

“This Damn War!” Family Dynamics and Resilience in Za’atari Camp in Jordan¹ Christine Huth-Hildebrandt² & Nour Hammash³

“We all depend on each other in this family. If you go hungry, we go hungry. What we buy for ourselves, we buy for you.”

Ali Aymar to his daughter-in-law

Abstract

Jordan is one of the countries most affected by the Syrian crisis, as it hosts the second-highest percentage of refugees per capita globally. In the aftermath of the Syrian crisis, 1.3 million refugees arrived in Jordan, but only about 740,000 are officially registered with the UNHCR. They mainly come from Syria but also from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, new refugee camps have been established to house the people who have fled. In the twelfth year of the crisis, many still live far from their homes, and in these camps initially established as emergency shelters. Za’atari is the largest and best-known of the northern Jordanian camps near the Syrian border. Since its establishment in 2012, Za’atari camp has become a symbol of the displacement of Syrians throughout the Middle East and now houses around 82,500 people. As part of a qualitative study, we interviewed 30 families who have lived in Za’atari camp for over ten years. It was to find out what life is like for them today, what each individual’s vision of the future is, and what their ideas are for making these visions a reality within their families.⁴ Among the families were also couples who have opted for a polygamous way of life. The family of Ali Aymar with his two wives Lina and Reem is one such case. This article is about reconstructing the life story of this family in its familial contexts. In a polygamous constellation, in which not only two, but three families of origin are interconnected, more complex questions or problems arise that affect everyday survival in a camp situation. This is particularly true when new decisions must be made due to displacements or shifting geopolitical dynamics, and families are required to navigate new paths while considering the future aspirations of all involved. The Aymar family is not an isolated case, neither within the camp nor outside. Karasapan (2017) assumes that polygamy has increased both within Syria and among displaced

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⁴ A study conducted by Nour Hammash on the basis of these discussions with families in the Za’atari camp will be published shortly.

populations⁵. The case shows how essential it is to have background knowledge of the complexity of such polygamous constellations during counseling sessions in the camps. Only in this way can a joint search for feasible options take place during the mediation process when diverging ideas arise, so that the future aspirations of the individuals do not become unrealistic dreams for all concerned due to insurmountable obstacles.

Key Words:

displacement; Jordan; polygamy; life and family reconstruction; refugee camps

1 The Importance of Diversity in Arab Refugee Families in Jordan

Displacement and life in a refugee camp have a profound impact on the way of life and social life of the people affected. Qualitative research approaches not only make it possible to capture these living environments, but also help understand the perspectives of those who have experienced the associated changes. Accordingly, these approaches serve to explore new aspects about which very little is known, and to integrate experiential knowledge from the perspective of those affected into the research results, in order to gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances and future plans (Oliver, 2012).

Displacement not only changes the physical environment of the people affected, it also brings about changes in familial structures and relationships due to the emergence of dramatically different living situations. As opposed to couples and families with local roots, displaced individuals and families have to develop a culture that is geared towards adhering to certain guidelines and regulations of the host society and reconciling them with their own values and traditions (Glick & Van Hook, 2002).

This process can sometimes lead to dilemmas that can only be solved with professional support. Knowledge of existing family contexts and cultural backgrounds is therefore essential for professional social work within this context (Shellenberger, 2007).

To plan targeted and effective support processes and interventions with Syrian refugee families within refugee camps, a solid understanding of the existing diversity is important. Shaped by the cultural, religious, and social diversity in the region, heterogeneity is reflected in the family structures of Syrian refugee families in Jordan. Both traditional and modern family structures coexist, and polygamous lifestyles still exist in the region alongside monogamous family structures. An awareness of these differences is important and enables counseling processes, and interventions that are accepted by the families, and are not based on unrealistic or inappropriate recommendations.

⁵ Polygamous marriages accounted 30 percent of registered marriages in 2015, whereas in 2010 it was only five percent. One of the possible reasons is the relative shortage of men as they go off to fight and are killed, wounded, maimed or go missing. Since polygamy is legal in Syria and all its neighboring countries except Turkey, it makes it an option for women and girls seeking safety (Karasapan 2017).

