Chapter 1
Zaatari Camp and its Planning

Zaatari is a controversial refugee camp. In the course of just a few months, it mushroomed into one of the largest in the world, according to experts, hosting one of the busiest markets a camp has ever seen. It also came to serve as an experimental field in which to test new humanitarian strategies and policies, and where the caravan, or the prefab container, was used as a new type of shelter. This turned Zaatari camp into both 'a huge caravan park' and a 'major urban hub' at the same time (UNHCR 2013b). The ability of Syrian refugees to extensively transform the camp spatially and to 'build a city', while, according to one of the camp's managers, humanitarian organizations were building a warehouse (Radfold 2015), has drawn significant attention to the space at a time when the refugee crisis was gathering momentum. In fact, it could be even said that Zaatari camp in many ways epitomized the suffering and resilience of Syrians, who suddenly found themselves in different regions around the world, having to adapt to harsh environments and challenging conditions. This explains why the camp turned into something of a pilgrimage site for researchers working in the field of migration and refugee studies — in addition to famous diplomats, actors, football players, ambassadors, philanthropists, photographers, filmmakers, heritage experts and entrepreneurs. All of them either visited out of curiosity or sought to make a contribution in support of the camp, which was simultaneously perceived as both a 'miracle of resilience' and a 'mess'. Furthermore, my personal connection to Syria — as I come from a Palestinian refugee family and hold Jordanian citizenship — contributed to and facilitated my access to such a busy and complex field. All these aspects made Zaatari camp a perfect site to examine spatial transformations within refugee camps.

This chapter has two objectives: First, to contextualize the camp by showing how it was built, how it was spatially planned, what kind of infrastructures were offered to refugees, how it was economically managed and what populations it accommodates. Second, to highlight the disciplinary nature of the camp. By looking at shelters, communal infrastructures and economic structures, the chapter demonstrates that a refugee camp is not only a temporary space for accommodating refugees, but also a space that dictates a 'different' way of living to them — one

that separates the dwelling as we know it, into fragments spread over the space of the camp in ways that keep refugees managed and governable. Thus, in this chapter, I show how refugees reacted to this disciplinary machine, and in turn, how they dismantled its components into smaller pieces that were later used to reassemble the space that was lost and suspended in the first place: the dwelling. The chapter will first outline how the camp evolved over time, and how it was planned. Then it will show how it was dismantled, materially and non-materially. Lastly, the chapter sheds light on the 'caravan' as an important archetype that had a significant impact on shaping the space of the camp. It concludes with a short presentation of the refugees of Zaatari camp, highlighting their diverse origins, cultural background and social structures.

Camp evolution

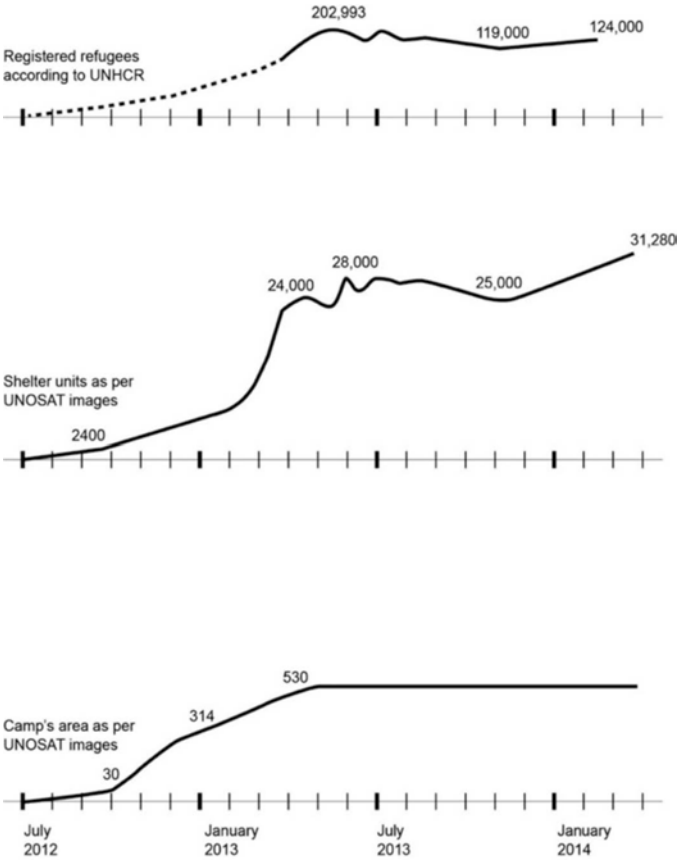
With the support of UN organizations and the approval of the Jordanian government, Zaatari camp was opened on 28 July 2012. The area chosen for the camp is situated in the desert, about 10 kilometres to the east of Mafraq, which is a small, underdeveloped city in the North of Jordan. The camp is also located a similar distance from the Jordanian–Syrian border, and about 750 metres south of the international road connecting Mafraq to the Iraqi border.

