<sup>97</sup> The obligation is to contest colonizing research practises by commitment to a critical epistemology of decolonization and reflexive methodologies.<sup>98</sup> A dilemma unfolds; the discrepancy within writing into a Western power/knowledge production while aiming to counter colonizing research practices. The dilemma is countered by a critical use of multiplicity of methods aiming at intersubjective authorship through oral history and ethnographic participant-observations, which privileges the participants’ persistence to include historical reflections in interpretations of their present.

#### 3.1.0 Oral History Method and Ethnographic Participant-Observation

I found it fruitful to answer the research question through combining oral history and ethnographic participant-observation (EPO). Oral history is an ethnographic historically inflicted method in which techniques originate in archival practices aiming to contest conventional grand-narrative history writing.<sup>99</sup> It relates to collecting information on specific events, experiences, memories and ways of life of those whose histories are often omitted from mainstream history, e.g. stateless persons, refugees, undocumented migrants, people of colour, working class, transgender and working class females.<sup>100</sup> I ascribe this work to a recent version of oral history closer connected to advocacy than to archival work.<sup>101</sup> An oral history project obliges in-depth sources, since its final product is the intersubjective interview. Therefore, background research, reciprocal interaction, observation and comprehension of historical realities of the participants are crucial.<sup>102</sup>

Oral history does not seek *representativity*, but seeks to *realize* subjective complexes of history and life experiences. A study with a large number of participants would fail to capture

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<sup>97</sup>Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York:Random House, 1978), 52.

<sup>98</sup> Anaheed Al-Hardan, “Decolonizing Research on Palestinians: Towards Critical Epistemologies and Research Practices”, *Qualitative Inquiry* 20 (2014), 61 + 69.

<sup>99</sup> Shopes, “Oral History”, 455.

<sup>100</sup> Linda Shopes, “Legal and Ethical Issues in Oral History”, in *Handbook of Oral History* eds., Thomas L Charlton et al. (Lanham Md: Altamira Press, 2006), 135. Kristina Minister, “A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview”, in *Women’s Words* eds., Sherna B Gluck & Daphne Patai. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 31.

<sup>101</sup> Shopes, “Oral History” 456.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 451. Roland Grele, *Envelops of Sound. The Art of Oral History*. (London: Praeger, 1991), 135. Minister, “A Feminist”, 28.

personal life experiences since trust issues would occur. In qualitative research rapport-building, i.e. establishing relationship, is necessary to mitigate trust, gain reciprocity and foster human dignity.<sup>103</sup> The reciprocal and co-conducting techniques give oral history a chance to contest colonizing methodologies, since the final product is created through inter-subjective authorship.<sup>104</sup> Mary Chamberlain named oral history the antithesis of narrative theory, since oral history engage in showing things “as they are” in their particularity, which shows that grand narrative is not equal to truth.<sup>105</sup> Oral history asks *why* people remember and *how* people create meaning of the past through individual experiences. It examines the past’s link to the present through interpreting lived experiences.<sup>106</sup>

I built EPO into the design of the oral history project in order to exhaust the information gathered and create a fuller picture of the environment and the social struggles covered. Dwight Conquergood argues that EPO is suited to unveil power processes and discriminatory mechanisms and that ethnography should de-centre typifications, specifically when studying refuge and displacement.<sup>107</sup> The observations are participatory, since I engaged in events during research as a *feminist embodied practice*.<sup>108</sup> By the term *feminist* I refer to practices, which includes both male and female aspects and contest male dominated sociocommunication. *Just* observing, if possible, would had made little or no sense and aggravate mistrust. The events I took part in varied from hospital and family visits, housework, meals, work at offices, commemoration events, meetings, demonstrations, walks and daily pastime. The combination of oral history and EPO help establish what Donna Haraway calles “situated knowledge” as a feminist objectivity practice – which aims at showing “better accounts of the world” - a practice, which privileges contestation, deconstruction and transforms systems of knowledge.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Lory J. Dance, Mary Hermes and Rochelle Gutiérrez. “More Like Jazz than Classical. Reciprocal Interactions among Educational Researchers and Respondents.” *Harvard Educational Review* 80 (2010): 333. Shopes, “What Oral History”, 451

<sup>104</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 259.

<sup>105</sup> Mary Chamberlain, “Narrative Theory”, in *Handbook of Oral History* eds., Thomas L. Charlton et al. (Lanham Md: Altamira Press, 2006), 390.

<sup>106</sup> Hamilton & Shopes, *Oral History*, viii.

<sup>107</sup> Conquergood, “Rethinking” 360.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 180. Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”, in *Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*, eds., Yvonna S. Lincoln and Norman K. Denzin. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2003), 34.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-30.

### 3.2.0 Research Design

The research design has developed through encounters with literature, pilot-testing, communicative validation with scholars, human rights experts, activists, co-students, participants and the research setting. Democratic processes thus shaped the research design through a commitment to understanding the narrators on their own terms and through “reciprocal interaction”.<sup>110</sup> Before embarking on the field trip I conducted oral history recordings with Mahmoud in Sweden.<sup>111</sup> Through the preliminary recordings the emic-category of *pervasiveness of borders* occurred. Mahmoud contributed to the research in three ways: 1) His experiences added to the hypothesis of discriminatory border policies and opened my eyes to pervasive border experiences, 2) he informed about current situation and 3) he suggested relevant questions to ask persons who recently escaped Syria. Further, through his warnings of the precarious situation and the delicate topic, I refrained from conducting a border-observation-study. The meeting with *lived experiences* developed the research design before embarking on the fieldwork.

The final design consists of an ethnographic study combining oral history, participant-observations, and grounded theory to analyse oral accounts, observations, hangouts, guided expert interviews and email correspondence collected through seven weeks in the spring of 2014.<sup>112</sup> The design is based on 10 oral history recordings with five main narrators (in all 13 hours recorded material) and three memos of observations: (I) Visit at Roula’s family, (II) Walk with Walid and Balsam and (III) a refugee committee meeting. Lastly, I conducted expert interviews with stakeholders and key informants Professor Sari Hanafi, HRW’s spokesperson Lama Fakih and Lebanese freelance journalist Moe-Ali Nayel. All expert interviewees have professional experience in working with the topic of Palestinians refugees from Syria in Lebanon, and distinct knowledge about the Lebanese society, international refugee law, and political practices. The collected material was translated, transcribed and analysed through initial and focused grounded theory coding via the software MaxQDA.<sup>113</sup>

The oral data and observations were collected through two Jazz-like-strategies: (1) hangouts and (2) recording sessions in a location of the narrator’s choice. I borrow the term of “hang-outs” and “Jazz-like” as methodological concepts from L.J. Dance’s description of her research.<sup>114</sup> I hung out in various locations with the narrators and was led by a “jazz-like respect for conversational

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<sup>110</sup> Dance et al. “Like Jazz”, 328 + 336.

<sup>111</sup> Mahmoud, 25 years old, born in Yarmouk Camp, Damascus. Escaped Yarmouk in November 2011.

<sup>112</sup> Appendices

<sup>113</sup> Charmaz, “Grounded Theory”. MaxQDA Rel. 11, Verbi GmbH, Marburg, Germany, 2014.

<sup>114</sup> Dance et al. “Like Jazz”, 334.



flow” through which rapport was built.<sup>115</sup> The strategy used to access the narrators was through the use of personal network established in Lebanon and Syria, in camp and non-camp settings, during periods from 2011-2014. The five main narrators were encountered through three gatekeepers: one in a refugee camp setting, one in a local NGO and the third through private networks.

### 3.2.1 Presentation of Narrators

Self-chosen pseudonyms and *narrators* name the participants, since they are the narrators of their narratives rather than informants sharing data or testimonies.<sup>116</sup> I refrain from using abbreviations as “PRS” for “Palestinian Refugees of Syria”, since this contributes to processes of othering and resembles administrative professionalized language and disturbs the methodological quest.<sup>117</sup> The five narrators were born, grew up and lived until their escape in Palestinian communities in Syria known as Yarmouk camp and Khan el Sheih camp – both places are today marked as “not accessible” due to siege, violence and lack of water, food and electricity.<sup>118</sup>

- Walid is a man born in 1988. He is educated as a computer technician. Prior to the conflict in Syria Walid lived and worked in Damascus. Walid is not married and escaped Syria by foot over a mountain alone in November 2013. Walid has found shelter in a refugee camp in Southern Beirut. Walid is undocumented in Lebanon.
- Balsam is a man born in 1986. Balsam has finished vocational training as an engineer assistant in Damascus. He is a Palestinian refugee, but he possesses both Palestinian and Syrian travel documents (his grandfather received a Syrian passport when he escaped to Damascus during the Battle of the Golan Heights in 1973). Balsam first escaped Syria to Jordan in 2012, but was denied entry and then escaped to Lebanon and from Lebanon by airplane to Jordan. He was forced to leave Jordan in January 2013 and went to Lebanon by airplane.
- Omar is a man born in 1986. Omar is educated as an artist in music, dance and theatre. Before the conflict he worked as a music and drama teacher at a UNRWA youth and women’s centre. Omar has escaped to Lebanon twice, but was forced to go back to Syria to renew his passport in June 2013. He fled by car through the official border crossing at Al-

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>116</sup> Portelli, *The Death*, 256.

<sup>117</sup> Several INGOs use “PRS” as an abbreviation for “Palestinian Refugees from/of Syria”

<sup>118</sup> UNRWA, “Syria Regional Crisis Response 78”, accessed September 22 2014,

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/syria-regional-crisis-response-78>.

Masnaa during both escapes. Omar is banned by the Lebanese General Security (LGS) from performing his profession while in Lebanon.

- Roula is a woman born in 1984. She is mother of five children (2 - 16 years of age). Roula has graduated elementary school. Roula's husband and son escaped Syria to Germany via Turkey in 2012. Roula and her four children escaped Syria in April 2014 by car via Al-Masnaa border crossing. She lives in a camp in Sothern Beirut and is waiting for family unification with her husband and son in Germany. In the recording sessions with Roula the voices of Nariman, her 16-year-old daughter and Sarah her 32-year-old cousin (mother of two) are included.
- Khaled is a man born in 1964. He is father of three (16 – 24 years of age). He has a high school education and has since been engaged in community work. He fled to Lebanon by car twice and crossed the official border crossing at Al-Masnaa in January and August 2013, since then he has been living in a camp in Sothern Beirut. He was forced to leave his family in Syria. He hoped to be able to reach Europe and seek asylum for them all there.<sup>119</sup>

### 3.2.2 Oral History Collecting

I conducted the oral history recordings, rapport building and observations in areas where Palestinians from Syria have settled, mostly pre-established Palestinian refugee camps, squats and private homes. Through periodic fieldwork and volunteer work in these areas since 2011 I had an already established network and knowledge about the camps and the conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon in general. All communication was conducted in spoken colloquial Arabic - the mother tongue of the narrators. I have studied Arabic for a number of years at university level and further lived in Arabic speaking countries as Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. It strengthened the quest of the thesis to be able to collect material in the narrators' native language and without the use of an external interpreter. Yet, numbers of cultural and language challenges had to be met, since understanding languages are not equal to understanding cultures of gestural cues and knowledge systems.<sup>120</sup> Using Arabic as the primary language of communication enabled the encounters and did not allow "added layers of meaning" through interpreters.<sup>121</sup> The oral history collecting was proven relevant, since the narrators expressed appreciation towards having their stories documented. The

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<sup>119</sup> Appendices.