2 Family Networks in Crisis Regions

The MENA region⁶ is still characterized by a strong family orientation (Rusli, 2020). Family and kinship cohesion helps many people living in poverty to survive. War, flight, or arrests and death have a significant impact on this cohesion: After flight, for example, connections must be re-established with family members who are scattered across different locations. New local and virtual communities emerge in which family life is rebuilt. These communities raise hopes for new opportunities, such as joining relatives on the European continent or in the United States (Grote, 2017). However, networks are also vulnerable due to loss or due to the separation of members from each other. For example, approximately 36.5 percent of all registered Syrian refugees in Jordan are separated from at least one member of their immediate family, with only a small proportion officially registered (McNatt et al., 2018).

Family cohesion signifies stability, is crucial for integration, and well-being in Jordan, as well as to cope with one's own life (Hadfield & Ungar, 2018). In this regard, more complex family relationships, including the present case of a polygamous marriage, can become a source of distress, and insecurity for its members, but also contribute to stability and security (Al-Krenawi, 2014). Polygamy is possible in Jordan under Islamic law. Although polygamy is rejected by the majority of the population today (Sarhan, 2012), there continue to be considerations, such as necessities or even constraints, that lead families to choose such a life style, especially since there are no legal prohibitions against it.

As of January 2023, about 80 percent of refugees in Jordan were living outside camps, with relatives or in their own accommodation (UNHCR, 2023). Nevertheless, a large number remain dependent on continuing to live in the camps and planning their next steps for their future from there, to the extent that such planning is possible. After an initial emergency phase, in which a tent city was built from scratch with international aid, Za'atari has now developed into a desert city that has become a home base for many refugees (Giebel & Kolbe, 2019). Some of them are becoming increasingly accustomed to the idea of staying and no longer hope to return to their home country. The case presented below describes one such family that has been living in Za'atari Camp for ten years.

In our interviews, we aimed to find out what everyday life is like for families today, what visions for the future individuals have, and what ideas exist within the family context for implementing and realizing these visions. The interviews provide insights into the subjective views, interpretations and attitudes of the interviewees. These insights were gained through questions that were specifically tailored to the perspective and biography of the individual (Schütze, 2016). It is important to note that the answers are tied to the moment of speaking, from which retrospective and prospective narratives, evaluations, and other reflections were made. Despite this temporal context, the interviews provide knowledge about the subjective perspectives, interpretations and attitudes of the interviewees, without which it is difficult to provide well-founded advice on everyday conflicts and future prospects. In the case presented here, we were particularly interested in the subjective views that the family members of a polygamous family have of their family

⁶ MENA stands for 'Middle East and North Africa'. The acronym refers to the region from Morocco to Iran and includes the Arabic-speaking world and Iran.

structure and way of life. As well as how polygamous marriage affects the unity of the family and the individual future plans of each member.

Fig. 1: The Za'atari Camp extends to the horizon. It hosts over 80,000 refugees and is close to the Syrian border (Al Jazeera Staff, 2022).



Source: Christine Huth-Hildebrandt

Fig. 2: A store on the Champs-Élysée in Camp Za'atari, named by UNHCR staff after the hustle and bustle of the famous Paris street.



Source: Christine Huth-Hildebrandt



The Ali Aymar family⁷ came to Jordan relatively early in the Syrian crisis, between 2012 and 2013. This means that they not only have a long experience living as displaced persons, but that they have also witnessed the camp's development from its early days to its current situation. This is including the development of the camp administration, and the support system provided by the organizations working there.

We were interested in the subjective views of family members of a polygamous family, specifically pertaining to family structure and lifestyle, and how polygamous marriage affects a family unity and their individual members' future plans. Since their arrival in the camp, the three spouses have interacted in ways that each partner interprets individually and in part differently in their own narratives. These interactions are influenced by both, the immediate physical constraints of the camp, and their broader family contexts in and outside the camp. Furthermore, their experiences are shaped by the legal, economic, and social conditions of the host country, which are intertwined with the cultural and religious context of both their home and host countries. All these factors create a complex framework that needs to be taken into account when analyzing the stories they tell here and in later counseling and support processes (Onnen-Isemann & Wimbauer, 2004).

