

# Tracing Syrian Refugees Urban Mobilities: The Case of Egypt and Canada

N. Elgendy, N. Hussein

**Abstract**—The current Syrian crisis has caused unprecedented practices of global mobility. The process of forced eviction and the resettlement of refugees could be seen through the insights of the “new mobilities paradigm”. The mobility of refugees in terms of meaning and practice is a subject that calls for further studies. There is a need for the development of an approach to human mobility to understand a practice that is turning into a phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper aims at studying, from a qualitative point of view, the process of movement within the six constituents of mobility defined as the first phase of the journey of a refugee. The second phase would include the process of settling in and re-defining the host country as new “home” to refugees. The change in the refugee state of mind and crossing the physical and mental borders from a “foreigner” to a citizen is encouraged by both the governmental policies and the local communities’ efforts to embrace these newcomers. The paper would focus on these policies of social and economic integration. The concept of integration connotes the idea that refugees would enjoy the opportunities, rights and services available to the citizens of the refugee’s new community. So, this paper examines this concept through showcasing the two hosting countries of Canada and Egypt, as they provide two contrasting situations in terms of cultural, geographical, economic and political backgrounds. The analysis would highlight the specific policies defined towards the refugees including the mass communication, media calls, and access to employment. This research is part of a qualitative research project on the process of Urban Mobility practiced by the Syrian Refugees, drawing on conversational interviews with new-settlers who have moved to the different hosting countries, from their *home* in Syria. It explores these immigrants’ practical and emotional relationships with the process of movement and settlement. It uses the conversational interviews as a tool to document analysis and draw relationships in an attempt to establish an understanding of the factors that contribute to the new-settlers feeling of home and integration within the new community.

**Keywords**—Mobility, refugees, home, integration.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE current global mobility is commonly caused by the process of forced eviction and resettlement of refugees. Yet it is important to have a holistic understanding of the process of mobility through the dual role of both the refugees, with all their choices, capacities, ambitions and motives, and the role of their destinations, whether they were transit or host countries, with their asylum and integration policies that shape the refugees facing economic, social and political challenges.

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The aim of this paper is to understand and trace the process of mobility within the asylum and integration policies of their transit and host countries. It studies the process of movement from a qualitative point of view. The research is based on the study of the two cases of Syrian refugees in Egypt and Canada, exploring individual experiences and personal narratives within the aim of building a holistic understanding of realities and processes of mobility through a number of interviews conducted with two groups of refugees from both countries.

## II. IMAGING THE CRISIS: THE SYRIAN REFUGEES

### A. Background

Since 2011, after anti-government protests in Syria that raged throughout the year, Syrians were forced to leave either their country causing a serious displacement crisis. Syrians had to flee for their own safety and fear of political persecution; execution, rape, torture, enforced disappearance and abduction; indiscriminate shelling and violence; and loss of home, family or livelihood.

### B. Whose Crisis?

"A crisis provides a focus for the development of the discipline." Although Charlesworth was referring to the discipline of international lawyers [1], crises give a sense of urgency and immediate need to all relevant studies. With Michael Reisman's argument [2], about the definition of crises which states that crises or incidents are overt conflict(s) between two or more actors in the international system, comes the primary question of who are the actors of conflict in the Syrian refugees crisis? Or whose crisis is this? Upon these questions and definition, we could say that the conflict causing the current crisis is between the Syrian refugees themselves and the policies of their transit or host countries. There are a lot more politics to point out around the word crisis, its definition and uses than what this research could discuss. But we could mention that it is fundamentally a “crisis” of state power over the transnational human mobility of those whose movements are otherwise presumptively disqualified as “illegal” (effectively, on the grounds of global class, race, or nationality inequalities) [3]. The term “refugee crisis” itself tends to personalize “crisis” and relocate “crisis” in the body and person of the figurative refugee, as if s/he is the carrier of a disease called “crisis,” and thus carries the contagion of “crisis” wherever s/he may go [3].

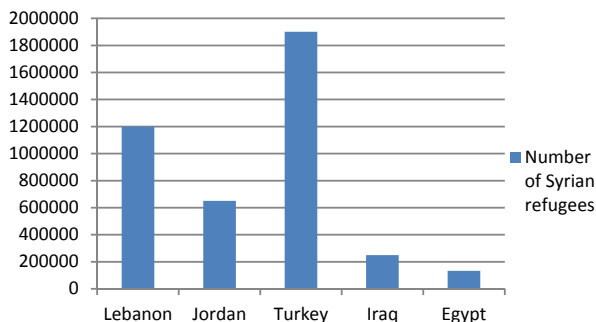


Fig. 1 Refugees in the region: More than 4 million refugees from Syria (95%) are in just five countries Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt [4]

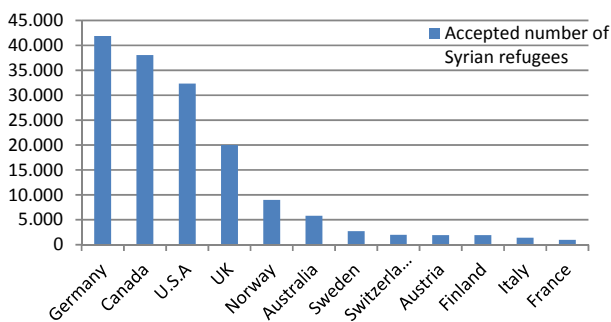


Fig. 2 Countries that agreed to accept Syrian refugees [4]

C. Hosting Countries/ Figures and Statistics

A persuasive and convincing method of imaging and giving a sense of a crisis would be through numbers, graphs and statistics. In short, there is a politics of numbers that is important and crucial to any authorization, organization of data collection, national government and international institutions to give a sense of a crisis whenever or wherever needed. However, those produced numbers and statistical graphs conceal as much as they reveal. They frame crises and problems in given phenomenon to shape affective and political responses to it [3]. Here we seek to present the numbers offered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), taking into consideration the numbers of unregistered refugees and untold fraction of masses of displaced people living beyond the published numbers.

