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Syrians in Beirut post-2011:  
Class and Settlement

By  
Sarah Shmaitilly

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## THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: Sarah Shmaitally I.D. #: 201806246

Thesis Title: Syrians in Beirut post-2011: Class and Settlement

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Department: Social Sciences

School: Arts and Sciences

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

MA \_\_\_\_\_ in the major of Migration Studies \_\_\_\_\_

| Thesis Advisor's Name: Paul Tabar |

| Signature: [REDACTED] | Date: 20 / 08 / 2020  
Day Month Year

| Committee Member's Name: Tamirace Fakhoury |

| Signature: [REDACTED] | Date: 20 / 08 / 2020  
Day Month Year

| Committee Member's Name: Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss |

| Signature: [REDACTED] | Date: 20 / 08 / 2020  
Day Month Year



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# **Syrians in Beirut post-2011:**

## **Class and Settlement**

**Sarah Shmaitilly**

### **ABSTRACT**

With more than a million Syrians arriving to Lebanon since 2011, most studies have been focusing on refugees in encampment or on the precarious lives working-class Syrians lead. This thesis aims to fill a gap in the literature which overlooks a group of Syrians who now are part and parcel of the social and cultural life in Beirut; the middle and upper-class. Drawing primarily on the theoretical concepts of Pierre Bourdieu and data collected from semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the thesis explores these non-refugees' economic, social, and cultural capitals and how they were utilized to settle and informally integrate in the city. It illustrates how the working-class Syrians are at the receiving end of discrimination by the Lebanese state and people, while the rich enjoy various privileges like access to citizenship, higher education, well-paying jobs, more respect, and an overall better experience of settlement in a new setting.

**Keywords:** Syrian Migrants, Pierre Bourdieu, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Symbolic Capital, Rich Migrants, Classism, Racism in Lebanon, Code-switching

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# **Introduction**

The Syrian uprising that started with peaceful protests in 2011 gradually transformed into one of the most brutal conflicts post-WWII, this resulted in waves of Syrians arriving at the Lebanese borders and settling in different urban and rural areas. At the end of 2015, more than seven million Syrians were internally displaced, and the number of Syrian refugees in neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt had passed four million, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2015). In addition to that, and after the open-border policy that Germany adopted in 2015, it was estimated that 200,000 Syrian refugees entered Germany in that year (Frankenfeld 2015). Syrians in Lebanon, on top of all the settlement challenges, have been facing tremendous discrimination and oppression from both the state and the hosting community. However, it appears that the receiving end of this discrimination is often the Syrian working class who have long been stigmatized, especially after the end of the Lebanese civil war.

Since the beginning of the unrest, Lebanon had kept its open border policy and received the largest total of Syrians fleeing the conflict. As of 4 December 2015, 1,075,637 Syrians had registered with the UNHCR. By that time, UNHCR was estimating that by the end of 2019, the active registered population will stand at approximately 850,000 Syrians. However, a few months before that, on the 6th of May 2015, UNHCR temporarily suspended new registrations as per the Lebanese government's policy to close borders. Thus, individuals waiting to be registered were no longer included in the statistics. The actual, unofficial number of Syrians in Lebanon is said to be considerably higher; that is because unregistered and labor migrants are not included in UNHCR's surveys, nor does the government provide any data regarding statistics. The total number of Syrians in Lebanon in 2015 hit 1.1 million, according to UNHCR, and has thus surpassed a quarter of Lebanon's original population. However, the number today is at 946,291 refugees as a number of them got resettled in other countries (UNHCR 2019).

The registered refugees are reportedly in a risky and precarious social and legal situation. Lebanon has not ratified key refugee protection apparatuses that protect refugees; it is not a signatory of the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol. There is a lack of legislation regarding refugee and asylum issues and overall poor migration governance. While UNHCR has been able to operate in the country since 1963, in 2015 the Lebanese government suspended all UNHCR registration processes for Syrian refugees.

Consequently, this means that there is a group of people that are not counted for, but that is undeniably a part and parcel of Beirut's society. All of the above stir many questions about the middle and upper-class Syrians who do not receive aid from international organizations, do not live in tents, do not worry about putting food on the table, and haven't sat through many researchers' interviews and focus-group discussions:

Why are they here in Lebanon and did not choose to go to Europe, the US, or even Turkey as many did? What are their lives like? What kind of businesses do they have here, if any, or have they used their accumulated wealth without having to yield to employment or starting a business? Are they aiming to stay or to return to Syria when the conflicts are over? Did they choose to settle in a neighborhood that matches with, at least, parts of their cultural capital (i.e. sect, education, entertainment preferences, etc.)? How did they use their socio-economic status to make it in Lebanon? And what are their future aspirations?

This thesis aims to explore the ability of the displaced Syrian upper-class to secure benefits by utilizing their economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals, and to examine the role of their different capitals in the experience of settling in Beirut. On the other hand, it shows the contrasting experience of their working-class compatriots. Finally, it presents the perceptions of the hosting community, the Lebanese, on the presence of Syrians in Beirut.

Drawing primarily on the methodological approach developed by Pierre Bourdieu, and through data collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, I intend to answer the following question: Since 2011, how have middle and upper-class Syrians utilized their economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals in the process of settlement in Beirut, and how does the experience of the urban working-class differ?

After this introduction, Chapter 1 gives a background on the presence of Syrians in Lebanon before and after 2011, as well as reported attitudes of the hosting community towards Syrian refugees who migrated to Lebanon as a result of the conflict in Syria. I also present previous studies that focus on middle and upper-class migrants in Lebanon and other countries, in addition to studies that used Pierre Bourdieu's sociology in the field of migration, which I, too, employed in this thesis. Chapter 2 introduces the research methods I used to carry out this research. This is a theory-driven thesis; I present and elucidate the theoretical concepts I employed in Chapter 3. The findings in Chapter 4 are divided into 3 subchapters based on the 3 groups I interviewed: the middle and upper-class Syrians, the working-class Syrians, and the Lebanese. In this chapter, I also analyze my findings based on the Bourdieusian framework I am employing, which indicate that, indeed, class has a significant impact on the lives of migrants, and that those who possess a sum of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals are able to have a smoother settlement experience in a new setting than those who do not. Finally, Chapter 5 closes my thesis with observations and conclusions, with an eye on future research.

# **Chapter One**

## **Background and Literature**

### **1.1 Syrians in Lebanon Prior to 2011**

Syrians have been migrating to Lebanon, mostly in circular migration, throughout the entirety of Lebanon's modern history. John Chalcraft (2009) historizes the presence and activity of Syrian migrant workers in Lebanon in his book *The Invisible Cage*; it is a solid account of circular labor migration that offers rich material on this important history which is still part of our present time. Contrary to popular belief, Syrians have been coming to Lebanon in pursuit of job opportunities well before the civil war ended. Using estimates by the Lebanese Ministry of Labor, Chalcraft reports that there were 145,000 Syrian workers working in Lebanon in 1964 and 280,000 in 1970.

During the 1960s, Lebanon became a regional hub, and experienced an economic boom, particularly in the construction sector, which recruited Syrian workers en masse. In 1972, they represented 90% of construction workers. Some of the Syrian bourgeoisie took refuge in Lebanon in the 1960s due to the nationalization of banks, industrial plants, and businesses, and some workers followed their employers (Sorby 2009). During the same period, it became known to the Lebanese emigrants that the Syrian labor is cheaper, so they also recruited Syrians to manage and cultivate the land they had left behind (Chalcraft 2009).

Then the civil war began in 1975, and despite the fact that many Syrians decided to go back to Syria, a significant number remained in the country. Chalcraft (2009) shows that discrimination against Syrians did not start with the Taef agreement, which legitimized the Syrian military presence, and which many Lebanese viewed as an occupation due to degrading treatment at checkpoints, the kidnapping of people, torture, and other atrocities. This hostility against Syrian workers first appeared in Christian areas whose inhabitants equated to the Syrian army, the “enemy”.

As soon as the war ended, Syrian workers returned, attracted by the demand for labor in the reconstruction market. This migration was framed by formal agreements between the two countries, while the Taef agreement legitimized the Syrian military presence. However, from the middle of the decade, the controversy over their presence swelled, while they had to endure in silence often difficult working conditions and the denial of basic rights. In 2005, Hariri's assassination triggered a new wave of violence and made them flee the country in huge numbers, they returned a few months later due to labor demand, and the heated political situation had calmed by then.

This type of circular labor migration has been facilitated by a number of factors: ease of movement, the fluidity of the labor market, weak state control, but also linguistic and cultural proximity. Chalcraft (2009) points out that there is a paradox here; despite the mentioned migration-facilitating factors, there has been such a weak integration into Lebanese society, which he explains to be due to the peculiarities of the Lebanese scene; there was always a sense of superiority. He states that even at the turn of the 2000s, it was not uncommon to hear, from the mouths of the man in the street as well as that of such a seasoned academic, the claim that one or even two million Syrian workers were in Lebanon, implicitly signaling the link with the Syrian military presence "occupation", which Chalcraft deems as an implausible figure.

The Lebanese economy has been held together, until recently, partly by the cheap labor it employs (Syrian, Palestinian, Asian, African) in different sectors. Nonetheless, Lebanese society, despite needing this labor has been building walls in the face of these workers, marginalizing and stigmatizing them so that the internal sectarian balance is not shifted. This continues to be the case today.

## 1.2 Arrival to Lebanon after 2011

As previously stated, the literature on middle and upper-class Syrians in Lebanon remains conspicuously scant. The majority of studies on Syrians in Lebanon tackle refugee issues, and sometimes Syrian laborers. They mainly consist of grey literature reports published by academic research centers or research teams based in UN agencies and other international organizations, and not journal articles with peer reviews. The reports are rich in both statistical and qualitative data that confirm their dire and precarious socio-economic conditions and their limited livelihood resources. However, most of these studies focus on areas of legal issues, water and sanitation, food and cash assistance, healthcare, and other aid-orientated topics. Only a few studies touch upon non-refugee Syrians, and even those are often descriptive and lacking theoretical and empirical insight.

Only around half of the working-age refugees are economically active, and most of the unemployed are women. About 92% of working refugees are primarily employed in low-skilled work, informally, without contracts, “in agriculture or personal and domestic services and, on a smaller scale, in construction” (ILO 2014). Despite the state claiming that there are over 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon, only around 1,200 work permits were issued or renewed for Syrian citizens in 2013 (CAS 2013), the year they claimed this population number (Turner 2015). If Syrians secure sponsorship and a work permit, their legal status can be changed to ‘migrant workers’ (Errighi and Griesse 2016), as long as their work is limited to construction, agriculture, and cleaning (decree 197 of December 2014). For other sectors, the Syrian worker typically faces bureaucratic and financial restrictions and constraints; work permits are expensive, and the employer needs to demonstrate why they are hiring a Syrian if a Lebanese can do the job. This does not entirely apply to the upper class.