3 The Family Aymar

3.1 Normative

Ali is the head of the family. He was born in Syria in 1972 and lived with his family of origin in a village in the Daraa region. He characterizes the situation there as a happy life: "My family lived close to each other in our houses on our lands and grew all kinds of vegetables. We were happy in Syria".

Ali comes from a large family. Three of his siblings still live in Syria. His oldest brother has passed away. All of his male siblings are older than he is. He has three sisters for whom he feels responsible. "If my siblings need me, I won't leave them, even if I have to beg for it". But his priority is "of course my mother, then my siblings, and then my cousins".⁸

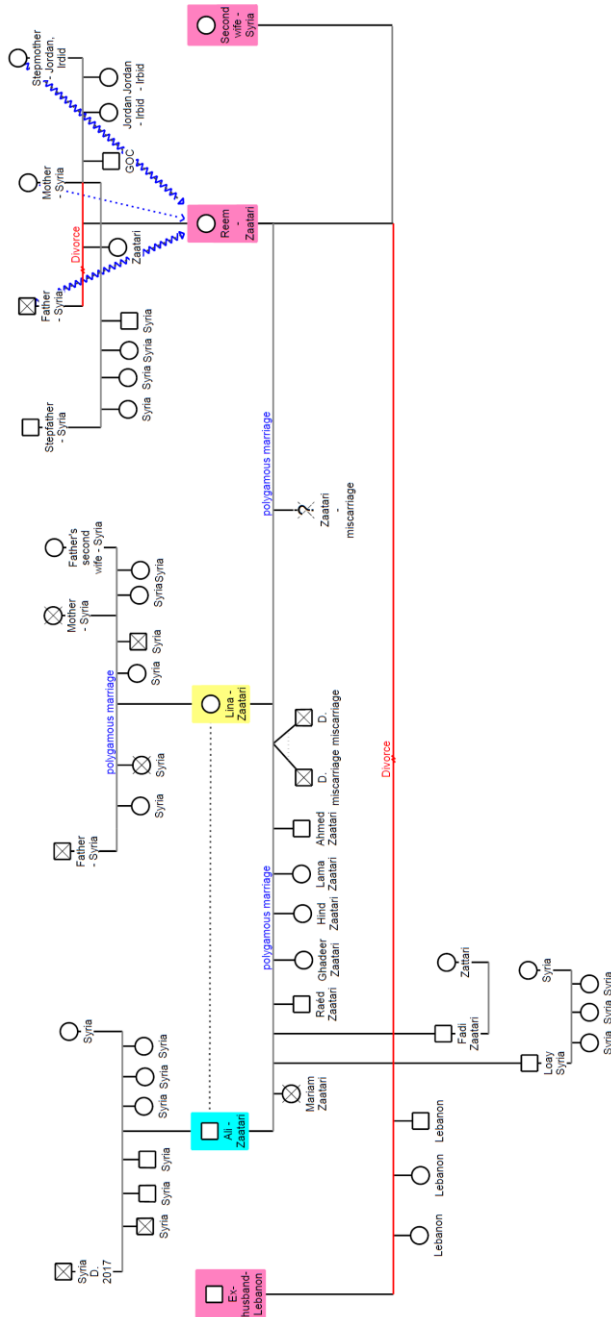
Before the polygamous family came into being, Ali was married to Lina. She came from the family of a friend from Kfar Sousse. They were engaged for 8 months and married in 1993. Their first daughter Mariam died after birth. Next, Loay was born in 1998, then Fadi and Raéd, and in 2006 their daughter Ghadeer.

After years, Ali fell in love with another woman, whom he also wanted to marry. However, when she found out about his first wife Lina, she was shocked, fainted, and had to go to the hospital. Nevertheless, Ali's father tried to negotiate a marriage contract for him, which was unsuccessful. After six years had passed without any more children, his mother-in-law convinced him to expand his family further. He had three more children with his first wife in addition to the four that were already born: Hind, Lama and Ahmed. They were then expecting twins, but they were stillborn in the seventh month.