Zaatari camp was initially planned after a series of 'smaller camps' had been built to accommodate Syrians who had crossed the borders without legal documents. These smaller camps (Al-Bashabsheh, the Stadium, King Abdullah Park and Cyber City) were rapidly filled, and the need to construct an official 'humanitarian' camp away from the state's overburdened facilities and infrastructures became apparent. Thus, Zaatari camp was initially opened with the intention of hosting 10,000 refugees (UN 2014). This was at a time when 1500 to 2000 Syrians were arriving in Jordan every day (Al-Rai 2012a). An analysis of satellite images shows that the camp has grown exponentially. Over the course of six months, it rapidly expanded from the size of a farm (30 hectares in September 2012) to the size of a city (530 hectares in March 2013). The camp subsequently maintained its size, with no plans for further expansion. Nevertheless, additional spaces around the camp were reserved for just that purpose. Some of these spaces were eventually used to host added facilities, such as administrative offices, a solar farming project and a sewage treatment plant.

The initial expansion in size was a result of the increased influx of refugees. There is no published data from the UNHCR for the estimated number of registered refugees in the camp before January 2013; however, it can be projected that around 10,000 refugees had already arrived at the camp in less than a month after its opening. The rise in the camp's population reached its peak in March 2013, amounting

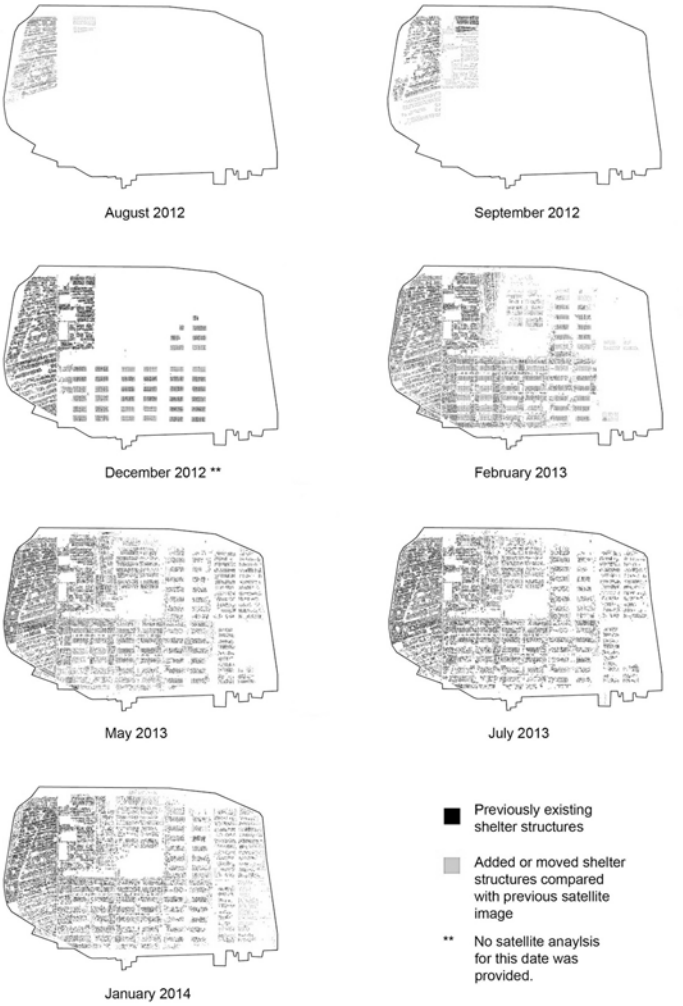
to more than 200,000. These numbers dropped to about 80,000 refugees during 2014, at which point the figure stabilized and the camp was closed to new arrivals.

Analysis of the shelter, population and size of the camp during the period of growth between July 2012 and March 2014



Source: Author's own, based on UNOSAT.

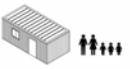
The physical-spatial growth of Zaatari camp between August 2012 and January 2014

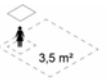


Source: Author's own, based on UNOSAT.

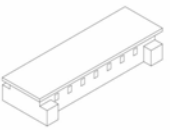
The architectural elements and spatial measures used for planning Zaatari camp, and its proposed end results