<sup>120</sup> Andrea Fontana, & James H. Frey, "The Interview. From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text." In *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2003), 76.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

narrators chose the time and locations of recordings and thus co-conducting and empowerment strategies mitigated trust in an otherwise insecure setting. Though oral history method emphasises conducting interviews through one-on-one exchange, this was at times impossible.<sup>122</sup> For example, it was impossible to conduct private recordings with female narrators, since they were with their children. Consequently, the text i.e. the transcription of oral data has to be situated both in reference to context and in reference to who is the *narrator* and who is the *audience*.<sup>123</sup> During recording with Roula, Sarah and Nariman they were in turn the narrators - the children and me the audience and *you* the invisible audience. At one recording Roula's brother was present and took over the role of narrating. Consequently, the audience silenced stories.<sup>124</sup> Roula expressed that her experiences did not have importance; therefore most her stories were told off record. This is reflected in the analysis where the men's stories are richer in details than the women's. Opposite Roula the males never questioned why they should tell their stories. Regrettably, this reflects the androcentric world where male speaking is the norm and the lack of time to establish close rapport with more female narrators.<sup>125</sup>

Oral history is conducted through unstructured interviews techniques with a broad focus, such as life stories, personal narratives and specific historical events and questioning is open-ended, subjective and historically inflected.<sup>126</sup> I memorised questions instead of bringing an interview-guide. Former projects taught me that separation by a document in the interview situation made narrators and myself uncomfortable. None of the narrators read or write English or were accustomed with recording situations. Approaching the narrators with a list of un-readable questions would contribute to a "process of othering" in an already systemic othering.<sup>127</sup> It is of crucial importance to notice that all narrators were psychologically affected by both their experience of living under military control in Syria, and with fear of deportations, the Lebanese authorities, checkpoints and accusations of being collaborators. I aimed to show sensitivity towards these subjects. For example, by eluding administrative language, such as asking for surnames and names of family members and avoiding topics of political and religious character.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Shopes, "Oral History", 451.

<sup>123</sup> Fatma Kassem, *Palestinian Women*. (London: Zed Books, 2011), 54.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Minister, "Feminist", 31.

<sup>126</sup> Fontana, & Frey, "Interview", 80.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling. Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. (Gylling: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 95.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, the time of the recordings and observations have influence on the content and analysis. Two events influenced the results: (1) coincidentally the Lebanese authorities changed border and entry procedures only a week into my field strip. (2) The 1948 Al-Nakba (annual May 15 event) was commemorated during the rapport-building and recording process. These two events were at times the centre of discussions and thus the timing of *during* research affected the outcome.<sup>129</sup>

### 3.3.0 Analysing Oral History and Ethnographic Participant-Observation

The oral history recordings provide material of new insights about Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon and their experiences of themselves, their border crossing and their place in history. My use of grounded theory coding is a way of developing a grounded theory through theoretical analyses of qualitative material.<sup>130</sup> However, a complete grounded theory approach was unfeasible, since I did not organise theoretical sampling to exhaust the material.<sup>131</sup> Yet, by building my analytical interpretations on a pre-established theoretical framework, I add to theories, which could be transcended.<sup>132</sup> In this way I combine an *etic*- (researcher-ascribed) and *emic*-approach (self-ascribed) in my analysis, yet, most sensitive to meaning generated from the material, which means that I have been guided by the words of the narrators.<sup>133</sup>

I have used initial coding to allow myself to pursue as many paths as possible and to abide to the oral history approach, which finds interest in tracing memory paths and methods of recalling.<sup>134</sup> Through this approach I found that the accounts build on un-linear form of memories, since one does not tell a life story from a model of beginning-middle-end. The task is to make sense of the personal logic of story telling and attempt to organize the way meaning is created.<sup>135</sup> The initial coding process was done on a word-by-word and line-by-line analysis as described by Charmaz in order to “code for processes”, which are fundamental in the life of the narrators and their interpretation of their present.<sup>136</sup> In the secondary phase I used focused coding techniques to develop categories.<sup>137</sup> The main parts of my results are found through scrutinizing participants’ statements, actions and patterns of movement.

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<sup>129</sup> Al-Hardan, “Decolonizing”.

<sup>130</sup> Charmaz, “Grounded”, 109.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 110 + 125.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>133</sup> Megoran, “Ethnography”, 626.

<sup>134</sup> Charmaz, “Grounded”, 115.

<sup>135</sup> Kassem, *Palestinian Women*, 42.

<sup>136</sup> Charmaz, “Grounded”, 112.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 113 + 116.

### 3.4.0 Ethical Concerns

Ethical considerations belong to the *before* of a critical methodological approach, since ethics in any good oral history project should be considered at its outset, however here the ethical concerns and flowingly the projects limitations are presented as an evaluation.

Naming hierarchies of power does not dismantle them, just like Said's critique of the discourse of *Orientalism*, did not undo it.<sup>138</sup> Likewise, power relations between me, as a researcher, and the participants are not undone by emphasising my privileged and power over the interpretation. Yet, by realizing the obligations, which accompany power, we can attempt to transform lack of power into a more empowered position. Through principals of informed consent I showed respect towards the participants. I informed about the initial idea and how it developed and my position as a master student at a Western university. I informed about the narrators' full anonymity and my aim to protect them while and after documenting their stories. From the first encounter it was made clear that participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any time with no consequences.

I combined the Ethical Guidelines of Lund University (LU), with Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling's (COHDS) ethical codes.<sup>139</sup> COHDS suggests three core principles of research ethics: informed consent, mitigation of harm and right of withdrawal. Mitigation of harm is an ethical principal, which is not a part of LUs Ethical Guidelines. Mitigation of harm refers to three ideals: Firstly, mitigating harm include the narrators and the researcher, since revisiting memory can be difficult, and listening may also prove painful and re-interpreting upsetting.<sup>140</sup> Mitigation of harm also includes not simply "getting what you want" from an interview, but revisiting narrators to maintain mutual respect. Lastly, it includes providing narrators with a copy of the transcript of the recordings in their language. I have aimed to meet all three ideals, however was unable to provide two participants with a transcript of their interviews, since I was unable to reach them since August 2014.

#### 3.4.1 Anonymizing

The narrators were guaranteed anonymity and protection of sensitive information. Anonymity has been secured through pseudonyms and anonymizing of current places of settlement in order to prevent ability to locate each individual. Further, only paragraphs quoted in the thesis are attached in Appendices – not the entire oral history transcript. Through the initiative of the narrators I have

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<sup>138</sup> Chakrabarty, "Who Speaks", 2.

<sup>139</sup> Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling's (COHDS). "Ethics", accessed September 22 2014, <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/toolbox/ethics>.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

not anonymized their former places of residence in Syria and their families' origin in Palestine and places of displacements, since these places have significant meaning for the narrators' and for historical developments. Omission of the names would be taking part in silencing of Palestinian narratives. Maintaining the names of places and stories connected to these places in the geographical areas of Syria and Palestine is part of contesting narratives where these names have been omitted from history writing, e.g. names of Palestinian villages and Palestinian communities in Syria. Series of dilemmas occur by my quest to contest stereotypic images of "refugees", "displacements", and "Palestinian's from Syria" by showing their particularities in life circumstances and social struggles, while anonymizing their stories, since via anonymizing places and events locality and historicity is lost.<sup>141</sup> This counteracts oral histories' quest to document silenced histories.

### 3.5.0 Limitations

This section illuminates four limitations and critiques of the study. Firstly, the language of research was Arabic, while the researchers mother tongue is Danish and the thesis is written in English. This creates limitations in reference to oral histories' quest to capture the natural language, emic-categories, and maintain the spoken word. Further, there is a risk of misunderstandings. Parts of the original oral data has been lost in translation, some of which have been found again by the later translation and transcribing processes. Yet, the originally spoken words are lost, since the exact moment of inter-subjective interaction has passed - the circumstances of all research.<sup>142</sup>

Secondly, the strategy behind accessing and selecting narrators was un-organized and dominated by ethnographic detours and logics of intuition more than logics of sampling, which allowed "side-roads of discovery."<sup>143</sup> This was extremely beneficial for discovering multi-levelled social struggles, yet, disturbed "sampling". Consequently, I only include one main female narrator, though three female voices are presented. Further, I have one male of 50 year of age in a group of otherwise 26-30 of age. Further, only one person is undocumented while the rest have different travel documents. Despite this the "sample" represents the diversity and intersections of persons escaping Syria.

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<sup>141</sup> Charlotte B. Jacobsen & Katrine S. Johansen, "Fortrolig viden. Formidlingsetik vs. tavhedspligt i sundhedsforskning", in *Mellem mennesker. En grundbog i antropologisk forskningsetik*, ed., Kirsten Hastrup. (Viborg: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2009), 216.

<sup>142</sup> Grele, *Envelpoes*, xxiv

<sup>143</sup> Paul Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic things: The Senses in Anthropology*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989), 142-143 + 149.

Thirdly, the research was conducted in a predominantly androcentric community. Consequently, my privileged position was at times transformed to a precarious position, as a female researcher. This limited me in my quest to cover lived experiences. Yet, I had the opportunity to establish close relation to both male and female narrators in different communicative frameworks, something proven difficult for a male researcher.<sup>144</sup>

Finally, I was momentarily dubbed “an insider”. Yet, I am a privileged outsider and there will always be an otherness towards me. Annaheed Al-Hardan emphasizes, “(t)hose of us who intend to research the colonized or stateless others from within imperialist states’ academies while upholding decolonizing commitments have a decided disadvantage”.<sup>145</sup> The disadvantage is to abide to decolonizing epistemologies knowingly that the very structures we stand on are build on a claim about a “universal” researcher’s right to knowledge.<sup>146</sup> We attempt to bridge the disadvantage by critical self-reflection, however, as mentioned it will not dismantle the issue. My freedom to *exit*, my privilege to cross borders, and the language-barrier are the three poignant signifiers of my outsider-position. This limited my ability to comprehend circumstances of persons who cannot leave and who carries histories of four generations of displacement. I can never speak *their voices*, since their subjugation is displayed by my very presence and freedom to *exit*.<sup>147</sup> *Their voices* have been selected by me, distorted through me and transformed in my interpretation and are *no longer never* theirs. Still, our numerous encounters taught me to let the narrators *speak back* through me to a world of borders, which denies them protection while procrastinating their right to return to Palestine.

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<sup>144</sup> Minister “Feminist”, 31. Megoran, “Ethnography”, 629.

<sup>145</sup> Al-Hardan, “Decolonizing”, 64-65.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, eds, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. (London: Routledge, 1995), 28.

## 4.0.0 Theory

Here, I present a multi-theoretical framework, which helps critical conceptualization of the three core elements in the research question:

- (1) Borders and border crossing (Border crossing experiences)
- (2) Statelessness and rightlessness (Palestinian refugees)
- (3) Racial determination and its consequences (“Palestinian refugees from Syria”)

This chapter theorizes the three latter elements through already existing theory - including analysis of new processes of racialization reinforced through intersections.

### 4.1.0 Imagined Spaces

This section will describe the theoretical foundation connected to borders as spaces. The section draws on a profound theoretical heritage of knowledge production about geographies, spaces and power established by Michel Foucault and Edward Said.<sup>148</sup> In order to contextualize the nexus I draw on Derek Gregory, and his theoretical work, based on the two former mentioned. Firstly, I identify the spaces and powers that create borders. I base my approach on Gregory’s interpretation of Said’s notion of *imaginative geographies* (IG) and Foucault’s aspects on *performances of power*.<sup>149</sup>

IG is a concept, which questions the spaces that the persons of this study move in and between. The IG can have multiple spatialities, which all contain constellations of power, knowledge and geography.<sup>150</sup> According to Said all territories are imaginative geographies separated by dramatic imagined boundaries: geographical, social, ethnic and cultural.<sup>151</sup> Said argued that states and borders are territories, which resonate imagined representations of spaces “entangled with relations of power”.<sup>152</sup> They are “imagined” due to their construction through practices and discourses about dominance and doings, which through “imagination [are] given substance”.<sup>153</sup> *Imagined* does not refer to “unreal”, but to the social construction of reality.<sup>154</sup> By the term *fixed border territories* I refer to the dogma that borders and border performances are solely between geographies and attached to a physical place.

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<sup>148</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 54. Michel Foucault in Mauro Betani and Alessandro Fontana *Michel Foucault. "Society Must Be Defended". Lectures at the College de France. 1975-76.* (New York: Picador), 2003: 24.

<sup>149</sup> Gregory, *Colonial*, 17 + 19.

<sup>150</sup> Gregory, “Imaginative”, 275.

<sup>151</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 54 + 73.

<sup>152</sup> Said in Gregory, “Imaginative”, 274. Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

<sup>153</sup> Gregory, *Colonial*, 17. Gregory, “Imaginative”, 448.

