Chapter 4
Culture, Knowledge, Memory and Identity

'Wow, this is interesting!' was a comment that I heard frequently when showing two sketches at once: how refugees live today (a floor plan of their current dwelling) and how they used to live (a remembered floor plan of their previous dwelling). In the first images, one could see how refugees tried to adapt to a new space and how they appropriated it. This space is often a shelter. One or two rooms, or caravans, placed together and moved to create a layout, a floor plan — a new dwelling. The second image is of the previous dwelling, the one in which the refugee used to live: a few rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and memories of how the elements were arranged and how the materials were used. What used to be a lived space is now nostalgia, a beautiful dream. Memories rarely represent the truth, but instead are manipulated by their holder. Brief snatches of remembering and forgetting; what was before and what is today. For architects and non-architects, looking at these two images at once is a sentimental moment. It equates to witnessing what displacement is about: an old, romanticized dwelling, often large, versus a newly appropriated and built one, associated with loss and hardship, and often smaller. The 'loss of home' is strongly felt through these comparisons. Juxtaposing them has the power to provoke the meaning of home, and if examined deeply enough, the challenge to dwell in our everyday life of turmoil.

In addition to the symbolism of this moment and its emotional impact, architects would naturally be drawn to observing and comparing floor plans. This room was here and the other was there; this looked like this and this looked like that. Architects would attempt to read the two drawings as interlinked, focusing on the object, the dwelling; what is similar and what is not? Do refugees reproduce dwellings in the same way that they used to live? In Zaatari camp, it was quite normal to hear people repetitively say that 'refugees designed their dwellings similar to those in Syria, all around a courtyard'. The image of the Damascene courtyard house in the Medina comes immediately to mind. The questions therefore, are what type of *knowledge* can be seen as transferred from one place to another? And what can these two different, yet interlinked, experiences tell us about dwelling, and

human behaviour and culture? The question about culture becomes the prevalent one.

Culture, memory, knowledge and identity can be interlinked, with one leading to another, similar to the maze of the home, house, domestic space, dwelling and shelter described earlier. These topics are inherently connected, yet each could lead to a slightly different path. The questions here are then: what is prioritized in this regard, and what is most relevant to the construction of dwelling? Or to put it more concisely, which of these issues have an impact on the reassembling practices? Understanding the reassembling of the camp as a socio-spatial ordering of space, allows us to reassess the importance of these topics *from below*. What is most relevant to refugees so they can dwell within the sea of shelters, or the 'caravan parking', as it was once called in a UNHCR report? Do refugees seek to reproduce 'cultural' models, such as the courtyard found in the Medina? Are they relying on their memory, or instead on certain relationships to identity and knowledge?

In this chapter, I use the words 'culture' and 'memory' as starting points to reach two dimensions that I consider as essential to the process of reassembling. These are *knowledge* and *identity*. Both culture and memory are catalysed and perceived here as forms of *implicit* 'knowledge'; ways of knowing the world that are not necessarily conceptual, but instead interactive, imaginative and lived. These forms of knowledge are complemented with what is imagined or wished for: knowledge that is seen and obtained from far away, thus *translocal*, or even knowledge that emerged from the camp itself, and is thus strictly *local*. In contrast to the construction and planning of the camp, this knowledge is not centralized or put together in a handbook. Instead, it becomes a tool that serves the dwellers' visions and needs. It also helps them to reconstruct certain 'identities', and consequently engenders *difference* as an important social reality in contrast to the 'refugee' that renders them all as the same homogeneous group. While these topics appear across all case studies and will be expanded on later; I will let them slowly unfold with the following case: a refugee who identifies as a 'city dweller', arriving in the camp in 2014 and settling in its margins, while lacking financial means and social support.

Dwelling on the edge

Omar, a 30-year-old man, was raised in an old city in Syria. Before the war, he had obtained a degree in teaching and had been able to purchase his own flat in the suburbs of the city. He married a woman who was originally from the Houran region. At the start of the war, Omar was conscripted into military service, but he managed to escape with the help of smugglers, who took him to Jordan after spending two days in the desert. Omar arrived at Zaatari camp in April 2014, which also marked the date of the opening of Jordan's new camp, Azraq. This meant that

he was among the most recent waves of arrivals at Zaatari camp. As his wife and in-laws (two parents, two brothers and a sister) had already been settled in Zaatari camp since 2013, he moved so as to be directly next to them, in an area located in the eastern part of the camp. At the time, this area was one of the least populated parts of Zaatari, due to its remote location (situated 2.5 kilometres from the entrance) and lack of infrastructure. As Omar explained, 'We were the only district that did not have electricity in the whole camp … It was all tents!' This was at a time when many dwellings around the camp were already being constructed out of caravans and metal sheets.