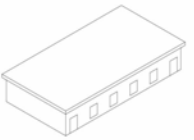

23 m²


16 m²

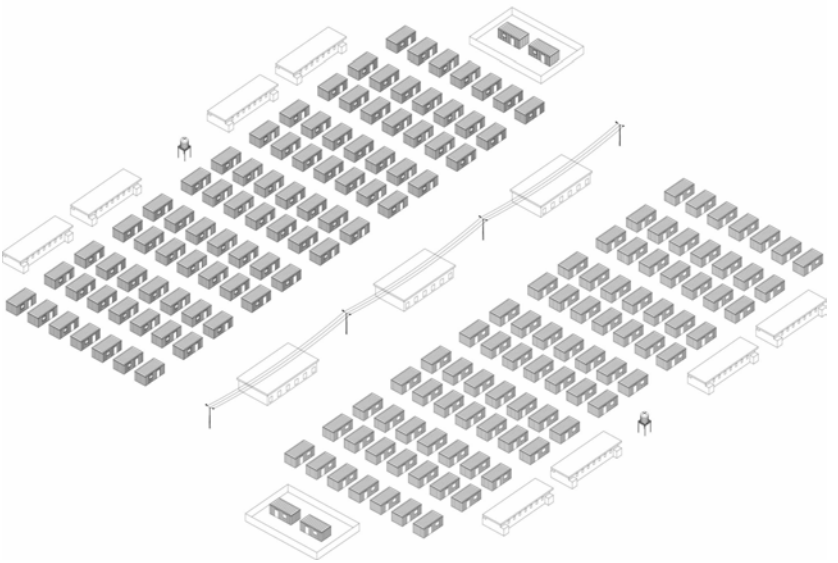


45 m²


Communal latrines


Communal kitchen


Communal water tanks



The planning of Zaatari camp

The planning of refugee camps has been much criticized by scholars and academics, yet this has had little effect on the policies and regulations under which camps are still placed. Some of this criticism has targeted technical details and the inefficiency of the available guidelines in terms of adequately responding to refugees' need for multi-purpose space (Kennedy 2005, 2004, 2008). Others consider the planning of refugee camps to be somewhat colonial in outlook, especially in the way that it is imposed on populations, cultures and regions 'that could not be more different' (Herz 2008, 285). This, however, has not had any significant impact on the way camps are planned, as this is still mainly based on guidelines found in manuals such as *Sphere* and the *Handbook for Emergencies.* In these manuals, site planners can find information about how a camp's layout can be arranged, what distances are required between different elements, where certain infrastructure elements should be placed, how shelters should be arranged and what measures should be adopted in order to ensure that refugees are safe and well protected. The planning of Zaatari camp was nevertheless not as smooth as often assumed, but occurred in various phases and took different forms across the camp.

For example, the first phase took place between July and November 2012, when the camp was managed by the JHCO and the UNHCR. At that time, refugees were settling in the limited space of the camp. Tents were placed in rows, creating narrow pathways between them. Shared facilities such as toilets and kitchens — initially as movable units and later on as structures built out of concrete blocks — were distributed between the tents wherever there was sufficient space. This area, which was relatively small and amounted to only about 35 per cent of the camp's eventual size, was partly surrounded by two main asphalted roads, along which other infrastructures such as schools and hospitals were also being built. The space was, moreover, located near the entrance of the camp and the base camp, where relief organizations were stationed. It later became known as the 'old camp' — a connotation it also earned for its high density and extensive informality, making it appear similar to 'Palestinian refugee camps in Damascus', as a refugee woman recalled. During this phase, the basic principles of camp planning were barely observed. Refugees were crowded into the small area, and the refugee influx continued. Thus, the need to intervene became increasingly urgent.

By November 2012, it was determined that an extension of the camp, as well as the creation of a manageable refugee space, had become a necessity. The availability of empty fields to the south-east of the first populated area of the camp was seen as offering a perfect opportunity to implement the principles of camp planning. At their core, these principles have two objectives that are intrinsically interlinked. On the one hand, camp planning aims to ensure that humanitarian measures are met and that refugees are protected; on the other hand, it transforms refugees into

manageable objects. In doing so, the camp is converted into a disciplinary space, and the machinery for managing and controlling refugees is put in place.

The planning of camps begins with arranging their basic elements: NGO offices (base camp), shelters, communal facilities, infrastructures, distribution centres, spaces for social use, and so on. Their layout is based on a division of space according to certain quota, and adheres to specific distances that are stipulated in the *Handbook for Emergencies*. For instance, it has been determined that each refugee in the camp should be provided with 3.5 m^2 of 'covered' space and 45 m^2 of 'open' space. This has led to the concept of a diagram-like cellular layout that bears striking similarities to the planning of other disciplinary spaces, such as the panopticon, the military camp, and so on (cf. Palomino 2021). In order to prepare the expansion of Zaatari camp, it was divided into sub-camps or districts (twelve in total), and each district was again divided into twelve plots (excluding the four districts that belonged to the 'old camp', specifically plots D1, D2, D3 and D12). Each plot was equipped with one water distribution point and four communal latrines, while every two plots shared three communal kitchens. Satellite images show that additional spaces were reserved to the side of each block for multi-activity centres. Each plot followed a grid of twelve lines and seven rows of shelters, and each shelter hosted a family of five people.

The result of this type of planning is a layout with multiple 'faces'. For instance, it reminds us of modernist planning principles, which advocated the spatial separation of different functions in the city (Le Corbusier 1986, 1987). These principles have been denounced for failing to acknowledge the complex, dynamic and messy ways in which cities function. Moreover, the resulting layout epitomizes the criticism of humanitarian planning principles implemented in camps, particularly in relation to their imposed, decontextualized and colonial character, and the way they are forced on people with little understanding of their culture and background (Herz 2008). In addition, such a layout promotes control over refugees. The subtle arrangement of the architectural elements contributes to the production of a disciplinary space.

