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Alternative ways to study a vulnerable population in fragile political contexts

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Researching urban forced migrants in Turkey and Lebanon:

Alternative ways to study a vulnerable population in fragile political contexts

Lea Müller-Funk, Osama Alaa Aldien, Arij Basrak, Weam Ghabash, Mustafa Hatip, Rand Shamaa, and Mouran Tourkmani

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Abstract

Studying mobility aspirations of forced migrants is a challenge. Refugees are a particularly vulnerable group and displaced persons are often described as a rare or hidden group whose members are hard to identify and to locate. Representative micro-level data is scarce, with surveys frequently based on non-probability sampling techniques. Furthermore, most refugees flee to neighbouring countries which are often politically unstable and sometimes at war with the origin country, posing additional security risks to participants and researchers alike. Building on existing literature and recent fieldwork conducted in Lebanon and Turkey in 2018, we suggest a methodological approach to study mobility aspirations of Syrian urban self-settled refugees in four cities in these two countries. In doing so, we highlight the importance of considering ethical challenges, adopting a mixed methods research design which incorporates randomness in data collection (multi-stage sampling, random walks combined with limited focused enumeration of the nearest neighbour technique), the advantages of including members of the targeted population in research teams, as well as challenges encountered during the research with regards to representativeness, confidentiality, security issues and positionality.

Keywords: refugee studies, methodology, vulnerable population, mixed methods, sampling, ethics, security

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Contents

1 Introduction or studying forced migrants' aspirations in fragile political contexts

Refugees most often flee to the nearest port in the storm: neighbouring countries which are sometimes at war with the origin country (Moore and Shellman 2007). 85 per cent of the world's displaced people in 2018 are located in developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (UNHCR 2018). The majority of Syrian refugees have fled to Syria's neighbouring countries in the region (5.6 million), while a smaller percentage continued on to European countries (1 million). 6.2 million Syrians have been internally displaced (UNHC 2018). Compared to studies about living conditions of Syrian refugees in Europe, less academic research has been done on internally displaced persons in Syria (Mooney 2014; Doocy et al. 2015; Doocy 2015), those who have stayed put within the country (Ferris and Kirisci 2016; Vignal 2018; Kastrinou 2018) or those who have settled in Syria's neighbouring countries (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017; Longuenesse 2015; Dionigi 2017, 2018; İçduygu 2015; Mandić and Simpson 2017; Kavak 2016; Bircan and Sunata 2015). We argue in this paper that research on refugees and forced displacement poses *à priori* many ethical and methodological challenges for researchers, which are, exacerbated if research is conducted in politically unstable countries. Investigating vulnerable displaced populations in these countries requires additional security precautions and ethical considerations which influence methodological choices.

The reflections of this paper originate in fieldwork conducted in 2018 for a research project (SYRMAGINE, 2017-2019) which examines mobility aspirations of Syrian urban self-settled refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries, Lebanon and Turkey. Both countries were initially open to the influx of Syrian refugees, at least until 2015: Lebanon officially hosts over one million registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2017) – the actual number is likely to be considerably higher – and has one of the highest refugee ratios in the world: a quarter of the country's population is a refugee. Turkey currently hosts the world's largest refugee population with 3.5 million registered Syrians in 2018 (UNHCR 2018). The project tries to understand what drives refugees' aspirations to stay, on-migrate and return in these two countries and how aspirations change over time. As such, the project contributes to research about the drivers of forced migration and adds to literature on why refugees choose certain trajectories. As Black (2003, 47) suggests, less emphasis should be placed on describing the routes, costs and contacts of irregular migration, and researchers should instead consider why irregular immigrants and refugees act in the way that they do, such as motivations and decision-making processes. In this project, aspirations are understood as thick representations of what one's future might and should look like (Boccagni 2017) and are situated within the literature on agency and structure. Drivers are understood as structural elements that enable and constrain the exercise of agency. It is the interplay between aspirations and drivers which influence refugees' mobility decision-making (Van Hear, Bakewell, and Long 2018, 928).

The role of aspirations in the context of forced displacement has largely been ignored. Conflict-related movements are often seen as unpredictable occurrences that are hard to analyse theoretically (Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo 1986). While several scholars have shown that political instability and violence in origin countries are the main drivers of refugee migration (Schmeidl 1997; Lindley 2010; Lischer 2007), to date, few large-N studies have examined the destination choice of refugees and most of them have focussed on European destination countries (Havinga and Böck 1999, Neumayer 2004, Black et al. 2006, Moore & Shellman 2007). The lack of research is on the one hand due to the difficulty of talking about 'aspirations' in a context of forced displacement. However, many researchers have pointed out that there is no categorical analytical distinction between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration, since all mobility involves both choices and constraints (Fischer, Martin, and Straubhaar 1997; Keely 2002; Van Hear 1998; Crawley and Skleparis 2018). Forced migrants make choices as non-forced migrants do, albeit within a narrower range of possibilities (Van Hear,

Brubaker and Bessa, 2009). On the other hand, conducting research in origin and neighbouring countries is considerably more difficult for foreign researchers than in destination countries in Europe, the US, Canada or Australia.

Refugees are in general a vulnerable group. Most of the time, they have been subjected to immense physical, psychological, and emotional suffering. Killings, rapes, loss of loved ones, torture, loss of home and possessions – all are common experiences in refugees' lives (Kabranian-Melkonian 2015, 717). Forced migrants in politically fragile or authoritarian neighbouring countries are particularly vulnerable. Both Lebanese and Turkish policies towards the Syrian refugee population remain highly entangled with their respective historical contexts, their current foreign relations with Syria as well as the geopolitical constellations in the region. Hizbullah, which is part of the current Lebanese government, continues to be significantly involved in the Syrian civil war on the side of the Assad government. At the same time, the Sunni political party Future Current has backed the Syrian opposition. Turkey on the other hand has become the host of major segments of the Syrian opposition, while the Kurdish conflict has grown into a core political issue, which ended a policy period of relative rapprochement in 2015. Last but not least, the Turkish military has been directly involved in Syria with two offensives in North Syria: a cross-border operation against forces of ISIL and the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces in 2016 and 2017, and the Operation Olive Branch against Kurdish-controlled Afrin in spring 2018.

Second, refugees' legal situation is fragile. In Turkey and Lebanon, the 1951 Geneva Convention is not applied to Syrians. Lebanon has always refused to be an asylum or resettlement country for Syrian refugees. Although UNHCR can register refugees on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding, the Lebanese government does not grant legal effect to UNHCR's recognition of refugee status. Since 2015, new restrictions for entering and residing legally in the country have been put in place, which has led to a situation where a large majority of Syrian refugees live without valid residence permits (Dionigi 2016). Turkey, on the other hand, has ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention with a geographical limitation. Only European refugees can apply for asylum in Turkey. Syrians in Turkey are considered 'guests' and are placed under temporary protection under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013). The law includes, in theory, the principle of *non-refoulement*, the right to legal stay, and access to health and education. However, it does not offer protection from political persecution nor does it entail residency permits or a work permit (İşleyen 2018). With President Bashar al-Assad declaring the country safe for Syrians to return in 2018, Lebanese – and partly Turkish – leaders have started to put pressure on refugees to return. During the presidential elections in Turkey in 2018, the opposition announced that Syrian refugees would be deported back to Syria should they win the elections (al-Jablawi, 2018). In 2018, Hezbollah opened several offices across the country for refugees to register for return and in the same year, Lebanon's foreign minister Gebran Bassil threatened to freeze UNHCR staff's local residency permits unless they stopped speaking out against pressuring Syrians to return (Yee 2018).

Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer (2010, 229) have pointed out that, besides justifying one's research topic, one of the main ethical issues when researching migration is the selection of appropriate methods to ensure that research is transparent, accountable and produces data of high quality. We argue in the following sections that efforts to understand refugees' mobility aspirations demand a methodological perspective which firstly allows for generalisations and secondly includes qualitative data to give space to contextualised subjectivities, changes over time and sensitive issues. We suggest combining a quantitative survey collected through cluster sampling and random walks preceded by exploratory fieldwork and enriched with qualitative data. Drawing from recent fieldwork, we address the ethical concerns and methodological constraints we were confronted with when following such an approach in Beirut, Tripoli, Istanbul and Izmir. In doing so, we demonstrate that a participatory research design, long fieldwork periods and a deep understanding of language and local customs can help to overcome these challenges. The second section gives a brief overview of the state

of the art focusing on ethical concerns and major methodological challenges which emerged as crucial for the project. The third section describes our methodological approach in detail, followed dby reflections from members of the local teams.

Figure 1: Provincial breakdown of Syrian refugees in Turkey 2018 (UNHCR, DGMM)

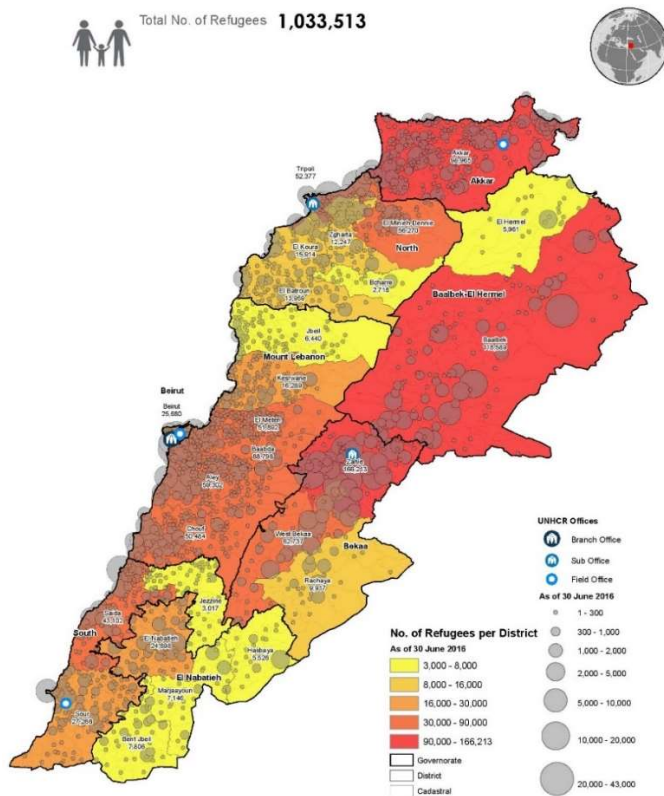Figure 2. Syrian registered refugees in Lebanon per district 2016 (UNHCR, Syria Refugee Response)

2 Ethical concerns, methodological constraints and difficult choices in fragile contexts

2.1 *Categories in refugee studies or who do we study?*

From the outset, refugee studies have been troubled by terminological difficulties. Refugee studies as an academic discipline has been characterized by its high level of dependence on policy since its beginnings in the mid-20th century, related to the emergence of the academic field after the signing of the Geneva Convention in 1951 and first institutions dealing with refugees, such as UNHCR (Black 2001). Based on the 1951 Convention, a refugee is commonly distinguished from the economic migrant, as someone who is forced to migrate rather than somebody who has moved more or less voluntarily. As such, a refugee is a person with particular needs, for whom special measures of public policy are justified.

