Introduction

This is not just another book about Zaatari camp or the Syrian refugee crisis. This is also not a text by another Westerner — often a white, male scholar, studying or speaking on behalf of refugees. It is a personal account of how displacement as an individual experience, exile as an intellectual state of being, and a passion for science and discovery all intertwine. Many scholars speak about home and homemaking, increasingly today in the context of refugees and displaced populations. Many Western scholars — some of the most well-known such as Bourdieu, Levi-Strauss and Rapoport — have ethnographically examined the conditions in which communities that are considered different or 'primitive' live. Yet how many of these writers have actually endured displacement and can speak about the loss of 'home' from personal experience? When is it the time for those who have experienced the loss of home — and by that I particularly mean displaced scholars from the Global South — to narrate their experiences and explain, based on their positionality, what 'home' means?

When I left what used to be home in Homs, Syria, I was barely aware of the significance of such a place. Now when I count the places, there were seven that provided shelter for me until I settled in Berlin. After finishing my master's studies and focusing on my research, I was still little concerned about the need to search for lodgings. For a few nights, I slept on a table in a workroom, stowing my luggage away underneath it and hoping that the cleaner would not notice my presence when she came to the room in the morning. Little did I realise the psychological suffering that the lack of such a space could cause. The frustration of having to finish my research in order to be able to stay in Germany put additional pressure on me. Trips to Zaatari camp in Jordan — which was opened in July 2012, yet emerged as one of the largest refugee camps in the world — enabled me to collect many types of data. On returning to the Technical University Berlin and presenting the work to my colleagues, I was asked, 'so your research is about homemaking?' I was surprised. Perhaps the research had become an opportunity for me to subconsciously investigate what I was personally looking for.

At that point, I decided to take 'homemaking' as a starting point. 'Is this what I am experiencing and looking for?' I asked myself while looking at my desk and

the piles of paper covered with sketches gathered from the camp. In Zaatari camp, refugees referred to the structures that they had built and developed out of shelters and other materials as '*beit*', which in Arabic literally means 'a house'. In Arabic, there is little difference between what constitutes a home and a house, unlike in the Anglophone tradition. A *beit* perfectly combines the physical and the emotional at the same time, and it blurs the boundaries between the two. Yet in the Western tradition, a home and a house can have different meanings: a home is more emotional, imaginative and individual, whereas a house is more technical, physical and material.

Looking at the sketches, and reading the literature on home, house, domestic space and so on, my anxiety increased. None of these terms, at least in the way they are shaped and presented in the literature, managed to encompass what I was looking for. Having experienced displacement and the sudden loss of home, I always sensed that I had a better understanding of what refugees go through. There was a point that was absent from the discussion about homing, housing and the domestic situation. A deeper meaning was missing — one that touched on the essence of life; not life as a man-made construct, not life as property, tenure, belonging, identity, memory, emotions, family relations or cultures. Those who lose their home are placed on the threshold of a powerful tension and contradiction. On the one hand, life tells you that you have lost your home or house, but on the other, it says that you still exist — so what can be done about that?

To search for new homes and to construct houses, we first need to dwell

The deep state of loss that refugees experience presents them with a simple question: what can we do? This is not an intellectual question, but one driven by necessity. Yet in the discussion on homing and housing, necessity takes a back seat. We suddenly speak of a right to housing. In that sense, we understand that there is a necessity for it, but that it is often treated as a managerial matter: nation states are obliged to offer their citizens adequate access to housing that fulfils certain conditions (economic, cultural, environmental and psychological). However, in the case of displacement, we are speaking of a bare state of being — a rupture that cuts through all the criteria and features of what adequate housing is and can be. A displaced person is confronted with the most basic state of being on this earth: dwelling.

I still remember the myriad of emotions I experienced while reading the work of Martin Heidegger. There is a poignancy to his texts that stems from similar circumstances and troubled human conditions. At the time he was writing, Germany and Europe were waking up to the aftermath of the Second World War, and millions of people found themselves suddenly homeless. Back then, no one was

talking about the right to adequate housing. They recognized the significance of a dwelling: a space that is so common and familiar, similar to the body, that we forget about it only to suddenly remember it at times of war and destruction (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995b).

Indeed, Heidegger's approach to the 'problem' or the notion that I was restlessly searching for in my sketches, as well as in my life, revolves around dwelling. Dwelling is about feeling safe, settled and secure. I was relieved. Heidegger spoke to the bare presence that I experienced, as did many refugees in Zaatari camp. To talk about imagination, belonging, culture, social relations, identity, politics, economics, ethnographies and the anthropologies of housing, homing and the domestic environment is to attempt to examine, and thus explain, a very advanced stage — one that refugees arriving to find a tent may never think of. What happened in Zaatari camp of course includes all of the above. Yet to take homemaking or housing as a starting point — and I am talking academically here, and in relation to the scholarly literature — is akin to attempting to explain a tree solely through one of its leaves.

There is power to the Heideggerian notion of dwelling that is absent in other concepts, such as homemaking, housing and domestic space. By situating the idea of dwelling as an equivalent to being on earth, Heidegger reaches an unprecedented depth — one that transcends crises, emergencies, constructions and deconstructions, cultures and global trends, gentrification and frameworks of production. Dwelling is not a right that needs to be asked for; it is the de facto state of existence in which we experience life on earth. The recurrent process of sleeping, waking up, eating and engaging with life is the present reality in which we all exist, yet it is less acknowledged and sometimes unspoken of. It is this type of fundamental principle that is associated with dwelling; both in concept and in practice. Based on this, in the current book, I speak of dwelling both in terms of a process and a structure. Here, dwelling is referred to interchangeably as the built physical structures for living in, and the process of dwelling as a manifestation of existence. The use of this term reminds us that a dwelling (the sheltering of the physical body) and dwelling (the process, with its spontaneity and complexity) are interlinked subjects. My intention in this regard is not to undermine the importance of more common terms such as housing, the home and the domestic space, but to shed light on the deeper — yet slightly neglected — reality in which we exist; a reality from which we cannot escape, a reality that transcends all emergencies and concepts, and a reality that is immediate and present everywhere, at any given time and for everyone.

In order to search for a home, to construct a house and to experience domestic space, one must first dwell. For displaced communities, for the exiled, and for refugees and migrants, the world constructs an illusionary distinction. People on the move do not dwell. They are deprived of this, since they are unsettled. For them, a shelter is sufficient. It is in our understanding of life that the notion of dwelling

vanishes and is replaced with emergency housing or images of the home charged with emotions and intimacy. To experience life, we need both thoughts and emotions — we need the house and the home. Yet even before that, we need to be present. We need to dwell. The depth of this notion is indispensable in the context of displacement.