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) suggests that 'discipline' was born when the art of controlling the human body was cultivated. Considering how the body and the dwelling are intrinsically and inevitably interlinked (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995b), this may warrant taking another look at the resulting layout for the planned parts of Zaatari camp, especially as it resonates with other camps around the world. Interestingly, taken in its entirety, the layout resembles that of a house, but in a fragmented manner. Refugees are placed in a living area designated exclusively as a residential zone. For cooking, they have to go to communal kitchens, and for bathing, they have to go to the communal latrines. The dwelling, as a complex, dynamic and self-contained microcosm, thereby becomes fragmented, broken into manageable pieces and spread over a vast area of space. At

the same time, it is reduced into an abstract and 'cellular' space; namely, the shelter. The shelter is then placed within a hierarchy of divisions, diagrammatic layouts and measurements that contribute to the production of a disciplinary space — a machine for care and control.

To reflect on this notion of the camp as a machine is important for two reasons: first, it allows us to better understand what these subtle arrangements of elements and architecture do to the people who experience them; second, it highlights an underlying network of power relations that is materialized in these spatial arrangements. At first glance, such simplistic layouts appear to stem from the state of emergency characterizing the situation — they seem to be merely a consequence of a series of pragmatic decisions. However, what they actually do is to place refugees in a fragmented 'machine for living', as Le Corbusier once called the dwelling — a machine they first have to dismantle in order to humanize it and make dwelling inside it possible. To reduce the level of abstraction of this image, I will now outline a few examples of how this machinery of the camp, taking Zaatari as an example, was gradually dismantled by refugees.

Dismantling Zaatari camp

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary (2019), the word 'dismantling' means 'the process of taking a machine apart into separate pieces'. In refugee camps, this process is multifaceted. For one thing, it entails the subversion of imposed power relations, which can be seen in the many ways refugees have replanned, reused and rearranged the architectural elements used in planning the camp. Second, it includes the fragmentation and dissolving of other structures imposed on refugees, whether physical or metaphysical, such as the physical aspects of the shelter, as well as the economic structures. In the following, I will highlight how refugees deployed various practices, material and non-material, in dismantling Zaatari camp and in preparation for it to be reassembled. The purpose of reassembling the camp and its different fragments was to create a counter design: to collect the fragmented parts of the dwelling and put them back together in different designs and forms, as we will see later. To start this discussion, I will return to the planned layout of Zaatari camp that was discussed earlier.

In 2013, refugees were taken to the newly-planned area of the camp. However, due to the unexpected rise in arrival rates and the inability to organize refugees' settlement on site as was initially planned, the refugees started to reshape the original layout. Some began to relocate their shelters, while others settled next to relatives and people they already knew. The spaces in between the shelters gradually became populated. In just a short period of time, the humanitarian agencies' layout

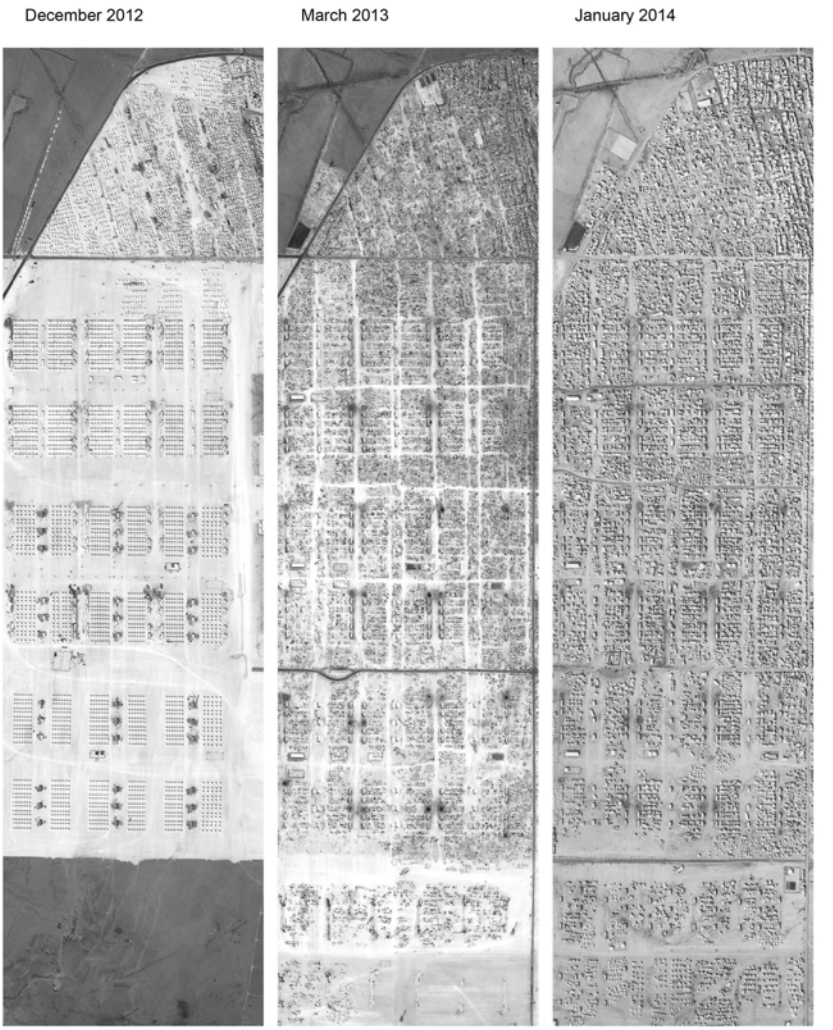
of Zaatari camp started to disappear. While this process is indeed reminiscent of squatting practices in residential areas and ghettos, what is significant here is that by relocating, rotating and replacing shelters, in tandem with refugees gathering, dispersing and re-distributing across the space, the humanitarian order was being subverted. In particular, the disciplinary layout of the camp — implemented with the objective of distributing bodies in fixed places and in order to prevent gatherings or unwanted movement — was gradually broken down. The rearrangement of subtle architectural elements, such as the shelter, introduced new power relations to the space of the camp. One of the most complex spaces in this respect was the 'old camp', as a site planner explained: 'it got so crowded and that does not fit with our standards. We need to be able to bring emergency cars or fire fighters there whenever needed; we are even thinking of widening the streets there so our cars can get through.' Indeed, these comments remind us of Hausmann's famous plan for Paris. In that sense, by disturbing and subverting the geometric layout of the camp, and by producing heterogeneous territories of concentrations and dispersions, refugees introduced a new spatial order — one that resisted and opposed the disciplinary machinery of the camp.