<sup>154</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 54.



Gregory defined *performances of space* through the use of Judith Butler's and Foucault's notions of spaces as *representations, dispositions, dominances* and *doings* given meaning through *performances of space, i.e. spatialization*.<sup>155</sup> Examples of performance of power in reference to border spaces are the practices of border demarcations of Self and Other, i.e. designating familiar spaces and separating them via geographical distinctions called borders.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, performances of power in relation to borders are the practices of control and regulations, which through spatial arrangement control influx and exit.

#### 4.1.1 Borders Beyond Borders

The theoretical insights just described give leeway for formulating a notion of how performances of space excel in time and space through practices of control and regulations and *de facto* makes borders pervasive for disadvantages populations. This study contributes with the theoretical notion that the ability to experience borders as pervasive is determined by ID status. Consequently, the regulations of influx including ID control in spaces beyond fixed border territory are in themselves borders. Person with valid documents or citizenship status rarely realizes that seemingly borderless areas, i.e. borders beyond border spaces, are fluid versions of border patrol. I use the phrase "borders beyond borders" to show that spaces that most people recognize as borderless, i.e. public or private spaces, as streets, stations, cafes or private homes are *always already* border spaces for the stateless and rightless person since parallel discriminatory performances of power occur in borderless spaces.

My approach to borders goes beyond the dichotomy of border territory and non-border territory. I argue with scholars as Philip E. Steinberg that the practices of borders through performances of power are potentially everywhere.<sup>157</sup> Steinberg's notion of boundary regulation and reproduction by acts of movement and his call for analysis, which moves beyond fixed border spaces supports this argument.<sup>158</sup> In the analysis I include both physical constrictions and the imagined constraints. I attempt to capture the participant's phenomenological notion of the borders they cross, which proved to not simply be between nation-states, but also manifest on the outskirts of refugee camps by roadblocks and checkpoints, by a stamp in their papers, at the entrance to their homes, on a steep mountain hill and between night and day. Border crossing is understood as a

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<sup>155</sup> Gregory, *Colonial*, 17-19.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>157</sup> Steinberg, "Sovereignty".

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

movement - either through choice or through violence – between and in spaces of dominance. In the following I will identify the signifiers, which determines those crossing pervasive borders.

#### 4.2.0 Statelessness and Rightlessness

I use Hannah Arendt's notions of statelessness and rightlessness updated through Judith Butler and Gayatri C. Spivak's reading of Arendt in order to theoretically understand the implications of statelessness.<sup>159</sup> In that way a terminology, which can help us understand processes that make some people able to cross borders with no consequences while for others crossing borders implies high risk and can have fatale consequences, is re-awaken. Arendt was the first political philosopher who wrote about the stateless and rightless person in modern Western societies and drew parallels to processes of homogeneity in Europe.<sup>160</sup> She emphasised that European imperialism and colonialism formed statelessness through the nation-state's juridical-political institutions and international declarations such as the Minority Treaties, which created people whose protection through citizenship ceased to apply.<sup>161</sup> In that way Arendt described statelessness as one of the most fatal consequences post-World War I.<sup>162</sup> A process, which continued in the aftermath of World War II, where processes of nation-state building emerged and created new groups of refugees and stateless populations e.g. "the Arabs".<sup>163</sup> The modern sovereign nation-state is the political entity, which has the sovereign right to expulsion and can thereby deprive or grant human beings membership in a state.<sup>164</sup> To Butler the result is disenfranchisement of minorities, ghettoization, genocide and mass deportations.<sup>165</sup>

Statelessness is when a person has lost protection both from and of the state and its juridical system, and thereby by law becomes an individual without a state. According to Arendt "[a] stateless is an anomaly for whom there is no appropriate niche in the framework of the general law – an outlaw by definition".<sup>166</sup> Yet, this does not make her "bare life", as Giorgio Agamben suggests, since life can never be bare.<sup>167</sup> Not belonging to a state is not equivalent to non-belonging. With other words the stateless person has agency through her belonging to other social orders. In the

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<sup>159</sup> Arendt, *The Origin*. Judith Butler & Gayatri C. Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging*. (New York: Seagull Books, 2007)

<sup>160</sup> Arendt, *The Origin*, 267-269

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>165</sup> Butler & Spivak, *Who Sings*.

<sup>166</sup> Arendt, *The Origin*, 279.

<sup>167</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Scaere – Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Butler & Spivak, *Who Sings*, 128.

words of Butler “If to be bare life is to be exposed to power, then power is still on the outside of that life, however brutal it imposes itself” and therefore there can still be struggles on “the outside”.<sup>168</sup> Arendt further adds that the stateless person in the eyes of the state is “illegal by nature”, and thereby has to constantly transgress the law in order to survive.<sup>169</sup> A stateless person has been forcefully displaced, i.e., uprooted from her habitual place of living, and thus become a forced migrant – a term, which covers both forced migrations through violence, need or persecution.

The stateless refugee is rightless by law and has by definition as a refugee suffered the loss of her home. What is unique to the circumstances of statelessness is that it has been made impossible for her to find a new home on earth.<sup>170</sup> The crucial point is that a stateless person loses her rights due to not-belonging to a state, since all rights, both citizenship rights and human rights, are attached to the nation-state and not solely to the nation. For Arendt the person who has lost “a right to have rights” is fundamentally rightless, and has thereby lost all distinctive political qualities and been reduced to “a human being and nothing else”.<sup>171</sup> The phrase conveys that to ensure secured rights you have to be a member of a nation with a state. However, in the social order of not belonging to a state there is still room for resistance, through movement, organizing and speaking back, which contests the nation-state order.

In short, three points are crucial in this section. Firstly, the distinction between nation and nation-state, where it is solely the nation-state, that can grant or deprive a human being rights. Secondly, the notion that statelessness means non-membership of a state, and not necessarily non-membership of a nation or another social order.<sup>172</sup> And finally, we see how statelessness deprives a person from a dual set of rights connected to the nation-state, namely, civil rights and “universal” human rights.

#### 4.3.0 Discrimination and Intersectionality

I here present a multileveled and intersectional theoretical approach, which I use to show the complexity of the results and to contest single-axis analysis. Patricia Hill Collins is one of the pioneers in shaping analytical and empirical approaches of intersectionality.<sup>173</sup> She emphasizes that “taken-for-granted natures of categories” as race, class, sexuality, and gender creates marginality,

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<sup>168</sup> Butler & Spivak, *Who Sings*, 39.

<sup>169</sup> Arendt, *The Origin*. 289.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 293.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 296-7 + 302.

<sup>172</sup> It became clear that membership of a nation, i.e. Palestine, has importance for the participants.

<sup>173</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

which is a potential source of strength that can “challenge false universal knowledge”.<sup>174</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis challenges this position and argues that intersectionality is not simply a tool for analysis of the marginalized but “the most valid approach to analyse social stratification as a whole”.<sup>175</sup> Yuval-Davis argues that “we cannot homogenize the ways any political projects or claimings affects people who are differently located within the same boundaries of belonging.”<sup>176</sup>

I use the theoretical analytical tool of macro, meso and micro levels of discrimination, as explained by Coretta Phillips in her analysis of the postcolonial condition in England, in order to theoretically show complexities in discrimination.<sup>177</sup> The macro level of discrimination refers to the global legal and political practices, which “shape articulations of race and racist exclusion”.<sup>178</sup> The meso-level of discrimination refers to the Lebanese national laws and directives towards Palestinians. The micro level of discrimination refers to the hostility and discriminatory behaviour the participants have experienced in face-to-face encounters.<sup>179</sup> Within these three levels of discrimination intersections reinforce oppression. Angela Y. Davis argues that discrimination and oppression cannot simply be understood via single categories.<sup>180</sup> Davis inquired into “the prison-industrial-complex” and discovered how intersections of race and gender reinforced discrimination within and beyond borders.<sup>181</sup> Gender, race, statelessness, rightlessness, nationality, age, and class are inseparable categories in the quest to illuminate experiences of discrimination and displacement. The multi-level analysis and intersectionality approach thus brings in the limelight several harassments, which unfold simultaneously and reinforce oppression. I take an intracategorical approach to intersectionality, since I see shortcomings of existing categories, but also recognise the powerful role that categories play, such as “refugee”, “statelessness”, “gender”, and ethno-racial determination. These categories cannot be taken out of analysis of experiences of social struggles.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, “The Trouble with Postmodernism” in Patrick R. Grzanka, ed., *Intersectionality. A Foundations and Frontiers Reader*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014), 49-50.

<sup>175</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis. “Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging”, (Aalborg: Institut for Globale Studier, Aalborg Universitet, 2011).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>177</sup> Phillips, “Institutional Racism”, 175-6.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>180</sup> Frank Barat, “Progressive Struggles against Insidious Capitalist Individualism: Interview with Angela Davis”, *Jadaliyya* (September 21 2014), accessed September 25 2014.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/19304/progressive-struggles-against-insidious-capitalist>

<sup>181</sup> Angela Y. Davis & Gina Dent, “Prisons as Borders: A Conversation on Gender, Globalization, and Punishment. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24 (2001), 1235-36.

<sup>182</sup> Bhattacharya, “Reflections of Intersectionality”.

#### 4.3.1 Racial Othering, Racialized Rightlessness, and Social Death

In the following I focus on theorization of the processes, which create “Palestinians” in a Lebanese context as racial others and thus allow and foster institutionalized and intersubjective discriminations and racisms. “Racial determination, in short, is the multi-determination of social particularities, of socially embedded particularities resonant in racially related, racially conceived, racially significant terms”.<sup>183</sup> “Palestinian-Syrian” is an ethno-racial determination formed through historical processes of stereotyping and othering through processes of racialization.

David Theo Goldberg and Nadia Abu El Haj<sup>184</sup> implied that *race* is not simply a set of ideas it is more broadly a way or ways of living and being, which differ across space and time and between regions.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, race is according to Goldberg “a set of views, dispositions, predilections concerning culture”<sup>186</sup> as it is a “set of conditions shifting over time”.<sup>187</sup> Conceptualized the process of racialization of Palestinians is by Goldberg dubbed Racial Palestinianization. Goldberg suggests that Palestinianization is a set of ideas and passions, which became racial through processes of racial antagonism between Jews and Arabs, which started in 1936 and thus created a relationship of force, where the subjugated became victims of racial targeting and branding.<sup>188</sup> He refers to a prevailed modality formed by “racial israelification” and the construction of a discourse of “Palestinians” as refugees and racial others.<sup>189</sup>

I modify Goldberg and Abu Al Haj’s notion of Racial Palestinianization, since in my analysis the context is changed from the racisms of Israel to the context of a racial modality in the Lebanese context.<sup>190</sup> Palestinians belong to a socially and politically constructed “Arab race”. In the Lebanese context they become “racial others”, through being racialized as an ethno-racial sub-population. Due to nationality (Palestine), origin (Syria and Palestine) and statelessness Palestinians are subjected to institutionalized racisms reinforced through processes of othering and expulsion. The result is “racially reduced rights” and discriminatory assaults.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> David Theo Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization”. *Ethnic and Racila Studies* 29 (2006), 334.

<sup>184</sup> Abu El-Haj, Nadia. “Racial Palestinization and the Janus-faced Nature of the Israeli State”. *Patterns and Prejudices* 44 (2010).

<sup>185</sup> Goldberg, *The Threat*.

<sup>186</sup> Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization”, 349.

<sup>187</sup> *ibid.*, 337.

<sup>188</sup> Goldberg, *The Threat*, 37-39 +42.

<sup>189</sup> Goldberg, “Racial Europeanization”.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>191</sup> Goldberg, *The Threat*, 39. Many populations are oppressed by institutionalized racisms in Lebanon. E.g., labour migrants, Iraqis, Armenians, Syrians, displaced communities and nomads. Rupen Das & Julie Davidson. *Profiles of Poverty. The Human Face of poverty in Lebanon*. (Mansourieh: Dar Manhal al Hayat,) 2011: 342.