Yet, a narrow legal definition is problematic for research for a number of reasons. In countries where the Geneva Convention 1951 is not applied, as is the case for Syrians in Lebanon, many Syrians find themselves in an irregular situation devoid of rights. Furthermore, a considerable number of Syrians have come to Lebanon as part of a circular work migration before the war. Technically, they are not considered refugees. However, they currently face similar constraints to return to Syria as registered refugees and some of them are also registered with UNHCR. Hence, many 'layers' exist to be a forced migrant in regards to their legal status – a recognised refugee, an asylum seeker, or a displaced person who has no access to a legal recognition as a refugee at all (Kabranian-Melkonian 2015). There are equally important 'layers' based on social class: Displaced people from a wealthy or a more comfortable economic background experience their displacement profoundly differently to more vulnerable forced migrants (Van Hear 2004). The connotation of the word 'refugee' therefore depends on its specific context. As Black (2001, 63) has argued, the term reflects – at best – the designation of refugee enshrined in a particular Convention at a particular time, within a particular international political and economic context. Many participants we interviewed did not want to be labelled refugees because of the negative connotations and the lack of agency they associate with the term.

The dependency of refugee studies on policy has been criticised by several scholars, arguing that it leaves large groups of forced migrants invisible – such as self-settled refugees (Bakewell 2008). It also renders theoretical reflections on forced displacement problematic when trying to make sense of realities which are more complex than often artificial categories (Van Hear, Bakewell, and Long 2018). Crawley and Skleparis (2018), for example, argue that the dominant categories, 'refugee' and 'migrant' fail to capture adequately the complex drivers of migration as well as their shifting significance for individuals over time and space. Erdal and Oeppen (2018) recommend understanding forced and voluntary migration as a continuum of experience, not as a dichotomy. Equally, Jacobsen and Landau (2003, 3) suggest using a more expansive definition for 'refugee' which is not restricted to a legal definition of 'refugees', such as forced migration.

2.2 *Security and risk in authoritarian or violent contexts*

How can data be collected in authoritarian and fragile contexts which regularly face political unrest where access to certain areas can be restricted for a number of reasons? How to balance potential risks involved for participants and researchers alike against the objective of wanting to obtain good data? Researchers have often reverted to alternative or innovative methods as the best possible solution in such instances. This can include limiting the research to certain areas considered more safe, privileging certain methods over others and building strong local connections with communities on the ground. Vignal (2018), for example, who studied how the Syrian economy has been impacted by

the war, relied on qualitative interviews with Syrians living in Lebanon and their memories of their lives before their flight from Syria. Kastrinou (2018) chose to use mediated communication with friends and family she had inside Syria through telephone, Skype or Facebook when studying sectarian tensions in a Damascene neighbourhood during the war. Düvell decided to interrupt his fieldwork and keep a low profile for a while when he received a discreet warning from the secret service in Ukraine (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010, 232). Glasius et al. (2018, 20), on the other hand, report that, with one exception, they have never sought government permission for their research on authoritarianism. They reported though to have regularly experienced high levels of uncertainty when conducting research under targeted surveillance.

Random sampling methods can be especially challenging in unstable regions or countries. Remaining invisible to authorities is generally considerably more difficult when conducting survey rather than qualitative research. Doocy *et al.* (2015), for example, conducted a needs assessment of IDPs inside Syria in 2014 and stressed that reaching a representative sample was extremely difficult as no nation-wide estimate of the number of displaced people was available and access to certain regions were complicated due to security issues. The team decided to exclude governorates and communities if the participation in the assessment could present a security threat to respondents or interviewers. Other researchers choose not to mention how they addressed risks involved specifically. Kavak (2016), for example, studied Syrian refugees working in agricultural work in Turkey and conducted a household survey in rural areas across Anatolia and does not address the security issues involved nor details of her sampling design. Similarly, Mandić and Simpson's (2017, 76) study about anti-smuggling policies and migratory risks for Syrian refugees in five countries, does not address how individual respondents were chosen nor the potential risks involved in conducting a small-scale survey.

2.3   Gaining access, language, positionality and building connections

How to gain access and together with whom – especially when research is not conducted 'at home'? How does positionality influence the research process? How to translate concepts and questions in a non-native language as a project leader? How to ask the 'right' questions? Fieldwork is generally experienced as times of excitement but also of stress by researchers, especially if it is conducted far away from home and in a context very different to their own (Glasius et al. 2018, 77). Researchers are often members of an ethnically or socially privileged group, and thus cultural sensitivity is of paramount importance. Cultural sensitivity relates to respect, shared decision-making and effective communication. Sieber (1992, 129) for example, criticises that researchers often ignore the values, life-style and the cognitive and affective world of their subjects, and instead impose their own. Some scholars have argued that including members of the same ethnic, cultural, linguistic, gender group might help to increase cultural sensitivity and facilitate relationships of familiarity and trust (Bloch 2007). In a study on Polish undocumented migrants, Triandafyllidou explains, for example, that a Polish research assistant was employed to establish friendly relationships with participants, which created trust (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010, 231). More radically, Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittawaz (2011) suggest a participatory action approach which projects refugees as partners, not simply participants: The scope of the research, the research design and analysis and findings should therefore be negotiated with refugee groups rather than set in advance by the researchers. Other scholars, on the other hand, have pointed out that it is best to minimise the use of refugee interviewers as they might be perceived to be politically positioned in the conflict by participants. Class, ethnic and religious identities might also be a challenge (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a, 242).

While it seems self-evident for most anthropologists that they learn the language of places they study and spend long periods of fieldwork in these areas and 'hang out' with refugees (Rodgers 2004), this is less the case for projects which incorporate quantitative methods. Researchers, even anthropologists, equally rarely discuss their personal language competences and how they impact their

access to the field and their results. Criticising this tendency, Borchgrevink (2003, 96) argues that many researchers are a long way from understanding their informants' innermost thoughts and feelings. He suggests acquiring language skills but simultaneously working with interpreters, which helped him not only to yield more results but also gave him qualitatively more salient data. In terms of the questionnaire design, Bloch (1999) argues that it is important to ensure that questions are transferable across cultures and the involvement of members of the refugee communities was a pre-requisite for this. Equally, Kohlenberger et al. (2017, 95) state that careful survey translation is crucial to data quality.

Finally, what shall we talk about and what shall we not talk about? What might be considered strictly confidential for a foreigner might be "*Everybody knows about it, not a big deal*" for a participant (Kabranian-Melkonian 2015, 718), such as ways of getting in contact with migration brokers or smuggling more generally (Mandić and Simpson 2017). Furthermore, it is very likely that research participants have experienced trauma, and it is more than possible that this trauma will form the core of their story. Some scholars have addressed what strategies should be used to avoid traumatic recollections. Some researchers have decided to exclude cases of severe trauma by training researchers to recognise trauma symptoms, needs, and concerns of vulnerable populations (Mandić and Simpson 2017). Others, such as Powles (2004), for instance, argue, however, many participants benefit from the opportunity to unburden themselves, sometimes speaking for the first time about very troubling experiences. They can therefore experience the process of recording personal narrative as empowering because it is a sign that their experiences and perspectives do matter within a humanitarian system that tends to appear otherwise (Powles 2004, 18). However, talking about their experienced traumas with forced migrants can also have unexpected difficult psychological consequences for researchers because they are faced with people suffering harsh living and working conditions, and this may well raise ethical dilemmas such as the researcher's own emotional engagement (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010, 230).

2.4   Representativeness and sampling hard-to reach or hidden populations

How to produce 'good data' and how to avoid biases in fragile contexts? Representativeness is a methodological challenge for all research but even more so in a context of forced displacement where sampling frames are often unavailable (Bloch 2007; Faugier and Sargeant 1997; Jacobsen and Landau 2003; Vigneswaran 2009). Displaced persons are sometimes described as a rare or hidden group, whose members are hard to identify and to locate. Especially representative micro-level data is scarce with surveys being based on non-probability sampling techniques. Faugier and Sargeant (1997) recognise the personal bias and distortion inherent in snowball sampling but argue that it is the price to be paid in order to gain an understanding of hidden populations. Similarly, Bloch (1999) states that snowballing or network sampling was the only option for gaining access to refugees and used a non-probability sample techniques with quotas and multiple gatekeepers. In a later article, Bloch (2007) advocates for a flexible approach to choosing the most appropriate sampling techniques and the most appropriate mode or modes of data collection for each survey population. Some researchers approach NGOs to gain access. Kohlenberger et al. (2017) chose to approach NGOs managing refugee emergency centres to administer a large survey on refugees in Austria. Other scholars finally focus on subgroups of the population. Bircan and Sunata (2015), for example, focus on temporary accommodation centres and available data provided by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD) which runs these facilities. Other researchers, however, have argued for generating representative data sets of the target population that permit statistical and comparative analysis. Jacobsen and Landau (2003a, b), for example, suggest the inclusion of a control group or a combination of multi-stage cluster and snowball sampling. Reichel and Morales (2017) suggest 'alternative methods', such as mixing register-based sampling with location sampling or random routes including focused enumeration. McKenzie and Mistiaen (2009, 358-359), compared three

approaches to survey migrants without a sample frame and found that snowball and intercept point survey methods tend to sample individuals who are more closely tied to their community than randomly sampled individuals identified through a two-phase stratified survey. The authors recommend instead surveying as many different locations as possible but argue simultaneously that there is no real substitute for two-phase stratified sampling in obtaining truly representative data.

Yet, quantitative data can only offer the 'next best' solution as reaching ultimate representativeness is simply impossible (Bloch 2007; Vigneswaran and Quirk 2012). Furthermore, quantitative data cannot provide answers to all relevant questions in research on forced displacement and often fails to give voice to forced migrants themselves. Essential questions often emerge while 'hanging out' with refugees (Rodgers 2004). There is a growing corpus of literature on migration that makes ample use of in-depth interviews and life stories to capture migrants' decision-making processes (Robinson and Segrott 2002; Valenta, Zuparic-Iljic, and Vidovic 2015; Brekke and Brochmann 2014; Mandić and Simpson 2017; Boccagni 2017; Ghorashi, De Boer, and ten Holder 2018; Dekker et al. 2018; Powles 2004). Powles (2004, 20) highlights, for example, that particular social dynamics of refugee situations can be captured in life stories and personal narratives as they allow space for unexpected subjects to emerge. Moreover, the meaning of 'home', the impact of memories of violence, and what it means to be vulnerable can only be communicated in narrative form.