Similar transformations could also be observed in relation to communal facilities. Refugees began tapping into the lighting poles, extending wires to their shelters and to newly emerging dwelling structures. Over time, lighting poles became hubs, used to 'individualize' what had initially been intended for communal purposes. Communal kitchens and latrines were similarly appropriated. These appropriations, however, were not inclined towards a general 're-purposing', nor did they suggest a change in use. Instead, the facilities were simply dismantled, and the components obtained in this way were utilized for individual purposes; more precisely, for the purpose of dwelling. For example, communal latrines and kitchens were built from concrete blocks, water pipes and other elements. In the 'old camp', some of these facilities disappeared entirely, as refugees began to dismantle them. 'One time we couldn't locate a communal toilet that was just built. It had entirely vanished! Thank God we had Google satellite images to prove to the donors that it had been built there, and that it had been entirely dismantled by refugees' said the camp manager, Kilian Kleinschmidt. In that sense, dismantling the camp provoked a dilemma: while relief organizations saw such practices as vandalism, refugees considered them to be a necessity stemming from the need to dwell — a need that was suspended in the logic of the camp and the shelter. 'My mother is old and sick, and she can't walk. How am I supposed to take her to the toilet every time she needs to! I also have two young daughters; I don't trust sending them to the toilets alone at night by themselves!' — a male refugee explained. The elements extracted from communal facilities and infrastructures were reassembled anew within the sphere of the dwelling. Electricity cables could be seen stretched, branched and raised over more than four or five dwellings; pipes would be buried in the ground, creat-

ing a network for channelling waste water; concrete blocks were used to construct individualized toilets and bathing areas, and some even used them to create seating areas next to the entrances of their shelters or their newly emerging dwelling structures. The materials brought by humanitarian organizations were dissected from the system they had been placed in, and they resurfaced with different sets of meanings, cultural codes and social relations.

A lighting pole, tapped into by multiple families in Zaatari camp
A dismantled communal latrine in the old camp

Satellite images showing the dismantlement of the humanitarian spatial order in Zaatari camp



Source: Author's own, based on Google Earth.

In addition, the dismantling practices in refugee camps extended to other, 'invisible' structures, such as economic relations. Economic factors often dictate whether camps are built in the first place. In the Global South, humanitarian camps are built to isolate refugees from the economic structures of the nation state, as these are often fragile and underdeveloped (see for instance Turner 2015). In that sense, placing refugees in camps implies that these camps should come with their own economic model; one based on standardized humanitarian relief. Imagine a city-sized camp with 80,000 refugees from diverse backgrounds and with different skills, who all receive the same amount of aid (cash or items), who are expected to exchange cash for items found in one supermarket and who are asked to survive on this model until the condition of 'self-reliance' can be claimed (UNHCR 2005). Although one may arguably be more inclined to describe this economic model as 'utopian' than as 'disciplinary' when compared with the previously mentioned aspects, it is nevertheless a part of the machinery of the camp, insofar as it treats refugees as a homogeneous group worthy of the same and equal humanitarian assistance.

Dismantling the economic model in refugee camps takes place by disrupting the circuit of giving and receiving, and by introducing the received aid into complex, dynamic and overlapping cycles of economic relations. For instance, vouchers distributed by the WFP in Zaatari camp were sold and exchanged at lower prices, and the single market built by relief organizations was replaced by hundreds of smaller shops, cropping up in different sizes and locations, and offering a variety of services. In this context, therefore, the dismantling of the economic system imposed on camps does not resist discipline spatially, but instead disrupts homogeneous and small circuits of aid, using their elements to compose multiple economies. These include shops, the emergence of businesses and professions, the selling of property and the exchange of non-food items (see Dalal 2015). While it has been observed that camps tend to turn into economic hubs within a certain amount of time after their inception (see Montclos and Kagwanja 2000), in Zaatari camp the boost to the local economy had an even bigger significance. In fact, it led to the emergence of a substantial market that was estimated to be circulating 2 million USD a month — which 'impressed even seasoned humanitarian workers as well as Jordanians with experience in other refugee camps' (UNHCR 2014, 12). Moreover, it led to the emergence of a 'caravan' market, which will be explored later. Before going on with the analysis, however, it is important to showcase the 'caravan' as a special and influential archetype that had a major impact on how Zaatari camp was spatialized and materialized over time.