⁷ Based on ethical requirements for social science research, the names of the interviewees have been anonymized and permission to use the interview has been obtained.

⁸ While more and more families in the region are living in nuclear households, extended kinship ties remain important, including not only parents but also cousins. A household may therefore consist of a married couple, the unmarried children, and possibly other relatives for whom the head of the family feels responsible.

Fig. 3: Genogram of the Aymar family. All sees himself as the head of the family, even though he has older brothers. Graphic: Nour Hammash



In September 2012, Ali was arrested and charged for being acquainted with terrorists and harboring terrorists in his basement. He remained in prison for 13 days. After his release, he left his village and crossed the border into Jordan with his wife and children. They planned to stay there for "one to three months" until the situation calmed down. They were housed in Za'atari Camp:

"On April 2, 2013, we arrived at the camp and were given tents. We started from scratch and did everything ourselves, from making and pouring concrete, to buying a TV, a refrigerator and a washing machine. We built our lives from scratch."

In the camp, he then married a second wife, Reem, in 2015, emphatically stating that he had not planned to marry again and considered this marriage as a kind of "destiny and providence". He does not talk about his personal reasons. According to him, this second marriage is not a problem for family cohesion: "On the contrary, we have great respect for my second wife, from the youngest to the oldest family member". He emphasizes that his son's wife, who lives in the camp with him, also respects Reem, and considers both women as her mother-in-law and treats them with the same love and respect. No children resulted from this second marriage.

However, Ali plans a different future for his daughters than for his wives. He expects them to be able to make independent decisions about their lives, irrespective of marriage, and therefore attaches great importance to their education. He is also against early marriage and considers such a marriage to be an obstacle to a decent life later on. He wants his girls to study in disciplines that are socially considered prestigious, as a guarantee for a future without further deterioration of their circumstances. A degree is

"their weapon. Without asking their husband, brother or father for help, they will remain independent no matter what, even if they are girls. Maybe one ends up marrying someone who ruins her life, maybe he divorces her, and she's screwed. Whatever happens to my daughters in their future marriages, education will serve as a social guarantee for them to live a comfortable life."

Ali has not yet found an opportunity to work in Jordan:

"Since my arrival, I have submitted applications and requests for work. But I have not been hired. I don't know who gets priority and what this is based on. God help me! If my children did not work, I would not be able to live properly. But even if my sons work, it is not reasonable for them to take care of their sisters and me. I am the father, and this is my responsibility."

The fact that he is unable to provide for his family, is the most stressful element of camp life for him. He says he is surrounded by men who are providers for their families, some of whom have even been able to open own businesses or small enterprises in the camp. This puts immense pressure on Ali, and he worries about his standing in the camp community. From his point of view, the social fabric and the position of the families have changed in the course of their presence in the camp. There are now those who have managed to fend for themselves and those who continue to be completely dependent on the help of humanitarian organizations.

He does not want to return to Syria and at most, would only consider returning for his son. His son, who was expelled from the camp three months after their arrival and sent back to Syria because he was found outside the camp without papers.

"Honestly, we are lost. This damn war! What can I do? How can I take care of 18 people for whom I am responsible? Here in the camp, I have my late brother's son with me, also my youngest brother's son and the daughter who is married to her cousin. And there are my three sisters and my oldest son in Syria with his children. Conditions are safe here, but we wish for a better life. But there is no future for the better, and wherever the refugee goes, he has no future."

However, if he saw a way to get to Europe, he would leave the camp and continue to migrate. He concludes the conversation by describing examples in Europe "where people are better off, and they have everything".

3.2 Lina

Lina, Ali's first wife, came from Cham. Her family circumstances were not easy. Her father died when she was six years old. Her mother wanted her to attend school. She finished ninth grade and started working as a seamstress.

At seventeen, she married Ali, who was twenty years old at the time. She got pregnant, but her daughter died at birth. Since her marriage, Lina has lived with Ali at her in-laws' home and has now been married for 35 years. She describes her life in Za'atari as "very difficult":

"When I arrived at the camp, I had no acquaintances or relatives, nothing except my children and my husband. We have been living in Za'atari for ten years now. The first years were very difficult. When we arrived, my youngest daughter was six months old, and Hind got asthma. We lived in tents for three years until we got a trailer."