In the Theoretical Overview, I delve deeper into this conceptual discussion by explaining how the house, the home and the domestic space are all interlinked, but slightly distinctive dimensions of dwelling. While this could constitute a research project in itself, worthy of its own book, I will attempt to clarify the main concepts and ideas encapsulated by each of these terms. Perhaps controversially, I show that the production, shaping and representation of these key terms — home, house and domestic space — are arguably little more than scholarly constructs, with traceable limits stemming from the different ways in which various academic disciplines have approached the phenomenon of dwelling. In that sense, dwelling is the beating heart that unites all these definitions and brings them back to their starting point. For this reason, the chapter includes a more in-depth exploration of the notion of dwelling in Heidegger's thoughts. What are the main characteristics of dwelling as a phenomenon and as a process? Here, and in addition to a semiotic reading of the term both in German and Arabic, I stress the importance of creativity and resistance in dwelling. Both concepts appear subtly in Heidegger's less commonly read text *Poetically Man Dwells*, which formed a basis for Lefebvre to build his conceptual distinction between 'inhabiting'[1] and 'habitat'. For him, the 'habitat' is a 'concept or rather a caricatural pseudo-concept' that breaks down the spontaneity and complexity of human being into a 'handful of basic acts: eating, sleeping, and re-producing' (Lefebvre 2003, 81). Thus, during the nineteenth century, the use of 'habitat' aimed to eclipse the 'inhabiting' that is closer to Heidegger's concept of 'dwelling'.

This contemporary reading of dwelling as a situated practice between top-down ideologies and bottom-up appropriations is a common thread that ties this whole book together. While these concepts will be further discussed in the conclusion, the first chapter gives an extensive overview of current debates, and explains why dwelling, both as a process and a product, is used in this book.

1 In the English translation of *The Urban Revolution*, 'inhabiting' is translated from French as 'habiting'. However, in the current book I use 'habiting', but also 'inhabiting', as being more familiar to English readers.

The dilemma of shelters

Displaced people face an immediate and little-mentioned challenge: how do they dwell, now that they have been deprived of their home and thus, their original dwelling space? Refugees seek accommodation in cities, informal areas, villages and camps. They utilize their social networks to find lodgings, when and wherever possible. Families share flats in cities, settle in neighbourhoods, occupy vacant buildings, construct makeshift housing on leased land or are accommodated in shelters provided by relief organizations in camps. The term 'shelter' can in fact be relatively broad and can include a variety of spaces and structures (see for instance Scott-Smith and Breeze 2020). It can, for instance, refer not only to tents and prefabricated buildings offered to refugees, but also to housing provided by the state for homeless people in need, or even to flats offered to refugees by relief actors in cities. However, a shelter always encompasses a sense of *loss* and *emergency*. Both notions are important to address here. *Loss* is intrinsically associated with displacement. To be displaced is to be uprooted, and therefore, no longer settled. In Arabic, the word for dwelling, *Sakana*, implies staying in place. To be on the move, thus hypothetically suggests the absence of dwelling. Displaced people are not settled and are accordingly seen as *non-dwellers*. When the notion of dwelling — in all its complexity — is in decline, it can be easily replaced with an empty room; a roof with four walls. After all, the purpose of shelter is 'protection' (see Scott-Smith and Breeze 2020).

The need to protect brings us to the second point, which is *emergency*. It is unlikely that someone would choose to live in a shelter. The notion of shelter signifies a state of emergency and exception. In that sense, shelters are architectonic responses to emergencies. For instance, shelters are usually offered in the context of natural crises, such as floods and earthquakes; in the context of war and the destruction of cities for IDPs; in spaces that experience a sudden rush of incoming populations, such as construction sites and neighbourhoods settled by migrants and the working classes; and of course, in refugee camps. In that sense, a shelter is always situated between an emergency need for a dwelling space and the lack thereof. Between loss and emergency, the shelter becomes a space of temporariness, *a space where the body is protected, but dwelling is suspended*. Yet if dwelling is an inevitable manifestation of being, then what happens to the shelter? What kind of relationships emerge between the dwelling and the shelter? In other words, how do refugees manage to dwell within a space that has been designed with no consideration given to social relations, culture, identity, socioeconomics, gender, history, time, intimacy and sex? How can such 'abstract spaces', as Lefebvre would call them, be transformed as dwelling occurs in them? These are some of the core questions addressed in this book.

The refugee camp as a disciplinary machine

Discipline is one of the most expected, yet least explored, notions in the context of refugee camps. Studies into camps are usually interested in topics such as exceptionality and 'bare life' (Agamben 1998), the camp-city (Agier 2002), the ambivalence of the camp (Martin 2015; Oesch 2017) or refugees' agency (Sanyal 2010; Ramadan 2013). Little research is dedicated to uncovering the camp as the machinery of discipline. In this book, I focus on unravelling the ways in which the shelter is situated within a network of power relations that are disciplinary at their core. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault (1979) explains the characteristics of the disciplinary space: the use of a 'cellular unit' to design and organize the space around it, the attempt to organize these units across space so they can be observed and the people within them can be managed, the introduction of hierarchies and rankings into the space so it is well divided and easily observed by those who govern the space, and lastly, the attention paid to the human body as the focus of these disciplinary practices. All these strategies for managing the space of a camp are implemented through planning. In this process, the shelter plays an important role. Not only does it become the 'cellular unit' around which the camp is planned, but it also plays a role in enforcing discipline on refugees. It is widely known that shelters are standardized units hosting refugee families distributed across the surface of the camp. However, little is known about how they are woven as part of a camp's disciplinary machinery.

A shelter becomes a part of this disciplinary machinery through the ability to organize bodies in space. Picture this: in a camp, refugees are brought together from different locations, backgrounds and family structures. In addition to single travellers, there are extended families, often with complex and dynamic relations. In a camp, the shelter is moreover usually a single space, substituting for both living and sleeping areas. It is rarely composed of many spaces, and often does not include separate facilities for functions such as bathing and cooking. When looking at a planned camp, one may imagine how the spatial structures attempt to reorganize the human body: families with different family structures all squeezed into a single space, and areas planned as residential zones, with communal kitchens and toilets placed in different areas. What used to be one composition — the dwelling — is now scattered across the camp in multiple measurable and standardized units. The shelter, which can be seen as 'too material, too banal, too small-scale and technical' (Scott-Smith 2020, 4), is entangled in a web of power relations that produce and reproduce discipline and control in the camp. In Chapter 1, I show how the camp and the shelter are intertwined. In particular, I show how spatial relations and arrangements, introduced into the camp as 'planning', have the ability to produce a disciplinary space. To understand the camp and the shelter as interconnected and intertwined spaces, and to situate the shelter within the camp machinery are

highly important considerations. This is because such an understanding allows us to perceive the transition from shelters to dwellings, which this book is concerned with; not as a small-scale appropriation limited to the boundaries of the shelter, but as a multi-scalar process that has the ability to transform the camp as a whole. Dwelling — which was initially repressed within the shelter design and camp planning — begins to induce change. It fractures the machinery of the camp and the shelter, dismantles its enforcement and uses its fragments to construct dwellings. This process I refer to as *dismantling and reassembling* the camp.