Syrian refugees that are registered with the UNHCR, are mostly living in camps in the Bekaa valley and North Lebanon, mainly in Akkar. The number of registered refugees today is at 946,291 (UNHCR 2019), which is not representative of the entire Syrian

population in Lebanon. In addition to the gaps in the nationality law and the complex civil registration system which continues to obstruct birth registration and increase the risk of statelessness, many Syrians have chosen not to register with the UNHCR, they prefer living outside camps where they are better able to have influence and control over their situation (Thorleifsson 2014), they have found jobs and the means to live without the need for the international organizations' aid, and others are wealthy enough to live like "tourists". It is important to note; however, that UNHCR still considers most Syrians in Lebanon as refugees but has in practice come to differentiate between registered, unregistered and what it labels 'recorded' refugees, i.e. those who have approached UNHCR after the government's ban on new registrations (Janmyr and Mourad 2018).

In this thesis, I use the term 'refugee' as the UNHCR (2015) uses it to define a person who has been "forced to leave and live outside their country of nationality because of fear, threat, violence or persecution, and war". It is essential to state this definition because the middle and upper-class Syrians who have arrived in Lebanon due to the conflicts in Syria since 2011 do not identify with the term 'refugee'; they reject this label. In an interview with Syrian screenwriter Najeeb Nseir published by Al Jazeera (2018), he says: "I tell people I'm a tourist... The idea of the refugee is humiliating..."

The Lebanese government does not label Syrian migrants as "refugees" either because the term has a legal weight to it. The preferred term is "nazihoun" [displaced] instead of "laje'oun" [refugees]. I also use "informal integration" because Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol, so the government rejects the "integration" of refugees and does not consider itself a country of asylum, but rather a country of transit; Lebanon does not want the Syrians to end up in a similar situation to that of the Palestinians (Janmyr 2016). On top of that, politicians have created a hostile environment for Syrians by continuously propagating a populist narrative around the topic of refugees whom they blame for Lebanon's economic turmoil. This populist speech cultivated anti-Syrian sentiments and right-wing party followers raised banners asking Syrians to go back home "Syria is safe for return and Lebanon can no longer bear it" (Cornish 2019).

Syrians in Lebanon have been facing tremendous discrimination and oppression from both the state and the hosting community. The discriminatory activities range from imposed curfews and lengthy pre-trial detentions to torture and mass evictions by local municipalities (Human Rights Watch 2014, 2017, 2018). However, it appears that the receiving end of this discrimination is often the Syrian working class, who have long been stigmatized, especially after the end of the Lebanese civil war (Chit and Nayel 2013). In an interview with a middle-class Syrian refugee, Chit and Nayel ask him about the Lebanese people's perception of him and he answers

*“They see that I’m here spending, and they see that I too come from the middle classes so they don’t show as much bigotry as it is normally the sentiment against us [Syrians] in Lebanon” (2013).*

The majority of Syrians in Lebanon remain to be working class and the urban and rural poor according to Chit and Nayel (2013); nevertheless, the middle class and upper classes are also part of the newcomer social fabric. Studying young migrants in Beirut as political subjects, Riga et al (2020) state that young Syrians are able to avoid racialization by adopting the Lebanese dialect by “becoming Lebanese”. One of their participants reported their ability to speak Lebanese Arabic without using the Syrian accent, in addition to using their fluency in French to allow them “to move between worlds”.

Turner (2015) talks about non-encampment labor and how it serves in the state whose interests are aligned with the economic elite. Non-encampment enables migrant populations to increase the supply of laborers, which in turn increases worker precarity and reduces wages. Contrarily, when the migrant numbers are high, as in the case of Lebanon, to show support to its citizens and in an attempt to protect them, the state uses encampment as a policy that aims to reduce labor market competition. “Camp” here is loosely used in reference to informal tented settlements. Lebanon refuses to build formal camps for Syrian refugees because it refuses to call Syrian migrants “refugees” for reasons mentioned in the previous section 1.1. Lebanon did not formally encamp Syrian migrants, but the informal settlement in tents, far from the urban labor market, was to the state’s advantage. The camp in this context is not be seen exclusively “as only a space of humanitarianism or fertile ground for armed

militancy”, like what is often portrayed in the media, but it is also a tool that the state uses to enforce economic policy, through which the state can spatially separate and ghettoize refugees of certain socio-economic classes, those who are considered surplus to the needs of the labor market (*ibid*). Syrians are in the camps for a reason, and they are outside the camps for a reason as well.

In a quick tour around Beirut, one would notice that Syrians are visibly occupying many jobs, it's not construction workers, kaak vendors, or janitors anymore. They are baristas, bartenders, waiters, salesmen, and delivery men. On the other hand, some are driving Porsches and eating at fine-dining restaurants. Some are also entrepreneurs taking up seats in start-up incubators or opening small food businesses or crafts shops. There have been some reports in the past years that mention that a number of “micro and small Syrian-owned businesses are opening” in some areas (ILO 2014). Alexandre et al (2019) report that Syrian refugees have the appetite to create their own businesses. There are three categories of Syrian entrepreneurs: the struggling, the coping, and the comfortable (Harb et al 2019). The interviewed Syrians in Harb’s study were as follows: ‘the struggling’ are barely making ends meet, running small sweets shops or carpentries stating that they are at risk of closure due to debts; ‘the coping’ entrepreneurs are restaurant, café, and clothing shop owners, they are modest businesses that mostly attract Syrians; and ‘the comfortable’ entrepreneurs own cell-phone shops, chocolate bars, and a furniture factory. The last group belonged to an “educated, cosmopolitan, urban upper class, which wears brand clothes and mixes English with Arabic when speaking”. They all also expressed frustration with the image of the Syrian refugee in Lebanon, the image a dirty, uneducated, rural, low-skilled and simple worker.

### 1.3 Lebanese Perceptions of Syrian Refugees

While there are no surveys about the Lebanese perceptions on Syrians in general, there are a few reports about the perceptions on Syrian refugees. The Political Science Institute at Saint Joseph University in Beirut polled 600 Lebanese citizens who live close to the refugee camps in 2016. The following figures were reported:

“41% of the respondents would not hire a Syrian refugee”

“45% would not accept refugees in their neighborhood”

“57% would not send their children to school with refugees”

“78% refuse that their child marries a Syrian refugee.”

“38% heard stories about Syrians refugees that made them feel threatened, mostly from the media (TV)”

A similar study surveyed 900 Lebanese citizens in 2013 showed very similar percentages, also stating that 82% of the sample believed that the Syrian refugees are taking jobs from the Lebanese, a complaint we often hear up until this day (Christophersen 2013).

These figures show a challenging relationship between the refugees and the host community. However, this does not necessarily apply to what the residents of Beirut, whom this thesis is concerned with, think and feel towards the Syrian presence.

#### 1.4 Rich Palestinians in Lebanon

Rosemary Sayigh (1988) spoke about the reception of the urban middle-class Palestinians in Lebanon and how different it was from that of the rural and poor Palestinians. The social capital of these middle-class Palestinians who were able to network with middle-class Lebanese helped them overcome their first years of exile, they were able to utilize this capital in finding jobs and accommodation, and they were introduced to politicians and key people in the middle-class social scene. They were met with kindness and support, unlike the working-class who were often chased away as thieves and were perceived by the Lebanese as “carriers of bad luck or a source of pollution”. Middle-class Palestinians, until the mid-70s, were easily naturalized as well. Although priority was given to Christians under Chamoun’s presidential decree, Muslim Palestinians who had the money and the connections were also able to acquire citizenship.

#### 1.5 Rich Syrians in Turkey and Other Rich Migrants in the World

The literature on the middle and upper class of Syrians living in Lebanon is very limited. However, recent literature on Syrians outside Lebanon may support findings. In her paper on the integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Doğuş Şimşek (2018) introduced the concept ‘class-based integration’ and defined it as “as the allocation of rights based on refugees’ economic resources, which means that access to rights, especially the labor market and citizenship rights, is easier for refugees who can do investment in the receiving country compared to those without”. Her findings show that the integration processes of Syrian refugees have been widely influenced by their class positions. Syrians who do not have economic capital struggled to have access to the labor market, education, and housing, all of which are essentials that need to be guaranteed by governmental policies. Even though access to citizenship rights for Syrians in Turkey has been made officially possible, Syrians who lack economic capital and who are less skilled might not be granted citizenship and would still be under temporary protection for a long time.

The empirical data of Şimşek's paper further shows that middle and upper-class Syrians establish businesses, build social networks with members of the hosting community through their businesses and engage in socio-cultural activities, and therefore making their integration processes smoother than those who do not have ready economic capital. To illustrate this further, the social aspect of integration reflects the role of class, as the poorer Syrians who work longer hours or those who do not have access to employment at all build fewer social networks with members of the hosting community due to being isolated, or even none at all. These conclusions also reflect Grace *et al.*'s findings (2017) that market citizenship renders Burundian refugees in Michigan economically, socially and linguistically isolated; because in a similar manner, the experiences of Syrians who work in the informal economy in Turkey are also isolated in similar manners compared to those who belong to the middle or upper classes. This also brings to my attention that some wealthy Syrians have been granted Lebanese citizenship for investing in Lebanon's economy (Annahar 2018).

In an analysis of class and migration, Oliver and O'Rielly (2010) present the case of British migrants in Spain, particularly "lifestyle migrants" who decide to relocate to popular leisure destinations after retirement. The authors attempt to understand why and how the cultural and economic aspects of class still dominated these migrants' lives, although their desire was to leave class concerns at home and to reposition in the new setting. Their desires were confronted by the reproduction of their class positions "through habitus and the continued distinctiveness of economic and cultural capital" (*ibid*).

A relevant study is by Nowicka (2013) who explores the positioning strategies of Polish migrant entrepreneurs in Germany while employing Bourdieu's concepts of capital. The author reports that the Poles have been able to convert their economic capital which they acquire in Germany, even those with low incomes, into social, economic or cultural capital in Poland and thus improve their positioning back home. The opposite is also true; social or cultural capital acquired in Poland can be converted into economic capital in Germany and influence migrants' social position there. There is a complexity of social positioning in the lives of circular migrants which can be understood through the differentiation between their capitals and

looking at the sum of their capitals in the process of positioning. “Some sorts of capital are more transnational than others, meaning they can be more easily converted and valorized across countries.” These capitals make way for new possibilities and a reevaluation of precarious living conditions. The possession of capitals and the journey of converting them to other capitals challenge social inequality and may grant the migrant upward social mobility (*ibid*).