The eastern periphery of Zaatari camp in February 2014

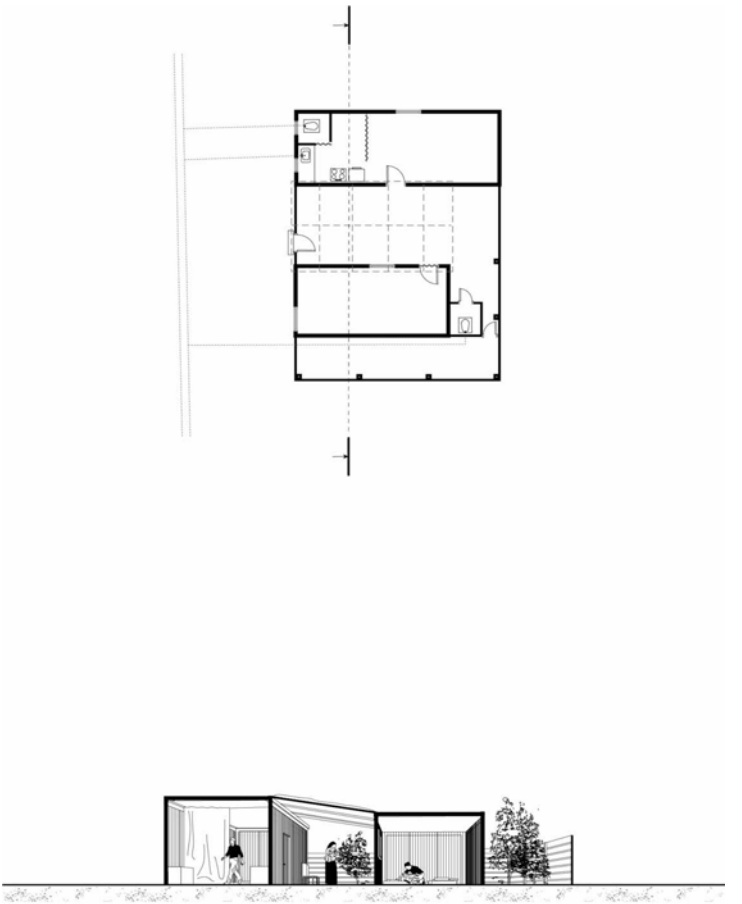
In contrast to others, Omar was not given a shelter on arrival at the camp, due to delays in the registration process. Instead, he was accommodated in an empty caravan borrowed from a neighbour. The caravan had only recently been delivered, therefore no additions had yet been made. As Omar recalled, 'an empty caravan. No zinco, nothing'. The caravan was already situated next to the one his in-laws were living in, so they did not have to move it. Settling there with his wife, Omar just added a mattress, so the caravan could be used as a sleeping and living space. Bathing and eating took place at his in-laws', who had already constructed their dwelling out of two caravans. Here, they lived for about twenty days until they had to return the caravan, because the neighbours needed it to construct their own dwelling.

Having arrived at the camp with only the money in his pockets, Omar had to find alternative accommodation. He managed to buy a used tent for 30 JDs (35 euros), which was all he had. The tent was placed in the empty area in front of his in-laws' living space and was again furnished with a mattress. Being physically close to his in-laws gave Omar a feeling of security, but being reliant on them also made him feel weak. He recalled, 'I felt I was a burden on others, and I didn't want to add anything to the tent because I wanted to go back to Syria'. Thus, the caravan was used as a living room for Omar and his wife during the day, but at night the wife would sleep inside one of her family's caravans. He explained, 'The tent is not safe to sleep in at night, so I asked my wife to sleep over at her family's place'. This again shows that the shelter, especially the tent, was not perceived by refugees as a safe and secure space. Instead, tents and caravans were used as elements to serve different socio-spatial arrangements, in which families and their members would feel protected and where privacy could be ensured.