Dismantling and reassembling

Dismantling and reassembling is an emerging concept that seeks to theorize the relationship between the dwelling and the camp. It starts from the fact that there is no camp without dwelling. Every camp, no matter how temporary, constitutes a sort of residence; a dwelling space. Regardless of how planned it is, each camp also resembles an alienation from dwelling, and a repression of the dwelling space. The camp and the dwelling are entrapped in cycles of contradictions, with each wanting to vanquish the other. The camp wants to remain temporary, manageable and a sign of emergency, whereas the dwelling wants to be permanent, and a sign of settlement, stillness and presence. This *initially* conflictual relationship starts to fade away as the need for dwelling prevails over any other imposed logic or considerations. The camp starts to disappear, and dwellings start to emerge. To face the domination of the camp, the force of the dwelling begins to crack up its fortification, to break it down into pieces and separate it into elements. Breaking down the camp into its elements, both physically and metaphorically, is the process of *dismantling*. By dismantling the camp, refugees — whose need for dwelling is imperative, overlooked or reduced to 'shelter' — begin to put back together the elements extracted from the camp. In other words, the camp as a politico-spatial vision, materialized as an apparatus of discipline, is broken down into pieces, and these pieces are put back together to produce dwellings. Thus, dwellings are *reassembled* from the camp and its dismantled parts. In this process, refugees – the dwellers, become the architects; the masters of the space. They mediate between the different needs, the potential and the limitations arising from two worlds: the social and the material.

In Chapter 1, I look closely at the process of *dismantling*, which as a practice, can be directly linked to the (planned) construction of refugee camps as the machinery for survival. This is why it may be less visible in spontaneous camps that are built by refugees. In planned camps, however, dwelling is meant to be suspended, and refugees are turned into manageable objects within its disciplinary space. Under such conditions, dwelling begins by taking apart the enforcement capacities of the camp. This process is tied to the level of control exercised by those who govern

the camp to maintain its order and structure, and therefore differs in its intensity. In some cases, such as the one presented in this book, dismantling the camp can be a comprehensive process that spans various dimensions including the spatial organization of shelter, communal infrastructures, the shelters themselves, and the economy. All these elements, once dismantled, are reintegrated within the dwelling space. The result is a hybrid assemblage that is neither fully a camp, a shelter nor a dwelling, but something in between. These practices of reassembling are explored in two parts: the first is dedicated to exploring the dynamics of the social world, and the second to examining the dynamics induced by the material world.

In Part 2, I look at the social dynamics of reassembling. Socially, dwelling is structured around the needs for privacy and protection. These basic functions produce a specific structure, in which dwellings are enclosed and certain openings with the surroundings, such as doors and windows, are located. Dwelling is a way of creating a specific socio-spatial arrangement, where the boundaries and gradients of public and private spaces are ordered. This is why reassembling the camp is first and foremost a process of introducing a socio-spatial order; an order that was initially supressed and replaced with disciplinary spaces. Therefore, the need for privacy orchestrates the first sketches of the dwellings. It drives the reassembling process, especially at the beginning. Yet soon after, other social dynamics starts to appear. While the dwelling spaces delineate the boundaries between what is inside and what is outside, what is familiar and what is strange, family relations begin to instruct the process of dwelling. The family brings hierarchy and social order to the space of the dwelling. It informs the process about who can use which spaces, when, and for what purpose, and thereby gives the dwelling its inner form and order. The complexity and richness of family relations, and how dynamic they can be, clashes with the abstract space of the shelter. The standardized and limited space of the shelter becomes perpetuated by dynamic social relations, differing from one family to another and from one culture to another. The need to accommodate these social relations inside the emerging space of the dwelling breaks the shelter apart. It moves it, rotates it, reorganizes its elements, and gives it direction and purpose. The camp, and the shelter as part of it, are being dismantled and reassembled.

Dwelling forms the resistance to the hegemony of the camp, and knowledge plays an important role in this process. In the camp, refugees gradually begin to cultivate a form of emerging knowledge about how to dismantle and reassemble the space. This knowledge is local, relating to the features of the camp itself: its structure, materiality and modes of organization and governance. To give an example, the ways in which shelters can be moved or used for building, comprise a form of knowledge that spread specifically in Zaatari camp and played a major role in enabling refugees to dwell. Yet in contrast to this type of knowledge, there are also other forms that can be used for the same purpose. These are often related to individuals or groups, and include the knowledge they have accumulated

before coming to the camp. This includes knowledge about dwelling within the previous context, or even observed and seen in other contexts. This translocality of knowledge empowers refugees as architects. It informs their decisions about how to reassemble, and allows them to give the dwelling space a further meaning — one related to identity.

Part 3 of the book looks at the material dynamics of reassembling. As mentioned earlier, in order to dwell, refugees become the architects, mediating between the needs and limitations of the social and the material worlds. While the social dynamics of dwelling may be more universal and shared among many people around the world — such as the need for privacy, and the requirement to shape space according to family structures — the material dynamics are more camp specific. They bring us back to the confrontation between the camp and the dwelling, which remains the central *problématique* of this book. The power of dwelling forces the materiality of the camp to circulate, to change order and to be constantly replaced according to needs of the dwellers. Yet there are boundaries to this movement. The space of the camp is conditioned by temporariness, which becomes challenged over time by the very process of dwelling. The tensions between temporariness and permanency in the camp produce boundaries that the material reassembling process has to respect. Chapter 6 reflects on this aspect, by showing how the different materials in the camp are reassembled within the dwellings. By comparison, Chapter 5 highlights the role of other material dynamics, such as prices, sizes and the quality of materials. To do so, the chapter explores the world of caravans, around which the entire space of Zaatari camp was built. It shows how caravans were turned from a standardized element, a shelter, into a construction material, thereby emphasizing further how shelters become dismantled and reassembled for the purpose of dwelling.

What is new about this study?