To illustrate the impact of class in another example, we can examine the case of the Lebanese who have migrated to Canada since the nineteenth century. As per the 2011 National Household Census, 190,275 Canadian claimed Lebanese ancestry (Statistics Canada 2011). The multi-sectarian and multi-partisan war that expanded over a period of fifteen years resulted in the death of dozens of thousands, and it is said that out of the one million displaced people, maybe around 250,000 migrated permanently, many of which ended up in Canada (Wood 2012). Canada has long been a country of immigration, where it largely selects migrants for their ability to contribute to economic development. Its approach to immigration and integration has evolved to reflect shifting needs and considerations, as well as the increasing diversity in the foreign-born population (Griffith 2017). This indicates that the Lebanese immigrants to Canada already possessed a certain amount of capital before arriving in their new setting. The literature and mainstream journalism outlets, especially Lebanese ones, are full of migrant success stories, and they are mostly about people who already had something to offer, who mobilized their capitals and polarized them, and eventually succeeded under the spotlight. Edgar Francis is one example of a migrant success story. He was elected mayor of Windsor when he was only 29, making him the youngest mayor in the history of the city and in Canada (City of Windsor, 2005). He ran three times, and won every single time, sometimes by 77 percent of the votes - serving for 11 years (City of Windsor, 2006). He inherited and acquired cultural capital as his parents had a Lebanese bread company, which he and his brother assumed, and that granted him the Windsor Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award as the Young Entrepreneur in 1999 (Windsor Public Library 2018).

While all of these studies offer excellent insight on the lives of rich migrants, and while some of them do draw on certain Bourdieuian concepts to tackle particular aspects of migrants' lives, they only select elements of his theory and ignore others, like only looking at migrants' cultural or social capitals. Most of the studies tackling migration miss out on employing Bourdieu's different concepts to show how important class is in the experiences of settlement for migrants. There is still very little scholarly attention given to class when studying migration today, and some of Bourdieu's theoretical tools remain underutilized. The gap in the literature also lies in that academic studies have mostly neglected accounts of non-refugee Syrian migrants in Lebanon, and sociological studies have overlooked a group of migrants that plays a vital role in the urban context, the middle and upper-class Syrian migrants.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Strategy**

For the purpose of this thesis, a qualitative research strategy provided a deep understanding of the community I focused on. It is a flexible strategy that generates interesting insights and findings. According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research has the advantageous traits like high environmental validity; it is as well trustworthy, sincere, transparent, and most importantly fair because the researcher can see through the participants' eyes. Qualitative research creates a rounded understanding of "rich, contextual, and generally unstructured, non-numeric data" (Mason 2002) by engaging in conversations with the research participants in a natural setting (Creswell 2009). Due to the scantiness of the literature relevant to my topic, this research strategy is the most beneficial approach to my study as allowed me to unravel information that is not widely available on a group of people that is often overlooked.

### **2.2 Research Design**

For this thesis, I followed the case study research design. This design seems to best fit the purpose of my study as it involves a single community (Syrian middle and upper class), as well as another (smaller by sample size) community which is the Lebanese. The defining feature of case study research is its focus on 'how' and 'why' questions (Myers 2009) and for this reason, it is appropriate for my thesis. According to Soy (2015), case studies are more flexible than many other types of research and allow the researcher to discover and explore as the research develops. A case study is able to emphasize in-depth content as it allows the researcher to delve deep in order to get a complete picture.

## 2.3 Research Methods

I used semi-structured interviews to gather data for this study. This method best provides an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences and insights into their perspectives. The exploratory nature of this method makes it more suited to qualitative research and by extension the objectives of this thesis. Daly (2007) argues that interviews should be a “conversation with an agenda”. While still facilitating the fluidity required for the interviewee to reveal information, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to retrieve control that can be lost in in-depth interviewing. However, an interviewer adopting a semi-structured approach should create an interview guide. Daly (2007) states that the interviewer should come prepared with questions that act as, “a touchstone that helps to maintain some level of focus while at the same time allowing for the flexibility to follow the conversation as it unfolds uniquely”.

It is crucial to note some challenges and limitations that I faced in carrying out this research in this chapter to give a clear and transparent idea to the reader about the situation in which this reach was conducted and how the findings may have been affected by it. Firstly, I conducted half of the interviews via phone, due to the COVID-19 lockdown. I believe I might have missed out on key information had the interviews been done in-person, where I could observe the participants' reactions and pick up cues for further questions and deeper conversations. Moving from face-to-face to remote fieldwork was challenging. Although the upside was that people had more free time at their hands and were more willing to take part in the research, especially those belonging to the middle and upper-class, I acknowledge that it may have been possible that some of the participants were confined in environments where they had little privacy. In addition to that, and specifically concerning the working-class participants who may have had copious worries about their health as well as their economic wellbeing, especially with the economic crisis going hand-in-hand with the pandemic, some of the answers may have been affected by the participants' conditions. Another issue would be the enormous economic collapse, especially during the pandemic, when many people lost jobs or did not receive salaries. It was not an easy task to ask working-class participants to give up an hour of their lives for being interviewed as they surely had other priorities and matters piling up on their

plates. Thankfully, they were very willing to speak to me and I am grateful for their time. However, the low number of participants in this thesis, in general, cannot be representative of the larger community of Syrians, the working-class, and the middle and upper-class.

After the participants' consent during in-person interviews, I used my phone's recorder to record the conversations. Similarly, for the online interviews, I sent a soft copy of the consent form to the participants, and I recorded the interviews using my laptop's recorder while using my phone on loudspeaker. I later transcribed the interviews on Google Docs in order to safeguard them on a cloud which can be accessed from any device, in case my laptop endures damage. It is a safe and secure storage platform, and files immediately disappear from servers as soon as they are deleted. It is also noteworthy to mention that while most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic and later on translated to English, a few of the upper-class participants preferred to speak in English during the majority of the interview.

### *2.3.1 The themes the interviews explored*

I used three sets of semi-structured interview questions for my study. The first and the second were very similar and they were aimed at both the middle and upper-class Syrians, and the working-class. The third set was tailored to be used when interviewing Lebanese participants in order to examine their perceptions of Syrians in Beirut. The interview questions I asked Syrians comprised 4 parts, following the theoretical framework, and later on, coded into themes. After asking general questions about their conditions of migrating to Lebanon and their arrival, I went on to explore their economic (what they do for a living, their assets, remittances), social (their immediate circles and acquaintances, their friends, collectives) and cultural (their education, involvement in the art scene, the places they hang out at, as well as their dialect which also can be viewed as symbolic and has a weighty impact on the way they experience daily life) capitals. As these topics overlap and "fields" are multi-dimensional, in the last section, I focused on some parts of their lived experiences as Syrians in Lebanon and their perceptions of how they are perceived by the Lebanese, and how they are treated by both the state and the people. All of this culminated in

why they made the decision to stay in Lebanon, whether they would consider going back to Syria, and their future aspirations.

As for the Lebanese participants, I asked about what they thought are the major challenges Lebanon is facing today (pre-COVID-19 pandemic); I wanted to check if they think “the Syrians” are a problem before I went on to inquire about their perception of the presence of Syrians in the country.

See appendix A for the full questionnaires.

#### 2.4 Study Population and Means of Recruitment

My study population consists of 8 Syrian participants who belong to the middle and upper-class in Beirut, whom I treat as one group in this study, 4 working-class Syrians, who show a contrast in how they are treated by the state and the people and how their living and working conditions dictate their experience as Syrians in Beirut, as well as 4 Lebanese people from different backgrounds whose input confirmed that Syrians from the middle and upper classes are perceived in a different way than the working class and the poor and that they are less likely to be discriminated against. While recruiting Syrians, I tried to keep a mix of genders as well as a mix of upper and middle-class individuals, and with the Lebanese, I tried to interview a mixed sample of people from different social class backgrounds as their perspectives on Syrians in Lebanon may have been significant to show how they (the Syrians) are treated according to their class by the hosting community.

To recruit participants, I chose generic purposive sampling as it is selective based on characteristics of the sample I am interested in studying; the goal here is to intentionally choose niche demographics (middle, upper, and working-class Syrians in Beirut) in order to gather the needed data. Bryman (2016) states that when researchers use a generic purposive sampling approach with respect to the selection of cases or contexts, they “establish criteria concerning the kinds of cases needed to address the research questions, identifies appropriate cases, and then samples from those cases that have been identified.” This is especially relevant to my study population.

As this particular group is a minority and not easily accessible to non-middle or upper-class research like myself; it is less likely to encounter them in public or popular spaces, I adopted a snowballing technique by making use of my personal

social networks and the networks of the people I interviewed along the way. Prior to commencing my study, I had already reached out to 3 Syrian people from the middle and upper class, whom I was introduced to by friends and colleagues, and who agreed to be interviewed and showed interest in suggesting other potential participants from their social networks.

## 2.5 Analysis

Qualitative methods of coding can be used to discover themes and draw out the commonalities within the data. Liamputong (2013) proposes an effective scenario in which to analyze interview data which accommodates various methods of research. Following the initial coding and subsequent content analyses, Liampottong (2010) advocates a “thematic analysis” to be carried out, whereby themes are drawn out of the text to produce a narrative. This is what I applied to analyze my collected data. I found that the software, NVivo, was the best available tool that helped me code and visual my data. It neatly organizes and retrieves data, easily clusters sources according to codes and cases, examines different themes, visualizes findings, and most importantly, it supports said findings with detailed evidence. “The searching tools in NVivo allow the researcher to interrogate her or his data at a particular level. This can, in turn, improve the rigor of the analysis process by validating (or not) some of the researcher's own impressions of the data.” (Welsh 2002)

## 2.6 Ethical Considerations

Before interviewing participants, I did not foresee ethical issues given that the participants will be granted anonymity and confidentiality. I was granted clearance from the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University, and I used a consent form, which is necessary for ensuring that the participants understand the purpose of their involvement and that they agree to the conditions of their participation. It included clauses that state that the interview will be recorded and transcribed, access to collected data will be exclusively limited to myself, all the data used and made available will be anonymized so that the interviewee cannot be

identified, pseudonyms will be used, and the data collected (recordings and transcripts) will be destroyed by July 2020. I used pseudonyms to keep a human element while keeping my participant's identities anonymized; I used a basic online baby-name generator for 2-syllable names.