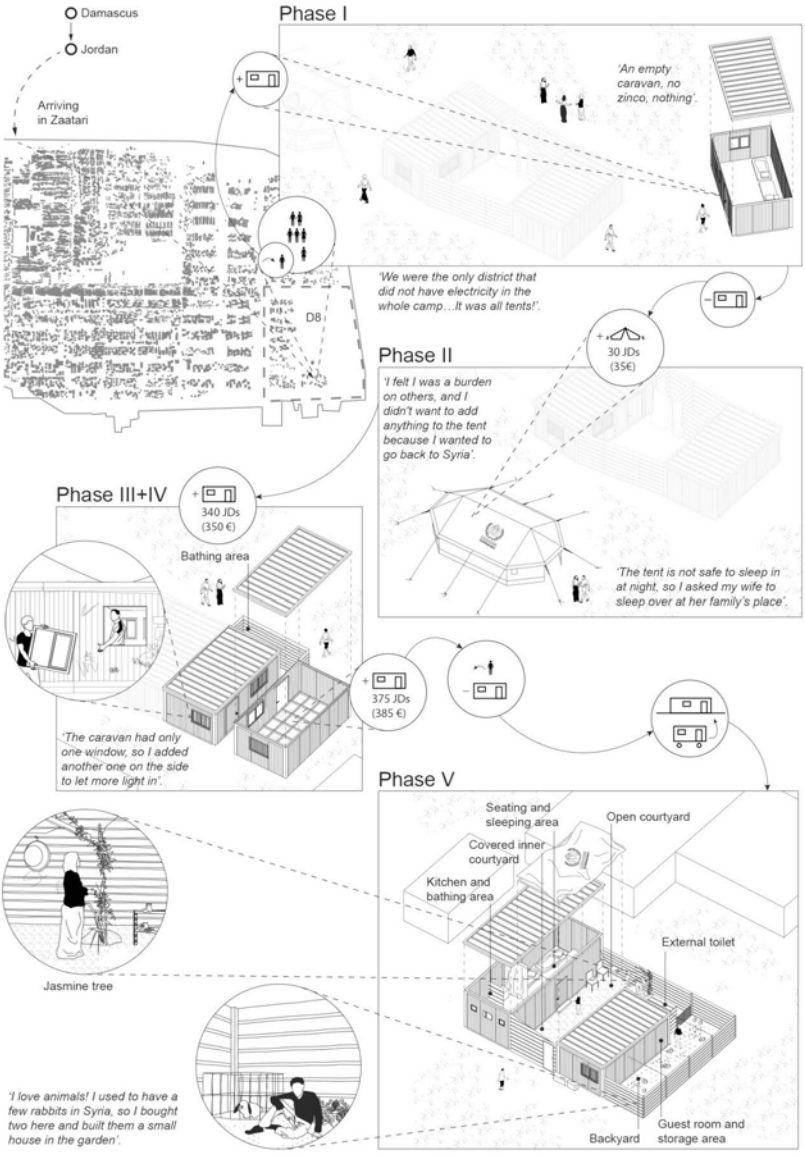
After spending four months in the tent and managing to earn some money from working in an NGO, Omar was able to buy a used caravan for 340 JDs (about 360 euros). The caravan had belonged to a neighbour, who planned to leave the camp to live with her husband, who was working in Saudi Arabia. The caravan was located about 300 metres away in the same district, so it was placed on a caravan carrier, moved to the site and then positioned next to the in-laws' dwelling. When asked about this, Omar said, 'I am spending much of the time in the morning at the NGO, so I want my wife to be close to her family'. Dwelling close to family was an important source of security for people in Zaatari camp, and constitutes a general practice that is assumed to be associated with the nature of Arab societies (see Young and Shami 1997, 3). However, Omar's case was slightly different, because he was not a direct member of the family. Here, in line with Suad Joseph's (1999) analysis of 'patriarchal connectivity', Omar was connected to his in-laws and considered as a 'son', on the one hand, while on the other he was expected to show his ability to fulfil the leading role prescribed to him as a husband. Additionally, as the daughter's husband, he could not be exposed to other women in the fam-

ily. This translated into spatial arrangements: the newly bought caravan was not placed directly facing the in-laws' ones, but off to one side, with its door facing the neighbours, thus expressing a sign of connectivity and of separation at the same time. Omar and his wife lived in the new caravan for a year and a half. The only addition he made was a window. He recalled, 'The caravan had only one window, so I added another one on the side to let more light in'. Cooking would be carried out inside the caravan using a small gas stove, and bathing would take place at the in-laws' dwelling.

A detailed floor plan and section (the case of Omar)



The transition from shelters to dwellings (the case of Omar)



A perspective of the resulting dwelling and urban fabric (the case of Omar)

After a year and a half, Omar was able to buy another caravan to receive guests in. To reduce costs, he bought it without a floor for 275 JDs (about 290 euros). He explained, 'I bought it without the floor … its wooden floor was sold by the caravan traders. It's cheaper like that'. Using a caravan carrier, it was placed one metre in front of the other caravan. To make it usable, he added sand and cement to the floor with the help of a professional. Additionally, he created a bathing area in the back using zinco sheets. Here, he would live with his wife for another four months. During this period, Zaatari camp was going through a re-structuring process, and a new type of caravan was introduced in the camp — the fixed Qatari caravan, which is larger and equipped with a built-in kitchen and bathing area. Omar's brother-in-law was able to obtain one of these fixed caravans, which happened to be located in an empty space in front of the in-laws' dwelling. However, shortly afterwards, the brother-in-law decided to relocate to the Emirati-Jordanian camp, seeking better services for his children. Instead of returning the fixed Qatari caravan to the UNHCR (as per the regulations), Omar and his brother-in-law came to an agreement to give back one of Omar's caravans (the cheaper one) in its place, so Omar could settle in the new, fixed caravan. Such forms of self-management of shelter helped refugees to find suitable solutions to changes occurring within the family — as shown in the previous case.