Hundreds of shops opened around the main streets in the camp

Caravanization

The development of camps around the world has brought with it a new type of shelter, namely the prefab or the caravan. Countless refugees — many of whom were Syrians placed in camps from Iraq to Turkey, Greece, Germany and Jordan — have been sheltered in prefabs. Major corporates such as IKEA have even shown an

interest in developing this model. Scholars have drawn attention to the container, or caravan as they are called in Zaatari camp, as a new humanitarian archetype, closely linked to the modern economy, in the way that containers play a role in concentrating and dispersing refugees in space (see Baumann 2020; also Pascucci 2021; Scott-Smith 2017a).

The 'caravanization' of Zaatari camp — referring to the process of replacing tents with caravans — was shaped by various factors that made the process unique to this space. For instance, the use of caravans as shelters in the camp was not initially intended. The collapse of tents in a snowstorm that hit Zaatari camp in November 2012 triggered an emergency response (UNHCR 2014). Relief organizations, in particular from Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, were among the first to donate caravans to Zaatari camp, aiming to help families that had been left without shelters. As noted earlier, this took place at a time when the camp was still growing rapidly. The first caravans were placed in the 'old camp', but soon after, the camp management decided to adopt this as a new policy. The first families to have arrived at the camp were given caravans to replace their tents. A family of five was provided with one caravan, larger families — as well as those with injured members or vulnerable cases — were given an additional one. Newly arriving refugees, on the other hand, were at this stage still being given tents. Thus, between 2012 and 2015, the camp was a mixture of tents and caravans. This situation offered refugees different elements they could experiment with, while designing their dwellings.

Generally, the caravanization process was chaotic for various reasons. First, its dependence on donations meant that the number of caravans available to refugees varied over time. On some occasions, the UNHCR had to distribute hundreds of caravans that had suddenly arrived at the camp. At other times, there was a longer waiting period for more donations to come in so that the demand could be met. Therefore, the availability of caravans — and thus the number of them — in Zaatari camp fluctuated over the years, but kept on steadily increasing from a few hundred in 2013 to over 26,000 by 2017. Second, the fact that several different donors were involved resulted in a diversity of caravan typologies. For instance, while the majority of caravans were movable,[1] at a later stage and in an attempt to bring back the 'disciplinary' layout of the camp, some caravans were developed to be fixed in place and were equipped with their own kitchenette and toilet/bathroom. The number of fixed caravans, however, was somewhat limited in comparison with the movable caravans, which remained the standard type. Additionally, the diversity of donors led to a wide range of caravan sizes and specifications. The mainstream model, for

1 Refugees invented various techniques to move caravans, such as placing them on a light structure made of few metal beams attached to wheels, or by sliding them on metal plates or rolling them on empty gas cylinders.

example, was a 5 x 3 metre Saudi caravan, while the favoured one was the Kuwaiti caravan, which measured 6 x 3.5 metres and featured high-quality materials. Third, the allocation of caravans varied and was dependent on the availability of space in the camp. This resulted in the emergence of a socially constructed understanding of the camp's space that contrasts with the one imposed by the humanitarian regime. Zaatari camp was perceived by refugees as comprising non-geometrical territories of different shapes and sizes, each carrying the names of the Gulf countries from which their caravans were donated. This different territorial understanding of the camp was common among refugees, particularly during the first years before they became accustomed to the numerical system suggested by the camp planners. The contrast between refugees' bottom-up vision of the camp and the humanitarian regime's top-down planning reveals the two spatial orders in play. By November 2015, all the tents had been replaced by caravans (Al-Shawabkeh 2015), but the caravan donations continued, primarily for the purpose of replacing and repairing damaged ones through a special programme tailored by the NRC.

The caravanization process gave Zaatari camp a very distinctive look. Its components — the caravans — were moved, rotated, relocated, dismantled and reassembled in various ways to enable dwelling, as the following chapters in this book will chronicle. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the subtle and slow movement of caravans over the years went along with a network of underlying social relations, starting with those who had been given the container as a new living archetype. In the following, I will shed some light on the people who lived in the containers of Zaatari camp.