I use the concepts *radicalized rightlessness* and *social death* to describe the consequences of processes of racialization.<sup>192</sup> Scholars as Sherene Razack has analysed the categorical different treatment of immigrants and refugees with Muslim background in Western law through the lens of Giorgio Agamben's "state and camps of exception".<sup>193</sup> Yet, I argue that *racialized rightlessness* and *social death* captures more precisely than "states of exception" the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon and leave room to show that discrimination is multileveled both in Western and non-Western societies. *Racialized rightlessness* is constructed from a mode of racial determination through practices: internationally, nationally and locally. *Social death* is a condition constructed by the deprivation of the right to have rights and by the use of racisms as a killing abstraction – meaning that measures, which can kill, are used against specific ethno-racially determined groups.<sup>194</sup> Lisa Marie Cacho used the terms in her empirical study of racisms towards minorities in the U.S. I modify the concept of social death, which was originally defined by sociologist Orlando Patterson in 1982 in his quest to theoretically conceptualize the internal dynamics of slavery in the U.S.<sup>195</sup> I find the conceptualization suitable and relevant to describe the deprivation of the right to have rights and the lack of social and legal existence for Palestinians in Lebanon. The stateless racialized rightless person is "an element of society" even though she has been made socially dead.<sup>196</sup> I argue that the theoretical concept can be applied on the context of racialized rightless refugees in Lebanon, since the term is a product of a specific political economy of borders that brings intersections of gender, race and statelessness together. The consequence of racialized rightlessness is social death, which occurs when a person is "unlawful by presence and illegal by status".<sup>197</sup> According to Cacho social death means "ineligibility to personhood" and reveals itself when a person can be subjected to racial, physical, and symbolic violence from state aggressors, without consequences for the state, and when civil rights law does not cover the victim of the violence or reproduce her narrative.<sup>198</sup>

The processes of racialization produce racialized rightlessness as a position of being legally rightless, while being refused to contest law through democratic processes, and nonetheless, have to

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<sup>192</sup> Cacho, *Social Death*.

<sup>193</sup> Sherene Razack,  *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>195</sup> Orlando Patterson. *Slavery and Social Death*. (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 8+ 81.

abide the laws to avoid deportation or detention.<sup>199</sup> Social death is when an individual is socially devalued and when this person's account or narrative of what is meaningful and meaningless is not counted and therefore not reproduced.

#### 4.4.0 Summary

In summary, borders are spaces of dominance and doings constructed through power/knowledge discourses about territory, land and geography. Excluding border practices targeting ethno-racial determined populations are not only connected to fixed border spaces, but expand beyond into seemingly borderless areas. We have learned that borders are pervasive discriminatory spaces of power performativity in and beyond fixed territories, which are enduringly crossed by stateless, rightless persons. Statelessness is the status of a person without a state and it implicates non-membership and the loss of the right to have rights. When one does not have a right to have rights both citizenship and human rights are absent and neither state nor international protection is enjoyed. In the Lebanese context Palestinian refugees have become racial others through processes of eviction from Palestine, incessant statelessness and institutionalized racial targeting by host communities, which manifest through ethno-racial determination, structural discrimination and exclusion at three societal levels reinforced through intersections as race, class, age, nationality, and gender. The stateless and rightless person thus becomes racialized rightless and condemned to circumstances of social death.

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<sup>199</sup> Cacho, *Social Death*, 6.

## 5.0.0 Findings

This chapter presents six findings divided in two parts. Part One is divided in three sections, which reflects the finding of three levels of societal discrimination: macro, meso, and micro. Likewise, Part Two is divided in three sections, which are (1) *Crossing Borders to Escape Death*, explaining the meaning of the movement of border crossing found in the narratives. (2) *Interpreting the Present*, presenting the finding of intertwined levels of memory used by the narrators to interpret their present. Finally, (3) “*A world of Checkpoints*”, describe the findings of experiences of pervasive discriminatory borders within and beyond border territories.

## PART ONE

### 5.1.0 Macro-Level Discrimination

Macro-level discrimination, i.e. discrimination at international structural level was found to have two central consequences. Firstly, the international power structures are - as explained in chapter one - part of creating “the protection gap”. The gap deprives the Palestinian refugees from Syria, from central human rights through international conventions, the UNRWA mandate, relevant UNGA resolutions and the RC’s exclusion clauses. Secondly, due to the hardship and lack of future opportunities in Lebanon and no view of resettlement in either Syria or Palestine the participants’ attempt to plan migrating from Lebanon to Western European countries, a movement stopped by the European migration acts. Additionally, I found that prevention of return to Palestine is also a sign of macro-level discrimination. HRW’s spokespersons in Lebanon, Lama Fakhri, explained how the problem of Palestinian and Syria refugees is a global problem and a sign of the lack of commitment to the key principal of “burden and responsibility sharing” in mass influx situations.<sup>200</sup> The macro level discrimination is located as one of the main forces maintaining the perpetual strangulating of Palestinians.

### 5.2.0 Meso-Level Discrimination

Meso-level discrimination is the actions taken by the Lebanese General Security (LGS) falling under the Ministry of Interior (MoI). LGS is the authority in charge of border control and

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<sup>200</sup> Fakhri (Appendix 5.2). ExCom. “Official Documents. Burden-Sharing - Discussion Paper Submitted by UNHCR Fifth Annual Plenary Meeting Of The APC”. ISIL Year Book of International Humanitarian and Refugee Law 17 (2001), accessed September 22 2014. <http://www.worldlii.org/int/journals/ISILYBIHRL/2001/17.html>



security functions.<sup>201</sup> It was the LGS, which launched the May 2014 directive dictating “new entry rules” for Palestinians from Syria.<sup>202</sup> The analysis, which is concerned with border crossing experiences and discriminations, will focus on the new entry and visa requirements connected to the right to freedom of movement and to access safe territory. These discriminations were found to have severe consequences for the narrators’ life in Lebanon. The following section elaborate meso-level findings.<sup>203</sup>

### 5.2.1 Targeting Palestinians from Syria

During the fieldwork a chain of events occurred including the discriminatory act of border-closure, deportations and pushbacks targeting Palestinians from Syria. The Lebanese government rejected to call it “a closure of the border”, yet agreed, “new requirements have been put in place to organize the entry”.<sup>204</sup> The “new requirements” make it next to impossible for a non-VIP Palestinian-Syrian to enter Lebanon from Syria, via official borders.

The new requirements were unannounced launched on May 3 2014.<sup>205</sup> Yet, since August 2013 an increasing number of Palestinians from Syria have been denied access to Lebanon.<sup>206</sup> On May 3 2014, the discriminatory stat-behaviour was taken to an extreme, since the MoI through an unofficial oral agreement ordered the LGS to ban entry for Palestinians from Syria.<sup>207</sup> The next step was taken on May 4 where three dozen individuals – with Syrian Palestinian ID - were forcibly deported from Lebanon to Syria, due to allegedly false visas on their attempt to migrate to Libya.<sup>208</sup> Three of the deportees refused re-entering Syria, since the Syrian Army wants them. At the time of writing they are still forsaken in the no-man’s-land zone between Syria and Lebanon.<sup>209</sup> HRW’s spokesperson in Lebanon Lama Fakhi condemned the act and told me: “Whether or not the documents were fake the individuals should not have been deported across the border [...] the individuals were saying 'we are refugees' or they fear returning to Syria, they should not have been

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<sup>201</sup> AI, *Denied Refuge*. 9.

<sup>202</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Lebanon: Palestinians Barred, Sent To Syria”. Human Rights Watch May 6, 2014, accessed September 12, 2014. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/05/lebanon-palestinians-barred-sent-syria>

<sup>203</sup> Findings not presented here are: discrimination via deprivation of the right to work, deprivation from education, health care, equal salary, aid and relief services, access to clean water, services to children’s day care and legal aide.

<sup>204</sup> The Daily Star, “Machnouk: New Entry Rules for Palestinians from Syria” The Daily Star, May 9 2014, accessed September 12 2014 <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/May-09/255811-machnouk-new-entry-rules-for-palestinians-from-syria.ashx#axzz31FgafWR3>, 31. Fakih (Appendix 5.2).

<sup>205</sup> Palestinian League for Human Rights/Syria, “An Unofficial Agreement Bans the Palestinians of Syria from entering Lebanon”. Oximity, May 6, 2014. Accessed September 12, 2014 <https://www.oximity.com/article/An-unofficial-agreement-bans-the-Pales-1>.

<sup>206</sup> HRW, *Not Welcome*.

<sup>207</sup> HRW. “Lebanon”.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Al-Akhbar. “Palestinians Deported to no-man’s-land between Lebanon and Syria”, Al-Akhbar, June 16, 2014, accessed September 22 2014, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/20194>.

deported!”<sup>210</sup> On May 8 the LGS announced that they “would stop issuing visas to Palestinians at the border [...]”.<sup>211</sup> Sari Hanafi explained to me that the MoI “[...] issued, a regulation to all airplane companies not to take any Palestinians from Syria to Lebanon and declared: “This is a very amazing measure.”<sup>212</sup> Different sources confirm that the Lebanese authorities’ ordered to ban Palestinians from Syria to board aircrafts.<sup>213</sup>

I found that these events had significant effects on the narrators of this study, who had already crossed the border. The closing of the border and other measures taken contributed to experiences of strangulation, fear of detention and deportation and provokes clandestine migration and separates families.<sup>214</sup> The Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon cannot escape to Europe, due to lack of financial possibilities and the European immigration law and Lebanese visa policies. They cannot go back to Syria, since the border is now closed and they fear not being able to re-escape the warzone.<sup>215</sup>

### 5.3.0 Micro Level Discrimination

The persons in this project have experienced inter-subjective micro level discriminatory assaults from both Lebanese citizens outside the camp setting and from Palestinians in the camp-settings. These types of discriminatory assaults alter from narrow ethno-racial targeted assaults such as being shouted at on the street and violent attacks - including experiences of being beaten up while protesting for the rights of Palestinians from Syria - to discrimination from local landlords raising the rent from day to day via ethno-racial reasoning, women being perceived as prostitutes or harassed due to the way they wear headscarves, and female headed families being harassed at night in their shelters. Further, the participants shared with me assaults due to their Palestinian-Syrian ID in reference to salaries; if they were lucky enough to get offered illegal employment they documented being paid less than Lebanese and Syrian citizens. In general they expressed experiences of discrimination refereeing to prices on goods and groceries, water and gas. All

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<sup>210</sup> Lama Fakih (Appendix 5.2)

<sup>211</sup> HRW, *Not Welcome*, 32. Sari Hanafi (Appendix 5.1)

<sup>212</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Justi Salhani, “Palestinians in Syria barred from flying to Lebanon”, *The Daily Star*, July 2, 2014, accessed September 12 2014, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jul-02/262322-palestinians-in-syria-barrd-from-flying-to-lebanon.ashx#axzz36KR3Mipf>

Al, *Denied Refuge*, 13.

<sup>214</sup> This was confirmed by different stakholder e.g., Email from ANERA (Appendix) and Observation III (Appendix).

<sup>215</sup> Since late October 2014 the LGS started using simular procedures of pusbacks towards Syrians, who wish to cross the border. *The Daily Star*, “Vague entry ruels spark confusion at Masnaa crossing”, accessed November 11, 2014, [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-10/277054-vague-entry-rules-spark-confusion-at-masnaa-crossing.ashx?utm\\_source=Magnet&utm\\_medium=Followed%20Article&utm\\_campaign=Magnet%20tools#axzz3IhDjSOS6](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Nov-10/277054-vague-entry-rules-spark-confusion-at-masnaa-crossing.ashx?utm_source=Magnet&utm_medium=Followed%20Article&utm_campaign=Magnet%20tools#axzz3IhDjSOS6)

participants expressed being charged more than the ordinary customers when grocery shopping, for renting rooms in the camp, for crossing the borders and for transportation.

In summary, the field study documented three levels of discrimination reinforced through intersections. Further, it found significant consequences of the new entry ban and visa requirements, which predominantly are fear for deportations and detention, provoked situations of clandestine migration, separations of families, limited freedom of movement and experiences of strangulation and inability to migrate beyond Lebanese territory.