She misses her eldest son Loay, who was sent back to Syria years ago.

"Now he's an officer in the army there, married and has three daughters I've never seen. Raéd, had to drop out of school after Loay's deportation to help take care of the family".

In the camp, Lina observes changes in social interactions and interprets them as fundamental changes in gender relations:

"I feel like gender roles have completely changed here. A woman starts to play the role of a man. The NGOs here in the camps offer work opportunities mainly for women, hardly any for the men. When a woman works, the man stays behind to take responsibility for the household. How difficult this is for a man's status!"

Coming from a rural background, Lina naturally took on the chores in the camp. For her, taking a job outside the family environment and earning a wage is something reserved for men. If a man does not fulfill this task of providing financially for his family, she believes it damages his reputation and rank in the community. Lina herself felt very uncomfortable during her six months working for an NGO in the camp and explains that she felt less worthy in this new role and even ashamed of it. She believes that if she had stayed in Syria, her sons never would have allowed her to agree to paid work.

Lina suffered greatly from her husband's second marriage. She reports that Ali's nephews persuaded her husband to marry a second wife. She received a video from relatives showing the wedding festivities. She then spent four months in psychotherapy. "I was pregnant with my youngest son at the time, I was very angry and left the camp. But I couldn't stand living outside the camp in the long run and trying to get a foothold there."

At some point she made peace with the second woman, went back to the camp and gave birth to her child there. She justifies this decision by saying that Za'atari has become her

new home, and she feels safer there. She also thinks of her children, who would have lost their father.

"I have three daughters, so I surrendered to my situation. Now I feel like I don't have a man in my life anymore. He doesn't sleep in the house anymore except for the first two weeks".⁹

Still, Lina stands by Ali and forgives him. "Even after everything he's done, I still love him. I married him at a young age, and he was more than a husband, a father figure and a whole world to me."

Fig. 4: Numerous schools have sprung up in Za'atari. The first opened just two months after the crisis began. Displayed here is a school container of a project by the German Jordanian University, donated by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.



Source: Christine Huth-Hildebrandt

She interprets Ali's second marriage as a reaction to the changed living conditions and relaxed manners in the camp. "I think if we were in Syria, my husband would not have married again." She continues, "In Za'atari, there is more contact with women. Women also have more freedom in the camp, and men are exposed to a worse social and financial situation". So, she can process her personal injuries due to her husband's second marriage, without blaming any family members, and ignores the fact that it was members of her own family who encouraged Ali to marry for a second time.

⁹ Since in a polygamous marriage the wives are to be treated equally, he sleeps two weeks a month in his first wife's trailer and two weeks a month in his second wife's trailer.

3.3 Reem

Reem is Ali's second wife. She was born in Damascus. Her family of seven consists of her, her sister, her half-brother, two half-sisters, her father and her stepmother. In the early years of her life, she grew up believing that her stepmother was her biological mother. She did not meet her biological mother until she was six years old.

At the age of 21, she met her first husband, a Syrian-Palestinian merchant. The marriage lasted ten years. During this time, her husband married another financially independent woman, ten years older, without informing Reem. She was pregnant at the time. The marriage lasted two more years before Reem filed for divorce.

During the war, Reem's father died, and she lost her half-brother, "who died a month after being sent to prison. He was mistakenly kidnapped because his name was similar to one of the people wanted in Syria." She saw his body, cruelly mutilated by torture, in a video.¹⁰ All this hit her hard and she decided to leave the country. Since her children are Palestinian, she feared that they would not be eligible for refugee asylum in Jordan and would not be able to stay in UNHCR camps. Therefore, she handed the children over to their father before leaving Syria. However, this decision was so distressing that she suffered a mental breakdown. Her husband sought refuge in Lebanon with the three children and she made her way to Jordan with her sister.