2.5 Research ethics, confidentiality, and informed consent

One of the core ethical principles of doing research is the principle of not harming participants and protecting their personal data. The majority of forced migrants are displaced because of war. This aspect makes them especially vulnerable since most of them are under the watchful eye of both the host country and different political groups of their home country. Fear is therefore a key factor for participants in research on forced displacement (Kabranian-Melkonian 2015, 719). Furthermore, since forced displacement is often interwoven with irregular stays and rights violations, research activities might put participants at risk in host countries (Beyrer and Kass, 2002). A common way of ensuring ethical compliance by researchers is to require a peer-review process to examine the way in which research will be undertaken by establishing a committee with the authority to scrutinize research proposals. An integral part of this process is a requirement that researchers should demonstrate how they will ensure that any participant has provided explicit informed consent. This is the 'consent form' approach, which is very widely used (Redwood and Todres 2006; Dominelli and Holloway 2008; Barsky 2010; Hugman 2010b). In research on forced displacement and irregular migration, it has however become accepted that, under certain conditions, informed consent is impracticable when it can create unnecessary risks for the research subjects, and even provoke the interviewee to use false names or withdraw from the research (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010, 234). Informed consent can be problematic on additional levels: Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittawaz (2011, 656-57), for example, question if consent can be considered informed in a situation in which researchers are seen as powerful outsiders who might be able to provide assistance. Kabranian-Melkonian (2015, 718) also addresses the difficulties in explaining the aim of social science research or implications of informed consent to a disadvantaged and sometimes poorly educated group. A largely unacknowledged problem is finally the issue of security breaches arising from researchers' confidentiality lapses and problems related to the impact of the researchers' presence on the people and communities being studied (Jacobsen and Landau 2003b, 187; Düvell, Triandafyllidou, and Vollmer 2010; Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittawaz 2011). In other instances, participants do not feel that they are in control over data collected or that the research will ultimately benefit them: "*We are really fed up with people just coming and stealing our stories, taking our photos and we never get anything back, not even a copy of the report. Nothing ever changes*" (Hugman, Bartolomei, and Pittawaz 2011, 657).

3 Methodological approach: Urban contexts, random walks and building local connections

The methodological approach of the project followed a mixed-method approach with two main methodological components: an individual quantitative survey (n=726) and 41 qualitative in-depth interviews. Considering risks and safeguarding the security of participants and the research team alike impacted all methodological choices. Both countries, especially in the border regions to Syria, witness regular tensions and violence. Turkey's government has increasingly grown authoritarian since the failed coup d'état in July 2016, characterised by a two-year state-of-emergency, the repression of political opposition including critical researchers, civil society and critical media outlets. Before starting the fieldwork, the research design was discussed and approved by the AISSR Ethics Advisory Board of the University of Amsterdam. Data was collected between March and April 2018 in Lebanon and between June and July 2018 in Turkey, preceded by one month of exploratory fieldwork to find local research partners, volunteer and get to know the chosen research localities. I was present during the whole process.

3.1 Categories in refugee studies or who do we study?

I decided not to use a narrow legal definition of 'refugee' as a selection criterion for participants in the research. Selection criterion was defined as being born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality and living in one of the chosen research localities. This was done to also include Syrian Kurds or Palestinians who might not hold Syrian nationality. This selection criterion, however, meant that the survey partly included Syrians who had already come to Lebanon or Turkey before 2011. I considered it too complex to define through a survey who could be considered a forced migrant or not in this case. However, a question in the survey addressed how respondents defined themselves. This question was equally asked in in-depth interviews. Furthermore, all minors below the age of 18 were excluded from the survey. Respondents were chosen from the age group 18-39 as this age group has the highest probability of migrating (Timmerman, Heyse, and Mol 2010).

A 50-50% gender quota was included in the survey for three main reasons: First, approximately half of the Syrian refugee population in both countries is female (UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP 2017; Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration 2015). Second, forced displacement is a gendered process with men and women experiencing their displacement sometimes profoundly differently (Lubkemann 2008; Daley 1991; Doreen 1998). Third, it would have been difficult to speak randomly to as many men as women for the survey – as in many families, an interview offer was more frequently accepted by the husband than his wife for cultural reasons. Quota sampling has been frequently criticised for its non-probability nature (which precludes the possibility of calculating sampling error), and the heavy influence of the interviewer in the choice of ultimate respondents. Rada and Martínez Martín (2014, 400) argue, however, that in some cases, quotas can obtain a more representative sample than probability samples, especially if random routes are used.

3.2 Choosing research localities versus security, permits and access or studying self-settled urban refugees

The logic of my risk management was to collect as much good data as possible in safe conditions by always putting personal safety first. This had an impact on which localities were chosen for data collection. First, we avoided border regions and neighbourhoods which are considered dangerous to enter (which were signalled as red in the foreign travel advice). Second, we decided to focus on urban

self-settled refugees and exclude camps and informal settlements. Access to camps might have proven impossible in Turkey as they are under the supervision of the Turkish authorities. It was difficult to judge in advance if we would be given access and I aimed to obtain comparable data in both countries.

Furthermore, to secure the safety of the team and participants in Turkey, I applied for a research permit with the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) together with a Turkish scholar who I hired as consultant. I also obtained a research affiliation with a Turkish university to have a link to a local research institution. Since April 2015, a research permit from the Ministry of Interior has been more or less mandatory for research on refugees in Turkey. Migration scholars working in Turkey who I contacted before the fieldwork gave very mixed accounts about how and if this policy was applied but pointed out that foreign researchers might be particularly monitored. Conducting a survey through random walks in urban neighbourhoods seemed hence impossible to me without being noticed. Moreover, shortly before the planned start of the fieldwork in Turkey, I was told by one of my team members that several Syrian research assistants who had participated in an unauthorised research had been threatened with deportation to Syria. This convinced me to apply for a permit. However, if the permit had not been granted – and there was a high chance that this could happen – it would have endangered the entire data collection, which caused a lot of stress and unpredictability leading up to the fieldwork. Finally, I provided name tags for the team, which we wore visibly throughout data collection. I also made sure that assistants did not conduct interviews close to where they lived.

Focusing on self-settled urban refugees was, however, not only driven by considering risks and easier access but equally by reflections on representativeness and a lack of research on urban self-settlement (Bakewell 2008). The large majority of Syrians in both countries lives in private accommodation: In Lebanon, around 85% registered Syrian refugees are estimated to live in private accommodation (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis). In Turkey, it is estimated that only 7.1 % of the registered Syrian population live in camps (UNHCR 2018). Syrian displacement in both countries is largely an urban phenomenon: Most Syrians in Lebanon and Turkey live in urban areas, in rented apartments in residential buildings (Kabbanji and Kabbanji 2018; Erdoğan 2017). However, overall, camps tend to be more researched than self-settlement (Sanyal 2014; Bakewell 2008; Jacobsen and Landau 2003b) and some refugee camps in Lebanon face a problem of over-research (Sukarieh and Tannock 2012). Equally, in Turkey, research on Syrian refugees often focuses on camps or temporary accommodation centres (Bircan and Sunata 2015; Kavak 2016).

I chose two cities in each country because a nation-wide urban sample would not have been possible with the available financial resources: (1) the biggest urban metropolis hosting Syrians of the country and (2) a second big-scale city considered to be a 'transit city' on the migration route towards Europe. The research localities were Beirut (including its suburbs in Mount Lebanon), Tripoli, Istanbul and Izmir. Beirut and Mount Lebanon have a population of almost two million with 20,787 registered Syrians in Beirut and 246,356 in Mount Lebanon (UNHCR 2017). Tripoli is the second largest city of the country with a population of half a million and 148,084 registered Syrian refugees including in its five surrounding district (UNHCR 2017). The city used to be considered an important transit city towards Europe via Mersin and Adana in Turkey. Istanbul, on the other hand, is the Turkish province with the largest number of refugees and hosts more than 401,928 registered Syrian refugees (DGMM 2016). Izmir is Turkey's third-largest city with a population of 2.5 million and hosts a significant number of Syrian refugees (93,324, DGMM 2016). It is one of the country's most westernised cities in the country and is considered as a stopping point on the way to Greece.

3.3 Gaining access, language, positionality and building connections

In an attempt to balance my positionality as a foreign researcher and to build more trust among participants, I decided to work closely with a team of young Syrians in each country. They had all experienced displacement themselves and were living in the country where the research took place. I got in contact based on contacts at local universities and among researchers working in the country. I chose assistants mostly based on their (young) age, social and language skills (Syrian Arabic), and previous work experience. I also aimed at choosing research assistants who were well acquainted with research localities. Furthermore, I tried to achieve gender balance in both teams to be able to do gender matched interviewing. Most of them were university students and/or had extensive experience in civil society organisations providing different services to Syrians in the country. My idea was to provide research team members with practical research experience which might be useful for them for future work and projects. I organised a one-day training during which the research questions, the methodology and the questionnaires were discussed in-depth and the survey was tested several times. Throughout the fieldwork and after, my team members became valuable research partners providing important knowledge on the ground. In regards to payment, I inquired about the average monthly salary for fresh graduates in Lebanon and Turkey and paid accordingly (per pay). During and after the fieldwork, I heard from several sources that Syrian research assistants are often paid significantly less than Turkish or Lebanese assistants, which is of course a highly questionable practice (cf. also Sukarieh and Tannock 2019).

The involvement of matched interviewers was crucial for gaining trust because assistants acted as gatekeepers providing legitimacy for the survey and the independence of the research team. I had the impression that the young age of interviewers and the fact that they were mostly university students also proved to be an advantage. Their participation in the project was sometimes perceived as forming part of their university studies. Occasionally, assistants faced distrust and hesitation as respondents tried to understand if assistants were Lebanese or where they stood politically in regards to the conflict, often through indirect questions about their original place of residence in Syria. The positive balancing effect of my presence – a foreign researcher from a rather neutral country (Austria) in the context of the Syrian conflict – was repeatedly mentioned by assistants; they told me to get easier access to participants when I was present.

As a preparation for the fieldwork, I strengthened my linguistic skills in Syrian Arabic as I wanted to conduct interviews in Syrian dialect. Building on my previous studies of Arabic, I began to take conversation lessons one year before the start of data collection and discussed the project repeatedly with my Syrian teacher. He was later also responsible for the translation of the survey and interview questionnaire into Syrian Arabic. As a second preparation for data collection, I volunteered with two NGOs one month respectively, who organise educational activities for Syrian children, namely the *Maan Centre* in Tripoli and the *Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants* (ASAM) in Istanbul. This brought me in contact with civil society actors working in the humanitarian field in Lebanon and Turkey as well as Syrian families. This, of course, did not solve all linguistic problems. I am not 100% fluent in Syrian dialect and strong dialectal differences exist between regions; the dialect from Eastern Syria, for example, is strongly influenced by Iraqi Arabic and was very hard for me to understand. In one interview when interviewing a man from Deir ez-Zor, my assistant translated his dialect to Damascene so that I could understand. However, I had the feeling that my attempts to speak Arabic with respondents (even if they spoke English) created an atmosphere where participants felt valued and respected culturally. On the other hand, my spoken Arabic – dotted by mistakes and unusual formulations – also broke the hierarchy inherent to many interview situations, especially in terms of class when I was interviewing participants living in dire economic conditions. I considered these effects stronger than working completely with translators. Analysing the transcripts of in-depth interviews in Syrian Arabic sometimes presented a challenge, as dictionaries for Syrian Arabic do not

contain all dialectal varieties or are often outdated. The team members equally provided additional (unpaid) support during this phase.