Fig. 1 shows how most of the numbers who fled Syria remained in the Arab region; the majority is in Jordan and Lebanon, with significant populations in Turkey, Iraq and Egypt [4]. However, of the primary host states, only Turkey and Egypt are party to the Convention and they have significant reservations: Egypt curtails refugee entitlement to welfare, employment, education and health; and Turkey only accepts refugees from events occurring in Europe [5]. Outside the Convention, international law also grants everyone the right to seek and enjoy asylum in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* [6].

Germany in Fig. 2 is leading the list of countries, followed

by Canada that has pledged to resettle about 180,000 Syrian refugees. According to the United Nations, Germany has agreed to accept 41,899 refugees, Canada 38,089, U.S. 32,369, United Kingdom 20,000, Norway 9,000, Australia 5,800, Sweden 2,700, Switzerland 2,000, Austria 1,900, Finland 1,900, Italy 1,400, and France 1,000. Based on a backgrounder on Immigration Canada’s website, the government chose Syrian refugees with the help of the United Nations Refugee Agency who were most vulnerable and posed no security risk. This includes complete families, women at risk, and people in the LGBT community [7].

D. The Refugee

According to Amnesty International [8], a refugee is a person who has fled their own country because they have suffered human rights abuses or because of whom they are or what they believe in. Their own government cannot or will not protect them and so they are forced to seek international protection. And regardless of how they arrive in a country and for what purpose, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers’ rights are protected by international law. The first is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 14), which states that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries. And the second is the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which protects refugees from being returned to countries where they risk persecution [8]. However, this is not always the case, as later shown in the participants’ experiences. It is then according to the announced or unannounced policies of those transit or hosting countries to choose how and where to respond to those refugees or asylum seekers. According to the UNHCR, the reality is that only one-third of the world’s 10.5 million refugees now are living in camps. More than half the refugees UNHCR serves now are urban refugees who live in urban settings [9]. According to this research, **a refugee is in a continuous state of mobility till he/she returns home.**

III. URBAN REFUGEES: THE CASE OF EGYPT AND CANADA

An *urban* refugee is a refugee who decided or was obliged for some reasons to settle in an urban area of the country where he or she fled to or found asylum rather than in a refugee camp.

TABLE I  
COMPARISON BETWEEN EGYPT AND CANADA

	Egypt	Canada
Continent	Africa	North America
Language	Arabic	English / French
Religion	Muslim majority	Christian majority
Development	Developing country	Developed country
GDP	\$287 billion	\$1.75 trillion
Unemployment rate	13.2%	6.9%
Population	89.6 million	35.5 million
Population Density	89.99 people per sq. km	3.91 people per sq. km

During our research, we aimed to start our project by a comparative case study between Egypt and Canada immigration policies. Both countries host urban refugees and

have similarities in their policies towards the refugees. However, the contrast between them, in the aspects of geography, culture, religions and language, as referred to Table I, Figs. 3 and 4, gives an important perspective on the

differences between the two cases and the process of urban mobility of refugees and their processes of settling and integration in each of them.



Fig. 3 Distance from Syria to Egypt



Fig. 4 Distance from Syria to Canada

#### A. Egyptian Policies towards Asylum

Egypt hosts a diversified community of thirty nationalities of refugees and migrants from Palestine, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq and other smaller groups from Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Burundi for many years even before the Syrian conflict. Egypt's capital, Cairo, accommodates one of the largest refugee populations living in urban areas [10]. The government does not give any official records of refugees entering the country and the only source of statistics is available by the UNHCR [11], as it determines the refugees' status not the Egyptian government.

In 1951, Egypt and Turkey were the only non-Western members of the drafting committee of the UN Convention on Refugees. In 1954, UNHCR established an office in Egypt. Article 151 of the Egyptian Constitution states that "international treaties ratified by Egypt have the force of law and in all cases supersede domestic law". In 1980, Egypt ratified the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems and the 1951 UN Convention. In 1981, it ratified the 1967 Protocol. The Arab Declaration in 1992 also urged Arab States to adopt a broad concept of "refugee" and "displaced person" as well as a minimum standard for their treatment. When Egypt was

ratifying the 1951 Convention, it added reservations to articles, making them inapplicable in Egypt. These articles relates to personal status, unequal treatment of refugees compared to nationals if there is a rationing system in Egypt and access to public relief. The two most important articles that had the greatest impact on detaining the refugees' life and integration in Egypt were on free primary education and employment [11]. This has made primary and secondary education for most refugees prohibited in Egyptian public schools (Until 1978, Palestinians were an exception to this prohibition) and allowed university education with foreigners' fees in foreign currency. (In 2013, the Egyptian President made an exceptional decision regarding education for Syrian refugees to be treated like Egyptians, including postgraduate education, which has later been cancelled by the current regime). The employment restrictions in Egypt have made refugees count on informal sector and are thus easily exploited [11]. All this along with the lack of national laws on refugees, and the unwritten non-integration policy of the Egyptian government towards refugees that has increased since 2013 with the introduction of the visa system for the first time, have created many challenges for refugees to survive in Egypt and made the decision of risking their lives through "illegal"

movement to countries with better chances or seeking a sponsorship for resettling by UNHCR in countries in Europe and North America, like Canada, that they have previously feared due to the long distance and culture gap.