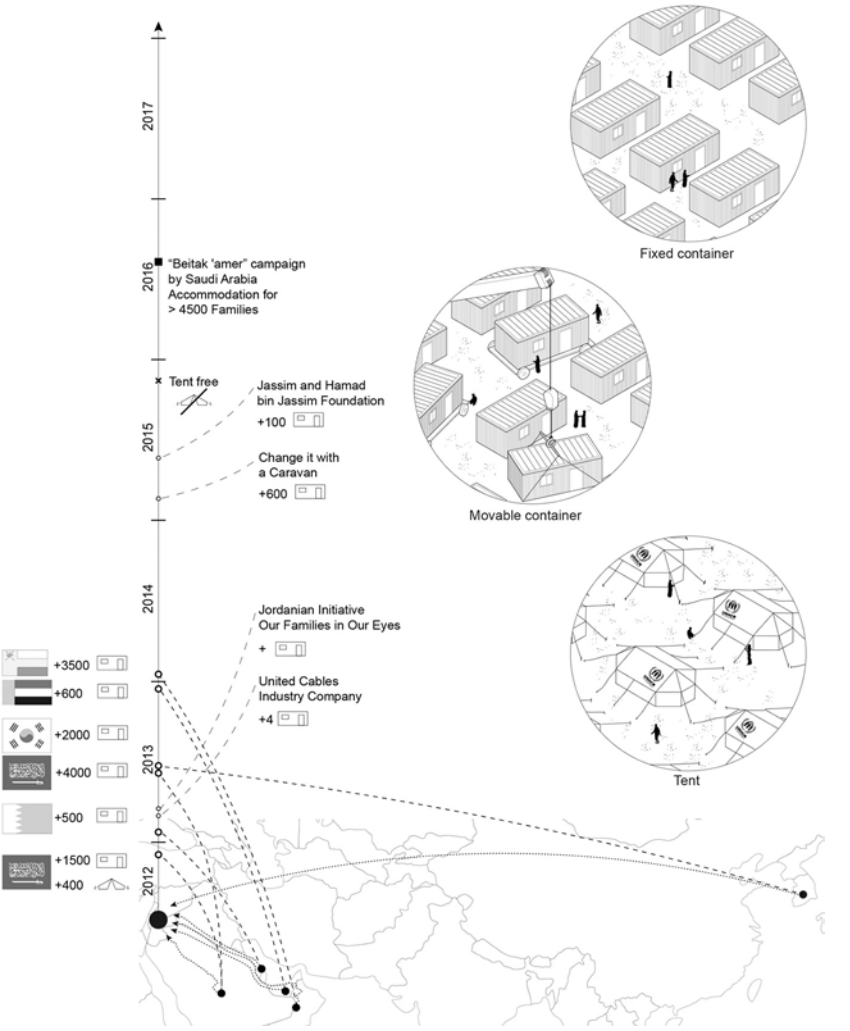
Refugees' origins and backgrounds

Refugees tend to be perceived and dealt with by the humanitarian regime as a homogeneous and abstract group of people. This renders them voiceless and de-historicized figures, detached from the previous contexts in which they used to live. In the context of Zaatari camp, and unlike other camps, a little more effort was put into understanding the populations accommodated there. The chaos prevailing in the camp during its first years, while it was still expanding, forced relief organizations to implement various scanning and population surveys. 'Zaatari camp is probably one of the most surveyed and mapped camps in the world', explained Léa Macias, a researcher working in this field. These different surveys offer us a better image of those inhabiting the camp, but they only provide a vague sense of their identity, background, economic status and culture. For instance, by the end of 2015, it was found that 83.1% of refugees in Zaatari camp originated from Daraa, 14% from Rural Damascus, 1.8% from Homs, 1.1% from Damascus and 0.8% from other areas (UNICEF and REACH 2015). Considering that Daraa is one of the

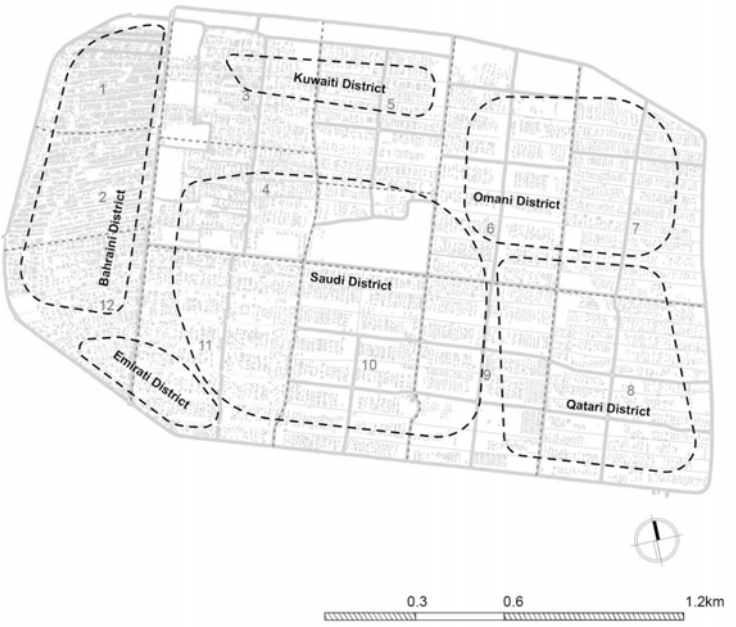
biggest regions in Syria, the survey provides another three sub-categories in Daraa that refer to its three governorates (Daraa, Izraa and As-Sanamayn). The statistics show that out of the 83.1% from Daraa, 21.8% are from As-Sanamayn, 29.6% are from Izraa and 48.6% are from the Daraa governorates.