We conducted in-depth interviews together, the project leader together with one research assistant, who helped in asking questions, helped probing and translated if necessary. The fact that interviews included three people created a more informal atmosphere than in a classic one-to-one interview situation, which I experienced as very positive. I had the impression that the at least partly shared destiny of respondents and assistants helped in creating a space where respondents felt safe to talk. Survey interviews were conducted solely by assistants, however, I always accompanied one of them during survey collection days.

3.4 Research ethics, confidentiality, and informed consent

I opted for face-to-face interviews for both, the survey and in-depth interviews and introduced the project as follows: "*We are doing a study in several areas of Turkey and Lebanon on adult Syrians' living conditions and their thoughts and experiences of working or living in other countries*". It was crucial that we communicated to respondents that the research team was not part of an international organisation, NGO or official national Turkish / Lebanese body and that participation in the research would not increase respondents' chances of resettlement in Europe. The fact that we met participants in person allowed the research team to explain the aim of the project orally, which in turn engendered trust. This introductory part sometimes led to general explanations about what social science research is more globally. For in-depth interviews, we explained that we use audio recording to represent respondents' words correctly, assured that audio recordings would be stored safely and would only be used for research purposes. For the survey, we also specified that there were no questions about participants' political opinion about the conflict in Syria. In qualitative interviews this topic came up, however, it was the choice of respondents to talk about it.

In regards to informed consent, we opted for oral consent as we did not want to put participants in the potentially uncomfortable situation of admitting illiteracy. A second issue was sensitivity: Written consent with a personal signature and name would have raised suspicion among respondents if their names were truly kept anonymous. Oral consent was included in the survey questionnaire and the qualitative interview guide, introduced as: "*The decision to participate is completely up to you and you can interrupt the survey at any time. Do you agree to participate in this survey/interview*?" Interviews and surveys were completely anonymised: Neither the survey nor the qualitative interviews included participants' names or addresses; only their current city of residence and the governorate they had resided in Syria before their flight. Personal data included participants' educational level, mother tongue and religious belonging. Questions about respondents' profession in Syria were chosen from a list of categories to ensure that their identity remained protected. In qualitative interviews, I anonymised all participants and cite them only with their gender, age and place of residence in publications. Furthermore, I pay careful attention no to cite or narrate sections which might make participants identifiable (detailed descriptions of work environment, people, neighbourhoods, involvement in oppositional and military activities etc.). The contact details of participants (qualitative interviews) were never stored together with interview data during data collection and were deleted at the end of the fieldwork by the project leader. Survey and interview data are stored by the project leader in a password-protected folder.

Furthermore, we considered it inappropriate to offer financial incentives as they might comprise the freedom of respondents to participate in the study as many respondents lived in difficult economic circumstances. The financial incentives that I could have offered were low and we considered that they could be perceived as insulting for some more affluent respondents. However, we tried to provide non-financial returns. We prepared a small leaflet with information about relevant NGOs

which we handed to participants if respondents were in need of support, especially in regards to medical services. Some of the research assistants stayed in contact with respondents for these reasons after the end of the fieldwork. Interviewers also handed out my business cards to participants at the end of the interview in case they wished to access the results of the project. Interviews sometimes resulted in emotional distress for participants, especially when talking about experiences of torture, discrimination, humiliation, loss of family members and loss of social status. Some participants mentioned nevertheless that having someone listen attentively to their stories was seen as a positive – and very rare – experience. Other participants, however, stated that the research did not benefit them and rejected participation. I often felt helpless in face of this immense human suffering. We regularly discussed these experiences as a team and I personally talked a lot with friends and family back home. However, it proved very difficult to 'switch off' from the hard life stories we were constantly confronted with during the intense phases of fieldwork.

3.5 Representativeness and the survey sample strategy

In both countries, there is no exact sampling frame about the global Syrian refugee population. Statistical information is incomplete and registration procedures are different in both countries. The Turkish government only started registration in 2014 and the Lebanese government has not allowed UNHCR to register Syrian refugees since 2015. Furthermore, not every Syrian is, wants to and can be registered. For example, in Lebanon, different types of visas exist for Syrians and it is sometimes those who lack financial resources who are registered with UNHCR to get access to certain services. In Turkey, some Syrians prefer not to be registered because a normal residence permit allows them better mobility within and outside Turkey. In Turkey, some Syrians are also afraid that the registration of their biometric data decreases their chances of going to Europe. Moreover, UNHCR only makes data on age, gender, and location (municipalities) publicly available.

My strategy was to use alternative methods to reach a representative sample among Syrian urban self-settled forced migrants in four cities by combining cluster sampling with random walks, preceded by in-depth exploratory fieldwork and enriched with qualitative data. Combining methods was considered to give necessary depth and space for explaining the context in which migration decisions are (not) made. Especially, sensitive information in regards to persecution in home countries, the complex motivations to migrate and their conditionalities, respondents' legal status, personal experiences during their journeys, and struggles of everyday life are extremely difficult to capture in a survey. Combining quantitative and qualitative data is hence essential for understanding refugees' changing life and migration aspirations. Yet, future imaginations and aspirations are difficult to capture in life histories. This is why I opted for in-depth interviews instead.

I decided not to pass through NGOs for finding participants for three main reasons: First, to avoid the oversampling of economically more vulnerable refugees who typically seek help from NGOs; second, so as not to overburden NGOs which have limited resources anyway; and, third, to keep consent truly voluntary as beneficiaries of NGOs might feel more obliged to participate in a research project if it is perceived as being supported by the organisation they receive services from. Local researchers furthermore voiced the impression that refugees frequenting NGOs have been too often approached by researchers in the past, leading to a certain research fatigue. As a result, I used a combination of multi-stage cluster sampling, random walks with multiple entrance points and focused enumeration of the nearest neighbour technique based on existing research (Jacobsen and Landau 2003a; Reichel and Morales 2017; McKenzie and Mistiaen 2009). Focused enumeration is a variant of random household sampling, by which every household selected through conventional sampling methods is asked if there are persons of the target population living in an adjacent household (Reichel and Morales 2017, 4).

I started with a literature review, the analysis of available UNHCR data and informal conversations during the exploratory fieldwork to identify neighbourhoods with high densities of Syrians. As forced displacement has affected Syrians across all income and educational levels, I included neighbourhoods known to be hosting high numbers of lower-class Syrians as well as neighbourhoods hosting middle-class Syrians within each of the four cities. The final choice also sought to reflect ethnic and religious diversity. Qibbeh in Tripoli, for example, is known for hosting Alawis. Bourj Hammoud in Beirut has hosted Kurdish Syrians who have come to work as seasonal workers since the early 1990s. Equally, Kadifekale in Izmir accommodates high numbers of Turkish and Syrian Kurds. Finally, I excluded neighbourhoods which were either signalled as red by the Dutch travel advice or which were described as being too risky to enter for me and my team of research assistants, due to their control by Hizbullah as well as Palestinian refugee camps such as Naher El Bared, Beddaoui or Burg el-Barajneh, for which we would have needed a specific research permit (see Table 1-4 in the annex for more details about the chosen neighbourhoos).

I then divided these neighbourhoods into smaller areas (enumerator areas) known to host high numbers of Syrians. According to key informants living in these neighbourhoods, Syrians often lived clustered in the chosen neighbourhoods. When we had located a cluster, I randomly chose two different entrance points. Interviewers were asked to find participants by walking "two house blocks straight, two house blocks right (or left if not possible)". Interviewers set up one original interview in each of the EAs through random routes and then used a combination of focused enumeration of the nearest neighbour technique (maximum three referrals) and additional random walks to find more respondents. Interviewers were told to select people as long as they were born in Syria or held Syrian nationality and were between 18 and 39 years old, in private accommodations or shops. The assistants' knowledge of local customs, such as how to hang up washing among Syrian families, proved crucial to locating possible respondents. Research assistants worked in two pairs, each starting at one of the entrance points (in the same street but different street sides). In order to limit bias as much as possible, we used multiple entry points in every area, approximately four in the morning and four in the afternoon. The survey registered the geolocation of the interviews, which I used in the evening of every data collection day to check the sampling coverage of a particular neighbourhood. The geolocations of survey questionnaires were deleted at the end of the fieldwork to ensure confidentiality.

Sometimes, the original rule of random walks did not work as planned, for example, if there was no street on the right or left available (see Figure 3). In Turkey, it was generally more difficult to locate respondents as houses were often locked and had intercoms, which did not allow a first direct contact face-to-face. Furthermore, the process of defining EAs often took long, especially when neighbourhoods were extremely large. In Istanbul, for example, the proportion of Syrians in chosen districts was not higher than 5% – in contrast to some neighbourhoods in Beirut or Tripoli where almost 50% of an EA was inhabited by Syrians. Küçükçekmece, for example, which hosts the highest number of Syrians (32,011) in Istanbul, had an overall population of 770,393 in 2018 – the proportion of Syrians is thus a mere 4.1%. We therefore had to resort to more focused enumeration first asking Turkish locals in the area to locate Syrian shops and then asking shop owners to locate possible clusters. For this phase, the Turkish skills of the team members were essential. In Istanbul's large districts, we also occasionally resorted to approaching possible respondents in public places, such as parks. We hence had to adapt our approach in a flexible way to the conditions on the ground.
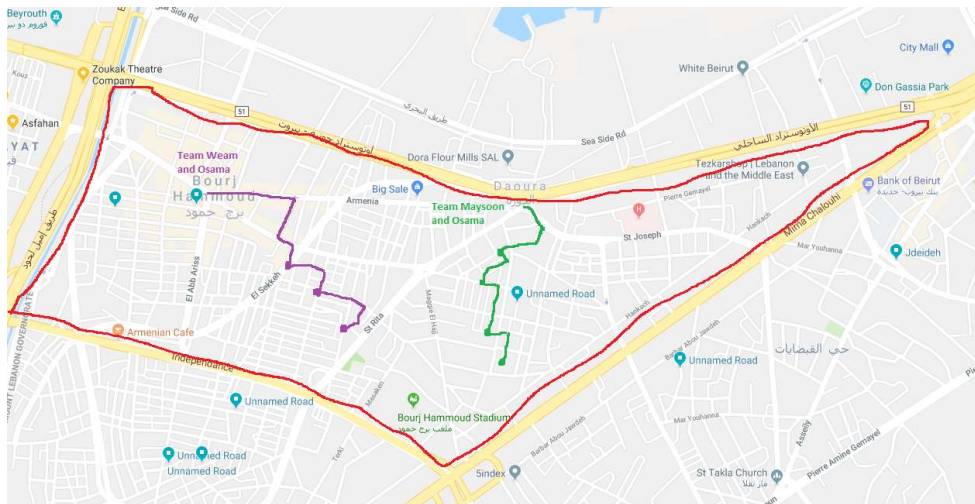
Figure 3: Instructions random walks for two entrance points in Beirut (Bourg Hammoud)

Where possible, we opted for gender-matching of interviewers which provided much better access among women. However, female respondents sometimes accepted to be interviewed by male interviewers even if they were at home alone; at other times, interviews were rejected. As interview offers were still more frequently accepted by men than women, we additionally sampled women to reach a gender participation of 50/50. We also tried to influence the participation of women by the timing of the data collection and decided to work on weekends plus an additional day of the working week (Friday or Monday) to have, first, to locate women alone at home on working days and second, to have higher chances of finding people in employment at their private accommodation during the weekend. Fulfilling the gender quota for women proved more challenging in Istanbul as only one assistant was female.