See Appendix B for the IRB approval form.

See Appendix C consent forms.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Bourdieu and Migration: Theoretical Concepts**

Migrants often use their different acquired capitals when in their new hosting country as tools of integration and survival. Using Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, researchers have been able to understand the impact of migration on migrant communities, their sending countries, and the politics and culture of receiving countries, as well as gaining insight on inequalities based on different social and cultural resources that are generated by people's mobility across national borders and the states' responses to it.

Bourdieu offers a set of analytical tools sensitive to comparative variations and relational dynamics, as well as hierarchies among migrants. Kim (2018) suggests that this approach encourages us to attend to how competitive struggles among holders of different kinds of capital shape the valorization, conversion, and legitimization of migration-facilitating capital. It also drives us to look beyond the individualistic human-capital-centered approach and explore how the symbolic power of the migrant-*sending* state can determine the collective "creditability" of its citizens, and how individuals lacking such collective credit are forced to resort to various kinds of *private* credit, or even the opposite. The uneven distribution of migration-facilitating capital produces material and symbolic stratification and generates distinctively transnational positional struggles, which intersect in revealing ways with the field of nationally oriented positional struggles.

Bourdieu (1985, 1986) proposed that social stratification is the result of the unequal distribution of four forms of capital; economic capital (money, assets), cultural capital (taste in arts, educational attainment, skills, behaviors), social capital (relations, connections, social position), and symbolic capital (honor, prestige or recognition); noting that all these forms of capital are convertible.

Reed-Danahay (2017) explains that Bourdieu's approach to "positioning in social space" can help us understand how migrants who are living within the physical

territory of a nation to which they have relocated may be fairly marginal to the social space of that nation because they do not possess the suitable or fitting forms of social, cultural, and symbolic capital which can position someone in social space. My thesis will argue that this is only true when migrants, who are the displaced Syrians here, do not belong to the middle and upper classes.

I am using Bourdieu's sociology as I see it provides a useful framework for me to conduct this kind of research and it matches well with the objectives of my study. Below are the main concepts I attempt to employ. Essentially, people achieve status on the basis of economic, cultural, social, and capital. Beyond this, in Bourdieu's conceptualization, the accumulation of social and cultural capital when recognized and valorized by others is transformed into symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1998, Hage 1998). Following this formulation, Moran (2015) argues that a "lack of capital among ethnic minority groups" results in several forms of social marginalization and an uneven distribution of wealth and resources.

### 3.1 Economic Capital

In Bourdieu's definition, economic capital is the pay you get and the assets you own, those which are "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (Bourdieu 1986). Economic capital includes all kinds of material resources; for example, financial resources, land, or property ownership make up one's economic capital. It is a straightforward concept.

### 3.2 Social Capital

According to Bourdieu, the concept of social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual recognition." Social capital is essentially the connections made among people that in turn form social networks. Within these networks, the critical norms of reciprocity and mutual trust arise, and that establishes the foundations for social cohesion (Ilja 2012).

Bourdieu (1986) said that social capital empowers agents to access, through ever-expanding networks of social relationships, an extensive range of resources that could not be otherwise acquired. Additionally, the accumulation of social capital ultimately changes an agent's social standing vis-à-vis others in the same social field, repositions them within its social hierarchies, and improves their control over this field and their ability to alter its rules in their favor.

"Each of the small decisions a person makes each day – what to wear, what to eat, how to conduct himself at work, whom to meet with later in the evening – contributes to such routines. All such choices (as well as larger and more consequential ones) are decisions not only about how to act but who to be." (Bourdieu 1991)

Bourdieu saw social capital as a property of the individual, rather than the group the individual is part of, derived predominantly from one's social position and status. Social capital allows a person to exercise power on the group or individual who mobilizes the resources. For Bourdieu, social capital is not evenly available to members of collective but obtainable to those who make the effort to acquire it by attaining positions of power and status (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital is accumulated via social, economic, and cultural structures that create a certain level of power and status for particular individuals and not others. Power creates "taken-for-granted assumptions" such as social norms that create benefits. This essentially means that social capital is not solely about having a sizable social network but having a social position that enables the potential for making use of one's social network. To Bourdieu, social capital is "irreducibly attached to class" and other forms of stratification, which in turn are associated with various forms of benefit or advancement (*ibid*).

### 3.3 Cultural Capital

The concept of cultural capital has been extensively used to understand migration, especially skilled labor migration. This concept has paved the way to a valuable approach to analyzing the global field of higher education, the global circulation of high-skilled workers, and the ways these new cosmopolitan cultural capital

accumulation strategies affect patterns of migration, migrants' family lives, and social stratification in society with where migrants are presents (Igarashi and Saito, 2014).

We can differentiate between three forms of cultural capital. 1) The institutionalized cultural capital form refers to educational attainment or skills training. 2) Objectified cultural capital concerns the ownership of cultural goods like vinyl records, paintings, or a collection of stamps. And finally, 3), the embodied cultural capital refers to people's values, skills, knowledge, and preferences, and even the way they speak and the way they carry themselves (Bourdieu 1986). In more detail:

1. The institutionalized cultural capital compromises an institution's formal recognition of a person's cultural capital, usually academic credentials or professional qualifications. The most significant social role of institutionalized cultural capital is in the labor market because it allows one to get a job, for example. The institutional recognition or validation enables the conversion of cultural capital into economic capital.
1. Objectified cultural capital concerns the ownership of cultural goods. It can comprise the person's property like a work of art or a musical instrument, for example, and this can be turned into economic profit by means of selling and buying such goods. However, while possessing a work of art the person can consume the art, as in they can understand its cultural meaning, they would be able to do so with the help of already acquired knowledge about the value conceptual or historical value of this piece of art. Therefore, cultural capital is not transmitted in the sale of the work of art, except when the seller explains the artwork's significance to the buyer.
1. And finally, the embodied cultural capital refers to the knowledge that is consciously acquired and passively inherited, by socialization to culture and tradition. One main example is linguistic cultural capital which is the mastery of language, one's dialect or accent, and their means of communication and self-presentation.

This thesis will not exhaustively dissect the different forms of cultural capital but will point them out where relevant. This is because cultural capital is a complex concept, and one reason is that, in his book ‘Distinction’, Bourdieu introduces a conceptual divide between inherited and acquired cultural capital (1984). This is important when we study migration because the acquired cultural capital of the migrant, or the lack thereof, will have a significant effect on the kind of life they will lead in the hosting country, and the inherited capital also means that the migrant has the ability to navigate through their new environment. This effectively points to the complexity of cultural capital and how challenging it would be to analyze it on all of these levels; this would require additional methodological tools.

Bourdieu (1984) asserts that cultural capital is a major source of social inequality. Certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others and can help or hinder one’s social mobility just as much as economic capital.

### 3.4 Symbolic Power

Symbolic power can take different shapes, it can be exercised by the state, by individuals of high status, or those positioned in hierarchies and believe they possess high status like employers, and from different other figures of authority; however, in this thesis, I will be exploring the dialect (Oxford definition: “a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group”) as symbolic power. This is when dialect is used as a gateway into a field, where without it, one would be considered “different” and thus alienated. In Bourdieu’s concepts, possessing this valuable linguistic capital easily translates into cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1984).

Bourdieu in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) is especially interested in exploring the use of language in practical ways to achieve certain results in the social field. Bourdieu argues that an individual’s linguistic capability is demonstrated in its practical sense, in that the individual should be able to produce well-structured sentences capable of functioning in different linguistic exchanges and settings. As per Bourdieu’s (1984) sociology, the competent individual must recognize the power structure in any linguistic exchange and be able to adapt to it accordingly. And since

linguistic exchanges between speakers can reveal hidden power struggles, language becomes a tool that cultivates inequality and divisive effects, thus reproducing social categories and barriers between social classes (Errihani 2016).

### 3.5 Field

According to Bourdieu's sociological concepts, fields are social spaces defined by common pursuits and rules that shape those within and ensure the ongoing reproduction of the field (Helbling 2007). While fields are relatively autonomous, they conceptualize the ways in which power and knowledge merge in particular realms of society, and are in turn “akin to what others call the influence of discursive frameworks or cultural idioms on the interests and actions of and the relations between individuals and groups” (Helbling 2007).

### 3.6 Habitus

The habitus, for Bourdieu (1990), is made up of systems of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures”. When adapted to understand the nature of social action within certain fields, the habitus “helps us understand that people’s identity is shaped by their social environment, but that they also exercise choice and thus may claim or reject common cultural values” (Helbling 2007). In simpler terms, and according to Oliver and O’Rielly (2010) definition: “Habitus describes those internalized structures, dispositions, tendencies, habits, ways of acting, that are both individualistic and yet typical of one’s social groups, communities, family, and historical position.” Bourdieu (1991), for example, discusses the “linguistic habitus” in the sense that language is a system of communication and a practice located within relations of power; it is both the capability to produce any number of context-specific words, phrases, or anything you can utter, and yet is structured by the specific “linguistic market and its system of sanctions and censorship” (Noble 2013). It is possible for the Habitus to transform and reinvent itself, especially when a person is settling in a new, unfamiliar space (Bourdieu 1990).

# **Chapter Four**

## **The Upper-Class Syrians of Beirut, their Working-Class Compatriots, and the Perceptions of the Hosting Community**

This chapter presents my findings in the form of vignettes from the data I collected from interviews with 12 Syrians (8 middle and upper-class participants, and 4 working-class participants) and 4 Lebanese participants, as well as analysis with respect to the different themes identified. The themes were selected according to the theoretical framework presented above.

In the first subchapter, I present the different capitals of the upper-class Syrians in Beirut and how they mobilized them to settle, how they used them to accumulate more capital and their experience with the people of Beirut and the state. Then, I present how the experience of settlement for the working-class has been different and how their capital-empty backpacks played a role in the struggle to settle. Finally, the last subchapter explores the opinions of Lebanese participants on the presence of Syrians in Beirut since 2011.

In analyzing the participants' capitals, I placed my findings under a certain capital-category, according to the weight of the amount of the capital each finding holds, no matter if it holds other forms of capital as well; in fact, most do.

### **4.1 Upper-Class Syrians in Beirut**

Most of the middle and upper-class Syrians I interviewed arrived in Beirut in 2012. They have experienced conflict in their hometowns, or they were afraid conflict would reach them. They all thought they would move to Beirut for a short while, weeks or a few months before returning, but all of them have not been to Syria since except for Hala who moved back for a short period of time but decided to return to Beirut as it was difficult for her to reintegrate.