## PART TWO

### 5.4.0 Crossing Borders to Escape Death

To seek inquiry into border crossing experiences one has to acknowledge that the movement is connected to the events, which made one decide or forced one to move.<sup>216</sup> It was found that the movement was caused by the fear of persecution and death. I found that for the stateless refugees, fleeing war with temporary or no travel documents, crossing borders had immense consequences. The border crossing imprisons the present, yet inaugurates both the *before* and the *after*.

It was found that each narrator passed different routes on their way to Lebanon. Further, each has subjective border crossing experience and interpretation of its consequences. For some the crossing of the border was a direct life threatening hardship. Yet, for others it was a car-ride from Damascus to Beirut (approximately 4 hours) with only few complications. However, different the trajectories and the hardship, common to them all is the fact that borders were crossed as an escape from death. Omar explained: “We left not knowing where we were going, all that really mattered was running for our lives - escaping death”.<sup>217</sup> Roula, escaped with four of her five children alone in April 2014 from Yarmouk camp in Damascus, just three weeks before the entry ban for Palestinians from Syria.<sup>218</sup> She explained how she had waited to leave, because she was aware of the predicament in Lebanon, as a woman, a single mother, and as a Palestinian refugee from Syria, but when death came to close, there was no other choice than escape.

They are eating grass. Grass from the fields. I do not know if you heard the news? [...]

The small kids, they are not eating. Until now what can we do? The rise needs to be cooked in water, but there is not enough water. No, we had to start eating rise like this, raw, without cooking. We are eating rise like this (*picks up imaginary rise grains one*

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<sup>216</sup> Gregory, *Colonial*, 258.

<sup>217</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.1)

<sup>218</sup> The family is waiting for unification in Germany with Roula's husband and son.

by one). Without boiling it. This is very serious for the small kids. At the same time there were shooting and shelling every day. Death was coming too close.<sup>219</sup>

### 5.5.0 Interpreting the Present

I now turn to the levels of memories found in the narrators' interpretation of the present. The border crossing experiences are constructed of what I call memories of the pre-crossing, crossing and the post-crossing narratives. The three levels of storytelling are interdependent and connect to collective memories of the 1948 escape from Palestine.

Firstly, I found that when embarking on speaking about border-crossing experiences the narratives were connected to the memories of what was left behind. Moreover, the narratives were built on experiences of how the road behind and in front enclosed them and created a rightless vacuum, which most narrators articulated as a feeling of *khanaq*.<sup>220</sup> Here the word *khanaq* was used as a metaphor describing the lived experiences of the narrators. The word did not refer to physical strangulation but was used to describe the feelings of distress caused by immediate material concerns, the lack of legal protection and the experiences of regulated immobility, i.e. being unable to further migrate from Lebanon or re-enter Syria due to the border regulations. Further, the act of border crossing and the border control practices separated them from their families and loved ones.

Secondly, I found that the memories of crossing borders are inseparable from the memories and grief connected to why, what and how they left and who was left behind. Consequently, by addressing experiences of border crossing to Lebanon a gateway opened to memories of life in pre-war Syria and these memories' connection to life in and displacement from Palestine. Thus, when talking about the past, two levels of past-memory occurred. One was the memory of the narrators' own personal life span in Syria and the other the memory of the stories handed over by family members and the community about Palestine. In the recordings the latter is manifested through the memories of the participants' parents and grandparents about Palestine, Al-Nakba and displacements.

Narratives of past, present, and future intermingle in the border crossing experiences. This taught me how the border crossing is on-going even though the moment of crossing and the territorialized point is long past both in time and space. Simultaneously, the daily experiences of the hardship in Lebanon (present), the consequences of displacement from Syria and the deprivation of

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<sup>219</sup> Roula (Appendix 4.4.1)

<sup>220</sup> Strangulation

the right to return to Palestine (past) shaped a *capacity* to develop survival-strategies through planning where to go next (future). I found narratives filled with tenseness about imagined futures, which included borders-not-yet-crossed. Meanwhile, public memory of Al-Nabka was present for the narrators in their narratives, as it is in their lives through, for example, commemoration events and daily struggles.<sup>221</sup> Several participants expressed how the scenes of the eviction from Palestine, which were shared with them through grandparents, parents and commemorations, at least once revisited them during flight from Syria and while in Lebanon.

In summary, by observing the narrators' own interpretation of the present it became clear how three levels of narratives of before, during and after escape intertwined. Even more, the actual experiences of border crossings for the five narrators at once are presently on-going and leads back to their parents' and grandparents' uprooting from Palestine.

### 5.6.0 "A World of Checkpoints"

I have shown how past, present and future combines in the narratives and helps constitute interpretations of the present. I will now show how this result is connected to the finding that borders are monolithic, pervasive, and discriminatory markers of the narrators' lives. By pervasive I refer to the actual pervasiveness of otherwise territory-specific border practices. I found that borders for the narrators are not limited to the fixed spaces of public international border crossing, e.g. Al-Masnaa between Syria and Lebanon. However, borders are both in Syria and in Lebanon the spatial markers, which divide "us" from "them". Walid told me: "I escaped Syria to get away from the checkpoints and the roadblocks of the Syrian regime. Away from the fear of being captured. What I found in Lebanon is a world of checkpoints and constant fear of detention and deportation to Syria".<sup>222</sup> Borders are experienced as presently pervasive, power enforcements and at the same time borders have shaped the past. The present is given meaning through interpretations of the past, and the past has been influenced by border crossings, denial of border crossing and displacement through three or four generations. Lebanon is experienced as an insecure transit point, where the individuals are at constant risk of being confronted with the same performances of power in and beyond fixed borders, e.g. control of identity, denial of entry, checkpoints, and irregular visa regulations and risk of arbitrary detention, interrogation, and deportations.

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<sup>221</sup> Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>222</sup> Observation I (Appendix)

I located that the experience of crossing borders, when being a Palestinian from Syria in Lebanon, neither starts nor stops at the physical border point, but is a pervasive experience. “A world of checkpoints” thus firstly educes the experiences of crossing borders for stateless persons escaping war zones, where both the territory of war and that beyond is controlled by checkpoints and contestations. At checkpoints persons’ bureaucratic identities are questioned, contested and either rejected rights or privileged. Secondly, the phrase deconstructs the notion of territorialized specific borders while contesting production of knowledge about borders, and calls for a more fluid understanding of human policing via border regulations, such as checkpoints at and beyond border spaces. Thirdly, the analysis has come from stateless persons who as at least twice forcefully displaced diagnose the world as “a world of checkpoints” and call for an acute awareness of borders pervasiveness.

### **5.7.0 Summary**

In summary, Part One shows that three levels of discrimination occurred in the narrators’ accounts. The multi-level analysis of discrimination helps categorize the complexities of experiences formed by discriminatory international, national, and local practices. Further, it shows that within few days in the spring of 2014 extreme measures were taken to stop the influx of Palestinians to Lebanon – this highlighted an already ongoing discriminatory targeting of Palestinians. Part Two provided a view into each narrator’s border crossing as an escape from death. It was found that the movement of border crossing is interpreted through inter-changing present and past experiences and understood through survival strategies connected to the future. The present is thus partly given meaning through collective memories handed over and individual struggles for better futures. In this way the narratives shed light on the continuing effects of the 1948 Nakba. Finally, it is found that borders are experienced as discriminatory and pervasive and expand beyond border spaces. Border crossing experiences thereby neither start nor stop at fixed border territories.

## 6.0.0 Analysis

The analysis firstly follows the logic of narratives inflicted by before, during and after border crossing. Section one analysis experiences *before* the border crossing and shows several displacements prior to crossing international recognized borders. Section two - divided in two subsections - analyses the experiences *during* border crossings. Section three analysis borders as pervasive discriminatory spaces of dominance *after* the crossing of territorialized borders. Section four moves beyond analysing borders in public spaces, and argues that the border crossing experiences expand and deter in private places. Finally, section five draws perspectives to border crossing experiences as they intertwine narratives of the past and imagined futures.

### 6.1.0 Before Crossing International Borders

The diversity in the narrators' experiences of displacement, escape, and border crossing is significant in order to understand the complexity of being a stateless refugee fleeing Syria and to counter stereotypical representations of refugees and so-called "strategies" of escape.

Participants shared that they had been internally or externally forcefully displaced one to four times before reaching their current place of displacement.<sup>223</sup> This tells that escape and border crossing is not a simple linear process from A to B. Further, all participants articulated that the first border crossed was at the outskirts of the camps, which used to be their homes. Balsam's story shows that denial of crossing a border leads to other attempts to access safe territory. The experience of border crossing is thereby extended in and beyond border territory and the roadblocks and checkpoints inside an imagined geography transforms to new imagined borders. Balsam escaped Syria since the secret intelligence services wanted him due to his activism against the regime and he had already been detained and subjugated to torture once, thus, Balsam was denied entry to Jordan by the Syrian border patrol. On his attempt to escape he explained how Syria became a "network of borders".<sup>224</sup> Finally, he made it to Lebanon by service-taxi from Damascus and flew directly out of Lebanon to Jordan, to join his family in the city of Irbid. Yet, after 20 months the Jordanian authorities announced his forced deportation to Syria, due to his Palestinian ID. Through bribing an officer he got the chance to fly back to Lebanon, where he first stayed 10 days in Nahr el Bared camp with his cousin, but was expelled for being 'Syrian' when caught in a checkpoint at the camp entrance by the LGS. He then settled in a refugee camp in Southern Beirut. Balsam thereby crossed international recognized borders three times and was displaced three

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<sup>223</sup> Tabel 1 (Appendix)

<sup>224</sup> Balsam (Appendix 4.5.1)

different places since he departed Syria in 2011.<sup>225</sup> His story exemplifies the complexity of border crossing for a Palestinian-Syrian refugee, which contains numerous confrontations with borders and boundaries inside geographies of states and at borderlines.

Omar escaped to Lebanon due to the siege of Yarmouk camp and the Syrian army's targeting of young men to recruit them for the army. The first time he entered Lebanon was in January 2013, before which he had been internally displaced. He explained the several times displacement, and change of spaces through his family's story.

[...] we left to a place they call Khan Al-Sheih to some of our relatives. We stayed there for a while but then trouble started happening there too and it went under shelling and so once again we left under fire to Jaramana. There we stayed in an area very close to Mleha with a lot of trouble going on, I mean shells would fall on the street where my parents were living about five shells a day and once the house across from theirs caught fire, so they also had to leave Jaramana to a place called Rukn Al-Din in Damascus. [...] So, they stayed there for a short while in the mountain, and after that they had to leave to Qudsayya in the suburbs of the capital and stayed there for a long while until, about a month and a half ago, some trouble erupted there too and there was the air force shelling and there was some fighting and snipers were shooting so they also had to leave Qudsayya. My sisters and their husbands left to Dahyet Qusdsayya, an area nearby but safe, and my mother, father and little sister had to go back to Jaramana.<sup>226</sup>

Table 1.0 and 2.0 displays the numerous forced displacements of the participants and their families.<sup>227</sup> It shows, as we know, that Palestinians have been targeted and forced to flee numerous times. For example, as the latter quote tells Omar was internally displaced before he crossed the border to Lebanon. After six months in Lebanon he was forced to return to Syria and then in August 2013 he again escaped to Lebanon after the chemical attacks in Damascus' suburbs.<sup>228</sup> The numerous displacements indicate that the nature of escape is double and is dependent on the movement of violence. It involves both "escaping death"<sup>229</sup> and staying close to one's home and

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<sup>225</sup> Tabel 1 (Appendix). Balsam (Appendix 4.5.2)

<sup>226</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.1)

<sup>227</sup> Appendix

<sup>228</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.3).

<sup>229</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.1)



family in order to enable return. Khaled explained how he escaped like his father and grandfather escaped Palestine:

[...] they got scared over their lives and decided to leave - like we did when we were displaced from Yarmouk camp - and they were displaced. My father and grandfather thought they would go out for about a week or two and then return to their village, you know? That's what they thought, but we are still waiting to return (*laughs*).<sup>230</sup>

In summary, the numerous forced displacements show that escape is not a linear movement. It tells us that escape is both running from death, but also an attempt to stay close to home and near families to enable return. This indicates that crossing the international recognized Lebanese-Syrian border was not the first strategy chosen by the Palestinians from Syria.