Refugees using a caravan conveyor to relocate a caravan after it had been placed on site

A timeline showing the dates, numbers and sources of the caravans donated to Zaatari camp between 2012 and 2017 (based on multiple sources)



Estimated boundaries of the districts as perceived by refugees (based on interviews)



While such statistics may help relief organizations to 'manage' a population, they remain very managerial and abstract in that they overlook refugees' cultural identities, which can be diverse and sometimes contested. For instance in Zaatari camp, refugees originating from governorates such as Daraa, Izraa and As-Sanamayn could have been city dwellers, villagers or even Bedouins. In 2013, many refugees fleeing the eastern parts of the Daraa region were predominately Bedouins living in sedentary communities. Yet these groups, which belonged to such tribes as Al-Juwasmeh, Al-Lujah, Jamalan and Al-Sulat, were effectively invisible to the UNHCR's official surveys and mappings. The differences in cultural habits and practices between the Bedouins and the *Ḥaḍar* (urbanites) led to conflicts, resulting in the relocation of the majority of the Bedouin communities to the less-populated part of the camp. Similarly, refugees who had previously lived in highly urbanized settings, such as Damascus and Homs, encountered villagers and Bedouins, sometimes for the first time. These multiple encounters were observed to have played an important role in shaping the spaces of the camp

(see Dalal 2021). While the encounters might have eventually led to extensive concentrations of Bedouins in the eastern periphery of the camp, particularly in District 8, they did not produce self-contained groupings similar to those witnessed in Palestinian camps during their first years (Peteet 2005). Some of the possible reasons for this might have included the continuous influx of refugees to the camp between 2012 and 2014, the constant mobility of refugees within the camp, the limitations of space during its expansion, and the close inter-cultural relations and connections between most groups descended from larger families and tribes in the Houran Plain, such as the Al-Hraki, Al-Hariri and Al-Zoubi. All these aspects contributed to fairly intense intermingling between the different refugee groups in the camp, even among and with the Bedouin communities. Thus, no clear-cut social territories or boundaries were constructed, except for the area with a large Bedouin majority, mentioned earlier.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that while the later refugee numbers in Zaatari camp hovered between 70,000 and 80,000, the majority of the population comprise infants and youths. Indeed, a recent survey shows that about 20 per cent of the camp's population are infants (between one and four years of age), and 25 per cent are children (between five and eleven), with the average size of a family counting six members (UNHCR 2017). This means that about half of the camp's inhabitants are a youth population, most of whom were born and raised in the camp, and most of whom tend to marry at an early age. This became apparent in a survey conducted in 2017, in which 88 per cent of the respondents (made up of 30,704 people, with roughly equal proportions of men and women aged between 18 and 59) were married and had three to six children (UNHCR 2017). These statistics highlight the nature of the social structures in Zaatari camp, which are predominantly based on extended family relations and strongly encourage marriage for adolescents. One important reason for this lies in the connection between family and shelter. For instance, while a family of five has to share one caravan during their stay in Zaatari camp, the marriage of one or two of its members allows them to form a new family, thereby becoming eligible for additional caravans. Moreover, in addition to marriage, the complexity of social relations — shaped by such events as divorce, arrival, departure, relocation or the death of a family member — has a significant impact on how the dwelling spaces are reassembled.

From dismantling to reassembling

Zaatari camp is a complex and dynamic space. It resembles a unique experiment, in which planning methodologies and norms, humanitarian economies, materiality, shelter and infrastructure, and people's origins and backgrounds have been brought together, producing a disciplinary machine. In this chapter, the focus had

been on the notion of *dismantling*. Available literature renders the process of dismantling under generic terms such as camps' urbanization or the appropriation of space. While those terms are important, and are essential in order to understand the multi-scalar dimensions of dwelling in a camp, *dismantling* is intrinsically embedded within the web of power relations that produces a camp. The planning of refugee camps inevitably means forcing them to become politico-spatial apparatuses for governing refugees. This manifests spatially, materially and even economically. In Zaatari camp, the arrangement of shelters and infrastructures within the planned plots, and the policies of distributing refugees within available shelters, revealed the face of this disciplinary machine. However, this power constellation appeared momentarily and disappeared shortly after, due to extensive dismantling practices. Shelters were relocated and rearranged, spaces were renamed, infrastructures were reused and dismantled, and economic structures were adjusted.

Dismantling the camp, therefore, is a process in which the camp as a composition of power relations is broken down into elements, and in which these relations are subverted. This not only destroys and disempowers the disciplinary machine of the camp over time, but also gives refugees new elements, which they can piece together to dwell in there. This means that the notion of dismantling always needs to be juxtaposed with the disciplinary machine of the camp — which can differ in its elements, policies and composition from one camp to another. It also means that while dismantling the camp may appear as a series of appropriations when looked at separately and on the micro scale, its relationships to power and to the disciplinary space, as shown in this chapter, allow it to reveal a holistic process in which the camp is not only broken down into elements, but is also *reassembled*. These practices of reassembling — their dynamics, rhythms and scales — will be the focus in the following three chapters.