“My aunt’s husband was shot dead near Damascus, so my parents decided it has become dangerous to stay; it wasn’t really a choice, we were pushed to leave. We thought it would be for a short period of time, but it’s been 8 years now. I tried to move back for 3 months last year, I tried to reintegrate into society and work there, but everything changed so much, I am a very different person now, and the environment has become too conservative. I don’t want to go back. Beirut is now home.”

#### *4.1.1 Economic Capital*

Besides Hala, who has lost her job as a marketing manager recently due to the economic crisis Lebanese is enduring, all of the other participants had at least one source of income and portrayed themselves as accomplished individuals. She still receives her monthly remittances from her father to sustain herself; her salary (\$1,000) did not cover her expenses and her father sends her an extra \$2,000-\$2,500 monthly. A quick search on Numbeo[1], an online crowd-sourced database for living costs around the world, shows that the average person’s living expenses in Beirut without rent is around \$900 without rent; she is not an average person.

Around half of the participants were high school or university students before they arrived in Beirut, so they continued their studies upon arrival and eventually were able to secure satisfactory jobs. As they do not have many years of experience or Lebanese citizenship (except for Fares who holds the French citizenship, and Bassem who got the Lebanese citizenship a few years ago) and although they have valid residence permits, they were not able to have high ranking or high paying jobs. Despite this fact, they were still able to have an income as high as fellow middle and upper-class Lebanese, as in addition to the salaries they made, the remittances they receive from their families are even higher than these salaries. The said participants in their twenties make on average \$2,500-\$3,500 a month. The older ones; however, are making at least \$5,000-\$15,000, except for Majed, an artist who does not have a monthly income but sells at least 3 paintings a year, each for \$80,000-\$100,000 on average.

“I do not work. Art is not work; it is my life. I have clients in Europe who appreciate my art, maybe because I am Syrian and they think they are supporting a cause, maybe because they believe I am talented. \*Majed laughs\* I live off the paintings I sell in exhibitions in Germany, Spain, France. I was able to sell 3 large paintings last year, each for around \$100,000. I also sell smaller ones priced between \$5,000-\$20,000.”

Majed told me about the amount of money he is making yearly while we were sitting at café where another Syrian, from Majed’s hometown and who moved to Beirut around the same time, works as a waiter. This waiter told me in a casual conversation I had with him months before this interview that he makes \$2.25 an hour.

As Syrians are only legally allowed to work in the fields of construction, agriculture, and cleaning (decree 197 of December 2014), the rest of the job market is not formally accessible to them and they need to have a sponsor or a partner, depending on the nature of work. However, other than the many working-class Syrians who are exploited by Lebanese employers and who have accessed the job market with strict bureaucratic burdens or “illegally” without sponsorship or valid paperwork, the middle and upper-class Syrians were able to access the jobs they desired more easily unless the jobs required syndicate memberships which is exclusive to Lebanese citizens. Hani told me that he is not a refugee, and that he did not register with UNHCR because he thought he has what it takes to make a living without the need to depend on aid and be chained by it, and that the “other Syrians” deserve it better; he is educated and skilled, and he arrived here with the capability to live comfortably. However, he is a psychotherapist who is prohibited from practicing, so he uses his talents and skills as an artist and NGO worker to make a living.

“I am a psychotherapist, but I can’t open a clinic because I am Syrian, I can’t join the syndicate although I’ve done all the required training and I have accredited diplomas. I also do improv theater and I train at organizations and companies, within in theatre group and by myself. I give training in leadership, public speaking, and other soft skills. I play the percussions in different bands. I also work at a couple of non-governmental organizations. I live comfortably, but I am not able to use the time and money I invested in my higher education in the career I hoped to pursue.”

This is indeed a case of someone who is rich in cultural capital and who is able to get by even when faced with a serious obstacle, but Hani's life would be different had he been able to work as a psychotherapist, and the reason he cannot is that part of his cultural capital is not valid in this Lebanese national field. The Lebanese state power manifests itself here; in order to protect Lebanese citizens in certain work fields, the state prohibits other nationals from entering said fields. The state does not recognize or validate this capital. Unlike other fields, where the state has no upper hand, and one can struggle to access a certain field given the competition between different individuals or groups to mobilize, acquire, or accumulate capital in this field, this one appears to be closed; there's no room for struggle or trial. This invalidation of Hani's capital is what Bourdieu would label as 'invalid', and this is key to the function of 'symbolic violence'. He defines it as 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (1992). This means that agents, in this case, Hani or other Syrians who cannot be members of syndicates, are subjected to forms of violence (treated as inferior, denied resources, limited in their social mobility and aspirations), but they do not perceive it that way; rather, their situation seems to them to be 'the natural order of things'; to him, this is how things are, this is the law, and he should use his other skills and talents to make a living.

It is also a case where one has to rely on one capital more than the other in order to get by. Hani is the participant with the least economic capital; he is still part of the middle class as he leads different projects, makes a good salary and is able to save money, but had he not possessed this amount of cultural capital, it may have been a possible case of downward social mobility. He was able to employ his talents in music and theatre to stay on his feet and even save money for future plans. Without his cultural capital, the experience of settling in Beirut for him may have been tough and challenging.

In order to try to qualitatively measure the participants' economic capital, I also asked them if they still had any assets in Syria. All of them except one said that they at least had an apartment and land there, but a few said they still owned farms, country/summer houses, shops, and more than one or apartment. In Lebanon, however, and while most of them own cars, only one owns an apartment, the rest rent

out accommodation. Bassem recently bought one using a banker's cheque in order to release the money stuck in a Lebanese bank after the enforced informal capital controls as a result of the economic crisis.

While it is not official information accessible to the public, it is known that non-residents cannot open bank accounts in Lebanon unless they deposit around \$100,000, with most banks requiring \$500,000, according to Doug Casey[2]'s International Man (unofficial number). I supposed it would be interesting to ask my participants if they have bank accounts in Lebanon and if the accounts were in dollars, as it is common among the working class that their employers would open bank accounts for them which they can only use to withdraw their salaries in Lebanese Lira, and they are not allowed to use it to save money or make any other kind of transactions. All of my participants have Lebanese-Lira bank accounts, except for Bassem who is now a Lebanese citizen, and whose dollars are under capital control[3]. Hani; however, reported being denied opening a bank account when the bank teller knew he was Syrian, but his "ajnabi" (foreign/white) friend helped him. The "ajnabi" in Lebanon is always held with high esteem. Hani here mobilizes his context-appropriate social capital for economic capital gains.

"I was at a street festival a few years ago and there was a bank booth, so I went there telling them I want to open an account in dollars, they refused because I am Syrian, then a friend of mine who is British, 'wahad ajnabi' [referring to a white foreigner] tried to do the same thing, as a joke, and the bank teller agreed to open an account for him. My friend told him he was only holding an ID card at the time and did not have a residence permit or any other document, but the bank teller still agreed, and during this, we were filming the conversation. Another person who works at the bank noticed that we were filming, so he decided to allow me to open an account, but in Lira. To open a bank account in dollars, if you are Syrian, you have to deposit \$100,000 in a dormant account that you can't use for 2 years. The rich Syrians can do it. And this also grants them a yearly residence permit called an 'iqamat wadiaa' [bank deposit residence permit]."

This was confirmed by Rafi:

“If you are Armenian Syrian and you know someone who works at Bank Audi in Burj Hammoud [Armenian-majority area in the outskirts of Beirut], they might make a couple of exceptions for you, because as a Syrian you cannot open a bank in dollars, but things changed after 2015. Everything depends on how much money you have and how they can make use of you. If you have \$100,000 you will not go through any trouble.”

Economic capital opens doors. It can grant migrants access to facilities and tools that potentially make life easier to navigate, like a bank account. Mobilizing social capital and economic capital at the same time can grant access to such tools in a smoother and faster manner.

#### *4.1.2 Social Capital*

It seems that although the economic capital of middle and upper-class Syrians played a huge role in granting them easy – to an extent – access to decent accommodation, and later on in this chapter, we will see that it also provided them with higher education at the country’s best universities, it is also their social capital that plays an immensely substantial role in the process of their settlement in Beirut. As capitals are transferable and convertible, it is indeed very visible how Syrians utilize their social capital in different fields and, through it, they are able to accumulate and exhibit extra economic, cultural, and symbolic capital.

While all of the participants seem to have lost touch with their Syrian friends back in Syria or even those who migrated to other countries, they have stated that most of their friends in Beirut are Lebanese, who they “now identify with more than Syrians” and that most of them are key players in the social field and appear to have high social status, ranging from bankers, entrepreneurs, jewelers, to owners of giant local brands (like Kassatli), famous artists, and even politicians. The participants employed these connections in several instances, and although these networks were largely a means of advantage for getting things done or for attaining certain benefits, some of these people have been intimate friends who provided a pleasant experience of companionship in a city that seems to be harsh to many.

“Without the friends I made at university and in other social settings, I would have hated Beirut as many Syrians do. It’s a tough city to navigate, and even tougher when you’re foreign and not around the right people.”

This was Raffi’s response when I asked him if his Lebanese friends had helped in the process of settling in a new environment, Beirut. He is an Armenian Syrian from Aleppo, who prior to arriving to Lebanon, had very limited interaction with people who are not Armenian; the new setting expanded his social network.

“Being in Lebanon was a big change for me, it exposed to so many people from different backgrounds. I met Shiites and Druze, who I never thought I would become friends with. These are the people I enjoy talking to the most, more than others [Armenians], this was surprising to me. Last Christmas, I decided to send out an email to all the people I care about in the world, and I mentioned the cities they now live in, I realized that half of the people who really made a big impression and touched my life, I met in Beirut, most of who are Lebanese. In Lebanon, I met Syrian Arabs, Lebanese Armenians, many of whom I met through my involvement in the party, and Lebanese, some are politically involved people as well. Lebanon gave me a more diverse and inclusive circle.”

When my interviewees first arrived in Beirut, they either stayed with a distant relative or found accommodation through their social networks after staying in hotels for weeks to at least a few months. Again, they did not expect their stay to be that long. Many of them live in Ashrafieh and the neighboring areas now. It seems to be an attractive area for the upper class. I am interested in their social networks and in the social spaces they occupy, so I asked why they chose particular neighborhoods, whether other Syrians live there, and if they helped them find accommodation. Intriguingly, sect played a role for some of them while making the choice to live in certain neighborhoods.