The survey aimed at collecting data to explore the relations between migration and return aspirations, perceptions of living conditions in the country of settlement, and imaginations of living conditions in a European destination country, when controlling for other determinants of migration aspirations (see questionnaire in the annex). The questionnaire was in large part based on the survey of the FP7 project EUMAGINE (2010-2013), which focused on migration aspirations and on imaginations of Europe in four major emigration areas. However, it was adapted to a context of forced displacement and I added questions about the participant's flight trajectory from Syria and their experiences in Lebanon since then. In regard to values and perceptions (gender, religion, social norms, life satisfaction) and the socio-economic situation of respondents, the EUMAGINE survey was slightly adapted based on the World Value Survey (2010-2012 Wave). The survey did not ask about the reasons why respondents left Syria. It asked only indirectly about their political opinion in the conflict through one question, namely: "*What would you do if the war was over, return, stay or move on, or return depending on the outcome of the war*?", followed by an open question "*Why*?" The survey also did not capture experiences of persecution and did not touch upon traumatic experiences in the war like the recent loss of family members. Nevertheless, for main demographic characteristics like marital status or number of children, respondents regularly experienced emotional distress answering these questions in the case of deceased family members. The survey gave space for open personal comments and wishes for the future at the end. This created a pleasant atmosphere when ending the interview and opened up the opportunity to a more informal conversation.

The strategy to conduct interviews face-to-face by native interviewers resulted in a high response rate (82.9% in Turkey, 83.6% in Lebanon). The choice to contact respondents in their private accommodations might equally have increased the response rate as chances for research fatigue were

probably lower than in camps or among respondents recruited through NGOs. Many respondents reported never having been approached for research purposes before.

3.6 The in-depth interviews

The qualitative semi-directive interviews served as a way to elucidate particular aspects which were difficult to capture in a questionnaire – especially changing personal migration aspirations, thoughts and reflections about returning and detailed imaginations of Europe. The interview guide included five main topics: the respondents' flight and migration trajectory, their perceptions of life in the locality, perceptions of migration and personal migration aspirations as well as imaginations of Europe. Interviews focused on these main topics but respondents had the freedom to influence the direction and emphasis of the conversation. During the fieldwork, conditionalities and temporalities emerged as crucial topics: Under which specific conditions would respondents really aspire to migrate further or return to Syria? Ultimately, the qualitative interviews revealed how fluid and contextual the chosen categories (stay, return, on-migration) were. It also became apparent that the political positioning in the conflict was crucial for aspirations for return and on-migration. The researcher noticed some indications of socially desirable answers. Some respondents seemed overly positive about Europe but definitely not all. Criticism and negative imaginations about life in Europe were sometimes voiced very overtly.

Participants were chosen with diversity in mind considering five aspects: mobility attitudes, gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation, age (18-39) and educational background. Informants were located by asking survey participants if they would agree to a follow-up in-depth interview, through exploratory conversations with persons encountered during the fieldwork and research assistants' personal networks. This strategy helped to gain access to a very diversified sample of respondents and increased the feeling of trust among participants because some of us have met them before. We interviewed 23 men and 18 women in total. Nine interviews were conducted in Tripoli, 11 interviews in Beirut/Mount Lebanon, 13 in Istanbul, and eight in Izmir. The biggest challenge was to include minority voices in the sample; we were neither able to locate pro-regime Alawis nor Ismailis. The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to up to 2.5 hours, depending on the setting and the responsiveness of the informant. Participants could suggest a place for the interview. Most interviews were conducted at home, some at work or in a café. All respondents agreed to audio recording. Subsequently, interviews were transcribed in Syrian Arabic by assistants.

4 Research assistants' reflections and observations of the fieldwork

4.1 Getting to know one's own community and gaining trust by sharing a similar fate

We as research assistants mostly experienced the participation in the research project as motivating in the sense that we learned more about our own communities in Lebanon and Turkey. Through the fieldwork, we met people from very different social backgrounds, educational levels and ages. Especially interesting were encounters with people we are not in contact with in our daily lives, such as Syrian workers, and being able to learn about their living conditions. In a certain way, it helped us to better get to know the social spectrum which we belong to ourselves. Some of us enjoyed the feeling of being able to give something back to our 'own community', by listening to respondents' legal and economic difficulties but also their aspirations for the future. We experienced this as interesting, sometimes as difficult, and often as touching. One of us felt that the project gave him – at least partly – hope that Syria might stand again one day. However, we equally felt that we were not able to reach out to Syrians belonging to the upper class nor Syrians with high educational levels through the survey. We tried to balance this through the qualitative in-depth interviews.

Some of us felt that interviewing respondents with whom we share the same nationality and fate helped to gain their trust. It gave interviewees the feeling that we could relate emotionally to the extreme conditions they have been going through. However, sometimes it was also difficult to motivate respondents to participate in the project due to the absence of any direct impact on them after more than seven years of war. As a consequence, we had to work hard on explaining and introducing the research. Finally, many Syrian families have preserved the same lifestyle as in Syria (such as hanging up their washing on the balcony in a certain way), which helped us to locate respondents.

For future projects, we suggest considering additional non-financial returns for respondents who invest a lot of time in participating in the research, probably in form of psychological support. One of us felt, for example, that ending the questionnaire with asking "What is your wish?" added a very positive motivation to those people to let them think about their personal aspirations. Another team member stayed in contact with many respondents whose contact details she had gathered to arrange in-depth interviews or with whom she had shared information about specialised NGOs. She experienced this as positive as she extended her social networks and could share her knowledge about access to certain services in the locality.

4.2 Challenges in interview situations

We experienced certain challenges when interviewing Syrians with whom we did not agree or whose opinion we perceived as irrational especially in regard to the situation or conflict in Syria. For example, one interviewee described life in Syria before the war as a sort of paradise. In this situation, it was difficult for us to keep neutral, to show the same interest we showed to other interviewees and not to let the respondent feel how we perceived his/her opinion. As we often did not have much information about interviewees beforehand, it was difficult to prepare for such a situation spontaneously as such remarks popped up suddenly in the conversation.

Sometimes survey interviews were conducted with many family members or friends around – a situation which is difficult to avoid when interviewing people in their private accommodations or shops. It was challenging to redirect the interview to the one person who accepted the participation in the survey in such a context, as surrounding people often wanted to share their experiences and

personal stories as well. Our male interviewers faced several challenges in interviewing women, especially in Istanbul where we had only one female interviewer during the fieldwork. The first and probably most considerable challenge was how to handle the interview situation when an interviewee's husband was present and we wanted to interview the woman to reach the gender quota. Often, the husband interfered in the conversation as he also wanted to share his opinion. We usually dealt with the situation by letting the husband speak in order not to be impolite and then redirect the question to his wife. We also tried to have the (female) project leader with us when we (male assistants) interviewed a woman in the presence of her husband, which made this procedure slightly easier. Some women were hesitant to participate because they expected their husbands to be opposed to their participation. It was a challenge to know how to react properly in such a situation, as we did not want to get respondents in trouble. Possibly, it would have been better not to interview women at home in such a case.

Finally, the question about religious belonging was sensitive. In Syria itself, questions about religious belonging have long been avoided (Van Dam 2017, 7–8) and there has not been a counting of Syrians by religion since the 1960 census. The questionnaire introduced the question about religious belonging as follows: "*Throughout the world, people believe in different religions. What is your religion? If you do not want to answer this question, just tell me.*" We were given flexibility in terms of how to introduce this question. Some of us explained to participants that this was an unusual question to ask to a Syrian and emphasised that they had every right to refuse to answer. Some respondents expressed their disapproval of the question by refusing to answer. Others chose to answer 'Only Muslim'. The survey also included a question on respondents' self-assessed degree of religiosity, by choosing one of the following options "*Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are 1) a very religious person, 2) a rather religious person, or 3) not a religious person?*" This question equally turned out to be confusing and most respondents were cautious to categorise themselves as 'very religious' as a high value of religiosity was associated with religious fundamentalism or Daesh. It is hence questionable how useful the results of these questions are.

4.3 Length of the survey, feelings of safety and punctuality

We experienced the questionnaire as slightly too long, especially the section about transnational social practices. This sometimes caused the feeling of boredom and there was consequently less time to focus on the last sections. Some participants stopped their participation during the survey interview because of insufficient time.

Some of us, especially the female members of the team, sometimes did not feel comfortable entering private houses by themselves. A bigger budget might help for future projects, so that interviewers can work in pairs to avoid doing research inside private accommodation alone. Another suggestion could be to use a live app which shows the movements of team members. While we were in constant whatsapp contact with each other during the fieldwork, we could not always answer team calls because we were in the middle of an interview.

Punctuality was another challenge for the project, which was, all in all, well-organised. Especially in big cities such as Istanbul, where distances between suburbs are far and transportation can take a lot of time due to traffic jams, punctuality is key to ensure that all team members can start working at the same time.

5 Conclusion and recommendations for future research

This paper argued that conducting research on forced displacement poses many ethical and methodological challenges, especially if it is conducted in politically fragile and authoritarian neighbouring countries where forced migrants are particularly vulnerable. Rather than giving up in light of these challenges, this paper maintains that it is of paramount importance to collect data in such contexts as most refugees flee to neighbouring countries of conflict countries, with 85 per cent of the world's displaced population currently being located in developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The paper gave an overview of the methodological approach of a research project on mobility aspirations of displaced Syrians in Beirut, Tripoli, Istanbul and Izmir. It combines a survey collected through multi-stage cluster sampling, random walks with multiple entrance points and focused enumeration of the nearest neighbour technique with qualitative in-depth interviews, exploratory fieldwork and volunteering. It is argued that while taking safety and ethical concerns seriously, collecting good and representative data in such contexts is possible if projects include randomness in data collection, members of the targeted population, and principal investigators spend long fieldwork periods in research locations to allow for cultural sensitivity. Including members of refugee communities and speaking the local dialect was not only crucial for gaining trust among participants (which resulted in a high response rate) but also helped immensely for a better analysis. It should be noted, however, that these data should only be considered representative for Syrian self-settled refugees aged 18-39 in these four urban localities and not for the entire Syrian refugee population in these two countries.