This book enables us to take a fresh look at the refugee camp. It gives us a new perspective, this time through the practice of dwelling, and underlines the fact that the camp and the dwelling are inseparable. In each camp, there is a need to dwell that finds a way to manifest and be practiced. To date, there are two streams of thought in this regard: first, the camp as a space of exception, biopolitics and bare life (Agamben 1998); and second, the camp as an ambiguous urban space, which for a lack of proper terms has been described as a 'camp-city' (Agier 2002). Over the years, researchers have criticized the former concept for failing to embed refugees' agency (Martin 2015; Oesch 2017; Ramadan 2013), and the latter for provoking problematic questions about the relationship between the city and the camp (Alsayyad and Roy 2006; Grbac 2013; Malkki 2002). Recently, however, it has been argued that

there is an urgent need to 'bring the camp from the periphery to the core of Urban Studies' (Picker and Pasquetti 2015, 686). Topics and processes such as bordering, partitioning and closures, racial and ethnic ordering, the inclusion or exclusion of citizenship, and various regimes of temporariness, are claimed to be crucial for bringing the camp into the urban debate.

The book illustrates that dwelling in refugee camps is a not a mere process of constructing makeshift housing or combining shelters. It is the very logic through which the camp, the 'nomos of the modern' (Agamben 1998), is deconstructed, dissolved, dismantled and reassembled. This perspective brings a solid contribution to the emerging discourse on refugee camps. Social scientists have for long struggled to describe the ambiguity of the camps, but have rarely paid attention to refugees' main concern within these places, which is their need to dwell and to be able to inhabit the space in which they suddenly find themselves. The need to dwell is imperative, beyond any political discourse on rights and belonging, or imposed temporaries of emergency. It is a manifestation of *being* (Heidegger 1971), and thus precedes all other thoughts, limitations and considerations. While refugees are accommodated temporarily in the camp, its whole structure starts to change: shelters change location, or their architecture starts to take a different appearance, spaces change purpose, infrastructures are reused, empty spaces become occupied, markets emerge and social infrastructures begin to infiltrate the initially empty spaces in the camp. The camp is gradually dismantled and reassembled through the act of dwelling. Anthropologists such as Julie Peteet (2005) have noted that Palestinian refugee camps were urbanized around what she calls the 'nexus of domesticity', and others have stated that cement has played a role in gluing the camp together into a hybrid politico-spatial assemblage (Abourahme 2015). My suggestion here extends these observations. I argue that dwelling is the very process that introduces a new spatial order in camps. It is the process that fragments and glues hybrid worlds together, yet in a different order than initially planned: coloured rugs, ornamental furniture, logos of UNHCR and the EU, flags of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, combined with lots of zinc, metal sheets and tents manufactured in China, washing lines, mattresses and concrete blocks taken from a rundown WASH facility.

To understand dwelling as the *force* through which multiple worlds are brought together, negotiated and intertwined, is not only of significance to the camp, but also to urban studies. Colin McFarlane (2011) argues that dwelling is a process of assembling that gradually leads to the production of the urban and the city (building on Deleuze and Guttari 1987). Arguing along the same lines, I suggest that dwelling is not a mere process of assembling, but is instead a force of resistance that breaks, cracks and dismantles the monumental when it needs to. It is the force that manoeuvres possibilities and negotiates options towards manifestation and realization. Being a force in an already existing field of forces implies that the dwellers need to become architects, and thus, mediate. In the context of refugee

camp, the humanitarian regime plays the role of a repressive dominant force. This force not only dictates to refugees how they should live and where, and in what ways their life is structured during their stay in the camp; but it also renders the space of the camp and the shelter as empty of social relations. This explains why shelter is always the first battlefield. In the urban context, people are also forced to dwell in standardized, ideology-driven and modernist housing that fails to incorporate social relations and limits the dwellers in their space. Socialist housing and the modernist ideas of Le Corbusier are good examples of such dwelling conditions. Within urban literature, these were distinguished by Lefebvre (2003b) as 'habitat' in contrast to the 'inhabiting' that gradually began to disappear in modern life. My suggestion is that this 'habitat' can be turned into 'inhabiting' through gradual processes of dismantling and reassembling. This dismantling may not be as stark as in Zaatari camp, but can be visible through successive processes of appropriation — whether invisible (for example rearranging the inside of a dwelling) or visible (such as the spatial appropriation of balconies).

To understand the camp as a dismantled and reassembled space through dwelling is therefore to underline a phenomenological dimension between Agamben's often criticized 'state of exception' and Agier's problematic 'camp-cities'. This theory also emphasizes the importance and centrality of dwelling as a cross-cutting process between camps and cities, and thus has the potential to bring these two bodies of knowledge together.

The right to appropriate

The 'right to appropriate' emerged as a concept by Mark Purcell (2002) in the attempt to provide a more practical interpretation of the 'right to the city' as suggested by Lefebvre. In the same manner, and in this book, I extend this notion further towards the process of dwelling, arguing that a 'right to dwell' should be universal, and that it can be better practiced in camps when refugees are granted the 'right to appropriate' the camp and the shelter. Further, while Purcell sees this process as the result of manoeuvring the relationship between a 'far order' and a 'near order' in cities, it can be similarly put as the practice emerging between the 'habitat' and 'inhabiting' as put by Lefebvre (2003c).

As this book will show, refugees transform their shelters into dwellings. Here, the shelter is a form of habitat, an imposed or pre-given way of living, and a top-down, predesigned way of housing that aims to shelter groups of people for an unknown period of time. While it shelters people, it also seeks to contain them and often to discipline them. In his book *The Minimum Dwelling*, Karel Teige (2002) draws attention to shifting trends in architecture in the early 1900s, and the way habitats were produced for the working class under the conditions of an ongoing

economic and social crisis. He noted that the city 'has become the concentration camp of the proletariat, for whom there is no housing there' (Teige 2002, 30). Instead, the working class is squeezed into shelters, as 'dwelling in the true sense of the word is in effect reserved only for the well-to-do segments of the population' (Teige 2002, 158). Teige's critique is not solely driven by an economic-political vision of housing but is deeply rooted in architecture. Comparing different types of architectural floorplans and designs, he begins to unveil the nature of the habitat that Lefebvre (2003a) talked about. Although Teige suggests that the concentration of the working class in cities can lead to resistance against their living conditions, his message primarily addresses architects and suggests ways in which better housing could be provided. This book, by contrast, does not offer practical tips on how to design better shelters. Instead, it offers important insights into a central paradoxical tension — one that needs to be better understood in order to grasp the deeper implications of 'habitat' and 'inhabiting' — namely the tension between two realities: the shelter and the dwelling.

The suggestion here is that while one of the basic functions of any dwelling is to provide protection — and thus shelter — during emergencies, the shelter and the dwelling become two opposite sides. The shelter is a mentally devised response to an emergency: an imagined suggestion of how a crisis and threat could be remedied. Dwelling, on the other hand, is a lived practice. It is a manifestation of presence and its challenges within the realm of everyday life. It is an individual practice in which the dweller has to manoeuvre between social, economic and cultural needs. It is a process of problem solving. Here, the problem is the imposed habitat, or the shelter in the case of camps. In order to bridge the gap between habitat and inhabiting, between shelter and dwelling, a variety of appropriations come into effect. These appropriations are informal, tactical, creative and negotiable. They allow dwellers to seek solutions and carve out new spaces in which dwelling can become possible.