After relocating, Omar had to rearrange his dwelling around the new caravan, which was fixed to the ground. He placed the remaining original caravan in front of it, thereby creating a courtyard. This was a common practice in Zaatari camp and was used to increase visual privacy. Yet in contrast to the previous cases, the construction of Omar's dwelling had to negotiate the characteristics of the fixed caravan, in terms of its size, dimensions and elements. For example, while this type of shelter comes with a built-in toilet placed near the kitchen, such an arrangement could be problematic for some. As Omar commented, 'I don't like having a toilet next to the kitchen!' Therefore, he built a small cubicle outside, adjacent to the caravan and near the back so it would not be seen immediately on entering the courtyard. This shows that the production of 'advanced' types of shelter, although offering more comfort for refugees, is still an imposed form of 'habitat' (Lefebvre 2003), and could thus clash with the dwellers' lifestyles and how they envisioned to dwell.

The resulting dwelling therefore had two rooms: a large one in the Qatari caravan, separated from the kitchenette and the bathing area by a curtain, and a small room in the adjacent caravan. The large room was furnished with mattresses, carpets, curtains, LED lights, pictures and a TV. 'When I receive guests [male friends], they can come here, and my wife stays at her family's temporarily until they leave', he commented. In that sense, the large room functioned as a guest room (*Maḍāfa*), living room and sleeping room. The other caravan he used as a storage room, where electrical equipment was kept. 'I like to create things. I made this generator here.

I use it to power these LED lights around the garden when the electricity is cut off', he noted. Between the two caravans, Omar constructed a roof with the help of a professional and added a cement floor along the length of the Qatari fixed caravan. The difference in length between the fixed caravan (7.5 metres) and the movable caravan (5 metres) resulted in two types of courtyard: a covered one along the length of the smaller caravan and an open one in the remaining space leading to the garden and the outside toilet. A few months later, Omar extended his dwelling by adding a backyard stretching from the open courtyard towards the back of the movable caravan. Here, he planted corn and raised rabbits. He stated, 'I love animals! I used to have a few rabbits in Syria, so I bought two here and built them a small house in the garden'. Finally, the dwelling was fenced with zinco sheets, and the backyard garden was kept separate from the rest of the dwelling using a net fence that would prevent the rabbits from reaching the courtyards if they were left out in the backyard.

The resulting arrangement and design of Omar's dwelling differ slightly from others in Zaatari camp. On the one hand, the difference stems from attempting to combine two different shelter typologies: a fixed and a movable caravan. On the other hand, the use and construction of spaces within the dwelling relied heavily on Omar's background, as we will see below. Nonetheless, a scarcity of resources delayed this process. Arriving at the camp with only about 35 JDs, and struggling to produce income, meant that Omar and his wife had to shift between various forms of shelters for two years until settling in their newly designed and composed dwelling.

The Saudi fixed caravans, with a built-in kitchenette and bathroom/toilet

A wedding tower decorated with LED lights and used to illuminate squares where weddings and the Dabkeh dance were performed in Zaatari camp

Catalysing culture and negotiating identities

'What is Syrian culture?' I asked myself after a long presentation of the various dwellings I examined in Zaatari camp on my return to Germany. In anthropology, it has been argued that 'culture' is used as a tool to maintain hierarchies and construct the 'other'; therefore, scholars have called for the need to argue 'against' it (L. Abu-Lughod 1991). In the context of refugee camps, Liisa Malkki (1992) noted the impact of space on refugees, as those accommodated in camps were observed to harness the purity of their national identity in contrast to those who found refuge in cities, and tended to adopt a more cosmopolitan identity. However, such generalizations about culture and cultural identity remain somewhat problematic, as Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) warned. In previous work, I have argued that — especially in a camp context — there is a need to uncover the multiplicity of cultures and identities that often remain 'concealed' by homogeneous categorizations within the humanitarian discourse (Dalal 2017). Furthermore, I have suggested elsewhere that there is a specificity to refugee camps that has long been overlooked. This specificity is tied to the fact that the camps put people from different cultures, backgrounds and origins, who have often been conceived of as immobile, in close contact with each other — in many cases for the first time. Therefore, the refugee camp is intrinsically a site of encounters, allowing refugees to rethink identities of the 'self' and the 'other' (Dalal 2021).