### B. Canadian Policies towards Asylum

Canada has a long history of immigration (Ontario is the destination for a majority of new immigrants) that has been intimately associated with Canadian immigration policy and practice. In 1969, Canada declared the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which led to its admission of refugees from Cambodia, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Tibet, Uganda, and Vietnam [11]. Immigration act was created in 1976 and implemented in 1978. The "Immigration Act of 1976" was put to examine immigrant flows to Canada. The Act included basic categories of individuals or classes eligible for landed immigrant status. One of those classes is the humanitarian class, consisting of refugees as defined in the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, and a designated class of displaced persons who do not qualify as refugees under the United Nations' definition [11]. The Act produced annual Immigration Plans that estimates the number of immigrants and refugees Canada could accept and accommodate on annual basis. In 2001, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act replaced the 1976 Immigration Act that leaves the detailed regulations to be formulated by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the federal department responsible for immigration. The Act admits the Convention refugees and people in need of protection. It works and assures that people in need are brought to Canada within days with the help of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to locate and prescreen refugees in areas with the most need of protection. The Act works to facilitate the inland refugee processing and reduces the period waited for reaching Canada for undocumented refugees who cannot obtain their documents from origin countries. It has programs like Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) that funds organizations to directly serve the immigrants and programs specific to refugees such as Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), Immigrant Loans Program (ILP), Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), and Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) that provide financial assistance for temporary accommodation, health services, transportation to Canada and other services. It allows Canadians to share responsibility in assisting refugees and funds them to give financial and emotional support for those in need.

*"Canada has been working with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to identify Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, who are registered with that agency. We are working closely with the UNHCR to prioritize vulnerable refugees such as women at risk and complete families in an effort to maximize the success in resettlement while minimizing security risk."* said Immigration communications adviser Mary Jago [7].

Both the Canadian and Egyptian policies, depended on the NGOs, yet the Canadian practice have managed to empower

them and provide channels to help the community of settlement and integration.

### C. The Interviews: Description of Sample Groups

This research is based on a comparative case study of Syrian refugees in Egypt and Canada. The sample groups selected for this research are case representatives of Syrians in their situations. We will present two cases from each group. The selection of the participants was based on their availability and willingness to take part in in-depth conversations that unveiled more detailed descriptions of mobility as well as motivations, aspirations and policies linked to their mobility.

TABLE II  
PARTICIPANTS FROM FIRST GROUP (EGYPT)

Name	Hadeel Tenawi	Mrs. Rana
Age group	20s	Late 40s
Sex	Female	Female
Marital status	Single	Married
Origin	Aleppo	Damascus
Former Occupation	Student in Damascus University	Active community member
Current Occupation	Student in Cairo University	A member in AOHR (Arab Organization for Human Rights) and is responsible of Education issues in the Syrian community in Egypt.
Status of arrival	With family	With Family
Time spent in Egypt	5 years	4 years
Motivation for movement	Her father's fear of being arrested or executed by the regime	Asylum in a Muslim and familiar community
Travel expenses fund	Self/Family	Self/Family
Destination before Egypt	Damascus	Damascus
Relations in Egypt/past visit	Yes	Yes

TABLE III  
PARTICIPANTS FROM SECOND GROUP (CANADA)

Name	Kasem AlTohmeh	Abdurrahman Algazzar
Age group	Early 40s	20s
Sex	Male	Male
Marital status	Married with 5 children	Single
Origin	Homs	Aleppo
Former Occupation	superintendent in an apartment building in Beirut	Salesman
Status of arrival	With family	Alone
Motivation for movement	Better life chance	Better life chance
Travel expenses fund	UNHCR	UNHCR
Destination before Canada	Lebanon	Jordan
Relations in Canada/past visit	No	No

The first group of Syrian refugees interviewed in Egypt consists of Hadeel Tenawi and Mrs. Rana. Hadeel is a senior Architecture student in Cairo University, arrived in Egypt five years ago with her family at the beginning of the conflict in Syria, her father was an active community member, with the fear of being arrested or executed by the regime, he decided to leave with all his family members to Egypt where he

previously planned to send his son for University education. Now Hadeel's father, Mr. Tenawi manages a Syrian NGO in Egypt that serves the Syrian community. Mrs. Rana, who works with Mr. Tenawi, is a member in AOHR (Arab Organization for Human Rights) and is responsible of Education issues in the Syrian community in Egypt since 2013.

The Syrian refugees interviewed in Canada in the second group are Kasem AlTohmeh and Abdurrahman Algazzar. Kasem is a 41 years old man who used to work as a superintendent in an apartment building in Beirut. In 2015, he applied for a refugee application at the UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees and in less than two months, they arrived in Canada. Abdurrahman is a 23 years old man who moved to Canada after he stayed in Jordan for 15 years with his family. After the conflicts he felt drastic changes in the way the Syrians were treated in Jordan, which affected their daily life. He used to work as salesman and by time his wage was cut, and was not able to even file a complaint. He applied for the UNHCR resettlement application for five years until he was accepted in 2015 and moved to Canada in January 19th 2016. He is now striving to bring the rest of his family of six for a reunion in Canada.