If dwelling is a phenomenon that is intrinsically embedded within us, then appropriation is the practice in which the *right to dwelling* is reclaimed. Today, many countries and treaties mention the right to adequate housing. Housing is an attempt to produce dwellings collectively. It is an induced form of inhabiting that will always be challenged by the dynamic and shifting ways in which our world is shaped. Thus, to speak of a 'right to housing' does not automatically mean that dwelling can be achieved. Governments certainly struggle to ensure that housing needs are met. In Egypt, some of the public housing was built in the desert or was left abandoned in ruins as people refused to live there. Within these contradictions between habitat and inhabiting, we need to speak of the *right to appropriate*. The difficulty in bridging the gap between the two is increasing. Thus, to speak of a right to dwell and to appropriate means to acknowledge the nature of the human struggle in today's world — a world that is built on the verge of social, economic

and political collapse. Within the cracks of this collapsing world, we will need to learn how to dwell, as Heidegger suggested. However, to do so, we need to perceive dwelling as a process in which new forms of space — possibly more fragmented, hybrid and untraditional ones — are produced. Indeed, these may well be spaces in which the boundaries between shelter and dwelling become unrecognizable, and where habitat and inhabiting merge. From this perspective, the book is a call to extend the 'right to appropriate' from the city (Purcell 2002) to the very space of the dwelling. Next, I turn to the ethnographic site to which this book is dedicated, and present some of the main and new methods used to answer the main question here: How did refugees transform their shelters into dwellings?

The Zaatari refugee camp

When I started the research for this book at the end of 2013, Zaatari camp was still relatively young. The world was beginning to learn about a newly emerging space, often through breathtaking aerial views: a carpet of small structures, stretching endlessly into the desert and covered in dust. 'The second biggest refugee camp in the world' and 'Jordan's fourth biggest city' were among the titles that Zaatari camp earned over the years. At the time, I was being exposed to some of the literature on refugee camps through my friend, Athar Mufreh, who had taken part in the camp rehabilitation programme in Palestine, the West Bank. The urbanization of the Palestinian camps and the paradoxical relations with the future and the past, the here and the there, the now and the then, were intriguing to me as an architect. In fact, I was amazed by the nature of the political discourses emerging around these camps, and how entangled they were with space and architecture. The space of the camp reveals the ruptures of our modern world. As if a mirror, it reflects what we have constructed outside of its space, but in an inverted way. There, the disciplines of architecture and planning were challenged in ways that I had not thought of before, despite my father spending his working life as a laboratory specialist in Al-Aydoon Palestinian camp, and my having studied in Al-Baath university, bordering this camp.

In one of his writings, Michel Agier (2010, 33) suggests that camps, due to their distance from the state and its structures, resemble a 'lonely world stranded in a desert'. Yet thanks to social media, Zaatari camp was not that lonely. After its opening in July 2012, it gradually grew to become *the star of all camps*. Its fame not only made it a destination for a range of visitors, including relief workers, IT programmers, engineers, architects, designers, volunteers, artists, scientists, actors, film makers, donors, politicians, football players and other VIPs from all over the world, but also enabled it to overshadow other camps built for Syrian refugees in Jordan and the region. In the Interlude in this book, I contextualize the produc-

tion of Zaatari camp by situating it amidst the landscape of other Syrian camps in Jordan. Many of these camps were experimental and smaller than Zaatari, yet the way they were constructed and managed shows the importance of this particular camp and why it is the most suitable for this study.

Zaatari camp during one of the first field visits in February 2014

There are two main reasons behind the selection of Zaatari camp as a site for this study. The first relates to my own trajectory and the second to the nature of the camp itself. Belonging to a Palestinian-Jordanian family and having fled the war in Syria before managing to join a master's programme on Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design, my role as an architect made me feel a responsibility with regard to what was happening in Zaatari camp. At that time, the camp was being portrayed in the news as a *symbol of the Syrian refugee crisis*, where the misery of the Syrian people was 'being cured' by the collaborative efforts of the international aid sector. Syrians were being *spoken of* but rarely *spoken with*. Even when spoken with, Syrians were represented through topics that would interest donors, and the Western audience. I felt a strong urge to be in the camp, to understand what was happening there, to document it and to voice it to the world. In this respect, I was driven by a sense of responsibility to explain to the world how Zaatari camp was evolving and how it was inhabited, using my enacted local knowledge of Syrian

culture and its way of life — in the knowledge, of course, that Syrians could never be subsumed under one overarching cultural category. Having lived in Syria before the war at least gave me a better chance of understanding the struggle and the sense of loss Syrians were, and are, experiencing, and the way they attempt to cope with a new life constructed within the boundaries of a camp such as Zaatari.

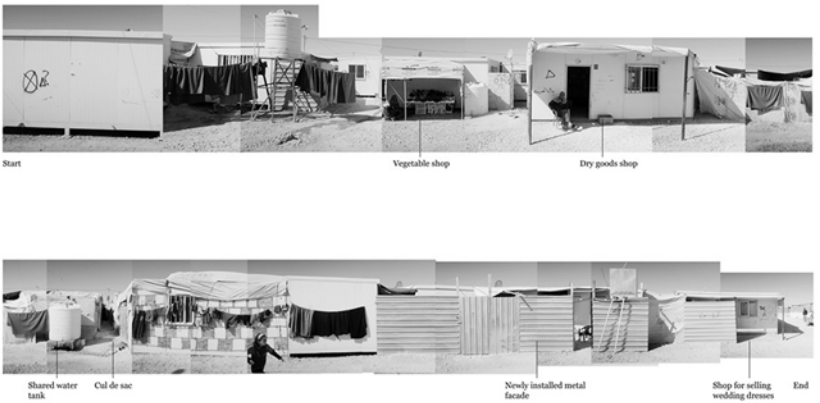
The other reason for choosing Zaatari camp to answer the main question posed in this book lies in the particularity of the camp itself, as it allowed refugees to excessively and rapidly transform their shelters into dwellings. Refugee camps vary in the ways they are managed and structured. Some are built entirely by refugees and are known as spontaneous camps. Others are planned by relief organizations, but have evolved into parts of cities. These are known as urbanized camps. Again others are smaller and have basic geometrical layouts. They are termed emergency camps and tend to be closed after a short time as refugees relocate or repatriate. Zaatari camp corresponds to none of these types, but at the same time it is, in a way, all of them put together. Zaatari camp has distinctive qualities that manage to enable refugees to appropriate space rapidly. In a way, one could make out 'sketches of a city' (Agier 2002, 324), but the camp did not appear as urbanized as Palestinian camps in Jordan, for instance. The particular case of this camp also illustrates elements of formal and informal planning. On the one hand, relief organizations attempted to plan the camp based on their criteria and in line with their standards, but on the other, this planning practice was challenged by the ways in which refugees began to construct their dwellings. Moreover, Zaatari camp represents a unique case, in which materials and people have accumulated over time. Its substantial size and rapid growth mitigated the often-strict humanitarian management of camps and allowed refugees to practice more control over how to shape the space. This happened while different types of shelters were being distributed in the camp: tents, movable prefabs (caravans) and fixed ones with advanced designs, including their own kitchenettes and bathing areas. From that perspective, Zaatari camp not only presents a unique opportunity to examine how shelters transform into dwellings over time, but also how this transformation relates to camp planning, social structures, cultures and materiality.