## 6.2.0 During Border Crossing

At the borders the participants experienced discrimination at the meso-level, i.e. state initiated discrimination. The discrimination manifested through intersectional components and differed according to class, gender, age, profession, and social connections, yet all shared the experience of being targeted due to national identity (Palestinian) and ethno-racial determination (Palestinian from Syria).

### 6.2.1 "There is no Border. It's a mountain"

Walid's story of border crossing is different to the others, due to the fact that he escaped by foot, without travel documents, smuggled to the border by the Free Syrian Army and arrived in Lebanon without the notice of the Lebanese authorities. His story mimics the disposition and performances of power that make borders and regulate behaviour even when there is no border.<sup>231</sup> Hence follows Walid's border crossing narrative:

It was cold and it rained on us. We spent two days on the mountain. The first day we walked. [...]. We came from Khan el Sheih and on this highway there was army patrols. We walked through the army points at night, something like 7.30 in the evening. Let me paint.<sup>232</sup> We were here and we had the Free Army with us. They were armed. We didn't have weapons. They took us, over the mountain. Okay, so we

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<sup>230</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.1)

<sup>231</sup> Gregory, *Colonial*, 19.

<sup>232</sup> During recordings we drew graphics of the trajectories and the urban spaces. For security reasons these cannot be included in the material.

walked and on the road the situation was very difficult. We arrived at a field landscape where there were cows and dogs. The dogs saw us and started barking at us. So then the regime heard it and so they started shooting after us. We were like 20 -30 persons only young men until now. This was before the women arrived to our group.

*(silence)*

They started shooting at us and *tatatata*. We fell to the ground at night. They fired a light racket so that they could see us in the dark. When the light racket went out we got up and ran as fast as we could. They shot two, I mean, one more light racket. When one was shot we fell to the ground again. Then they shot the next. But we went on. We were in a regime area. We were very tired. Our clothes were ripped from the sharp stones. The regime was everywhere and shooting and had closed all the streets. We were very tired when we arrived there. We drank water. The water that had fallen from the sky on the trees and lay under them in small pools. We drank water and rested a bit and then we went with a car and left to a area where the regime was not present. [...] We slept there till the morning.

*(silence)*

So, the second day came and we left like at 5 in the evening and cars started coming and started gathering with other people, a lot of people; women and children as well all from Syria, from all areas. So at this moment many of them left to the West of Syria for the first time in their lives to go to Lebanon. Me and Mohammad and other men were there and then we walked. From hereon started the very challenging part of the journey. It was so hard to walk. There were a lot of army checkpoints all over. We left and we went back to the mountain and walked down. The situation was very difficult. We were about 400 persons; children and women and elders and wounded too. All walking. There were persons who couldn't do it. They died. We ran a bit back to see and had to give them up. The slump of the mountain was horrible. We walked. [...]. Some elder persons had heart attacks. We had to continue. Persons died on the road. The world and the road were killing us because of the mountain. We got to a

point where there was an Israeli watchtower. We walked under it. They saw us, but didn't make problems. So we went into the part of the Lebanese mountain. At this point the situation was horrifying. Women and children were crying. I didn't have anything. I had blood on my legs and my clothes were ripped. And eventually I couldn't walk anymore. I had to walk down like this from the mountain (*showing me how he walked on his hands and feet with his back towards the ground.*) I had blood and dirt everywhere. A lot of persons were in the same conditions as I with ripped clothes and skin. We waited at the mountain. The situation was terrible.<sup>233</sup>

When I asked Walid about what happened at the border, he answered:

There is no border. It's a mountain. There were Lebanese army checkpoints later on [...]. We started to go down. The road was like this. Very steep! (*Showing by hand gesture*). This road is controlled by the Lebanese Army. The road was divided like this (*Shows how the road splits in two paths*). We, the young men, went this way [...] to avoid the Lebanese Army and Secret Intelligence Services. We were something like 25 young men. The women and children went to the army post. So we didn't see them (the army). So this road was very horrible. The mountain was so steep. We arrived and were torn. [...] If I had had any idea that the road from Syria to Lebanon would be like this I would have stayed in Kahn el Sheih, because the road was like dying. Death, death.<sup>234</sup>

Walid's paperless and stateless status and his fear for the Syrian army and LGS forced him to risk death by clandestine escape. On a later occasion Walid explained to me that he had no travel documents, since the Syrian Government had denied him the right to documents since he was 16 years old and had participated in a demonstration at the Syrian Golan-Israeli border and jumped the border as a barb-wired fence to reach Palestine.<sup>235</sup> His narrative is a sign of the discrimination of border regulations, which forces persons fleeing war to embark on devastating roads, whether by sea or land to escape warzones. His traumatic experiences at the mountain is a result of regulatory excluding border systems as well as a result of the totalitarian and violent Syrian regime and Walid's resistances struggle against the regime and his fight to return to Palestine. It shows that the

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<sup>233</sup> Walid (Appendix 4.1.2)

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

movement of crossing borders clandestinely is a movement created by the discriminatory pervasiveness of border systems.

### 6.2.2 Official Border Crossing

The following section analysis experiences at the official borders. Omar explained his experience of the border crossing and the discriminatory performance of space witnessed at Al-Masna'a border.

There was discrimination against all Syrians and Palestinians alike because the borders were very crowded. So because of the immense amount of people there the Lebanese General Security would start shouting at the people words like “you animals” or curse as in “get in line you animals”. I mean nasty words that should not be spoken. Regardless of whether this treatment is fair, after you stand in line all the way to the window, you can see from the look on their faces that they do not like you or even want you to enter Lebanon.<sup>236</sup>

In July 2013 Omar had to renew his Palestinian-Syrian documents, since the LGS had destroyed the picture when issuing his visa permit – a discriminatory and allegedly unlawful tactic used by the LGS to “lawfully” deport persons also documented by AI.<sup>237</sup> Omar was thus denied to stay in Lebanon and had to re-enter the warzone.

[...] my document picture got messed up and the General Security told me they were unable to take it because of this and that I had to renew it and so I had to go back to Syria. I went to Damascus thinking I'd stay for 2 or 3 days, fix my passport then come back here, but while I was there the Lebanese passed a law that forbids entrance to all Syrian-Palestinians.<sup>238</sup>

Like Omar, Khaled crossed the border twice and the second time in August 2013 with a formal delegation. He managed to cross the border due to the delegation's “insider connection”, but witnessed more than 20 families being rejected and returned.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.2)

<sup>237</sup> AI, *Denied Refuge*, 5.

<sup>238</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.3)

<sup>239</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.2)

The procedures were difficult I mean back then there was no decision banning the Palestinians' entry. Actually, there were two different decisions taken by the Lebanese. I'll tell you about it. Back when I first came here you - as a Palestinian - would pay for a visa and enter without any problem. But when we came back the second time in August with a European campaign delegation [...] of which I was a member, they forbade me entrance, although I had my name put with a formal delegation via the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, just because I was a Syrian Palestinian. We tried talking with the officer in charge and so did the head of the delegation, but he still refused me and another guy entry, since we were Syrian Palestinians until someone with the delegation talked to a senior official he knew, an insider's connection, if you will, just so we could get in. Otherwise no Syrian-Palestinian is allowed entry only for special cases. What are these special cases? Frankly, the officers and their moods decide this; I mean there is no specific criterion.<sup>240</sup>

Balsam as mentioned carried a Syrian passport, which is marked with a ف (*fa*) for *filastine* (Palestinian). He crossed borders both by land and by air from Lebanon to Jordan. He explained how the official passport check at the airport was unproblematic. It was the feeling he had when he was in the air that reflected his border crossing experience:

[...] first of all, this was the first time in my life I was in an aircraft. Very first time. It was the first time I took a flight. So I was looking like this (*eyes wide open*) out of the window. I was not scared. The first thing is that I did not feel scared. The first time but I was not scared of the flight. I was looking like this at the sea and at Beirut, just looking (*silence*). It was the first time that I saw the world from above. So my feelings were like (*silence*). I was in the plane and then I started crying and a few tears came down. And then I had a feeling of realizing that I would never come back to Syria. So when I went to Lebanon it was just a matter of getting away quickly and get on a flight. But when I was on the flight I started feeling that this is something strange. I mean, for real, today I remember the point in time and that I felt that I would not return to Syria. Never.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Balsam (Appendix 4.5.3).

Roula and her children expressed what they called a “normal” border crossing.<sup>242</sup> This was concerted in my interview with Nayel where he expressed that before many had a relatively normal border crossing experiences without discrimination.<sup>243</sup> However, the discrimination started when the border had been crossed. Roula expressed the importance of focusing on her experiences as a Palestinian from Syria in Lebanon and the way Lebanon treats Palestinians while focusing on the border experiences in order to combine the experiences, since they cannot stand alone.<sup>244</sup>

In summary, this sub-section has clarified different border experiences and the discriminatory nature of the borders. Borders and the people who are empowered to govern them perform discriminatory behaviours reinforced differently in the participants’ accounts due to social connections, gender, age and status of travel documents or lack of the latter – yet all experiences of discrimination are connected to ethno-racial determination.

### 6.3.0 After Crossing Borderlines

The pervasiveness of borders is seen when border “dominance and doings” as power performances take place beyond borders, such as cities, refugee camps, streets and private homes. When similar performances of dominance are performed in seemingly borderless areas, the power enforcements, which make borders fixed, spill into the lives of the participants. The borders become pervasive not only as a metaphor in the mind of the narrators, but also concrete since they are - *ala hawia*<sup>245</sup> - *always already* outside the framework of the law and yet constantly subjected by the law’s excluding performances.

### 6.3.1 Forbidden Life - Social Death

The following analyses experiences of social death - as a consequence after border crossing – understood as “ineligibility to personhood”.<sup>246</sup> The displacement experiences display how lives are forbidden and become socially death through categorizing human beings by bureaucratic identity documents (ID). The crucial role of narratives on ID in the oral histories showed that borders are also experienced as pervasive due to the vexed regulation that the stateless Palestinian documents

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<sup>242</sup> Roula (4.4.2 Appendix).

<sup>243</sup> Moe Ali Nayel (Appendix 5.3).

<sup>244</sup> Roula (Appendix 4.4.3).

<sup>245</sup> By identity

<sup>246</sup> Cacho, *Social Death*, 8.

appoint. The Palestinian ID - *al-fisha*<sup>247</sup> - appoints specific sets of regulatory constraints on the body that carries it. The narrators independently expressed the sentiment “*al filastinieen mamnuaa adtaich*”.<sup>248</sup> The institutionalized racism within the ID, or being forced not to have one, combined with the surveillance and checkpoint strategy applied by the Lebanese authorities are the main elements forming the pervasive border experiences. When your identity papers can constantly be controlled and their validity contested, when moving in public and private spaces the borders transcend geographies. Balsam here expressed the burden of the ID:

[...] when I say that it is forbidden for a Palestinian to live, the meaning is, that the Arab States, like Lebanon, are not giving him the right to study, or work. [...] It is forbidden for the Palestinian to travel to Turkey and it is forbidden for the Palestinian to travel to the European countries, because Palestinians are refugees, they do not have a passport. He doesn't have a Palestinian identity he doesn't have a personal national number. We only have the refugee cards, which says, that you are a Palestinian refugee in the eyes of the UNRWA, only, this is my identity. If someone asks me: you are Palestinian from Palestine? I say yes, and then he says, what is your identity? and I say *that* is my identity, it's written on my Palestinian identity card. And then he says, but that is not your identity, where is your passport? And I say, I do not have a passport. A passport is *muaqad*<sup>249</sup> for Palestinian refugees. This is not a passport this is *muaqad*.<sup>250</sup>

Khaled expressed the link between having Palestinian ID and experiencing that life is forbidden. Additionally, Khaled's account reviled “the protection gap” for Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon.