In the context of this book, and in relation to dwelling, what could appear to be 'cultural', and in that sense generic, are the importance of visual privacy and the position of women within the family. In his book, *House Form and Culture*, Amos Rapoport (1969) suggested that cultural forces play a primary role in shaping the layout of a dwelling, in comparison with other factors, such as economy, site, materials and building techniques. For instance, he observed the 'courtyard house' to be a recurring model in Greece, the Middle East and Latin America, where there is an 'extreme need for privacy for woman who are cloistered'. Therefore, 'the windows and roofs of these courtyard houses are designed to prevent anyone from intruding into the intimacy of the house' (Rapoport 1969, 65). However, in his latest work, Rapoport (2005, 1992) came to recognize the difficulty of discussing sociocultural factors in generic terms, and therefore called for 'dismantling culture' into various elements — including identity, which is a subtle yet important dimension to focus on in the case of Zaatari camp. To highlight this dimension, I turn again to Omar's dwelling.

As mentioned earlier, Omar originates from a city in Syria. This portrays him as 'highly civilized and advanced' in contrast to most of the refugees in Zaatari camp, who originate from villages and towns in the underdeveloped south of Syria. During an interview, Omar established this *difference* by saying:

> Everyone in the camp … and I mean it, everyone has relatives here except me … a cousin working here, an uncle working there … but not me! I'm here all by myself. And imagine, every time I open my mouth to speak, they would immediately ask me, 'where are you from?' They realize that my dialect is different.

Omar felt very estranged by his urban identity as a city dweller, even though he had been living in the camp for three years at the time this interview was conducted. When asked about the culture of other refugees in the camp, he commented:

> I don't go to their weddings anymore. I find it weird. Even the songs and chanting I don't understand. I feel like a stranger. I'm afraid to act in a way that would be misunderstood. I was asked to go to a wedding the other day, but I refused! I can't integrate with them, even though I've tried! The other day I had to go to a wedding of a close friend of mine. I simply did not like it. A guy playing keyboard loudly all day, and people dancing *Dabkeh*, and noise! Two days of dancing and then three days after the wedding ceremonies. Is that normal? This is not a wedding, this is a 'party' [in English]. Our weddings were not like this, two hours, rings, and a small event, that's it.

The notion of 'identity' is a very complex and challenging one in the Middle East. Different aspects, such as religion, socioeconomics, sects, territories, elitism and history can be deeply intertwined, producing hybrid and sometimes contested identities. 'Where are you from?' I am often asked when taking a cab in Jordan, due to my Syrian dialect. Although holding a Jordanian passport, I would be treated differently and looked at with a different pair of eyes. These Middle Eastern identities are recognized and associated with dialect, behaviour, education, knowledge, place of residence, and so on. Being aware of this complexity, particularly within the Syrian context, I would suggest that the main identities in Zaatari camp are constructed around urban origins. City dwellers were considered to be more 'civilized' and 'advanced' compared with villagers in the camp; nonetheless, they were also seen as more 'uptight' than the villagers, who were described as maintaining a fairly 'relaxed' and 'open' attitude. Similarly, the Bedouins or the nomads were considered the 'least civilized' by both city dwellers and villagers. 'Bedouins have a different lifestyle. They have no problem with leaving their kids running outside in the streets barefoot and naked, or pissing outside and playing in mud! This is not acceptable for us. We are conservative communities', commented Omar. Such tensions between nomads and the *Ḥaḍar* [urbanites] are historical and are claimed to stretch beyond the newly established nation states in the Middle East (for a more detailed explanation, see Dalal 2021). While the debate on identity constructs in the camp clearly requires further research, it should be underlined here that these identities are not static, but are fluid and dynamic in their formation. For instance, one of the refugees had his family origins in a village in the south of

Syria, yet was born and raised in Damascus. This put him in a problematic position within the camp, as he recounted:

> I tried to integrate and make people think that I am just like them. I always repeat 'I am like you, I'm also from Daraa'. But they keep treating me differently. Whatever happens, they immediately say. 'You are *Ibn al-Sham* [a Damascene]!' Maybe it is true, I am different. People from cities are different. When you live in Damascus, you are used to a certain lifestyle. You may have lots of friends and social relations outside, but when you come back home and close the door, it means you are by yourself, and nobody has the right to disturb you or interfere with your life. Here, I started to hear people gossiping, 'Oh, they did this, and those did that'. Rural society is much more open towards each other than in cities, they know each other much more closely and have stronger relations. But this made my life miserable here. They kept interfering in my choices. Even the zinco I put up to prevent my door from being exposed to the main street — they ask me why I put it there! I regret that I came to this area, although I am next to my relatives.