Fieldwork

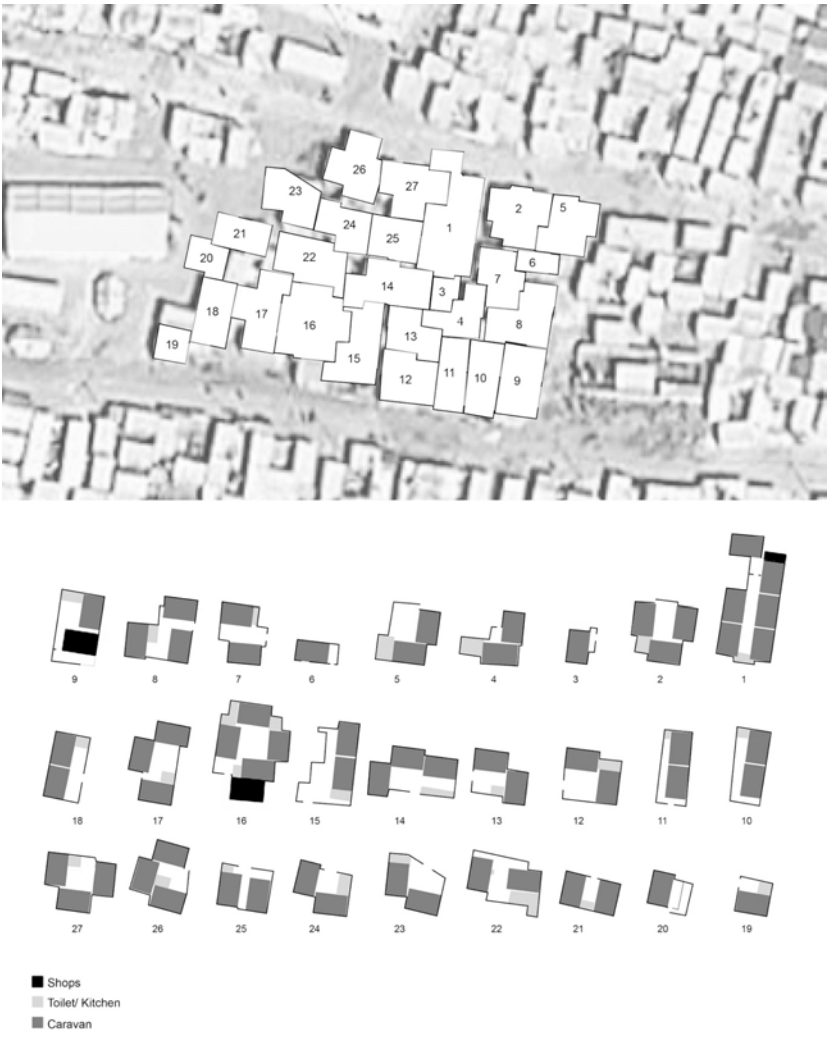
Between 2014 and 2018, my visits to Zaatari camp varied in their purpose and frequency. It should be mentioned here that unlike other camps that are more open to visitors, Zaatari camp requires special permits from the Jordanian government in order to be accessed. As a researcher, these visits can be limited to two or four within one month, and for a limited time window (from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Up to 2016, my visits were exploratory in nature, aiming to understand the new envi-

ronment constructed within the camp. Unlike other spaces, Zaatari camp had its own spatial, economic and managerial system, which needed to be understood before delving into the transition from shelters to dwellings (see for instance Dalal 2015a, 2015b). These visits were very important, because they enabled me to observe and document the various appropriations taking place in Zaatari camp before its structure became entirely crystalized. In 2014 in particular, many refugees were struggling with the caravanization process, which resulted in hybrid forms of dwelling that combined tents and caravans. At this time, I was able to sketch and map an entire cluster of units inhabited by 27 households. Additionally, I was able to conduct many in-depth interviews with refugees and relief workers, including Kilian Kleinschmidt, the manager of Zaatari, who became a famous figure due to his provocative statements and untraditional approach to humanitarian relief. Interestingly, during 2014, it was obvious that both refugees and relief actors felt the urge and the need to narrate and explain the spatial transformation occurring within the camp. It was obvious that both types of actors were experiencing *something new* and were therefore eager to tell the story of the place and explain what was happening around them.

The façades of the cluster studied in 2014



Floor plans of the first studied cluster, showing the diversity of the designs and arrangements of dwellings



In 2015, I visited Zaatari camp as the main protagonist for one of Al Jazeera's documentaries. While this gave me the opportunity to follow up on the spatial transitions occurring in the camp, and to conduct interviews and collect data for my PhD research, it was also obvious that refugees and relief workers were becoming worn out by the pressure of external visitors to the camp. The camp was turning into a field of 'innovative' operations, inviting projects from all over the world.[2] This was exhausting for the camp management, and the refugees there were turning into another 'over-researched community' (see Sukarieh and Tannock 2019). These new conditions impacted on the way I could access the field, and instead of visiting, I enrolled as a volunteer in one of the NGOs in the camp, where many young Syrians from different origins were also working as volunteers. This, in turn, made me aware of the importance of identity and its relationship to the urban environment in my research (see Dalal 2017). This period lasted from October 2016 to April 2017. Later, I conducted a follow up visit to Zaatari camp in 2018, and had the opportunity to lead a small and short research mission in Azraq camp. This offered me a wider perspective on the spatial nature of camps. Additionally, between 2015 and 2021, this perspective was enhanced by various visits, teaching work and research periods in several Palestinian camps in Jordan, in addition to the newly built camps in Berlin called 'Tempohomes'. Thus, in the later periods of my research, I was able to revisit and develop the new theoretical concept of *dismantling and reassembling* and to understand the impact of camps — their planning, management and layout — on the transitional process *from shelters to dwelling* within Zaatari camp and at large.