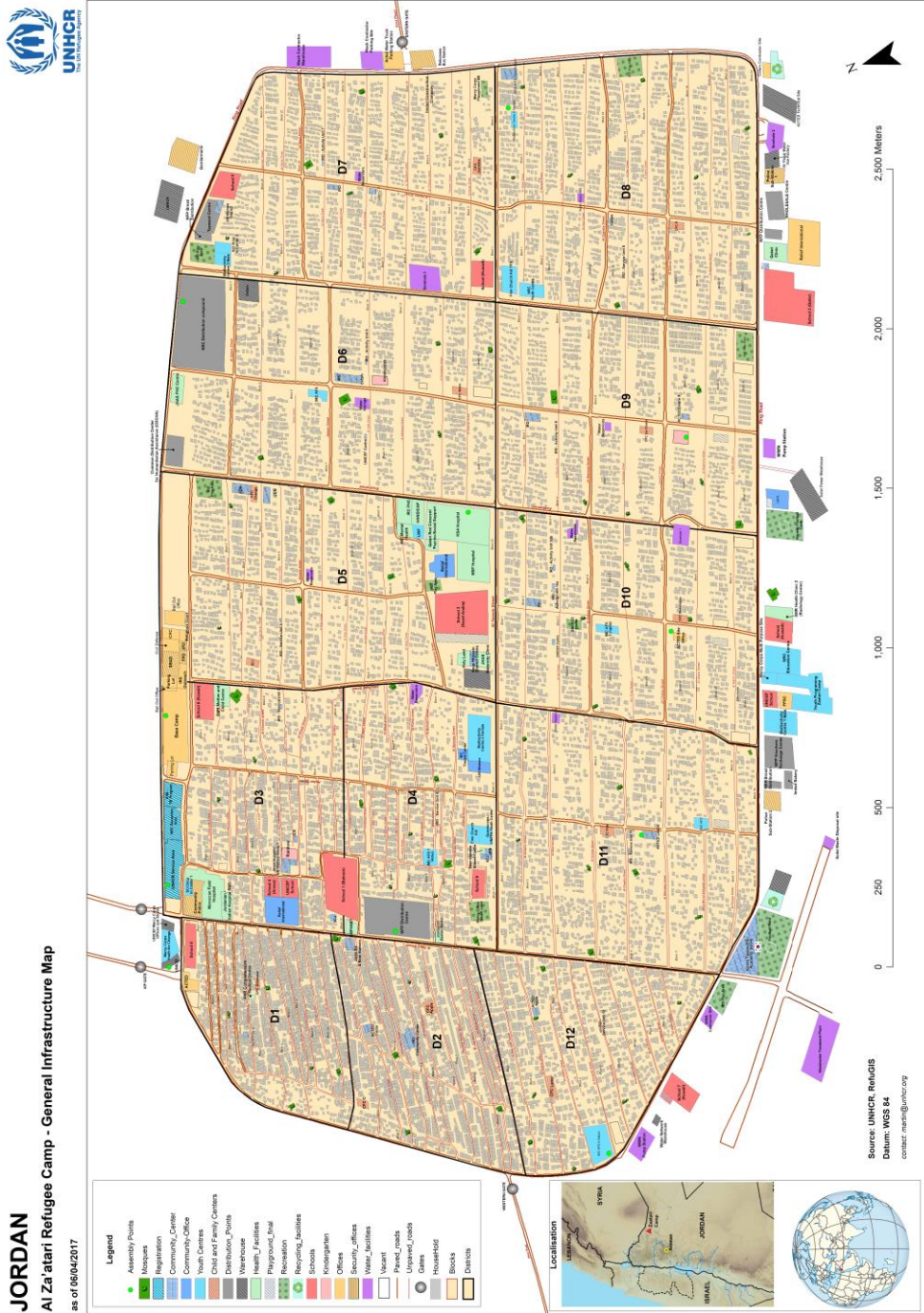
Arriving at the camp, she thought it would only be "for about 20 days", but it turned into years. She describes the situation as stressful and threatening: "I cried for three months, mourning the events and what I had to endure in the camp. They gave me a secluded tent. My emotional and mental state deteriorated." Since it was known in the district that she lived alone in the camp, she was afraid someone would break into her tent at night. At the time, Za'atari was still a field camp under construction with many problems. The fear kept her awake, so she suffered from permanent sleep deprivation. She explains that if she were to cry out as a victim of a night raid, she would be exposed and shamed for the rest of her life. But if she remained silent, she would have to carry that shame and suffering alone.