Fares lives in Ashrafieh, known for being a majority-Christian area, but not because he is Christian; he chose this neighborhood as per his friends’ recommendations.

“Someone I know, an upper-class francophone Sunni who lives in Ashrafieh and sends his kids to Lycee, was asked by his neighbors

‘how did they let you rent out an apartment here (in a Christian area)?’

When I moved here, I was advised to stay away from Shiia areas [allegedly Pro-Hezbollah/pro-Syrian regime majority] because you would hear unpleasant things like ‘your country is beautiful and safe, why did you flee?’

I think that, in general, the Christian environment is definitely more welcoming to Christian Syrians, and a Sunni environment is more welcoming to Sunni Syrians, and also Syrians actively avoid situations that would be annoying or even threatening to them.”

Oliver and O’Rielly (2010) echoing Bourdieu say that “a habitus finds similar habitus; one is thus attracted to those of one’s own class to avoid feeling like a fish out of water.” Migrants often attempt to settle in spaces that can provoke a sense of familiarity in a setting that is rather unfamiliar.

Jana, a researcher in political science, and another resident of Ashrafieh, had moved there not knowing the sectarian and political dynamics of Beirut’s neighborhoods; she moved there because the location seemed nice and convenient at the time.

“I do not know other Syrians here [in the neighborhood]. We do not feel very welcome in this area. When we moved, we didn’t take into account the issues of racism and discrimination, and the sectarianism that comes with the different districts of Beirut. We lived where we thought is a good place to live, but for example, during the elections two years ago, we saw writings on the walls and campaign banners against Syrians; this is why I think many Syrians do not live here, they live in other areas like Hamra, close to the universities, or even outside Beirut. Apparently, every district has a different sectarian majority. When we were looking for a place, we were advised by Lebanese landlords or brokers to look in certain districts according to the sect they assumed we belonged to ‘you would like it here, there are many Sunnis’. But now some people assume that I am a Christian when I say that I live in Ashrafieh. I once saw a huge banner in Sassine that says, ‘one day we will tell the Syrian to pack his things and go back to your home country’. It is ridiculous.”

Political affiliation was another factor that played a role in renting out accommodation for Rafi.

“I had good social support from the Armenian community, and I was in a political party, Tashnag (Armenian Revolutionary Federation), so they helped me find a place, I had access to almost everything within the party and the community. I am a member of the party in Syria, but I was also active when I came to Lebanon. You know the tension between Syrians and Lebanese, but I was able to get elected to be leading the branch of the student association of the party in Beirut, although the dynamic with the Lebanese was very complicated.”

Hala’s economic capital allowed her to enroll in one of Beirut’s elite universities. As we will see in the next section, not only did this open many doors for her, education-wise and career-wise, it also was an environment where she was introduced to many key people in the community who helped her navigate her way into settling in Beirut and landing many opportunities that would have otherwise been invisible to her.

“I could entirely depend on my dad for money if I wanted to, but I have dreams and ambition, and I want to be part of the bustling life around me. Having a social network here is a treasure; the more people you know, the more you get out of life Beirut.”

This corresponds to Bourdieu’s idea that the more capital one has, the more opportunities are made available to them, and the more powerful a position they occupy in social life.

#### *4.1.3 Cultural Capital*

The participants, aged between 23 and 53, have all attained higher education, with half of them holding or pursuing a master’s degree at the time of the interview. Their educational backgrounds are diverse; STEM, social sciences, arts, and humanities. They all have busy social lives which seem to have them frequenting nice cafes, bars, museums, galleries, and festivals, in addition to career and academic conferences for some of them. Many of them are involved in non-governmental organizations and philanthropic activities. It appears that they all have carried with them a load of cultural capital which they mobilized in Beirut to access certain fields, and which they

also multiplied, converted, and accumulated along the way. This greatly facilitated their experience of settlement as we are seeing.

To continue with Hala, it is evident that having access to spaces that are majority-elite, like one of the best universities in Beirut, is a catalyst to accumulate capital, especially cultural capital in this case. She told me that many doors were opened for her in Lebanon opened, especially during the time she was pursuing her BA in Political Science and International Affairs. She was also able to find a job upon graduation because her flatmate who is one of her close friends, offered her an opportunity at her parents' enterprise.

"I was very lucky to be part of the Model United Nations and Model Arab League, I traveled to New York, and that to me was quite a valuable experience which really pushed me and made me enthusiastic and ambitious about women's rights and equality. I attended many training programs that the university gave me and my colleagues exclusive access to. There are many opportunities here for a person to gain new skills and meet new people - you can do everything in Beirut from enrolling in diplomacy and human rights workshops to attending cooking and bartending classes... I built a lot of hard and soft skills, and I still learn something new every day."

She is interested in alternative and electronic music, and different other arts. She lives in a neighborhood, Gemmayzeh, where there are many art galleries that she enjoys visiting. She told me she inherited this interest from her mother who is a painter. She spoke in length about social life in Beirut, recognizing the different social groups and classes; she is content with the diversity, which she told me is very different from how life is back in Syria, and that it made life a lot easier for her, she is able to choose the groups she belongs to and the groups she wants to distance herself from, now that there is room to do so and that she is not stuck with a group of people who do not resemble her.

Bourdieu (1968) argued that equivalent to passing on land, status, and wealth, cultural capital is a resource that is inherited within families. It seems that Hala's mother has had an impact on her life, her interests, and her aspirations.

It is apparent that her experience in Beirut has had its impact on her habitus as well; what used to be the normal social settling in Syria has vastly shifted during the 8 years she has spent here. She told me she would not be the person she is today if she were to still be living in Syria and surrounded by the same uniform social group, and that she would not have been able to explore things about herself which she did not know she possessed before.

“If you go to ‘Em Shariff’, a fancy restaurant, you see many upper-class Syrian women hanging out, trying to find a husband from their social class. These people always hang out at the same places. The Syrian community is a bit homogeneous, and that is why I distance myself from them. My identity has shifted. But in Beirut, there are many different societies; you have those who want to start families like the Syrians, but also there people who are working hard to achieve their goals, they go to universities, start businesses, people who go to night clubs and god knows where that’s taking them. There are so many groups, and you can join whatever looks like you, wherever you find yourself. There’s a big LGBTQ community that allows people to express themselves. There’s such power to the women here, it’s an easy society to live in if we’re to compare it to the Syrian society, despite the government being shitty, most people are educated.”

This, on the other hand, reflects the kind of social circle she is part of and the capitals she possesses. The working-class participants in the next subchapter do not at all agree that it is an easy society to live in.

Art is another form of cultural capital that facilitated a kind of a smooth process of settlement for Hani. He sees his talent and skills in playing seven different percussion instruments as an invaluable asset that not only adds to his wealth, but also helps him navigate social life.

“What I learned from my experience as an artist in Beirut is that art is a tool for cohesion, it really broke the stereotypes people had for me a Syrian. I entered homes of very racist people, but as an artist, they couldn’t do anything but respect my art, and this definitely challenged the preconceptions they had, and it was very

obvious to me, I saw it in their confused behavior and attitude. Fanni ra'smali [art is my capital], it is who I am, and it earns me the respect I deserve.”

Cultural capital, in this case, artistic capital, is Hani’s “status-laden influence, associating with actual or aspirational social position”. (Coleman 1983).

Fares, the photojournalist with a solid social network, also believes that someone’s art and culture make people overlook their nationality. He told me that he knows that some Lebanese have made the effort to unlearn their racism when they were in the same room with a Syrian from the same social status.

“The cultural scene in Beirut is very rich. Most of the friends I hang out with are in the arts field, so there are many things to do in Beirut. I also go with some of my Lebanese friends to these exhibitions, some who come from environments that tend to be racist or anti-refugees, but they do not mind going to an art exhibition or own a painting by a Syrian artist.”

This is later confirmed in the subchapter 4.3 on Lebanese perception by one of the participants who told me that racism appears to vanish when the racist is dealing with someone who possesses cultural capital, like an artist, who is often treated in a better manner than the working-class are treated.

#### *4.1.4 Symbolic Power*

“Those who have money, who could get a big apartment, and send their kids to IC [International College] or Lycée Français, they are not the ones receiving racism. They are not like the Syrians in the camps of the Beqaa. If they look like them, talk like them, spend like them, they are protected from racism.”

This is what Fares had to say when I asked about his observations of how the Lebanese treat Syrians.

This section intersects with the previous and following sections, but it will include clear-cut examples of how the participants' embodied cultural capital is converted to symbolic power. The following vignettes illustrate how the participants' looks and the way they speak granted them easier access to situations that would otherwise be unpleasant, this is contrary to the experience of the working-class participants that we will see in the next subchapter.

Generally, it appears that all of the participants have changed the way they speak, and sometimes the way present themselves in terms of clothing or the places they go to in order to be recognized as having the same status as their Lebanese peers (the middle and upper-class). However, similar to the strategy of the working-class Syrians that we will see later, some of the participants also change their dialect in order to avoid unpleasant situations. Rafi told me that if you are in a job where you have to be in constant contact with Lebanese people who are strangers, so they do not who you really are and what your background is, like if you're working in insurance or as a bartender, or even when you take a cab, you will be harassed all the time, directly or indirectly, if you do not change your dialect and mirror their way of speech.

"More often than not, when I was a student, taxi drivers asked me to get out of their cars when they heard me speak because I sound Syrian, but when I change my dialect, many times they would be cursing Syrians without realizing that I am one. I was once going from Ashrafieh to Dawra, the guy told me 'the Syrians will eventually take your job, it's so sad, you're a young 'mrattab' [of social status] Lebanese student.' When I open my mouth and they realize that I'm Syrian, they would kick me out of their cars, so these moments make me do things differently, I change my dialect, my way of thinking, and even clothing, I have also noticed many girls do this especially, they change they wear things, their fashion, to become more acceptable in this pretentious society."

Rafi emphasized to me that he is a very proud Syrian, and that sometimes he can become defensive about his identity, but he also wants to protect myself. He believes that this coping mechanism, dialect-switching, is an essential tool for Syrians because most of the Lebanese see them as a lower class.

“For years, I used to change my dialect between environments where I am comfortable being Syrian and others where I have to adapt to my surroundings, but very recently I am speaking Lebanese without even thinking about, it has become part of who I am, and some of my Syrian friends joke and mockingly tell me ‘shu sayir Lebnani!’ [you’ve become Lebanese].”