Data collection

During the volunteering period, I was able to visit 21 dwellings and conduct semi-structured interviews with refugees (men and women) from different backgrounds and origins in Syria, including both villagers and city dwellers. Due to security measures, my access to refugees was limited to the volunteers working at the same NGO. Yet my previous experience in the camp allowed me to conduct selective sampling, in which priority was given to origins and culture, family conditions and lo-

2 The attention that refugee camps were paid varied significantly from one camp to another. As a site planner who worked in Zaatari camp and then was relocated to another camp in Asia noted during an interview: 'In Zaatari, I used to receive proposals and requests for collaborations almost every day … Here, it rarely happens … possibly every two weeks or so I may receive an email from a researcher'. In Zaatari camp, this has resulted into a very long list of projects proposed to the camp's management prior to the year 2016, which I had the chance to scroll through during a workshop in Berlin. These included numerous different suggestions from universities, individuals, architects and designers, as well as from the business sector.

cation in the camp, as shown in the case studies presented in Part 2. The diversity of Syrian refugees working there enabled such an approach. Semi-structured interviews are important to this study, because they 'epistemologically privilege the participant as a knower' (McIntosh and Morse 2015, 4), and thus allowed refugees' subjective knowledge to enhance my understanding of the studied phenomenon. Some of the main findings were then reflected on with the volunteers as a group during shared meals. These informal interviews were important, and functioned as 'validity check on information gathered in a one-to-one interview' (Frey 1991, 183).

Additionally, collecting the necessary data for this research relied on participatory observation and walk-along interviews. Through observations, I was able to understand how space was used and how it functioned during the day. Unfortunately, these observations were limited to the time of the visits, which lasted about one or two hours during which I was hosted as a guest. Thus, the space of the dwelling would be used in the context of this guest-host relationship, to which I am well accustomed within Syrian traditions. Some of the interviews would actually start after a long breakfast, and in some cases I was able to join men's gatherings in one of the *Maḍāfa* (guest spaces) attached to one of the dwellings. While food was being served, I was able to observe how the space was used and asked questions about other parts of the dwellings that I did not enter, such as the sleeping rooms. The importance of this method lies in its ability to uncover things that at times diverged from the stories presented by the interviewees. As Barbara Kuwalich (2005) notes: 'participant observations allow the researcher to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share when doing so would be implicit, impolite, or insensitive'. These observations extend from the dwelling space to its surroundings. On many occasions, refugees would offer me the opportunity to walk with them around the dwelling they had constructed and to introduce me to their neighbours. These visits, which were always accompanied by an obligatory cup of coffee, allowed refugees to speak to me about their direct environment and to explain how it had been constructed. It sometimes forced them to compare and elaborate on certain spaces in a way that would be almost impossible to understand solely based on interviews conducted inside their living rooms. These spaces included collectively managed storage areas and gaps between rooms, reserved for water tanks and other functions. While these methods are highly valuable for this study, they also have their limitations. The short duration of the visits, and sometimes the inability to revisit the sites, presented some problems in this regard. To compensate, I was able to rely on documents released by the UNHCR in Zaatari camp, such as surveys and satellite images. In many cases, the dwellings had to be searched for using Google Earth, which allowed me to observe how the site had developed, although the images were relatively very poor quality. Thus, new research methods had to be developed specifically for this research. While I documented some of my observations

using a camera, on other occasions I would quickly sketch them, especially in instances when refugees were appropriating space and redesigning their dwellings.

An in-between space used as a storage area, and managed collectively between two households, shown to me during a walk-along interview

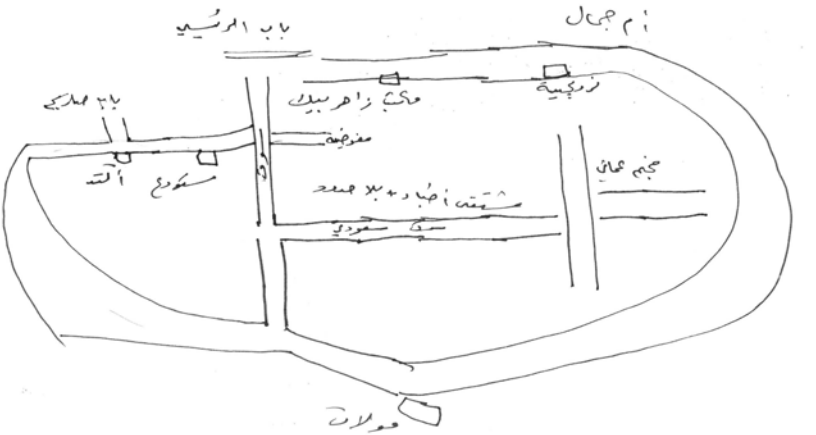
A quick sketch showing how a caravan was being lifted up and rotated into place using empty gas cylinders and a metal ladder

Co-mapping: a new research method

One status I always had on my field visits, besides being known as 'the Syrian PhD student from Germany', was my training as an architect. In the realm of research methods developed by social scientists, architects can easily get lost. This is because their implicit abilities to understand, analyse and build arguments using visuals and drawings are not reckoned with, or sufficiently developed within schools of architecture worldwide. Faced with the challenge of understanding how refugees transformed their shelters into dwellings, I had to develop new research methods that combined narratives with mapping techniques. This new research method, which I term *co-mapping*, is different from mental mapping, which is widely used in social research and was also utilized in this research whenever refugees were asked to draw floor plans of their previous dwellings in Syria. To produce mental maps, participants are asked to draw a spatial representation of a space or a process from their memory while being guided by the researcher (Gieseking 2013). Consequently, the outcome relies on the participant's drawing skills. While other research projects are interested in the way participants imagine and represent space, individually or collectively, on a blank piece of paper, such an approach was not required for my research. Instead, it was important to understand the sequence of spatial and material arrangements and how they had been used by families before the dwelling construction was finished. The details and drawings of this process were combined with narratives, as presented in Part 2 as an example of what the outcome of co-mapping can look like.

Generally speaking, co-mapping is a research method that relies on the researcher's ability to first visualize and then illustrate a space while it is being described by the interviewee. The paper placed in front of the researcher and interviewee becomes a means of *co-production*; a canvas for articulating ideas, visualizing relationships and examining arrangements and compositions of space. The empty canvas — or occasionally a piece of paper containing initial drawings or a site plan — becomes a medium of conversation between the interviewee and the researcher. It provokes feelings, tensions, fears, hopes and aspirations. Further, just as memory can be manipulated and politicized by its owner (Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013), a co-map is a result of these impulses of memory and what the interviewee wants the researcher to know and document. Thus, a co-map is not a precise document of a space or an architectural constellation, but a manipulated vision of how a space was perceived, experienced and lived. The results are never entirely precise, but they are approximations of how interviewees construct space in their memory and how they want it to be represented.