We do not hesitate to point out that this approach certainly does not provide a solution to all ethical and methodological challenges in the study of forced displacement. First, in regard to psychological support, financial means of the project were not sufficient to pay professional psychological support for the research team which would have been a great help to reflect on difficult interview situations together before and during the fieldwork. Hence, budgeting for professional psychological support for future projects might be a good way forward.

Second, deleting respondents' contact details for data protection reasons – which is increasingly demanded by funding agencies – is in contradiction to the idea of providing a return to respondents, for example, in the form of a research report or psychological support. Moreover, it equally means that there is no way to follow-up on respondents for possibly interesting longitudinal research (McMichael et al. 2014). While some of members of the local teams stayed in contact with survey respondents to provide counselling on support from civil society organisations, I have no mean to get back in touch with participants.

Third, I believe that efforts to strengthen collaborative writing efforts with local research team members is crucial to highlight forced migrants' agency and their own perspectives in research. As Sukarieh and Tannock (2019) have stated, subcontracted local research assistants often speak critically of their sense of alienation, exploitation and disillusionment with the research they work on. Research on forced displacement requires better recognition to the work, interests and concerns of research assistants. While I strongly believe that translations of key results into the language of the communities we study and the language of the host country are crucial, such efforts are often in contradiction with which types of publications are valued in the academic community. 'Grey' publications and alternative dissemination strategies are often being overlooked when assessing the quality of research. Finally, financial resources should be budgeted to pay local team members for participating in drafting papers. Last but not least, producing good data collected in an ethical way in challenging contexts takes time, which is a rare commodity in today's academia.

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7 Annex

Table 1: Distribution of registered Syrian Refugees in Beirut and suburbs (UNHCR 2017)[1]

District at the cadastral level	number of registered Syrians
Aain el-Mraisse foncière	277
Ras Beyrouth foncière	1,560
Bachoura foncière	4,592
Marfa' foncière	41
Msaitbe foncière	2,888
Mazraa foncière	8,787
Achrafieh foncière	1,748
Bourj Hammoud	12,128
Sinn El-Fil	2,123
Furn Ech-Chebbak	465
Haret Hreik	4,107
Chiyah	41,360
Bourj El-Brajneh	19,374
Baouchriye	3,590
Fanar	2,275
Baabda	1,123
Hadath Beyrouth	2,121
Laylake	2,252
Choueifat El-Aamrousiye	17,331
Tahouitat El Ghadir	664
Aaley	5,552
Total	**134,358**

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[1] Data from Syria Refugee Response Lebanon Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorates, Distribution of the Registered Syrian Refugees at the Cadastral Level, 2017. Neighbourhoods in yellow were chosen (Nabaa and Bourj Hammoud, Tariq el-Jdide and Cola/Mazraa foncière, Sabtiyye/Baouchriye, Aaley, and Achrafieh), neighbourhoods in red were excluded due to security risks.

Table 2: Distribution of registered Syrian Refugees in Tripoli (UNHCR 2017)[2]

District at the cadastral level	number of registered Syrians
Trablous Et-Tell	2,246
Trablous Er-Remmaneh	0
Trablous El Hadid 4	450
Trablous Es-Souayqa	47
Trablous et Tabbaneh	4,629
Trablous El-Qobbe	7,716
Beddaoui	18,455
Deir Aammar	3,086
Mejdlaiya Zgharta	4,054
Trablous Ez-Zeitoun	16,384
Ras Masqa	2,141
Dedde	1,893
Qalamoun	3,141
Trablous El Mhatra	10
Trablous El-Haddadine, El-Hadid, El-Mharta	1,460
Trablous En-Nouri	37
Trablous Ez-Zahrieh	2,116
Trablous jardins	1,738
Mina Jardin	1,731
Mina N 1	208
Mina N 2	11
Mina N 3	2,868
Total	**74,421**

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[2] Data from Syria Refugee Response Lebanon North Governorate, Tripoli, Batroun, Bcharreh, El Koura, El Minieh-Dennieh, Zgharta Districts (T+5), Distribution of the Registered Syrian Refugees at the Cadastral Level, 2017. Neighbourhoods in yellow were chosen (Zahrieh, Mina, Abu Samra and Trablous Ez-Zeitoun, and Qibbeh), neighbourhoods in red were excluded due to security risks.

Table 3: Distribution of registered Syrian refugees in Istanbul (DGMM, 2016)[3]

Districts Istanbul	number of registered Syrians
Adalar	153
Arnavutköy	15,752
Ataşehir	1,270
Avcılar	15,291
Bağcılar	31,571
Bahçelievler	14,155
Bakırköy	2,648
Başakşehir	21,077
Bayrampaşa	8,735
Beşiktaş	103
Beykoz	1,626
Beylikdüzü	2,419
Beyoğlu	10,609
unknown (bilinmiyor)	3,106
Büyükçekmece	2,593
Çatalca	284
Çekmeköy	2000
Esenler	18,509
Esenyurt	31,267
Eyüp	8,393
Fatih	26,092
Gaziosmanpaşa	14,836
Güngören	10,968
Kadıköy	103
Kağıthane	12,799
Kartal	1,576
Küçükçekmece	32,011
Maltepe	2,015
Pendik	4,783
Sancaktepe	10,115
Sarıyer	1,559
Silivri	1,672
Sultanbeyli	19,184
Sultangazi	27,194
Şile	223
Şişli	8,952
Tuzla	2,235
Ümraniye	13,542
Üsküdar	1,795
Zeytinburnu	18,713
Total	**401,928**

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[3] Data from Turkish General Directorate of Migration Management at district level, October 2016. Neighbourhoods in yellow were chosen (in Istanbul: Fatih (26,092), Zeitinburnu (18.713), Küçükçekmece (32,011), and Bağcılar (31,571);.

Table 4: Distribution of registered Syrian refugees in Izmir (DGMM, 2016)[4]

Districts Izmir	number of registered Syrians
Aliağa	163
Balçova	62
Bayındır	298
Bayraklı	4,958
Bergama	96
Beydağ	15
Bilinmiyor	5,460
Bornova	17,576
Buca	8,908
Çeşme	267
Çiğli	360
Dikili	161
Foça	344
Gaziemir	974
Güzelbahçe	7
Karabağlar	20,575
Karaburun	242
Karşıyaka	544
Kemalpaşa	761
Kınık	52
Kiraz	31
Konak	24,536
Menderes	956
Menemen	1,090
Narlıdere	61
Ödemiş	137
Seferihisar	138
Selçuk	85
Tire	213
Torbalı	4,180
Urla	74
Total	**93,324**

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[4] Data from Turkish General Directorate of Migration Management on district level, October 2016. Neighbourhoods in yellow were chosen (Konak (24,536; Basmane, Kadifekale, Hilal); Bornova (17,576; Gediz), Karabağlar (20,575; Eski Izmir), and Buca (8.908).

SYRMAGINE survey questionnaire

Read to the respondent before beginning the interview:

INT 1 Hello, my name is [….] I am working for the University of Amsterdam. We are doing a study in several areas of Turkey and Lebanon on adult Syrians' living conditions and their thoughts and experiences of working or living in other countries. This research is conducted by the University of Amsterdam in cooperation with Bahçeşehir University and IFPO Beirut.

Could you please help us by answering some questions? The survey will take around 30 min. All your answers will stay completely anonymous, we will not collect your name and the survey will not touch upon your political opinions about the conflict in Syria or your reasons for fleeing Syria. We only wish to get a better picture about your living conditions here and your future plans. Unfortunately, we also cannot guarantee that you will personally benefit from participating in this study.

Do you hold Syrian citizenship or were you born in Syria?

If yes:

INT 2) Are you aged 18-39?

If yes:

I 2) In which year were you born? _____

If yes:

INT 3) The decision to participate is completely up to you and you can interrupt the survey at any time. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Instructions for interviewers in bold and italic.
REMINDER: 777 Not applicable – 888 Don't know --- 999 Refusal

I   Individual variables

If yes:

I would first like to ask some basic questions about yourself and your family. If you don't want to answer some questions of the survey or if you don't understand the meaning of some questions, please just tell me.

I 1) Sex **(0 = Male; 1= Female)** ☐

If respondent does not know, ask respondent for age and month of birth and calculate year of birth.

I 3) What is your marital status? Are you:

1. single (never married)
2. married,
3. in a partnership but not married
4. divorced

    5.   widowed?

I 4) How many children do you have?

1. No children
2. 1 child
3. 2 children
4. 3 children
5. 4 children
6. 5+ children

I 5) In which governate did you live in Syria before you left the country? **(*SEE location codes Syria*)**

_____

☐ Don't want to say

I 6) Did you live in a village or in a city? *Before you left Syria*

☐ Village
☐ City

I 7) If you went to school: What was the last year you completed?

1. None
2. Pre-school
3. Primary / elementary (1-6 grade)
4. Lower secondary / تعليم إعدادي (7-9 grade)
5. Higher secondary / تعليم ثانوي (10-12 grade)
6. University / superior
7. Only koranic school

I 8) What was your principal activity in Syria? *(SEE principal activity codes)* _____

I 9) Do you hold Syrian nationality?

☐ Yes
☐ No

I 10) Do you hold another nationality?

☐ Yes
☐ No

I 11) *If yes*, from which country or countries? *(SEE country codes)* _____

Other: Please specify

F   Flight from Syria

I would now like to ask you some questions about the time since you left Syria.

F 1) In which year did you leave Syria? _____

F 2) When did you come to Turkey / Lebanon? _____

F 3) What is your current place of residence? **(*SEE local location codes Turkey and Lebanon*)**
_____

F 4) Have you lived **in another location in Turkey / Lebanon** for longer than three months since 2011?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 5) *If yes*, where? *(SEE local location codes Turkey, Lebanon)*

_____

_____

_____

F 6) Have you lived in **a different country** for longer than three months since 2011 before coming to Turkey / Lebanon?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 7) *If yes*, where? *(SEE country codes)*   _____ _____ _____

If Other, please specify_____

ONLY LEBANON

F 8) Are you registered as asylum seeker with the UNHCR? Do you have the UNHCR registration card?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ On the waiting list to be registered

If yes:

F 9) Since 2011, have you had an interview for resettlement with UNHCR?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 10) Do you currently have a valid residence permit in Lebanon? Do you have a residency card?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 11) Do you currently have a Lebanese sponsor?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 12) *If entered after 2015*: Through which category did you enter Lebanon?

☐ category 1 for tourism, shopping, business, landlords, and tenants
☐ category 2 for studying
☐ category 3 for transiting to a third country
☐ category 4 for those displaced
☐ category 5 for medical treatment
☐ category 6 for an embassy appointment
☐ category 7 for those entering with a pledge of responsibility (a Lebanese sponsor).
☐ Does not apply

ONLY TURKEY

F 14) Have you (pre-)registered for temporary protection?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

F 15) *If yes*: Have you been granted temporary protection? (Do you have a Turkish identity card – kimlik?)