#### IV. THE JOURNEYS: URBAN MOBILITY

##### A. Politics of Mobility

Asylum is currently considered a different policy area than migration [12]. The refugees policies that offers "durable" solutions to displacement through settlement, either in the country of origin (repatriation), or in the neighboring countries (local integration), or in a third country (resettlement), leaves no space for the compatibility of mobility as a choice or solution. According to Giulia Scalettaris, mobility could be enhanced as a livelihood strategy, rather than be considered as a problem. She considers mobility as an asset of self-reliance and transnational networks that could turn mobility into a solution itself [12]. Within this point of view and the obvious and direct relation between mobility and the policies applied on it, understanding mobility holistically becomes very important. As there seems little doubt that mobility is one of the major resources of 21st-century and that it is the differential distribution of this resource that produces some of the crucial differences today [13].

To understand mobility holistically, according to Cresswell, a great attention should be paid to the three aspects of mobility. These are the fact of physical movement: Getting from one place to another; the representations of movement that give it shared meaning; and, finally, the experienced and embodied practice of movement. In practice, these aspects greatly intersect and affect one another. There remains the task of breaking mobility down into different aspects of moving that each have a role to play in the constitution of mobile hierarchies and the politics of mobility. In the process of breaking mobility down in this way, we get some analytical purchase on how mobility becomes political [13].

Tim Cresswell defines the concept of politics of mobility as

the way in which mobility is both productive of social relations and how they produce them. By social relations, he refers to the production and distribution of power. Social relations are diverse as well as complicated. They include relations between classes, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, and religious groups as well as a host of other forms of group identity. Mobility, as with other geographical phenomena, lies at the heart of all of these [13]. Within this theory construction, Syrian refugees' journeys are broken down, in order to be studied through these elements of mobility. With additional information from interviews, including quotes, and published documents, this research purposes to describe the story of Syrian mobility to Egypt and Canada. Through this narrative as described by those interviewed, the experiences of mobility and the direct consequences of policies on those experiences are introduced.

##### B. Motive Force: Why Does a Person Move?

It needs an applied force for an object to move and so as for a person. And since refugees and their destination applied policies formed the acting parties in the "refugees crisis", the major forces come from those two. According to physics, forces are either attractive or repulsive. The war in Syria has formed the greatest repulsive force that pushed Syrians outside their home country. But there have been other forces and motives that were either pushing or pulling Syrians to their current destinations.

Refugees general aspirations are shown in Table IV, along with the countries policies towards them, played and still do play an important role in their mobility decisions. Whilst those aspirations change along their journey, the political and economic landscapes continuously change, mostly towards deterioration [14].

TABLE IV  
GENERAL ASPIRATIONS LINKED TO ASYLUM

Refugee Status	Better life
a) Security	a) Job/Education
b) Humanitarian aid	b) Housing (decent)
c) Reunification (with nuclear family)	c) Assimilation/Nationality
	d) Potential for onward movement
	e) 'Freedom'

In the cases of Egypt and Canada, aspirations and politics were more specific, yet very different. According to the cases of the interviewed samples, forces are mainly as shown in Table V. The attractive forces are those who have encouraged Syrians in similar situations to take the decision to leave for the chosen country, while the repulsive forces are those that have made Syrians reconsider a second movement to another country. In case of Canada, Syrians have recently arrived and no cases of second movement from Canada have been recorded. Yet it is important to mention that Canada's policies increases penalties on illegal movement, creating a new offense for human trafficking, and introducing a life imprisonment penalty for migrant smuggling and trafficking which is far from the case in Egypt where smugglers works more freely. This is what BBC game about Syrian refugee routes shows on their website in Fig. 5, where they claim "*The*

routes, options and outcomes in this Syrian Journey feature were based on real stories uncovered by extensive research as

part of a BBC Arabic digital project exploring migration from Syria" [15].