Reem felt foreign in the camp, as most of the people in her camp district were Huaranis originating from Daraa. She did not feel as if she belonged because of her dialect, even though she had lived in this region during her first marriage.

When she received the news that one of her sons was sick, Reem left the camp and visited him. This was possible because Jordan did not keep its border completely closed to Syrian refugees. However, there were times when restrictions on entry were tightened, especially when there were security concerns and shortages in reception capacity (Achilli, 2015). When she wanted to return to the camp, the border had just closed, leaving her stuck in the border area for three months.

¹⁰ The many personal accounts from such prisons around the world make it understandable why people who have escaped or been released from these violent institutions leave their country as quickly as possible, especially if they see no prospect of political change in the country (cf. Baker, 2022).

Fig. 5: The Za'atari Camp with its subdivision into districts.



Source: UNHCR open street map

Once back in the camp, Reem was shocked to discover that her tent was missing, and all her furniture and belongings were gone. She implored the camp management to give her a trailer so she would feel safer than in a tent, but her wish was not granted at the time. She "really hated the camp from the bottom of my heart." She became more and more withdrawn and changed from a social, lively, and energetic person to a scared and isolated woman. In 2015, she started working in the camp in different NGOs. However, her feeling of strangeness remained with her. She describes that the work made her tired, depressed, and sick: "I have stomach ulcers, asthma from the weather, and varicose veins in my legs from walking for so long while I was working."

While working, Reem met her current husband. Although she refused to marry a married man, she nevertheless decided to accept his marriage proposal to secure her livelihood. The lonely life in the camp and rumors that the Syrians would be sent back again were another factor that tipped the scale.

"If I had to go back to Syria, I would have no one, no house, no siblings, no father, I can't live with my mother for various reasons. And when I met Ali, I thought of all these possibilities and decided to marry him."

Based on her own experience, Reem knows how it feels when a husband takes a second wife. She even recommended to Ali's first wife that she should not agree to the second marriage. However, since Lina was convinced that she could not dissuade Ali from his plan, she did not intervene but surrendered to her fate. Thus, Reem feels free from guilt towards Lina. She wanted to set an example that things could be different from her own experience. However, many of her statements indicate that this was not unproblematic for all parties involved (see also Al-Sherbiny, 2005).

For Reem, it is important to earn her own money as a woman. She also worked in Syria. Since Ali does not work, even though he has a UNHCR ID card, she sees herself in a dual role, "that of a woman and that of a man. I take care of the family and do the housework". Although both women live in separate trailers, Reem considers herself jointly responsible for all family members through her marriage. Her future plans, however, revolve around the desire to be reunited with her children. She wants to go to Germany together with Ali, and she tells of people who have managed to get there.

4 Remain, Return or Continue Towards an Uncertain Future?

Much has been written about family structures in the MENA region, particularly concerning interdependencies. However, there have been little publications so far about how the stress of displacement and flight affects family groups in everyday life. The Aymar family has somewhat come to terms with living in Za'atari and all family members residing in the camp try to reorganize a life after flight and loss. For many, Za'atari has become a second home. This is also true for Lina. After leaving the camp, pregnant and deeply hurt about her husband's second marriage, she still returned.

In contrast, Reem rejects life in Za'atari Camp, she even despises it. She wants to leave the camp and cannot imagine a future in this desert city. In Ali's narratives, the camp seems to resemble a train station where he has been forced to make makeshift arrangements in a train on a siding – uncertain whether he will be able to transfer to another train, in whatever direction, so that he can fulfill his obligations to his family in a "better world".

Za'atari has changed from a tent city to a permanent city in the desert, where residents from different regions in Syria come together to grow. Women who have arrived in the camp from cities in Syria seem more open in some cases and are more flexible in dealing with the forced changes in their daily lives. This is sometimes perceived with rejection and mistrust by women from rural areas, as they are not used to the overt presence of women in the public sphere, and consequently see it as a possible threat to their own familial peace. Lina finds that women in Za'atari have more freedom compared to the women in her family, who are more conservative and cannot move as freely.