All of the above shows that identity can be a contested term, even in a newly established space such as Zaatari camp in Jordan; but how did that contribute to the construction of dwellings in Zaatari camp, particularly in Omar's case?

It has been suggested that 'a dwelling can be seen as an expression of identity, both for oneself and others. Location, exterior and interior have something to say about the social group one belongs to, and provide information about one's lifestyle and personal taste' (Hauge and Kolstad 2007, 273). In Omar's case, identity was *reconstructed*, expressing itself in the ways in which he furnished his large room: coloured curtains, wall decoration, LED lights, carpets and mattresses. Further, on entering the dwelling, a notable feeling of cleanliness would be apparent. This is an important cultural practice among city dwellers in Syria, and a sign of wealth and pride. 'Look, Bedouins are everywhere in this area. If you want to know how to recognize them, just look around and you will see dwellings wrapped with *Mshamma*' [plastic sheets, here meaning parts of tents], bags, wires. You would recognize them mostly from the *Mshamma*' they keep using, although caravans and metal sheets are available for construction', said Omar. Based on that, identity is not only signified by the decoration and interior design of dwellings, but also by the type of materials used to construct them.

Remnants of a tent (Mshamma') used to construct a front yard in a dwelling inhabited by a Bedouin family

The 'guest room' of a family originally from a city, showing the contrast to the humbly decorated rooms of the villagers in the camp

The Role of knowledge

In the context of 'dwelling', knowledge seems to have been paid little scholarly attention to date. If considered at all, it has been simplified or reduced to implicit forms of knowledge carried by the dweller and practiced in the form of 'memory' and 'habits'. This form of knowledge, which I would term *implicit knowledge*, is indeed an important dimension of the process of dwelling, as it is inscribed directly in the practices of the dweller. In addition, although implicit knowledge is very important (and culture could be considered as one source of implicit knowledge), it is not the only dimension in which knowledge becomes important for dwelling — an aspect that I will return to later.

From a historical perspective — for instance in relation to the climate — it has been argued that 'people respond to the regional conditions of the places they call home, and dwell through a particular way of *knowing* the world' (Bassett 2015, 110 [emphasis added]). A re-reading of Rapoport (1969, 1992, 2005) also suggests a way of thinking of culture as a form of implicit knowledge. It can be associated with the poetics of dwelling, and thus with memory and the practices generated by it. As Gaston Bachelard (1954, 36) puts it in his famous book *The Poetics of Space*, 'But over and beyond memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits'. This means that implicit forms of knowledge are also *expressed* implicitly, as well as unconsciously. The ways in which they are intrinsically merged with the practice and imagination of the dweller make it difficult to recognize this knowledge as a separate element from the dwellers themselves.

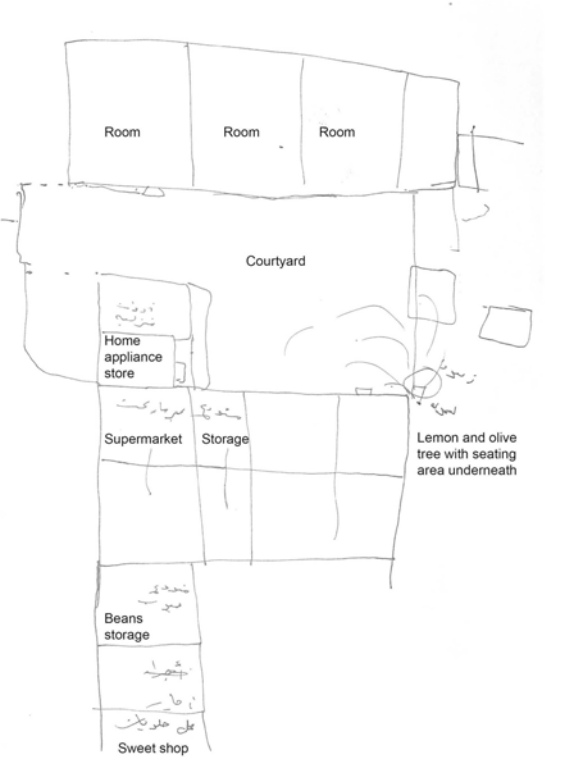
In Omar's case, this was evident in the way he used the spaces around the shelter. As mentioned earlier, the difference in size between the fixed and movable caravan resulted in the creation of an open courtyard: a small uncovered and fenced space with a cemented floor and two chairs placed in the corner. In front of this area, a jasmine tree was planted, spread over a wooden beam, behind which the external toilet was located and a net-fenced door leading to the backyard was placed. When Omar was asked whether he had been inspired by his previous dwelling in Syria when constructing the one in Zaatari camp, he answered with some irritation, 'We used to live in a house that is 200 years old. It is impossible that I could rebuild a similar one here'.