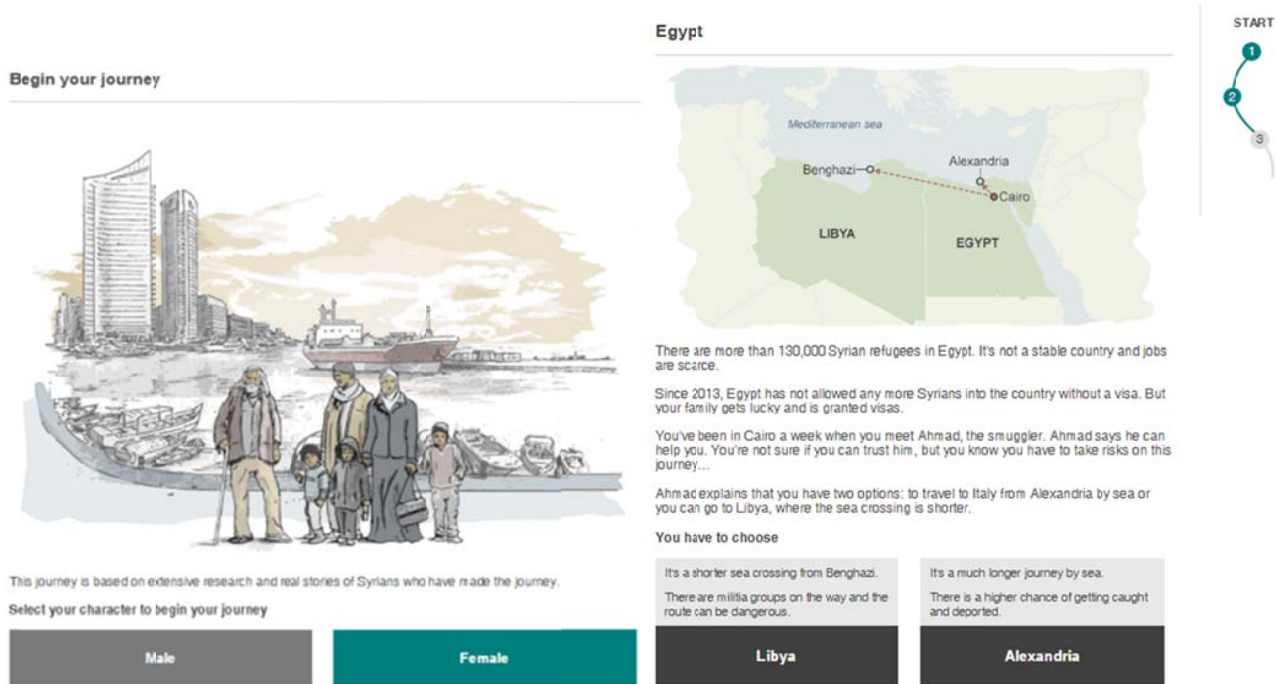


Fig. 5 BBC game: Syrian Journey: Choose your own escape route

TABLE V  
ATTRACTIVE FORCES ASSOCIATED WITH EGYPT AND CANADA

Egypt Attractive forces	Canada Attractive forces
- Financial: Investment and industry.	
- Religious: Community of Muslim majority.	
- Cultural: Same language (Arabic).	
- Education: Similar curriculums.	-Better future for self and family.
- Geography/climate: Closer distance and similar climate.	
-Relations / past frequent visits.	
-Affordable and easy to reach.	

TABLE VI  
REPULSIVE FORCES ASSOCIATED WITH SYRIA

Repulsive forces leading to Egypt	Repulsive forces leading to Canada
- Fear of being targeted for arrest, detention and recruited for participation in hostilities in Syria.	-Very little offered support.
	-Insult and harassment from transit country community due to undesired market competition.
	-Fear of showing identity due to hatred and racism.
	-No rights guaranteed in labor.
	-Threat of deportation by the official governments of transit countries.
	-Lack of durable solutions.

Tables V and VI clearly show the contrasting magnitude and distribution between types of forces in Egypt and Canada.

Repulsive forces of transit countries (countries Syrians stayed in before they resettled in Canada) exceeded the attractive forces of Canada itself. This is due to the unclear vision of Canada's potentials in the eyes of the Syrians. Their main vision was to escape the hardships of those transit countries. On the contrary, Egypt as a host country had more

forces thus potentials to attract Syrians or at least in Syrian refugees perception. In case Egypt's repulsive forces exceed those attractive ones, Egypt turns into a transit country to the Syrian refugees and they proceed moving towards resettlement.

C. Velocity: How Fast Does a Person Move?

The velocity of the journey, whether on a two hours air flight trip to Egypt or a long four years journey to Canada, is a valuable resource at the center of hierarchies of mobility.

Being able to get somewhere quickly is increasingly associated with exclusivity. A price of a flight ticket can move you to Egypt on a faster journey than that of those who left to near Lebanon. And it is not always high velocities that are the valued ones.

Velocity as well as rhythm, opens up discussions around to the idea and definition of transit migration and the period of time spent in transit countries. Categorizing refugees as being in transit can be problematic [14], since it is associated first with the refugee's intention to continue their journey, which shows no clear evidence of it. But for the purpose of this research, to reach a well understanding of mobility and its velocity, we will test three different definitions of transit migration. The first definition is a common definition that states: "Transit migration is a period of immobility in a migrant's journey". The second definition by Claire Pursey is similar to the previous yet he adds" [14], where there are aspirations of continued mobility". The third is the experience and description of Abdurrahman himself to the journey in his

words “We joined the UNHCR in Jordan as soon as the conflicts started in Syria, they had open applications to travel to Canada, United States and Australia, so we filled an application and renewed it yearly. The last one was on the first of December 2015. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, I had a phone call for an

interview on the next week. And on the next week I received a call, informing me that I would travel in 4 days.. It was really quick for me”. Fig. 6 shows how the differences in definitions could appear in Abdulrahman's journey.