Through marriage, girls and women move into a new family context and bear responsibility in the role assigned to them as mothers of the husband's children. Lina seems to have been completely absorbed in this role until the event of the second marriage disrupted her sense of stability. In her view, Reem had no choice but to think of a second marriage to avoid social discrimination and possibly sexual violence. She could not afford to be selective, as it is not easy for a middle-aged, divorced woman with children to remarry. If a marriage fails – and increasing numbers are documented for Jordan – many of the women return to their families of origin. This is often not possible for Syrian women. Divorced women who support themselves and raise their children alone still face devaluation and great difficulties, as this way of life is almost impossible to sustain economically, and to this day, it is not socially respected (Al-Khataybeh, 2022; El-Saadani, 2006). Ali sees his decision to live with two women as unproblematic for cohabitation. Offering remarriage to women when they are forced to try to manage their lives alone is a common practice and is viewed positively in his environment.

Nevertheless, he seems to understand the possible difficulties and psychological burdens that women in polygamous marriages face. This is reflected in his desires for the next generation: He wants to do everything he possibly can for his daughters to ensure that they stand on their own two feet and do not have to confront dependencies out of compulsion.

5 Conclusion

After 12 years of displacement and exile, the Syrian regime's hitherto rigid political exclusion in the Arab world has been called into question. The first transnational talks are beginning to take place to resolve the crisis. In addition, surrounding countries are reaching their limits in continuing to bear the economic burden of displacement, and international capacity and willingness to provide support is also declining. Concerns about being sent back are spreading among families. Lebanon's and Turkey's approaches point in such directions, and similarly, Jordan is addressing the issue of "voluntary return" to Syria. Families increasingly find themselves in a tangled web of information and rumors, causing some to panic and push forward with their migration efforts at all costs (Luck, 2022).

Ali himself has three options: He can return to Syria, where he would be reunited with his mother, son and sisters. However, his financial situation would be so inadequate that he would not be able to provide for his family. In addition, he does not know which other family members of his family of origin also need help. His two sons would have to serve in the military in Syria. He could also stay in the camp, which would be an attempt to come to terms with his forced displacement. A third option would be to try to emigrate to a third country and settle there. This would be risky with very uncertain prospects. In addition, Ali

has no intention of abandoning his two wives or children. There would only be the possibility of continuing formally with a wife and "a mistress", since polygamy contradicts the laws in Germany. For example, where as a rule only the first marriage is legally recognized, and further marriages are considered null and void. He sums up, "We are lost, we cannot settle in the camp, nor do we have the possibility to seek refuge in another country."

While Reem plans to leave Jordan and seek asylum in another country to be reunited with her children in Lebanon, Lina wants to use money from an inheritance to build a life and source of income in Jordan or Syria. She feels that the need for cultural adjustment and new roots in a foreign country would be a step backwards for her and her daughters, both financially and from a familial perspective.

The family is faced with difficult decisions and conflicts of interest. Due to the respective family backgrounds of the two wives, there are different wishes for the future. The second wife wants to reunite with her children, while the first wife wants to develop a sense of security and start a business in an environment to which she already has cultural ties.

We can see from this family that local and international aid organizations are facing new challenges today. In the early years of the Syrian crisis, aid was primarily focused on establishing services in Jordan in terms of shelter, food supply, education, and health care to provide the most necessities to those arriving.

Now, more counseling concepts are needed that capture the different life concepts and future visions of those living in Za'atari, so that possibilities for the future can be explored adequately. As can be seen from the example of the Aymar family, there is no unified idea as to which of the three permanent solutions – voluntary return, local integration or resettlement in a third country – is preferred by them collectively. Interventions, as the case of the Aymar family shows, therefore, cannot solely be geared to the individual person, but must take into account the various familial structures and dependencies and, if necessary, be prepared for a comprehensive mediation process. At the same time, it is important to pay attention to and sensitively communicate the opportunities that are currently arising and are possible for individual families due to the constantly changing geopolitical situation in the Middle East and the reactions of the immigration countries to these changes.

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