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

F 16) **If no:** Have you applied for a residence permit (tourist residency, work residency, student residency)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 17) *If yes*: Have you been granted a residence permit?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 18) Have you applied for a work permit?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 19) *If yes*: Have you been granted a work permit?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 20) Have you applied for Turkish citizenship?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 21) *If yes*: Have you been granted citizenship?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 22) Since 2011, have you had an interview for resettlement with UNHCR?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 23) *If yes*: Have you been granted resettlement?

☐ Yes
☐ No

F 13) Syrians who left Syria use different terms to describe themselves. Which of the following terms would you use to describe yourself? ***Read out terms.***

☐ a Syrian expat (مغترب)
☐ a Syrian abroad (سوري بالخارج)
☐ a Syrian displaced person (نازح)
☐ a Syrian refugee (لاجئ)

☐ a 'guest' (ضيف)
☐ Other, please specify: _____

TN   Transnational social practices

Now I would like to start by asking some more questions about you and your family.

TN 1) Did you live outside Syria for more than three months before 2011?

☐ Yes
☐ No

TN2) *If yes*, where? *(SEE country codes, multiple answers possible)* _____

Other, please specify

TN 3) Does at least one member of your close family – this means your partner, your child/ren, your parents or your siblings – currently live outside Syria?

☐ Yes
☐ No

TN 4) *If yes*, who and what is his/her/their current country of residence? And when did she/he move there? (max. 10 members)

	Relation to respondent (SEE relation codes)	Country of residence - (SEE country codes)	Year
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

TN 5) During the last 12 months, have you had (written or spoken) contact with any of these persons?

☐ Yes
☐ No

TN 6) *If yes*, how often – several times a day, once a day, several times a week, several times a month or less than once a month?

Relation to respondent (SEE relation codes)	1 Several times a day	2 Once a day	3 Several times a week	4 Several times a month	5 Less than once a month
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

TN 7) Do some of your closest friends currently live outside Syria?

☐ Yes
☐ No

TN 8) *If yes*: What is his/her/their current country of residence? ***Only note three closest friends.***

	Country of residence - (SEE country codes)
1	
2	
3	

TN 9) During the last 12 months, have you had (written or spoken) contact with him/her/them?

☐ Yes
☐ No

TN 10) *If yes*, how often – several times a day, once a day, several times a week, several times a month or less than once a month?

	1	2	3	4	5
	Several times a day	Once a day	Several times a week	Several times a month	Less than once a month
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

TN 11) I would now like to ask you some questions about your contacts over the internet. What are **the top three** of the following social media which you use to stay in contact with people and family living abroad? (multiple answers)
   1. Facebook
   2. Twitter
   3. Viber
   4. Instagram
   5. Whatsapp
   6. Snapchat
   7. Other: specify_____
   8. None

TN 12) *If 1-7*: How often do you use social media to stay in contact with people and family living abroad?

   1. Several times a day
   2. Once a day
   3. Several times a week
   4. Several times a month
   5. Less than once a month

L   Life satisfaction

I will now ask you some questions about how satisfied you are with your life these days.

L 1) All things considered, on a scale on which 1 indicates the lowest satisfaction and 10 the highest, how satisfied are you overall with your life these days? *Code one number*_____

Lowest group									Highest group
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

L 2) How would you describe your health in general on a scale on which 1 indicates the lowest satisfaction and 10 the highest. *Code one number*_____

Lowest group									Highest group
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

L 3) How would you describe the current educational opportunities for yourself and your family in this country on a scale on which 1 indicates the lowest satisfaction and 10 the highest? *Code one number*_____

Lowest group									Highest group
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A   Migration aspirations and intentions

Many Syrians had to leave Syria since the beginning of the war. Some Syrians came to live in Lebanon / Turkey. In the following section we would like to know about your thoughts about staying in Lebanon / Turkey, leaving to another country or returning to Syria.

A 1) Ideally, if you had the opportunity and the war in Syria ended tomorrow, would you like to return to Syria, go abroad and live in another country than Lebanon/Turkey, or would you prefer to stay here? Or would you return to Syria depending on the outcome of the war?

☐ Return to Syria
☐ Go to another country
☐ Stay in Lebanon / Turkey
☐ It depends on the outcome of the war
☐ Don't know

A 2) Why? And originally, why did you decide to come to this country and live specifically in this neighbourhood?

A 3) **If go to another country**: Which country would you like to go to? **(SEE country codes. Await answer; do not list alternatives. If several countries, ask for preferred destination. If the respondent does not specify a country but a region (eg Europe or Gulf) use region codes. Only use region code if the respondent fails to name a country.)** _____

A 4) **If go to another country**: Will you try to go to that country within the next two years?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 5) If a Syrian would want to leave Turkey/Lebanon now and live somewhere else, which country do you think is the best option? **(Await answer; do not list alternative. Write country code and name. If the respondent mentions several countries, ask him or her to choose the preferred destination. If the respondent does not specify a country but a region use the region code.)**

☐ _____

A 6) Have you ever considered to return even if the war continued?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 7) If you were to stay in Turkey / Lebanon, would you prefer to... **(read out)**

☐ Stay in this area
☐ Move within Lebanon/Turkey to a village or a rural area
☐ Move within Lebanon/Turkey to a town or city

ONLY TURKEY

A 1b) If someone were to give you the necessary papers now to go to Europe, what would you do? Would you stay here or go to Europe?

☐ Go to Europe
☐ Stay in Turkey
☐ Don't know

A 8) People say different things about going to live in Europe. Tell me, if you were to go to Europe, would your family overall…. **(read out)**

1. Strongly disapprove
2. Disapprove
3. Neither approve nor disapprove
4. Approve
5. Strongly approve
6. Have very mixed opinions

A 9) Has anybody ever encouraged you to go to Europe?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 10) **If yes**: Who was that? Is he / she living in Syria, in this country, in Europe or elsewhere abroad? **(Do not list alternatives. Several options are possible; include all persons who have encouraged the respondent).**

	Living in Syria	Living in Lebanon /	Living in Europe	Living elsewhere

	Turkey			abroad
My spouse	☐	☐	☐	☐
My girlfriend/boyfriend/fiancé(e)	☐	☐	☐	☐
My son	☐	☐	☐	☐
My daughter	☐	☐	☐	☐
My father	☐	☐	☐	☐
My mother	☐	☐	☐	☐
My brother	☐	☐	☐	☐
My sister	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other male relative	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other female relative	☐	☐	☐	☐
Male non-relative	☐	☐	☐	☐
Female non-relative	☐	☐	☐	☐

We now would like to know a little bit more about your plans and experiences going to another country.

A 11) Have you ever had a passport for international travel?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 12) *If yes:* Do you have a passport now?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 13) Since 2011, have you applied for a visa? *(Include all types of visa)*

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 14) *If yes*: What type of visa was that?

☐ Business
☐ Tourism
☐ Student
☐ Other, please specify: _____

A 15) *If yes*: Of which country? *(SEE country code)*

1_____ 2_____
If other, please specify

A 16) *If yes*: Have you obtained one?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 17) *If yes*: Of which country? *(SEE country code)*

1_____ 2_____
If other, please specify

A 18) Since 2011, has a family member living in a different country applied for family reunification for you?

☐ Yes
☐ No

A 19) *If yes*: Of which country/region? *(SEE country code)*

    1_____ 2_____
    If other, please specify

A 20) Have you taken any other steps to leave to another country?

    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

A 21) *If yes*: Which steps? _____

P   Perceptions of Lebanon / Turkey

I would now like to ask you your opinion on several aspects of life in Lebanon / Turkey. Would you say that overall… *Read out answer categories after each statement*.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good
P 1) Life for Syrians in Lebanon / Turkey is....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 2) The schools in Lebanon / Turkey, which Syrians have access to, are...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 3) The health care in Lebanon / Turkey, which Syrians have access to, is...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I am going to read several statements to you about life in Lebanon / Turkey. Please let me know for each on whether you strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree. *Read out answer categories after each statement.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	agree	Strongly agree
P 4) It is easy for Syrians to open a business in Lebanon / Turkey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 5) It is easy for Syrians to find a job in Lebanon / Turkey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 6) In this country, it is dangerous to walk in the street after 7pm at night.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 7) The Lebanese/Turkish government respect different religions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 8) Lebanese / Turkish people think badly of Syrian refugees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 9) The help from the Lebanese / Turkish government for Syrians, who are in need, is very good.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 10) In this country, Syrians can say whatever they want in public.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 11) In this country, Syrian women have the same opportunities as men.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
P 12) There is no corruption in this country.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

P   Perceptions of Europe

Now I would now like to ask you some questions about life in Europe.

PE 1) Which countries do you think of when you hear the word Europe?
(Write down country code and name. If the respondent mentions cities or areas that are not countries, write down as accurately as possible and leave the codes blank)

1_____
2_____
3_____
4_____
5_____
6_____
7_____
8_____
9_____
10_____
Other, please specify

PE 2) Did you ever travel to Europe before the war for business or pleasure?

☐ Yes
☐ No

PE 3) *If yes***:** Where? *(SEE country codes)* _____
Other, please specify

PE 4) *If yes:* In which year did you visit Europe for the last time? _____

Even if you have never been to Europe you probably still have some ideas and imaginations about what life is like there. Can you please tell me if you think that… *Read out answer categories after each statement*.

	1 Very bad	2 Bad	3 Neither good nor bad	4 Good	5 Very good
PE 5) Life for Syrians in Europe is....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 6) The schools in Europe, which Syrians have access to, are...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 7) The health care in Europe, which Syrians have access to, is...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If respondent claims not to know anything about Europe, try saying:

+ *It is okay if you have never been to Europe, you might still have some ideas about it.*
+ *Most people I have spoken so far have not been to Europe but they still had some ideas about it.*
+ *There are no 'wrong' answers, I just want to know what you think.*
Please only use these sentences.

I am going to read several statements to you about life in Europe. Please let me know for each one whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree. *Read out answer categories after each statement.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
PE 8) It is easy for Syrians to open a business in Europe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 9) It is easy for Syrians to find a job in Europe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 10) In Europe, it is dangerous to walk in the street after 7pm at night.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 11) European governments respect different religions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 12) People in Europe think badly of Syrian refugees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 13) The help from governments in Europe for Syrians, who are in need and live there, is very good.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 14) In Europe, Syrians can say whatever they want in public.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 15) In Europe, Syrian women have the same opportunities as men.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 16) There is no corruption in Europe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Now I would like to know what you think about the following statements – your personal ideas. Please let me know for each one whether you <u>strongly agree</u>, <u>agree</u>, <u>neither agree nor disagree</u>, <u>disagree</u> or <u>strongly disagree</u>. (***Read out answer categories after each statement***)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
PE 17) People who go and live in Europe often lose touch with their culture and religion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 18) There is a lot of discrimination against Muslims in Europe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 19) Many people in Europe are welcoming to refugees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 20) Going to Europe without papers is very dangerous.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PE 21) Refugees in Europe are safe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PE 22) People learn what is going on in Europe from various sources. Which sources do you use?
1. Foreign newspapers and magazines
2. Arabic newspapers and magazines
3. Foreign TV channels
4. Arabic TV channels
5. Internet research
6. Social media
7. Family members abroad
8. Friends abroad
9. Other: specify_____

10. None

I   Individual variables

Now I would like to ask you some more questions about yourself.