According to his description, the dwelling in which he was raised was located in the Medina, and represented a typical Syrian courtyard house: a central open space around which the dwelling and its spaces are organized. A kitchen, a water fountain, a bathroom and a guestroom were located on the lower floor, and sleeping rooms were situated on the upper floor. 'I love sitting in this place [in the open courtyard] when the sun is not too strong', Omar commented when he showed me the space. Another form of this implicit knowledge of space could also be observed in the way additional areas around the dwellings were used and appropriated. City

dwellers, for instance, were keen on constructing a fenced garden or open space attached to their dwellings, in which domestic animals could be raised and the family could sit outside in the shade during hot summers. 'This is where we eat and gather on summer days. The kids just love it', commented a refugee woman from Homs city, while we sat on a bench built from concrete blocks propped up against the caravan and furnished with small pillows. The knowledge of how to construct gardens clearly has its origins in the production of habitats in Syrian cities, where the general design encourages the creation of fenced gardens attached to the dwellings on the ground floor. The necessity to construct such gardens in cities arose out of the need to maintain visual privacy and a desire to bring back nature to cities in which green spaces were rapidly declining. Such a practice, or rather this particular expression of *implicit knowledge*, was not found among villagers in Zaatari camp, who were accustomed to 'living in the fields', as one villager put it. 'We rarely had private gardens attached to our dwellings back in Syria. They were mostly surrounded by *Ḥākoura* [farms]', a young man from the village of Sheikh Maskeen commented. In this regard, the impact of implicit knowledge was astonishing: none of the interviewees from rural origins had fenced gardens attached to their dwellings in the camp, in stark contrast to all of the interviewees from the city. While the sample used here is by no means representative, knowledge seems to be of significant importance to dwelling and has the capacity to catalyse notions such as 'culture', which could be misused, especially in the context of scholarly research and representation (see Said 1994).

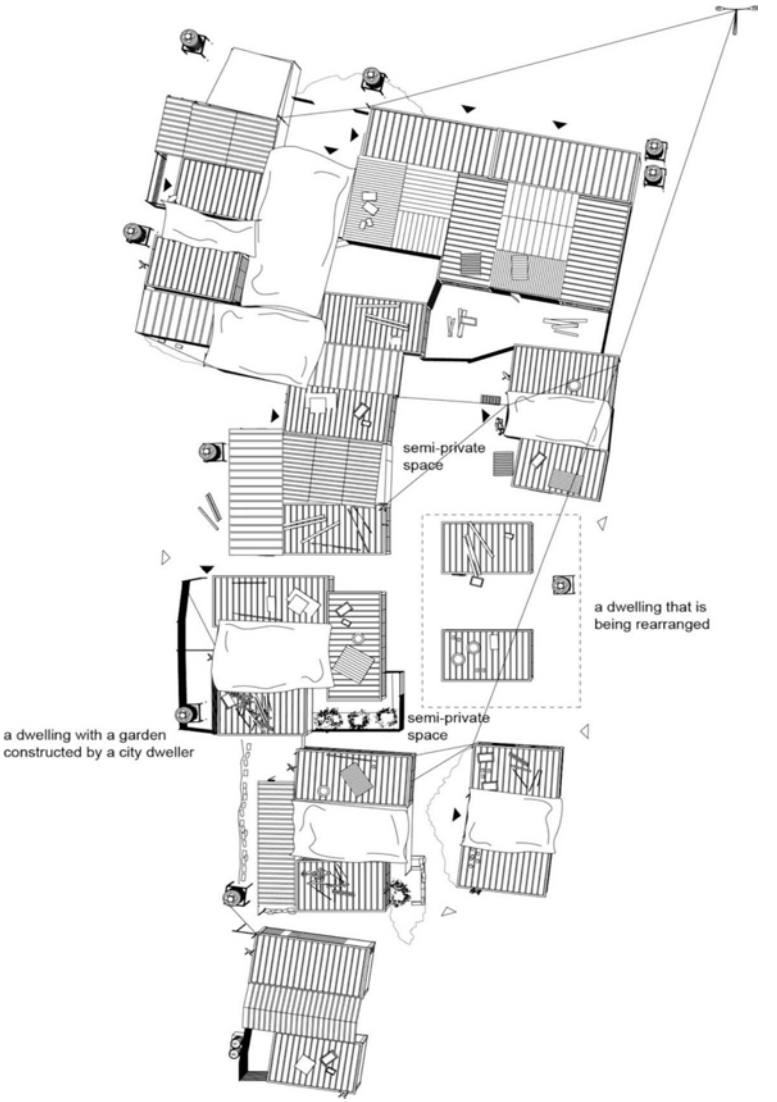
A mental map of a refugee's previous dwelling in Syria, located in a rural area (The case of Eyad)