Code-switching is a performative practice by migrants that they adopt in order to protect themselves from potential harm. It is an act of conscious labor and it takes time before their habitus fully embraces it. Although the habitus is a product of early experiences, social dispositions, and one’s history altogether, it is continually “re-structured by individuals’ encounters with the outside world”. (Di Maggio 1970)

It is essential to define “mrattab” in this section as it will appear many times throughout this thesis. The working class, the upper class, and the Lebanese participants all use this term or its plural “mrattabeen” when speaking about those who possess social status. While it literally means neat, tidy, or well-groomed, it colloquially refers to someone who is educated, cultured, middle or upper class. It is often used to contrast the “other” Syrians, the ragged construction workers and janitors, which is the general image the Lebanese have of Syrians, due to their presence as unskilled laborers in the country for decades. Apparently, the upper-class Syrians similarly use it to describe their working-class compatriots.

Going back to daily encounters with Lebanese people, specifically cab drivers, Bassem, who holds an MA in social sciences, and other working and upper-class participants also have several stories with cab drivers, and because of the countless incidents, they even have a name for it:

“We Syrians here have something called the ‘service accent’ which we switch to whenever we are in a service [share taxi] this is where we switch to Lebanese when we speak to the drivers to avoid any discrimination or harassment. But my friends and I do not speak in Arabic most of the time anyway, having grown up in a colonial school [American Community School] we are used to speaking English.”

Some of the participants I spoke to told me that most of the time, they prefer adding some French or English, like the Lebanese (of the same social status), and some said that they have completely adopted the Lebanese dialect because they have been here for years, they are now “ahl el balad” (like citizens) and that their prestige dictates they speak the way their friends speak. Majed uses dialect as “social distinction”, as Errihani (2016) would put it.

“Imagine going to an art gallery trying to sell your art to the elite crowd, you are not going to speak vulgar \*jokingly\* Shami [Damascene] to them. You will speak what they understand, what they think is cool or classy. Not only for prestige but also to sell. You have to play the silly game.” Majed told me.

Fares had many anecdotes about his friends’ experiences, it is probably the journalist in him that digs for stories.

“I know many people in Ashrafieh who speak in French because they do not want to face the Lebanese with their Syrian accent, I guess they think it would downgrade their status. A friend of mine always goes to Antoine [a bookstore] to order books, he mostly speaks French, and one time the worker there told him that a specific book would arrive late, so without paying attention, the Syrian-dialect Arabic slipped from his mouth and he said ‘mou meshkleh mani mestaajel’ [no worries, I am not in a rush]. She was totally stunned and asked him where he was from, and when he said he is Syrian, her shock was even more obvious and a little condescending ‘I could not tell that you were Syrian, I thought you were French or Lebanese!’ She probably thinks that all Syrians are construction works. There is a lot of ignorance.”

Here we see “the fantasy” (Hage 1998) of who or what is Lebanese, what embodied cultural capital makes one belong to the national space of “Lebaneness”, and what other characteristics act as pointers to eliminate this person from this field.

Jana told me that some of the upper-class Syrians she knows in Beirut have similar perceptions and behaviors to those of the Lebanese towards the working-class Syrians. She believes that most of the time people discriminate against those who “don’t look like them”, who are not “mrattabeen”.

“When it comes to Syrians who are not considered refugees, those with money and status, it is often that they have a problem of ‘we are not like them (refugees)’ they do not want to be associated with refugees, they do not want to work with them, they think it is an insult if someone calls them refugees. There is discrimination amongst Syrians themselves when it comes to class and legal status. My parents’ friends talk about Syrians in a condescending way ‘these dirty Syrians who ruined our reputation, they ruined Lebanon’. During a family lunch last week, a distance relative shamelessly said ‘Lebanon should kick Syrians out of Lebanon. They are making it a mess, they are sexually suppressed and messed up’. Some also have a savior complex and treat them with pity. This is common among upper class Syrian... Classism is Lebanese-Syrian, Syrian-Syrian.”

Bourdieu et al (1993) state that different groups with certain amounts of capital strive to maintain and retain certain spaces, “bringing closer desirable persons and things”. Clearly, discrimination comes from those who position themselves in society as superior to those they see as below them, not only do the Lebanese look down on Syrians because they perceive them as construction workers or dirty refugees, the upper-class Syrians have similar sentiments; they do not want to be associated with “such” compatriots who do not possess similar cultural capital as they “ruin their reputation”; this reputation is precisely the honorable symbolic power the upper-class aims to always maintain.

Hala is aware of the class differences and believes that the way the Lebanese treat her is because of her social status.

“I’ve seen a lot of support and understanding from the people around me, and felt very welcomed, there were only a few bad incidents. Maybe it is because I got integrated with the part of society that is aware and educated, this is why I got good treatment. I think this has to do with class. In Akkar, I saw that

some of the Syrian families have integrated with the Lebanese poor families. Also, in Beirut, you see that the rich Syrians get along with the rich Lebanese, they all go the same restaurants, the same spaces... I think this discrimination is classist. When the Lebanese say ‘hol el sourriyeen’ [those Syrians] they don’t mean me, they mean the poor refugees. It could be my friend’s mom who says that, but I do not take it personally, she does not mean me, she means the uneducated Syrians, which is unfortunate, it’s not their fault they were not educated, it’s not their fault that they seem scary to certain rich families.”

The labels like “mrattab” and “hol el sourriyeen” are again categories of discrimination or racism performed by possessors of cultural capital and who view themselves as superior, showing that those who lack certain characteristics, linguistic or physical, are automatically placed outside the nationalist field and are undesired. (Hage 1998 on Bourdieu)

Bassem, too, has been treated in a different way, he has often heard: “oh you’re Syrian, but you’re not like the other Syrians” and he believes it is because of his social status.

“I ask ‘what do you mean by other Syrians? They are just like me’ they answer ‘you know who I am talking about, those construction workers, those who verbally harass women, etc.’”

Bourdieu (1984) says that in a new setting, where one’s background is unfamiliar or hidden from others, they form their opinion and judgment through observations of one’s habitus, the way they dress, the way they behave, and their taste in things.

#### *4.1.5 Dealing with the state and the people*

In comparison with the working-class participants whose experiences we will see in the next subchapter, the middle and upper-class participants did not seem to have a hard time navigating social life in Beirut. As stated previously, they all had Lebanese friends and a good support system. Only a few of them reported being discriminated against, but none faced any extents that the working class did.

Hani told me that the Lebanese only discriminate against those they see as “lower” than them, and that even if they hate you as a Syrian, they will treat you with respect, they do not mind pretending, and that is because they know you can be of potential benefit to them, you can strike a business deal with them, for example. It’s a “give and take relationship”, but with the working-class, there is nothing to ‘take’.

“If the Lebanese see you are from the same social class, they treat you well ‘enta souri mrattab, mesh metel gher souriyyeen el shaghileh’ [you are a Syrian of social status, not like the other Syrians, the workers]. It is when they look down on you that they treat you like shit.”

When dealing with bureaucracy, their experience was not terrible either. It seems that the state’s symbolic power does not have a large influence on those with money and status. Almost all of the middle and upper-class participants had no trouble getting their iqama renewed; on the contrary, they reported that they were treated with respect at the General Security bureau and that they received their passports back in a timely manner. However, they also recognized that the “other” Syrians, who were with them in the same waiting rooms, were not treated equally.

Jana’s experience with the General Security has been quite smooth, and she believes that this due to being perceived as a woman with social status.

“I know someone who works at the General Security, so he always helps me get my residence permit renewed on the same day. I have a different permit (iqamet wadiaa/bank deposit permit) we can renew it as long as we have this money in the bank, so it doesn’t require many documents like a student’s residence permit. The refugees’ experience at the general security is much worse when waiting for my turn at the office, I saw a man who surrounded by 3 members of General Security and he was crying because he wants his papers renewed, and they were giving him a hard time and not being respectful to him and they were laughing at him. I was upset to see this difference in treatment. this really depends on your socio-economic status and the way you look, I am a female, I am young, I do not wear the hijab like most Syrian women waiting for their turn, they see me as “hada mrattab” they do not annoy me, but they annoy my guy friends, as a female, they

treat me in a nice way and also sometimes they flirt with me, but they can't do that with guys, this works for me, it's wrong but it works for me. It's horrible how the patriarchy works."

Here we see different capitals facilitating this routine task which is typically a hassle for others. Her economic capital paved the way for her to get an iqama based on how much money she has in her bank account. Her social capital, having someone who works at the General Security in her social network, allows her to get her iqama renewed on the same day, when others have to wait for at least two months. Finally, her cultural capital, the way she looks and dresses, grants her no annoying or degrading behavior from the General Security personnel, also contrary to the experiences of the working class. It is a full package of settlement-facilitating capitals.

On the other hand, not all of the interviewees need an iqama, Fares, for example, has French citizenship, so he leaves the country every 3 months [the duration he is allowed to stay on a tourist visa], and gets a new visa on arrival, no questions asked, especially that he holds a journalist ID from a top press agency. This works well for him as he often wants to go back to Paris to spend time with his children.

Bassem does not need an iqama anymore. He was granted Lebanese citizenship a few years ago. He told me that "bourgeois Syrian" relatives of his were able to pay \$250,000 per person to obtain citizenship. This is a lot of money for a family of four. However, thanks to his mother's social network, and to the ex-minister who "had a crush on her", they were all granted citizenship, offered for free by this politician.

Here, it looks like mobilizing social capital to the extent of using politician friends in one's social network is a ticket to evading the state's bureaucracy, and sometimes, violence. Having the host country's citizenship is a lot of weight lifted off a migrant's shoulders.

Economic capital certainly is a major asset when dealing with the Lebanese state as well. Fares told me that many bureaucratic obstacles can be overcome if you have some money you don't mind wasting, but also when you allow the state to enforce its power on you, because sometimes, even if you are rich, you are still Syrian.

“I know from friends that getting a driving permit [for Syrian-plate cars] is a struggle. There is a lot of bureaucracy, a lot of required documents, and a lot of waiting time, but most of it gets worked out with a little bribery. There is no law of order in this country. So here comes the class issue again, if you have money to bribe, you can get things working for you.”

Using Bourdieu’s lens, Egan and Tabar (2016) examine the relationship between the Lebanese state and the reproduction of unequal power relations, when it’s not *wasta* (nepotism), it’s bribery. In this example, we see a “clandestine exchange of certain symbolic and material resources” (*ibid*).