I 12) When you were around 7 years old, what language did you speak at home with your parents? *(See language codes)* _____

I 13) Do you speak any other languages? *If yes*, please specify. *(See language codes)* _____

Only Lebanon[5]:

I 14) Throughout the world, people believe in different religions. What is your religion? If you do not want to answer this question, just tell me.

1. Muslim Sunni
2. Muslim Shia Ismaili
3. Muslim Shia Imamiyya
4. Muslim Alawi
5. Other Muslim, specify: _____
6. Druze
7. Yazidi
8. Armenian-Orthodox
9. Armenian-Catholic
10. Greek-Orthodox
11. Greek-Catholic
12. Maronite
13. Syrian Catholic
14. Assyrian
15. Syriac-Orthodox
16. Other Christian, specify: _____
17. Jewish
18. Other, specify: _____
19. No religion (atheist)

I 15) Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are… *Read out*.

1. A very religious person
2. A rather religious person
3. Not a religious person

SE   Socio-economic situation

I would now like to ask you a couple of questions about your work and the income of your household.

SE 1) Including yourself, how many people – including children – live in your house regularly at the moment as members of the household? A household comprises those persons who live under the same roof, normally eat together and have communal arrangements concerning subsistence and other necessities of life. *Write in numbers* _____

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[5] This survey question was asked to be deleted by the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management when I applied for a research permit.

SE 2) Are you currently doing paid work or not?

☐ Yes
☐ No

SE 3) What is your principal activity now? (*SEE principal activity codes*) _____

SE 4) Can you tell me how many hours you work approximately in one week? _____

SE 5) Could you please tell me which of the following categories describes best how much **your household's monthly income** was before the war – after tax and deductions? Please count all wages, salaries, and other incomes that came in.

Read out. If respondent does not know the exact figure, ask him/her to give a rough estimate.

1. 0-200 USD / 0-920 TRY
2. 200-400 USD / 920-1840 TRY
3. 400-600 USD / 1840-2760 TRY
4. 600-800 USD / 2760-3680 TRY
5. 800-1000 USD / 3680-4600 TRY
6. 1000 USD and above / 4600 TRY and above

SE 6) Could you now please tell me which of the following categories describes best how much **your current household's monthly income** is – after tax and deductions? Please count all wages, salaries, and other incomes that came in.

Read out. If respondent does not know the exact figure, ask him/her to give a rough estimate.

1. 0-200 USD / 0-920 TRY
2. 200-400 USD / 920-1840 TRY
3. 400-600 USD / 1840-2760 TRY
4. 600-800 USD / 2760-3680 TRY
5. 800-1000 USD / 3680-4600 TRY
6. 1000 USD and above / 4600 TRY and above

SE 7) During the past 12 months, did your household: (*read out*)

1. Save money
2. Just get by
3. Spent some savings
4. Spent savings and borrowed money

SE 8) During the last 12 months, did your household receive money from a member of your extended living outside Lebanon / Turkey? *If yes*, from who and how often – several times a month, once a month, several times a year, once a year or less than once a year? ***Count only financial remittances, not gifts or goods.***

Relation to respondent (SEE relation codes)	1 Several times a month	2 Once a month	3 Several times a year	4 Once a year	5 Less than once a year
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SE 9) During the last 12 months, did your household receive assistance from the Lebanese / Turkish government or an international organisation / NGO (ie cash or food assistance, medical aid, clothes, etc.)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

SE 10) **If yes**: What kind and how often?

	1	2	3	4	5
	Several times a month	Once a month	Several times a year	Once a year	Less than once a year
Type of assistance					
1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SE 11) In what type of accommodation do you currently live?

1. Private accommodation (rented)
2. Private accommodation (owned)
3. Private accommodation (with friends and family, little or no payment)
4. Other, please specify: _____
5. Refusal

SE 12) We have almost reached the end of the survey. Please tell me – if you had a free wish, what would you want to change about your situation right now?

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SE 13) This was the last question of the survey. Thank you very much for your cooperation! Do you have any additional comments?

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7.1 Annex Code Sheet

Location codes – Syria: Governates

1. Aleppo Governorate
2. Damascus Governorate
3. Daraa Governorate
4. Deir ez-Zor Governorate
5. Hama Governorate
6. Al-Hasakah Governorate
7. Homs Governorate
8. Idlib Governorate
9. Latakia Governorate
10. Quneitra Governorate
11. Raqqa Governorate
12. Rif Dimashq Governorate
13. As-Suwayda Governorate
14. Tartus Governorate

Location codes – Turkey: Provinces

1. Adana
2. Adıyaman
3. Afyonkarahisar
4. Ağrı
5. Aksaray
6. Amasya
7. Ankara
8. Antalya
9. Ardahan
10. Artvin
11. Aydın
12. Balıkesir
13. Bartın
14. Batman
15. Bayburt
16. Bilecik
17. Bingöl
18. Bitlis
19. Bolu
20. Burdur
21. Bursa
22. Çanakkale
23. Çankırı
24. Çorum
25. Denizli
26. Diyarbakır
27. Düzce
28. Edirne
29. Elazığ
30. Erzincan
31. Erzurum
32. Eskişehir
33. Gaziantep
34. Giresun
35. Gümüşhane
36. Hakkâri
37. Hatay
38. Iğdır
39. Isparta
40. Istanbul
41. İzmir
42. Kahramanmaraş
43. Karabük
44. Karaman
45. Kars
46. Kastamonu
47. Kayseri
48. Kilis
49. Kırıkkale
50. Kırklareli
51. Kırşehir
52. Kocaeli
53. Konya
54. Kütahya
55. Malatya
56. Manisa
57. Mardin
58. Mersin
59. Muğla
60. Muş
61. Nevşehir
62. Niğde
63. Ordu
64. Osmaniye
65. Rize
66. Sakarya
67. Samsun
68. Şanlıurfa
69. Siirt
70. Sinop
71. Şırnak
72. Sivas
73. Tekirdağ
74. Tokat
75. Trabzon
76. Tunceli
77. Uşak
78. Van
79. Yalova
80. Yozgat
81. Zonguldak

Location codes – Lebanon: Governates

1. Akkar عكار
2. Baalbek-Hermel بعلبك - الهرمل
3. Beirut بيروت
4. Beqaa البقاع
5. Mount Lebanon جبل لبنان
6. Nabatieh النبطية
7. North الشمال
8. South

Country codes – Selected regions

1. Africa
2. Central Africa
3. Europe
4. Western-Europe
5. Gulf States
6. Scandinavia
7. America
8. North America
9. Arab Countries
10. Turkic Countries

Country codes

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Algeria
4. Armenia
5. Australia
6. Austria
7. Azerbaijan
8. Bahrain
9. Belarus
10. Belgium
11. Bosnia and Herzegovina
12. Brunei
13. Bulgaria
14. Canada
15. Croatia
16. Cyprus
17. Czech Republic
18. Denmark
19. Djibouti
20. Egypt
21. Estonia
22. Ethiopia
23. Finland
24. France
25. Georgia
26. Germany
27. Greece
28. Hungary
29. Iceland
30. India
31. Indonesia
32. Iran
33. Iraq
34. Ireland
35. Italy
36. Jordan
37. Kosovo
38. Kuwait
39. Latvia
40. Lebanon
41. Libya
42. Liechtenstein
43. Lithuania
44. Luxembourg
45. Macedonia
46. Malaysia
47. Malta
48. Mauritania
49. Moldova
50. Monaco
51. Montenegro
52. Morocco
53. Netherlands
54. New Zealand
55. Norway

56. Oman
57. Pakistan
58. Palestine
59. Philippines
60. Poland
61. Portugal
62. Qatar
63. Romania
64. Russia

65. Saudi Arabia
66. Serbia
67. Singapore
68. Slovakia
69. Slovenia
70. South Africa
71. South Sudan
72. Spain
73. Sweden

74. Switzerland
75. Tunisia
76. Turkey
77. Turkmenistan
78. Ukraine
79. United Arab Emirates (UAE)
80. United Kingdom (UK)

81. United States of America (USA)
82. Yemen
83. Other: please specify

Family relations

1. Spouse
2. Son
3. Daughter
4. Brother
5. Sister
6. Father
7. Mother

Language

1. Arabic
2. Turkish
3. Turkmen (Azeri) أذرية
4. Kurmanci Kurdish كورمانجى
5. Sorani Kurdish سۆرانى;
6. Palewani Kurdish خوارين
7. Zazaca Kurdish / Zaza زازایى-
8. Circassian
9. Armenian
10. Aramaic
11. Greek
12. Farsi
13. French
14. English
15. German
16. Russian
17. Other, specify:

Principal Activity

1. **Student**
2. **Volunteer / intern**
3. **Housework**
4. **Unemployed**
5. **Retired**
6. **Unable to work due to disability/illness**
7. **Clergy**
8. **Farming and fishing**
   8.1. Working unpaid in family farm/business
   8.2. Farm worker (receives salary)
   8.3. Own agricultural enterprise
   8.4. Modern commercial farmer (sells most produce)
9. **Trade/business**
   9.1. Trader/Hawker/Vendor (works by him/herself)

9.2. Business owner (less than 10 employees; hairdresser, butcher, baker, carpet maker)
9.3. Business owner (10 or more employees)
10. **Private sector**
    10.1. Domestic worker, maid, gardener
    10.2. Private security
    10.3. Unskilled manual (cleaning, garbage collection, factory worker, porter)
    10.4. Skilled manual (tailor, driver, miner, hair-dresser, mechanic, carpet maker, dress maker, carpenter, butcher, baker, cook, mason, wood, worker)
    10.5. Foreman (factory, mine, building site)
    10.6. Unskilled non-manual; retail employee (works in a shop/supermarket)
    10.7. Skilled non-manual or office worker (secretary, office clerk, bookkeeper, assistant to pharmacist, assistant to veterinarian, etc)
    10.8. Manager / head of department
    10.9. Nurse, private hospital
    10.10. Teacher, private school/university
    10.11. Professional worker (architect, accountant, lawyer, doctor, dentist, pharmacist)
11. **Government (civil servants)**
    11.1. Army, soldier
    11.2. Army, higher rank
    11.3. Police officer / customs officer
    11.4. Unskilled manual (cleaning, garbage collection)
    11.5. Skilled manual (driver, carpenter, mechanic)
    11.6. Foreman (of manual workers)
    11.7. Office worker (secretary, office clerk, bookkeeper, etc)
    11.8. Manager / head of department
    11.9. Nurse, state hospital

11.10. Teacher, state school/university
11.11. Professional worker (architect, accountant, lawyer, doctor, dentist, pharmacist)
11.12. Politician (professional full-time: mayor, councillor, member of parliament)