A mental map of a refugee's previous dwelling in Syria, located in a rural area



The arrangement of a courtyard house in an old city, where a Syrian refugee in Zaatari camp used to live

An overhead view of a studied cluster, showing the semiotics of space and the role of implicit knowledge in reassembling



Knowledge, in the context of dwelling, can uncover and shed light on the power dynamics involved in the process of reassembling. At the beginning of this book, I sketched the notions of 'habitat' and 'inhabiting' that were developed by Lefebvre (2003a). The concept of knowledge can help us to unpack these further: What kind of knowledge is used to produce habitats today, including shelters? And the other way round, what kind of knowledge is mobilized by dwellers to inhabit space? In the context of Zaatari camp, in addition to the implicit subjective knowledge brought to the camp by each individual and the knowledge of space borrowed from other contexts — which could be called *translocal/transnational knowledge* (for example, the American kitchen in Sami's dwelling), new forms of *emerging local knowledge* were also produced. The main characteristic of this knowledge was that it emerged from the specificity of the context and thus produced a local and dynamic reservoir of spatial knowledge, continuously expanding within the camp. This knowledge was initially generated and spread through encounters (Dalal 2021). Gradually, people became accustomed to the tent and the prefab. They not only appropriated them to suit their daily needs, but they also became knowledgeable about their specific characteristics: how to move and relocate the caravan, how to shorten its metallic framework, how to alter its composition, how to use it as a load-bearing system, and most importantly, how to inhabit it. This knowledge, although ephemeral in nature, was assembled by the 'professionals' mentioned in the case studies. These professionals were often referred to as the 'realtors' or 'caravan traders' (whose role will be elaborated in the following chapter). They not only became responsible for carrying and preserving the knowledge about the caravan and how to build with it, but also developed new techniques, including dismantling the caravans and rebuilding entire dwellings out of their parts.

Based on this, the knowledge used by relief actors and donors to produce shelters in Zaatari camp was confronted by an ephemeral, emerging and unexpectedly growing body of local knowledge that enabled refugees to inhabit the shelter and to construct dwellings. Refugees would share information about successful models that improved dwelling among their neighbours. In other words, dwelling in Zaatari camp was a tactical practice in which refugees' knowledge about space was utilized against the institutional knowledge of space. The former operated 'tactically', and therefore informally, whereas the latter functioned 'strategically' (De Certeau 2013, 36), through standardized knowledge resources such as the *Handbook for Emergencies* (2007). This last point sheds light on the importance of understanding and approaching the process of dwelling not as a product or a physical structure, but as *ongoing resistance* to the hegemony of institutions that want to discipline dwelling and make it manageable, especially during crises.

Chapter summary

This chapter aimed to unpack a myriad of issues that are, by nature, interlinked and thus often confusing to address, such as memory and culture. In the context of the shelter and the camp, culture appears as the most striking element as it the easiest one to notice: a set of behaviours and traditions that represent 'difference' in contrast to the standardized and 'similar' shelter design offered to refugees. Coming back to the notion of dismantling and reassembling which ties this book together, I have suggested here a new way to look at culture and memory, by first addressing the *struggle* and *conflict* that is automatically engendered by attempting to dwell in the camp, and second by considering them as means to 'win' this conflict as De Certeau would say. In that sense, culture and memory find ways to express themselves in the camp, but can be seen as tools to win this struggle. To clarify this point, I turned into the notion of knowledge which *weaponizes* culture and memory. These notions become ways to addressing the struggle to dwell in a shelter; they become justifications to why and how shelters are appropriated and the camp is being eventually altered. Knowledge therefore is a more holistic term that brings us closer to the nature of dwelling in camps, which is not only conflictual, but also tactical and strategic at once. Dwelling in camps is where institutional knowledge confronts an emergent, hybrid and ephemeral kind of knowledge which is simultaneously local, translocal and implicit. This knowledge, possessed by the dwellers, is geared towards removing the limitations and constraints against a more suitable and dignifying dwelling space. In the following, I will try to wrap up this part, which was directed towards exploring the social dynamics of reassembling in Zaatari camp.