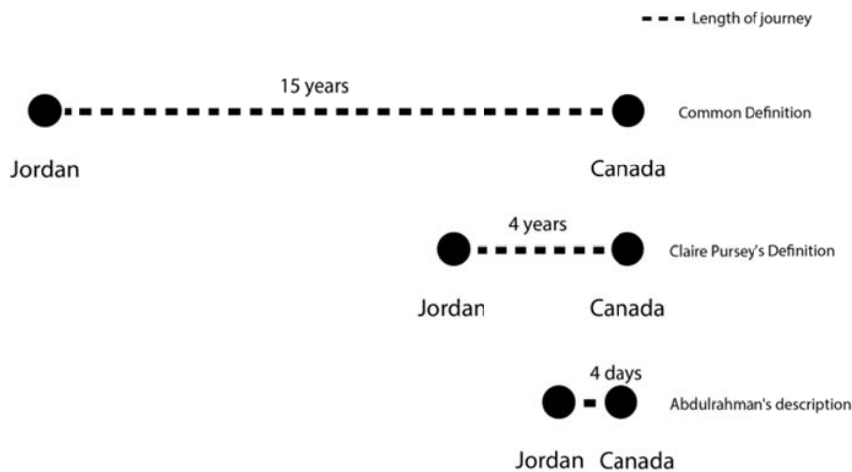


Fig. 6 Definition of transit migration on Abdulrahman's journey

Abdurrahman was in transit not by his choice of being in transit but by the choice to proceed on moving. This makes his journey of a four years length, still quick since his departure to Canada only took four days. This shows how meaning and experience differs in measuring velocities of journeys.

#### D. Rhythm: In What Rhythm Does a Person Move?

"Rhythm seems natural, spontaneous, with no law other than its own unfurling. Yet rhythm, always particular (music, poetry, dance, gymnastics, work, etc.) always implies a measure. Everywhere there is rhythm, there is measure, which is to say law, calculated and expected obligation." states Henri Lefebvre who outlines rhythm analysis as a method of interpreting the social world is richly suggestive [16].

Rhythm could give explanations to social order or historical period. Too many one-way trips, journeys at irregular intervals, or sudden bursts of mobility give a sign of abnormality or crisis. On Syrian refugees scale, the different rhythms of fragmented journeys of those refugees are what adds to the understanding of the refugee's aspiration and policies applied and how both change over time and space. It briefly explains the movement patterns of those who have left Homs for Damascus and then towards the borders heading to the nearest destination they could afford. Also those who have left with no passports from the country side heading towards a safer destination with no intention to leave Syria finding themselves with no other option but crossing borders to Lebanon. Then to where they believed there is a better future, in Canada. It also explains the one-way tickets to Egypt and the scarcity of seats in Egypt Air flights heading to Cairo when Egypt was a better or an optimum option for early departure.

#### E. Route: What Route and Channel Does It Take?

Mobility is channeled. It moves along routes and conduits often provided by conduits in space. It does not happen evenly over a continuous space like spilt water flowing over a tabletop. Producing order and predictability is not simply a matter of fixing in space but of channeling motion of producing correct mobilities through the designation of routes [13].

The journeys of refugees, as they appear in Figs. 8 and 9, might appear as straight lines moving from one stable point to another, but consider the individuals' experience, continuous aspirations and policies that might extend this line to infinity, turning their migration journey's period into a life-time. With changes in the refugees decisions they take along the entire route, like in Kasem and Abdulrahman' case, A single straight line is no longer feasible. Even in the case of Hadeel and her family, like many others, they had internal multiple lines within the Syrian borders before they left directly to Egypt.

#### F. Experience: How Does It Feel?

Human mobility, like place, surely has the notion of experience at its center. Thus Bob Dylan's question "How does it feel? To be on your own? With no direction home? Like a rolling stone?" is a relevant one [13]. Moving is an energy-consuming business. It can be hard work. It can also be a moment of luxury.

Syrians consider the first part of their journey as the most difficult [14]. Leaving their country, they are at exposure to the military assault and being caught by authorities. (Egypt's case was an exception at a time when it opened its doors to the Syrian refugees.)

*Experiences in Lebanon* -Those who have reached Canada have had a hard journey experience relevant to those who

went to Egypt. They had to pass by a transit country where they experienced 'repulsive' forces that have pushed them away towards Canada.