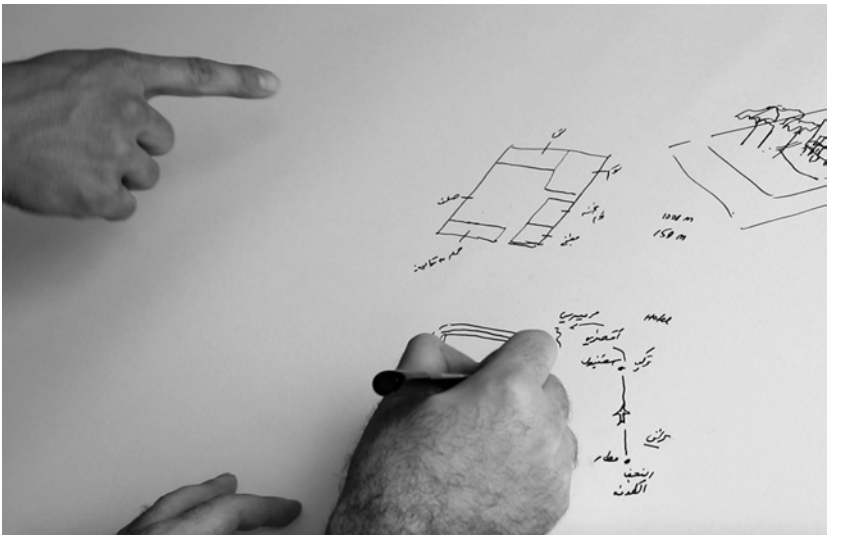
A mental map of the camp, as perceived by a 32-year-old man in Zaatari camp during 2014



The co-mapping method allows buried images and visions of space to come to the surface again. It allows interviewees to formulate new thoughts and reflect directly on the space as it is being drawn and visualized in front of them. Co-mapping unleashes the power of visualization as a medium to access thoughts and ideas that are often only recorded through text (field notes), voice (recordings) or images (cameras). Co-mapping allows the participants to co-produce and re-produce their imagination of a space. While these processes can be empowering for interviewees, they can also be shocking and traumatic. The accuracy of the drawing and the in-depth investigation of the spatial arrangements can sometimes trigger nostalgia and can cause interviewees to cry or even to stop an interview. During one of the sessions in Berlin, where I was conducting research for a different project, the interviewee asked for the interview to be stopped. This was because the narrated story and how it was spatialized on the canvas had worked as a mirror to reflect and *visualize* his living conditions in Berlin. This suddenly became upsetting and he thus wanted to have the part omitted from the interview. Of course, in such cases researchers need to rely on their ethical reflexivity (Guillemin and Gillam 2004) and act according to the demands of the moment. The method therefore needs to be employed sensitively, while prioritizing the interviewee's emotional and psychological well-being. By contrast, however, co-mapping can also be very empowering, as it allows interviewees to articulate their political agency and thereby shape the outcome of the research. Spaces are never entirely accurate: spaces can be stretched, neighbourhoods can expand or become smaller, and some parts of the examined space can be entirely forgotten. Nevertheless, in contrast to mental mapping, the researcher here plays an important role in inquiring about the architecture that is being drawn. Enacted spatial knowledge and access to local culture can therefore be important, as it facilitates the process of producing more precise outcomes.

Co-mapping is accordingly a method that requires a balance between on the one hand, the ability to sketch rapidly and efficiently, and on the other hand, to follow the narrative of the interviewee. This could lead to challenging situations, where a great deal of focus and repetition is required. For instance, an interviewee may need to be interrupted with questions such as 'was it placed like this?', 'how much distance was there between this and this?', 'was the door here?', 'how did you connect these spaces together?', 'was this covered with sheets? and so on. In this case, the result is a series of sketches in which dwelling arrangements are explained in relation to time. Most of these drawings became very complex and messy during the interview, and thus required re-drawing, which was carried out after the field visit had finished. Moreover, most of the described and co-mapped constellations were revisited using available Google satellite images or photographs whenever possible. The corrected drawings were then shared with the interviewees on the next visit, if possible, to make sure that they were correct.

Photograph of a co-mapping session taken from a film documentary project



Outlook: opportunities and challenges

This book should be seen as an opening for different research agendas — a call for enhanced research efforts on different levels and subjects. For instance, the co-mapping method demonstrates the need to develop new research techniques derived from the field of architecture itself. Architects today deal with a range of topics within the discipline, many of which are interdisciplinary and rely on methods and tools developed in the realm of social science. While these are important and certainly cannot be discounted, there is a power in architectural research that is still waiting to be unleashed. This power stems from the magical and surprising dimension that visuals can add to research — whether during the process of data collection or when presenting its outcomes. Visuals can be used to build arguments and analyse space in ways that architects may automatically gravitate towards, as they are trained to do so. Yet a proper research agenda still requires committed efforts in this direction. In fact, many colleagues pursuing their PhD research shared their frustration with me, as they were struggling to find the right language and medium to convey their thoughts, outcomes and analytical approach. These were often perceived as not scientific enough by colleagues who used text as the main gateway and medium for researching and building arguments.

In addition to such methodological deliberations, this book issues a strong call to revisit the meaning of dwelling, and how it is represented and conceptually con-

structed across different disciplines. 'It is very confusing to research the meaning of home', a friend of mine confessed with embarrassment. Home, dwelling, housing, habitat, domestic space and many other such terms seem, at times, to be indistinguishable from each other. In order to advance studies in this area, we need more grounded definitions and distinctions between these terms and how they are being researched. In this book, I propose a potent way in which these terms could be understood, by highlighting the centrality of dwelling as a phenomenon and its current entrapment between two practices: inhabiting and the production of habitat. We need to re-centre dwelling as the core process from which all other definitions and terminologies branch off. Adding to this discussion, I present a unique case in this book of how dwelling occurs in steps, and how rigid empty containers are gradually transformed into lively dwellings. This transformation highlights the distinction between habitat (shelter) and inhabiting (dwelling), and shows that only appropriations can bridge the gap between them — a gap that is probably at its widest in the case of refugee shelters. These appropriations are tactical, informal, creative and negotiable in nature. While all these dimensions are reflected in this book, they will require further investigations and assessments, using different case studies from around the world. Dwelling has become exceedingly difficult today, in a world torn apart by wars, famines, pandemics and unsettling transformations of space. This book represents the personal journey of an author who himself became displaced and eventually found home and courage through the many ways in which refugees showed strength and resilience in the most absurd, heartbreaking and inhumane spaces, such as those found in an emergency refugee camp.