When I went to see the Western embassies to ask for immigration they asked for a piece of paper to prove that we are refugees here. I went to the Commission they refused me being a Palestinian and said I was to see the UNRWA. I did and the UNRWA refused to give me such a paper, well why? I am already registered with you as a displaced person here and I had come here forcibly why don't you give me a piece of paper to prove this? They said they couldn't legally do this because as far as

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<sup>247</sup> The chip – (colloquial Arabic)

<sup>248</sup> “Palestinians are forbidden life”

<sup>249</sup> Temporary

<sup>250</sup> Balsam (Appendix 4.5.4).

the Lebanese government is concerned, we are but tourists here. I have come here on a visit (*laughs sarcastically*) so this is yet another problem you know? I mean the embassies are holding to certain rules and regulations not to take my claim here unless I manage to get them a piece of paper that states me being a refugee in Lebanon. Most embassies refer us back to the European Commission fully knowing we have no papers there, well then why are you sending us back there? It is lying straight to your face.<sup>251</sup>

In summary, IDs create a person's bureaucratic label, and term eligibility for services, which marks the difference between life and death.<sup>252</sup> Social death in a Lebanese context is a direct result of carrying a Palestinian refugee ID and physical death is a possible result of the treatment one is subjected to due to that ID, e.g. via detention and deportation to Syria. The narrators' stories like the stories of the three Palestinian-Syrian men, who are in no-man's-land and their 37 counterparts, who were deported to Syria in May 2014 (section 5.2.1) work to ignite the circumstances where forbidden life through IDs and ethno-racial targeting creates social death. It shows a crude example of racialized rightlessness and social death and a situation where stateless persons' narratives are silenced.

#### 6.4.0 "Shrinking Private Space"

The following section dwells with the daily struggles after border crossings and focuses on border regulations moving into private spaces. The face-to-face assaults of officers or LGS guards are experienced as both meso- and micro-level discrimination, which in turn creates experiences of a "shrinking private space".<sup>253</sup> Both male and female narrators expressed perpetual experiences of surveillance, which resulted in fear regulated patterns of movement. The feeling of surveillance occurred when the border control mechanisms and performances of the Lebanese Army and the LGS moved beyond border spaces and into *places of living*, e.g. private homes and close neighbourhoods.<sup>254</sup> Yet, the feeling also occurred at the micro level when camp dwellers harassed the narrators in their homes. I firstly analyse, narratives of border performances in non-border

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<sup>251</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.3).

<sup>252</sup> Feldman, "Challenge", 388.

<sup>253</sup> Roula (Appendix 4.4.3).

<sup>254</sup> Peteet, *Landscape*, 27-8.



spaces by presenting Omar's narrative and by analysing a hangout with Walid and Balsam.<sup>255</sup> Then the sub-section "*Let's Stay between the Walls*" presents female narrated consequences of discrimination.

#### 6.4.1 Beyond Borders

This section will analyse the experiences of borders expanding beyond border spaces and into private living places. Omar expressed how the practices of the LGS create a constant presence of a furtive surveillance, which paralysed him, since he crossed the border. His narrative works as an example of border spaces moving into private space and it shows how repetitiveness in regulatory practices fosters fear. The following passage happened twice to Omar and kept him from moving freely for at least four months. Also, the LGS twice confronted Omar at his temporary place of settlement to check his identity:

I went there (*to the LGS department*) and gave them my travel documents and was told to check back in 15 days. After 15 days I returned but they did not give me back my passport and told me to come back after 15 more days. They contacted me after a month and I went there. So they checked where I live and also my information but still did not give me back my passport, which by this time had been with them for a whole month. 2 or 3 days later they came over to my place and made sure I really was that person and called me to check with the department of artists. I went there and they interrogated me and asked me for information, such as where do you work and how do you live. [...] So they interrogated me on what I do for a living and how I can spend so I told them, I do not work. They said okay and asked me to return and check with them within 15 days. So I did and still the passport was not ready until (*pauses*)... until about 2 months.<sup>256</sup>

Observation I shows how Walid and Balsam's behavior is regulated due to border performances beyond borders. The observation describes a walk with the two men in Beirut and it was observed how their patterns of walking on the streets were regulated by checkpoints and police officers. First, the observation shows that the two men only leave their room in the camp after nightfall to avoid being recognized as Palestinians from Syria and to avoid police. Here follows an extract from the observation, which describes the ambiance of the event observed:

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<sup>255</sup> Observation I (Appendix).

<sup>256</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.4).

I observed how Walid and Balsam were constantly looking for army checkpoints and police and as soon as they saw some they changed the route or changed to another sidewalk. In this way a normally 10 minutes walk took 40 minutes. The ambiance was constantly shifting between joking via the use of sarcasm and a very serious tone. Walid said: “We have to make a plan if they take me. You and Balsam should come and visit me so we make sure they don’t deport me.”<sup>257</sup>

In summary, this section has show examples of the border regulations moving into private spaces and public spaces beyond fixed border territory. This regulates the narrators’ behaviours and foster fear both when in living places and when walking on public streets. The example chosen are male narratives, I will now examine the female narratives.

#### 6.4.2 “Let’s stay between the walls”

I dedicate this subsection to the three female accounts (Roula, Sarah and Nariman), since I wish to honor Roula’s call for me to include a focus on her daily struggles and the borders that start at the door to her shelter.

[...] the most important is...is to see the situation here in Lebanon and what they are doing now. I feel I have a shrinking private space. The border is there (*pointing at the door*). The border is everywhere. I have my dad in Syria and he wants to come to Lebanon, but he doesn't know how. He went to the border and was sent back. He is in Yarmouk! They send him back to Syria! He was not allowed to go to Lebanon. He was at the border.<sup>258</sup>

The discrimination experienced by the narrators cannot simply be understood by categorizing them as male or female. The experiences must be compexified through particularities as war-refugees, statelessness, single mothers and an unmarried teenage girl, living with social struggles due to poverty and ethno-racial labelling in a predominantly patriarchal society. The female speakers all expressed fear of being approached by males, both civilians and intelligence guards, on the street and in general walking on the streets of the camp and the city. Therefore, Sarah, Roula’s cousin, claimed, “*fa khalina bein al-khitaan. Ahsan!*”<sup>259</sup> The fear stemmed from anxieties connected to the local communities perceptions of them (both women and men), as single parents

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<sup>257</sup> Observation I (Appendix)

<sup>258</sup> Roula (Appendix 4.4.3)

<sup>259</sup> “So let us stay between the walls. It’s better”, Sarah in Roula (Appendix 4.4.4)

with no man in Lebanon. Secondly, the fear stemmed from the vulnerability of being a female Palestinian refugee from Syria in reference to the discrimination at macro- and meso-level. The women explained that they were subjected to misconceptions and labelled as “Syrian prostitutes” both due to the way they wear their headscarves, the way they clean their houses and their colloquial spoken Arabic and could thus be targeted on the street by both civilians and intelligence guards. These experiences were sensitive and mostly told off record. Nariman and Sarah allowed me to publish this dialogue:

Nariman: Now, if I open the door a little, like this, they (*the men*) can look in and see me.

Sarah: The young men we have in Damascus, if this was happening in Damascus and a man walks by they would yell: 'Close the door', 'Close the door'. 'Close the door, oh sister'. Out of respect. But here.... they say nothing ... and then they stare at us.

Nariman: Yesterday we were having dinner. The door went open a bit and they were all looking at me. I was not wearing my scarf and did not have it near me and it was only a few seconds. They walked by and one looked like this at me (*eyes wide open*). And because of that I am very scared. I'm very scared here. Very much.<sup>260</sup>

The women expressed severe worries for their children and the consequences that follow living in camp circumstances and the continuation of daily small traumas following the traumas from the war in Syria. The women noticed their children incessantly biting nails and fingers. Further, Sarah told about her daughter (3 years of age) who by mistake was electrocuted. Sarah now had to take her daughter to Damascus to see a doctor every second week, since no Lebanese doctor would see her and they could not afford a private doctor. However, since the border closure she has been unable to take her daughter to the doctor.

In summary, this subsection has provided a view into the narratives of constraint and fear, which the female narrator expressed as consequences of crossing borders. There is no experiences of border regulations mentioned, but the women’s fear is seen as a result of the regulations and their stuck situation is part of their on-going experience of border crossing, where Lebanon is the transit point. The female voices show how borders transform into frontiers in the life in a camp setting.

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<sup>260</sup> Nariman in Roula (Appendix 4.4.4)

The women explained how they feel surveillance both by the Lebanese regulations through checkpoints and guards on the streets, but also through the predominantly male culture, which stares into their places of living. All in all both the male and female accounts of personal experiences of fear due to discriminations reveals the unstable situation and oppression, which is reinforced through intersections when being a Palestinian refugee from Syria in Lebanon.

### 6.5.0 Perspectives on Borders Never Crossed

The stories collected are frozen moments in time. The situations of the five narrators and their families have deteriorated since the recordings. For example, one is in detention, one is on the street, one returned to Syria and one is stuck on the way to Europe. Oral historian Allesandro Portelli noticed, “[e]verything becomes something else before it has time to freeze into a finished separate stage.”<sup>261</sup> The five narrators are still struggling for sustainable futures and their paths of border crossing have not ended. The analysis concludes by capturing two corresponding developments in the narratives, which are the narratives of experiences of the on-going Nakba and the planning of futures elsewhere. The narrators’ use of the past and the future indicates that the mind can cross borders the body never will. The narratives include borders, which might never be crossed and geographies, which have never been touched, while relating to imagined futures.

#### 6.5.1 Disabling Human Energy

I have selected extracts from Omar’s and Khaled’s narratives to show the experiences of an ever-present catastrophe through the past 66 years, however, all five narrators shared the feeling of an on-going Nakba. In the narratives I found that spaces and experiences of displacement are connected across different time laps and territories. With the narrators I argue that the Nakba is a living memory connected to the several forced displacements and border crossings and that the past is present, since no durable solution has been found for the refugees. Khaled’s narrative mimics how incessant displacement brings the two historical events together and forms one predicament:

My mother and father used to tell us about Palestine and the history of our village and how they left and what road they took on their journey. When I left the camp with my family back in 2012 where they were shelling and bombing us very heavily using air force, families were fleeing by the thousands and I was looking at that scene and started remembering (*silence*) my mother and father when they told me how they left

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<sup>261</sup> Portelli, *The Death*, 52.

Palestine. [...]. When we were leaving the camp by the thousands I remembered my mother and father when they were telling us about the days they had left Palestine. That same scene was replaying and the last time I left the camp I remember thinking whether or not I should return but now I can see this crisis to be very long and I may return to find nothing but ashes and no houses standing.<sup>262</sup>

Omar's interpretation includes a distinction between what he calls the small and the big Nakba. Omar explained how the siege and destruction of Yarmouk camp is a catastrophe for his life and a catastrophe for the largest Palestinian community outside Palestine. In his reasoning the Nakba is both the siege in Yarmouk, but also the fact that the Palestinian community has now been further disorganized and expelled further from Palestine into hostile communities. In his logic the disorganization hinders return to Palestine.

[...] the small Nakba is the siege on Yarmouk camp, the largest gathering of Palestinians. It really was a Nakba. I mean, it was a huge shock and a literal catastrophe because that camp was the biggest gathering of Palestinian refugees in the countries around Palestine. Besides, that camp had a case unlike any other camp. [...] That place really was our little Palestine from which we were demanding our return to Palestine. And it was also threatened and targeted from a long time ago, so I think what really happened in the Yarmouk camp wasn't born out of a sudden, no, it was rather a planned scheme to hit the largest Palestinian gathering. The biggest proof of this is our current state of loss and spreading all over. [...] So disabling this human energy this energy was crushed, and the gathering destroyed it was a real Nakba just like that of the year 1948; a small Nakba.<sup>263</sup>

The Nakba is for the five narrators both a past still present and a present given meaning through the past. It is on-going, since there has been no return to Palestine. The pending solution, the perpetual experiences of displacement, border crossings and the inherited statelessness cement the temporariness of Palestinian identity documents and creates the experience of the Nakba as a present reality. It is reawakened in small catastrophes through the physical and symbolic violence

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<sup>262</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.4)

<sup>263</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.5)

against the Palestinian population and its communities.