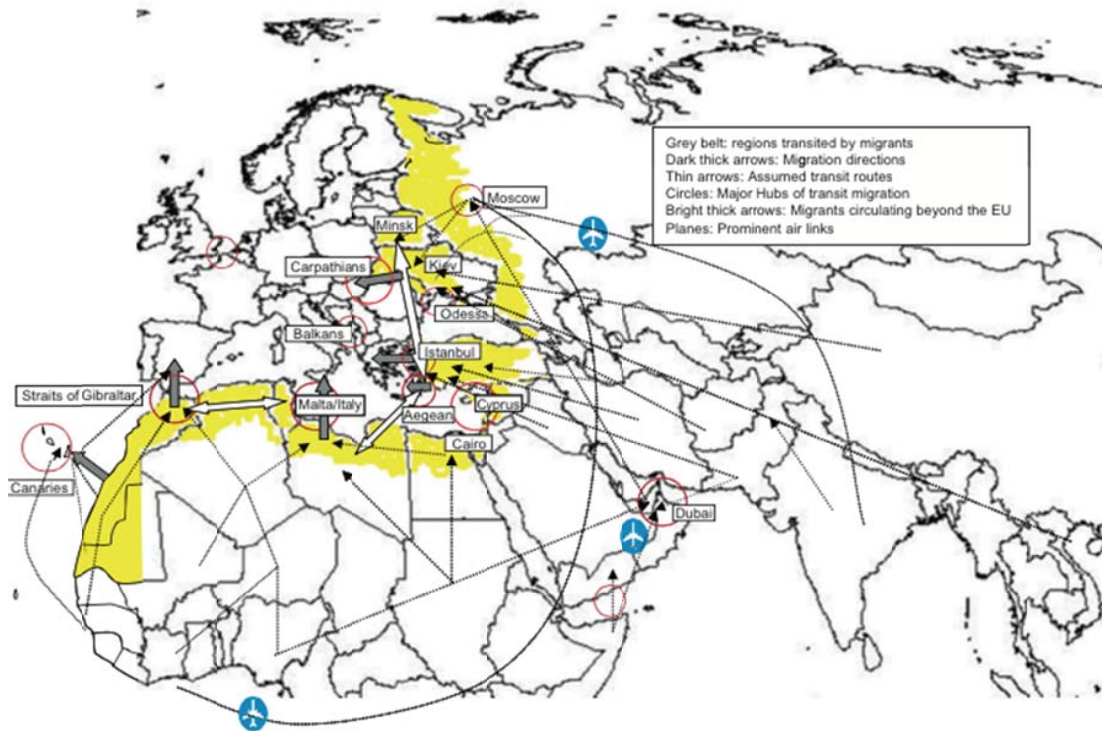


Fig. 7 Fragmented journeys of migrants to European Union [17]



Fig. 8 Map showing different routes of participants to transit countries





Fig. 9 Map showing Karem's route from Lebanon to Canada

The challenges of the transit country of Lebanese started at the borders' check that had restrict entry, allowing passage if refugees had a passport and if there is a proof of accommodation. Syrians greatest fear in Lebanon was and continues to be deportation [14]. They also suffer a very limited support. Kasem who brought his family to Beirut as the conflict started in 2012, had to stay in a single room, as they couldn't afford a rent. They had hardships with private school payments and the rest of the life expenses.

*Experience in Jordan* - According to Abdulrahman Algazzar "As a Syrian in Jordan, after the conflicts that started in 2011, you don't have any rights. If you work, you don't sign a contract and you are paid less than your Jordanian and Palestinian peers. You can be dismissed at any moment, and if you complain, you have no rights and can be sent back to Syria...The whole community changed in Jordan. They became more racist against Syrians, and they hated the large masses coming in as they competed with them for the job opportunities and for less wages."

Abdulrahman, who was living in Jordan for a decade before the events, was afraid to show his identity. He claimed that gangsters would attack Syrians just because they are refugees, and that the police officers would not seek their rights, but rather threaten to deport them.

"In Jordan, the word Syrian itself is now an 'insult' ...

*I can't speak using a Syrian dialect in Jordan, I have to use the Jordanian or Palestinian dialects to avoid insults and harassments.*" Abdulrahman continued.

*Experience in Egypt* - The Egyptian experience had an important milestone, of the overthrowing of Mohamed Morsi (Former Egyptian President 2012-2013), who approved a number of decrees to help the Syrians settlement and

integration in the community. These decrees were based on the concept that Syrians are like the Egyptian citizens and have equal rights, in education, work and housing... etc. and lasted around two years. However after the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 and since Adly Mansour became the transient President, most of these decrees were stalled. After that point, many restrictions were proposed on the Syrians. Due to the investment/industrial restrictions, some investors disassembled their factories and loaded it to Malaysia, thinking that paying for this process is safer and less risky than waiting for the papers issuing in Egypt. As for the employment restriction law (which does not allow the issue of work permit to Syrians), now Syrians work illegally or informally with a contract that you cannot issue a visa upon, and some Egyptian employers use this condition to hire Syrians with low wages. In addition to the law issued which forces Syrian businessmen to have Egyptian partners in order to start a business. These restrictions, in addition to the Media Speech, which have promoted negative perceptions of the Syrian community and were not in favor of their stay, have caused frictions between the Syrians and Egyptian ordinary people, and have encouraged many of the refugees to seek a home elsewhere. In the summer months between May and September, in 2014 and 2015, many Syrians have tried to start their new journey towards Europe, through the Mediterranean Sea, although in many incidents these boats were turned into "death boats".

In Egypt, the process of movement was the easiest, with the lack of visa requirements and short distance, especially for those who moved at the start of the conflicts. Their trip lasted for a couple of hours and there were no problems in entering or finding a home, as long as they had the money. They had no problem in any of the cultural aspects and shared the same language. But due to the political changes, the possibility of

integration was made harder, especially, for those who lost all their assets back in Syria and needed support to build a new life. The government did not provide any of that; they just a tight space for the NGOs and Civic organizations to help. On the other hand, the new restrictions and legislations made the situation more complicated and caused discrimination.

*Experience in Canada* - As most of the Syrian refugees who came in Canada are the ones who applied at the UNHCR for re-settlement from Lebanon and Jordan. This could make their journeys in search for home, to be considered in years. These journeys have longer stops and different rhythms and velocities and much more uncertainties. The new settlers have just arrived and starting their process of search for a home and exploring new cultures and land, however throughout the interviews conducted, they seemed to be to a great extent satisfied with the Canadian policies and efforts for re-settlement and have a positive vision for their future in their new home. " *God's will, in a year, we will have mastered the English language and got a job and made a success in Canada*" - said Kasem Altohmeh

#### G. Friction: When and How Does It Stop?

As with the question of reasons for mobility (motive force) we need to pay attention to the process of stopping, either stopping at a checkpoint, an airport, a transit or a destination.

There are three types of immobility according to Schapendonk that lie outside the EU's border, these are 'stranded migrants' who experience a sense of immobility in a particular direction referring to those who cannot reach their desired destination in the EU, second are 'stuck migrants' who are blocked in almost every direction, and finally there are those who may be stuck but do not wish to move and can be considered 'satisfied' [18]. We could assume that all our interviewed participants either in Egypt or in Canada have reached this case of being stuck, yet being satisfied with what they have reached. At least until the moment we have finished our research. This is reached when refugees' aspirations and destination policies somehow intersect and meet at a point in time.

#### V. REFLECTIONS

These two cases of Canada and Egypt, being the first two cases in the comparative analysis of the host countries in the research project, are comparable in terms of type of settlements and main immigration policies. They also provide an interesting perspective being contrasting in their relationship with the Syrian community.

The Canadian re-settlement process for the Syrian refugees started in 2015 and the first group arrived in January 2016. And although, the refugees at the beginning of the move from Syria, favored the countries in the same region, yet the hardships they faced and the disappearance of any hope that things will settle in Syria in the near future, encouraged them to move willingly to Canada.

These study cases show how refugees' journeys can take years and target destinations can change on multiple occasions according to different individual decisions. These decisions are based on their immediate needs, financial capacities, and mobility experience, while trying to maintain a long-term vision of how their future will look like. Understanding this entire process can therefore assist the tracing and analysis of refugees' patterns of mobility.

#### APPENDIX

A sample of the interview consent for participation including the interview structure is attached as an appendix.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**CAIRO UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

**Study Title:** Syrian Refugees: Tracing New Global Mobilities

**Principal Investigator:** Assistant Professor Noheir Elgendy- Cairo University- Architecture Department

**Researcher:** Nchier Elgendy / Noha Hussein

I am a researcher in Architecture and Urban Design. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. I am doing this study with research team from Cairo University. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what we will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

**Why are you doing this study?**

You are being asked to participate in a research study about Syrian refugees in Canada. The purpose of the study is to trace the process of urban mobility of the Syrian refugees and the effect of the policy making on the process of integration into local communities. At the end of the study, I will explain in greater detail what we hope to learn from this research.

**What will I do if I choose to be in this study?**

You will be asked to give information about:

- The scenarios of different journeys Syrian refugees go through since they leave Syria until they arrive in Canada, stating:
  - Dates, ex. since .. till
  - motive force - why does a person move?
  - categories - who came to Canada?
  - velocity - how fast does a person move? i.e length of the journey
  - rhythm - in what rhythm does a person or thing move? ex. Too many one-way trips, journeys at irregular intervals, or sudden bursts. do they travel in groups/families/on their own?
  - route - What route and channel does it take?
  - experience - How does it feel?
  - friction - how and why does it stop?
- The process of arriving, settling and home making.
  - what did they face when arrived (Government policies and community efforts) including:
    - Laws , regulations & Procedures ex. registration ..etc
    - money, houses, jobs
    - Media calls
    - Treatment / aid or oppression (official and non official).
    - NGOs role.

How do they define their current identity?

1

How do they define Home?

from a "foreigner" to an inhabitant, What spaces do they call theirs? and why (characteristics) and how did they make new homes? how did they shape them with their identities? what type and scale of change did they make to their houses, streets and neighbourhoods? what activities do those spaces occupy?

- The Process of integration, socially and economically.
  - How do you define integration?
  - In what scale do you see it? Describing the current situation and living conditions.
  - How did it happen? socially and economically?
  - what skills do Syrians have that helped with integration?
  - Who encourages/discourages this process? and how. (Syrians, Canadian locals, Canadian Government)

You will be asked to Provide data material , if possible (documents examples, photographs)

You will be asked to Guide through visits to Syrian neighbourhoods, streets and houses (spaces of livelihood activities) (if possible)

**Study time:** Study participation will take approximately 12 months.

**Study location:** All study procedures will take place in Canada.

I would like to audio-record this interview to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these recordings in my personal library and they will only be used by my research team. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, I will take notes instead.

I may wish to quote your remarks in presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym will be used to protect your identity, unless you specifically request that you be identified by your true name.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts?**

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk to you but I assume

- You may feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer at any time if you wish to take a break or stop the interview.
- You may be uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics we will ask about. If you are uncomfortable, you are free to not answer or to skip to the next question.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality of the information we collect from you could be breached – we will take steps to minimize this risk, as discussed in more detail below in this form.

**What are the possible benefits for me or others?**

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help others.

**How will you protect the information you collect about me, and how will that information be shared?**

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used unless you give explicit permission for this.

2

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, we will give limited access to study records.

We may share the data we collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers – if we share the data that we collect about you, we will remove any information that could identify you before we share it.

**Financial Information**

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

**What are my rights as a research participant?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free to do so. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

**Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this research study?**

If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researchers at my number +1 (647) 526 9895 or email address amirallahban@gmail.com.

**Consent**

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I agree to allow the researchers to audio record my participation.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I do not agree to allow the researchers to audio record my participation.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I agree to allow the researchers to mention my identity (name/title) and my institution identity (name/description).

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I do not agree to allow the researchers to mention the complete identity of myself and my institution. Instead the researcher might use a broad description of my institution with my initials.

**Optional Study Elements**

**Consent for use of contact information to be contacted about participation in other studies**

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I agree to allow the researchers to use my contact information collected during this study to contact me about participating in future research studies.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I do not agree to allow the researchers to use my contact information collected during this study to contact me about participating in future research studies.

If you agree to participate, please say so. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

3

Fig. 10 Consent form for research participation.

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