### 6.5.2 “Not for the love of Europe”

From a look into how the past unfolds in the present, I will now turn to how the future is present in the narratives and also include border crossing. All participants expressed that coming to Lebanon was “a station” or “a transit” on a way to reach Europe. Most knew about the devastating situation for Palestinians in Lebanon before departure, nonetheless they were forced to go there. The survival strategies developed, e.g. planning to reach Europe, is yet a confrontation with and contestation of perpetual border regulations. Meanwhile, it adds to the feeling of strangulation and imprisonment in Lebanon, since “Europe’s new border regime” has closed borders regulated by powerful nation-states.<sup>264</sup> Khaled poignantly explained the embodied experience of what he called imprisonment in Lebanon: “It’s a bad and lamentable feeling to begin with. The freedom of moving is one of man’s most basic rights. When this basic right is taken away from you, you’re actually being ripped of your humanity. What more can one say? You feel you’ve been imprisoned”.<sup>265</sup> The experiences of “forbidden life” (section 6.3.1) provoke development of new survival strategies - a result also found by scholars prior to me.<sup>266</sup> As mentioned in the literature review Peteet calls it the *creativity capacity* among Palestinians.<sup>267</sup> Perdigon names it *pessoptimism*, by an algorithm of pessimism and optimism, creating forms of recovery in the aftermath of violence and assaults.<sup>268</sup> Hope for better days passes through bodies, yet, perpetual circumstances reassure that the hopes will never be fulfilled. In my study I found creativity capacities and pessoptimism in the hopes of reaching the shores of Europe, knowingly that Europe’s shores are hard to reach. The participant were well-aware that in Europe the UNHCR inclusion clauses of Article 1D will protect them, and the UNRWA mandate ceases, meanwhile, higher life quality will help moving on, as Omar said:

So I think when I am living somewhere safe abroad without anybody constantly asking me for papers and drawing red lines forbidding me from doing this and that, I could rest a little and see the subject matter correctly. I mean, I will have more knowledge. I feel that Palestine is close, it is a shortcut, I mean, I feel that Palestine as my home country is closer to Europe than it is to Lebanon. I mean, I can be in Europe if I was able to feel comfortable I could see my Israeli Zionist enemy, call it what you will, I could see him and confront him and talk to him with words, I mean, discuss

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<sup>264</sup> Andersson. *Illegality*. 3.

<sup>265</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.5).

<sup>266</sup> Sayigh, *Too Many*. Peteet, *Landscape*. Allan, *Refugees*. Perdigon, “Yet another”

<sup>267</sup> Peteet, *Landscape*, 2.

<sup>268</sup> Perdigon, “Yet Another”.

with him tell him that I am as much of a human being as he is and how I love and believe in him as a human, and that we as people can solve this issue so that I could return to my home country. I think I can get myself balanced and talk to him regardless of him being my enemy. But from Lebanon or Syria or even Jordan or Egypt these countries did not grant me the freedom to think or read or know.<sup>269</sup>

Omar's narrative includes the optimistic view of reaching Europe, while also expressing the consequences of Palestinians being subdued by institutionalized racialization in the region. Khaled's account mimics the preliminary pessimist and realistic fact of how hard it is to reach Europe.

[...] to be frank and honest with you, what's on most of the Syrian Palestinians' minds coming here is immigration. I'm sure you've heard of some of them go on badly built boats and die in mid sea or get robbed clean or experience some kind of fraud just so that he can reach Europe, not for the love of Europe, but rather so that he can finally reach a safe haven where he can live in dignity and freedom with his family without the fear of someone attacking or violating him.<sup>270</sup>

Walid expressed the pessoptimism through his knowledge about the route through Europe to the well-known Scandinavian welfare states, where he dreams about settling; meanwhile he is well aware of the difficulties of getting there and the difficulties for refugees in these societies.

There is no one who wants to have us at their place. Maybe the Scandinavian countries, which you are from, or like Sweden or some of these countries? They allow asylum seekers. [...] I just want to be recognized as a refugee. But how can I contact them? They say you have to *be there* to apply for asylum. But how can I get there? Maybe I will die on the sea. All the counties you will go to and then stay there maybe a week or 10 days and then go to a camp in another country. For example in Turkey and then to Greece and from Greece to Kosovo and from Kosovo you go to Hungary and from Hungary to Serbia and then maybe to Italy and then from Italy to Germany or Denmark and then to Sweden. This is the situation for asylum seekers. But no one has money.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.6).

<sup>270</sup> Khaled (Appendix 4.3.6).

<sup>271</sup> Walid (Appendix 4.1.1)

Finally, Roula expressed her frustration and feeling of humiliation by the German asylum system, where she has applied for family unification with her husband and son, who have been there for two years. At a visit documented in Observation II she repeatedly asked about the German asylum system, the Schengen system and the Dublin Convention.<sup>272</sup> Roula repeated, “this cannot be true, this cannot be true, we are humans we need a way out of here”.<sup>273</sup>

### 6.6.0 Summary

In summary, the analysis has provided five analytical sections which all shed light on the border crossing experiences and its consequences. The analysis has thus given logic to the collection of narratives through organizing experiences in five stages. Firstly the escape and displacement in Syria, secondly the border crossing into Lebanon, thirdly the experiences of borders as pervasive in Lebanon, and of spaces shrinking and limiting freedom. Lastly, the analysis provided a focus on borders, which have only been crossed through remembrance of the past and survival strategies created about an imagined future on safe territory. Yet, both affect the experiences of borders and border crossing in the narrator’s present. The final section showed how borders are markers in the past, the present and the future of the narrators. In that way two historical events form one predicament and the border crossing experiences work to display the on-going consequences of displacement from both Syria and Palestine.

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<sup>272</sup> The Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Convention (Dublin II Regulation) refers to legal bodies of the European Union (EU). The former created a “borderless” Schengen Area for member states and EU passport holders, while the latter refers to the common EU law and fingerprint database manifesting that an asylum seeker can only claim asylum in the first European Member State she enters.

<sup>273</sup> Observation II (Appendix)



## 7.0.0 Perspectives on Resistance

The narratives reflect circumstances of severe hardship, danger and circumstances limited by levels of discrimination, and lack of possibilities of life and livelihood. The presentation of the oral history accounts collected has shown “the unbearable knowledge”, i.e. the fact that some can cross borders seamlessly and others cannot.<sup>274</sup> Yet, rich material has been omitted from this thesis. All in all more than 50 codes with sub-codes were established in the 150 pages material (transcripts, filed notes and memos). This means that the theme selected in the in-debt analysis merely reflects parts of the participants’ subjective accounts. I end my study by drawing lines to a possible future study, including thorough analysis of forms of resistance the situation described through out this study. The narratives presented show the vulnerability of the narrators who through war, violence, uprooting and displacement, have been victimized and subjugated to discrimination, harassment, institutional racism and intersubjective assaults. This evidently illuminated vulnerability, however, as Veena Das emphasizes, “to be vulnerable is not the same as being a victim.”<sup>275</sup> The Palestinians from Syria are disadvantaged but carry agency reinforced through powerful ideas and an incessant will to resist their predicament.

I estimate that escaping Syria and attempting to find ways of surviving, living and preparing for the future are all ways of non-violent resistance: resisting war, resisting violence and resisting the social death they experience. I find it important to include that each and every person had her or his own way of resisting. The survival strategies among the five narrators spread over various creativity capacities and unfolded in the world in different ways. Walid was dedicated to documenting his everyday life, demonstrations, atrocities and the daily roots through a camera. Meanwhile, he uploaded documentation online and kept claiming his right to live as “a human being” as he said. Walid wrote articles in Arabic about his home community and the resistance in the village and he tried to help those still in Syria to get their stories out. Balsam resisted through attempting to find a job, even though he is not allowed to work. Moreover, he was as much as possible in contact with family and friends back in Syria and on a webpage he participated in documenting the continuous destruction and the shelling of his former home.

For Khaled resistance was being politically active in the refugee camp setting, he has since he arrived in Lebanon worked on organizing the Palestinians from Syria in a committee which helps

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<sup>274</sup> Veena Das, “The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity” in *Violence and Subjectivity* edited by Veena Das. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): 279.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

individuals and families who newly arrived from Syria. Moreover, Khaled on a weekly bases attended talks, organized demonstrations and participated in activity meetings.

Roula's way of resisting was at least two folded. As a female single parent she spent all her time supporting her children through different methods. She kept encouraging them to study and practice even though all they had was a broken pen and no paper – so they wrote on the walls. Moreover, Roula tried to keep herself updated on European migration acts through communicating with her family members already in Europe. In that way she learned about the changing asylum procedures. Finally, Roula daily went to the UNRWA registration office to get help and even though she stood in line for hours and did not get registration she kept coming back to see if new resources or possibilities would occur. Finally, for Omar resistance was to perform his art, under ground, writing songs and participating as a playwright. Omar described:

Art is the strongest weapon for resistance. To me as a Palestinian outside my homeland I think resistance in art is a great thing but it is also a hard thing it is not easy, but it is a very expressive medium that has the power to reach out the image and the idea to as many people worldwide as possible so that they can see justice in a civilized and beautiful artistic manner. [...] Although I am with shooting he who shoots and kills us, okay? But there are many ways through which I can shoot him back not necessarily with a pistol or rifle; I can shoot him with a word or a song.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Omar (Appendix 4.2.7)

## 8.0.0 Conclusion

Through oral history, ethnographic participant-observation and grounded theory as analytical tools I have inquired border-crossing experiences of Palestinian refugees from Syria, who escaped war-driven Syria to Lebanon since 2011. The results were strongly influenced and highlighted by the May 2014 closing of the Lebanese-Syrian border for persons carrying Palestinian-Syrian ID. The aim of the study has been commitment to decolonising methodologies and intersubjective authorship, yet, the final result is a re-interpretation framed by the author. Nonetheless, the five narrators' accounts generate leeway for *speaking back* to a world of borders, and challenge the nation-state order of borders as fixed spaces.

My inquiry has, in part, been an effort to rethink and renegotiate established ideas of borders and border-crossing experiences. I contest conventional dogmas of borders and suggest that border-crossing experiences are pervasive for stateless racialized rightless persons. For Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon borders construct *de facto* discriminatory pervasive power performativity through checkpoints, visa regulations, and *ad hoc* directives including arbitrary detentions and forced deportations. Further, persons who are holders of Palestinian refugee ID experience their lives as forbidden, which I analyse as experiences of racialized rightlessness and social death, which implicate narratives being silenced. The concepts of racialized rightlessness and social death are relevant to analysing the material collected, since the two notions help describe the historical and systemic processes behind the construction of the disadvantaged life circumstances of Palestinian refugees. Firstly, racialized rightlessness is applied since traditional notions used such as Arendt's notion of rightlessness needs to be reformulated to gain theoretical and contextual explanatory strength. Thus racialized rightlessness implies that rightlessness is not merely connected to formations of laws and right regimes, but also a product of contextual historical processes of othering and racial targeting of a specific group, which have resulted in racialized laws, racialized implementations and racialized interactions. Social death is the researcher-ascribed term used to portray the narrator-ascribed category of being constructed as "forbidden life", which all participants expressed. The notion of social death thus describes the disadvantaged life circumstances, the silencing of narratives and the ineligibility to socially be a person in the eyes of the structures. Through the lens of social death the thesis shows that lives have been made socially death by the discriminatory structures, yet, the notion of social death also leaves room for understanding that it is possible to "belong" to a social order without being legally or rightfully part of the established system of belonging since there is still belonging outside this framework.

The collection of stories that this thesis contributes with adds much needed nuanced information about Palestinian refugees in particular, and refugees' flights in general. The overarching contribution is that in the circumstances of the stateless and racialized rightless person borders are discriminatory and pervasive spaces that expand beyond border spaces. Even more, subjective interpretations of the present are haunted by atrocities of the past as the Palestinian participants in this study describe a stateless horizon extending from the Nakba of 1948 through the atrocities of multiple violent assaults and displacements, to the current-day crises in Syria. The crossing of the borders between Lebanon and Syria is a reminder for the stateless Palestinian that she is by definition *always already* out of law and that the temporary protection she enjoyed in Syria was defined by its prolonged temporariness, which has now ceased. This forces her to hover in a world of checkpoints.

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## **10.0.0 Appendices**

Please see the attached document “Appendices”.