I asked the participants about their views on how the consecutive governments since 2011 have dealt with the issue of Syrian refugees. They all seemed to agree one three things. One, although Lebanon was not ready for the influx, especially when it comes to infrastructure and housing, there has been damaging incompetence and no planning, in addition to a great dependence on international organizations to come in and meet the refugees’ different needs. Two, despite allowing many international organizations to work in the camps, there have been suspicious deals with them; there is a lot of talk about corruption in the participants’ circles, and some of them said they had a firsthand experience while volunteering in some camps – they observed mismanagement of funds and resources, and lack of research before implementing projects and distributing aid, all in the absence of the state’s supervision. And three, most of them spoke about the hateful discourse disseminating by Lebanese officials. Most of them named Gebran Bassil [former minister of foreign affairs] as the main propagator of this discourse, who uses every occasion to blame the country’s problems on the refugees and threatens the international community to let them migrate to their countries [Europe] if Lebanon does not receive adequate funds and support from them. The state, represented by Gebran Bassil in this case, and many other politicians and public figures close to the state, makes it a point to exhibit its symbolic violence to the local and international community, in the aim of securing benefits for the state using fearmongering and populism, by scapegoating the refugees, although it is not seen as violence from its [the state] end.

Lena volunteered in a camp in Akkar, north Lebanon, and witnessed the precarious living conditions of Syrians in camps.

“I have no words to explain it, I can never understand how people can behave this way towards one another. For example, Gebran Bassil's policies were completely demeaning towards Syrian refugees, I've never been in the center of it, but I know from what I hear and see that is it is irresponsible for someone who is a state person to react this way to a crisis. It is very populistic and hate-inciting. I sometimes really worry about the refugees. Some got their tents burnt down a couple of years ago.”

## 4.2 Working-Class Syrians in Beirut

Before introducing this chapter, to provide context and understanding, and as the interviews I have conducted for this thesis took place during an economic collapse following an uprising in late 2019[1] and a pandemic lockdown, it is important to note that these two factors have affected some of the participants' lives, especially those belonging to the working class whose salaries, once paid in dollars, got slashed in half and are now being paid in Lebanese Lira, which has undergone implacable devaluation[2]. For the purpose of avoiding confusion, all numbers reported in LBP are based on the \$1=1,500 LBP exchange rate, since some of the interviews were conducted prior to the extreme devaluation of the local currency. On the day I wrote this paragraph [early July 2020], the exchange rate was \$1=8,100 LBP.

To show some contrast to the findings I came about with the upper-class participants, and to gain insight on the experience of settlement for non-refugee working-class Syrians, despite the daily discernible observations of exploitation and discrimination, I interviewed a bartender, a waiter, a cashier, and a street cleaner. They all arrived in Beirut between 2012 and 2014. The working-class participants' capitals appear weak in comparison to their upper-class compatriots. I try to thoroughly illustrate this below. Similar to what I did in the previous subchapter, I explore how the participants' different capitals, or the lack thereof, came into play with the different aspects of navigating life in Beirut as a Syrian.

### 4.2.1 *Economic Capital*

All of the participants came from working-class backgrounds before they arrived; they were already in working-class jobs and/or they were raised in working-class households. They all came from rural areas and not cities: Reef el Sham [Rural Damascus] and Reef Halab [Rural Aleppo]. All three male participants left their families back in Syria, either internally displaced to other parts of Syria or living collectively with extended family to reduce the costs of living. The only female I interviewed, and the youngest participant, 20-year-old Nada, moved to Lebanon with her Lebanese mother at age 14 to her grandparents' apartment in Hadath on the outskirts of Beirut. She was not able to continue her studies at school because the

Lebanese curriculum was difficult to catch up with at her age, and having no school certificate, on top of not being a national, her chances at securing a decent job were too little; she started working at a children's clothing store in her neighborhood at the age of 17, where prior to the October 2019 uprising, she made 700,000 LBP; she now makes half of this salary and often does not get paid on time. Rami, a waiter at a café, had his salary slashed in half since November 2019 as well.

“I used to make 700,000 – 1,000,000 LBP a month, depending on tips, but since the revolution, they cut my salary by half, and I started to make less money with pandemic lockdown as the working hours have been reduced. I don't know how I will pay rent, send money to my mother in Syria, and still be able to eat this month.”

Rami tried to pursue a degree in business at one of the low-tuition universities in Beirut, but he could not continue after his second semester. Working a one 6-hour shift was not enough to pay his tuition, rent, transportation, sustenance, and to send his mother in Syria some money, all while attending courses and studying for exams. It was an exhausting experience. Despite the existence of plenty of educational programs and scholarships for young Syrians, Rami was not aware of any. His social network probably was also not aware of these opportunities either. This; however, is not the fault of his limited social network, information about such programs is not being thoughtfully disseminated. Syrians need better access to this kind of information, knowledge sharing and enhanced coordination between governmental agencies within Lebanon, international actors and educational institutions need to be better strategized in order to reach those who can benefit from such programs that provide access to tertiary education (El Ghali et 2017). He had been on a scholarship that pays him a stipend and his tuition at a good university, he may have had been able to focus on his studies with a part-time job that does not take up too much of his time, and he would still have sent his mother money. Access to information is hindered by one's social and cultural capitals, but also by state power.

Three of the participants reported remitting money to their families in Syria (around 300,000 LBP on average), except for Karim, a 27-year-old bartender in Hamra, whose

mother occasionally sends him money (around \$300-\$500) in order to support him with his son's expenses. He is divorced and splits expenses with his ex-wife who lives with his 3-year-old son in Berlin.

Kamil makes around \$350 a month cleaning the streets of Beirut. He sends most of his money to his wife and two sons in Syria in order to support them with tuition and other expenses. He sleeps in the cleaning company's shared accommodation facility and he doesn't spend money on food as he depends on staff meals.

#### *4.2.2 Social Capital*

When it comes to social life, it seems that all participants do not have the time for hanging out with friends and enjoying leisure breaks due to the long working hours and sometimes double shifts. They also reported not having that many friends, neither Lebanese nor Syrian. The people in their immediate circles are either coworkers, and their bigger social networkers consist of acquaintances they met at work: customers, suppliers, or other workers in their field who they meet in the neighborhoods where they live. Nada told me that she was not able to make any friends for three years before she started working; she spent her teenage years without a friend or a support group:

“When I came here, I didn’t have any friends, I did not know who to talk to or how. I felt shy talking to the neighbors’ children. I only made friends years later when I started working at the clothing store.”

Acquiring social capital for a migrant in a new social setting can be challenging; and belonging to the working-class makes it more so. In a new setting, especially for a young person like Nada, migrants who are often deprived of “usual ways of ensuring they mix with people”, tend to show how insecure they were in the attempt of making new friends and getting to know people in the migration setting. (Oliver and O’Rielly 2010)

Karim told me that he often hears his customers, the bar-goers, casually over a glass of beer, hooking each other up with opportunities like tell each other about a job

vacancy in their workplace or introducing them to someone who is looking for a certain service that they can offer as freelancers.

“It amazes me how within minutes someone can find a job just being connected to the right person. Beirut is all about personal connections. To find my job, I had to ‘knock on many doors’. I ate instant noodles for weeks, got let down by many potential employers, before I found this job, which did not even pay me well the first month of training; most of the money I made was tips from customers.”

This highlights the privilege to access further economic capital by being part of a social network that has the means to support a migrant; as we saw previously, the middle and upper classes were able to utilize their social capital for similar benefits. Social capital is quite relevant in its ability to be converted to symbolic capital. “In the struggle to acquire symbolic capital in the migration setting, speculation about past social position became common.” (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010).

All except for Kamil have found accommodation through a family member who had already moved to Beirut for work. Rami and Karim live in Hamra, where they told many other Syrians live. They both said that they know many of them, but they are not friends, “kel wahed baddo maslahto, maslaha w mesh sohbeh” [everyone pursues their own interests, these relationships are built around interest and not friendship]. Kamil has no friends here either, most of the people he works with are Indians and Bangladeshis, so he told me there a language barrier, but he is always happy when he is placed with a Lebanese, Palestinian, or another Syrian worker on certain rotation shifts. Most of his friends in Syria had passed away or got displaced. He is a street cleaner and lives in a collective, overcrowded accommodation provided to him by the cleaning company. The 55-year old from Rural Aleppo used to teach at a local school before it got destroyed in 2012.

It appears that the lack of a solid social network has had a grave effect on the working-class participants compared to the upper-class ones, who mobilized their social capital to secure accommodation, find jobs, and acquire other benefits more easily.

#### *4.2.3 Cultural Capital*

Not entirely conflicting with Bourdieu's concepts, but also not fully in-line with them, all of the working-class participants have acquired at least some kind of cultural capital in Syria and were able to valorize it in Lebanon, even more than some of the upper-class participants. They are all interested in different arts from classical music, Sufi jazz, to Arabic poetry, and culinary arts. They wish they had the time to go to museums, plays, and concerts, although on occasion, some of them manage to sacrifice some rest on a day off to attend a concert they had saved money for months to be able to afford to attend.

Their working conditions seem to dictate a certain lifestyle on them and prohibit them from enjoying activities they otherwise would be able to engage in more frequently.

Only Karim and Rami speak a little English, which they learned from conversations with their bar and café customers or while eavesdropping on them, while all of the middle and upper-class participants spoke at least two languages, and some spoke three or even four.

On another hand, it also seems that their cultural capital cannot be utilized in their current working and living situations. It is deemed useless. Nada told me that her boyfriend is teaching her how to play the classical guitar once a week, but she is not very excited about it, and her mother thinks it is an unnecessary activity.

“I love the guitar and I would love to play concerts, but I don't know where I am going with this. It is a waste of time, I think. Nobody around me values it. I will never have the time to practice enough to become a good player, let alone find a gig that would pay me to play. I have to work every day, and by the time I am done or even in the weekend, I am too tired to do anything. A short lesson once a week is not enough. I don't have the luxury of time; I have to support my family with my income.”

To each field, there corresponds a habitus specific to the field (academic habitus, legal habitus, basketballer's habitus, etc.). Only those who have incorporated the habitus specific to the field are able to play the “game” and to believe in the importance of the

game (Hilgers and Mangez 2014). And according to Bourdieu (1984), capitals are relevant and valuable in their respective fields, so for example, an artist's capital is only valued in an environment that has an artistic field that values this type of art.

#### *4.2.4 Symbolic Capital*

In this section and the next one, we will see the extent of discrimination the working-class participants have been through just for being Syrian, speaking Syrian, looking Syrian. Here I will primarily demonstrate how they have opted to switch from their Syrian dialect to a Lebanese one as a protective mechanism in an attempt to, at least, symbolically appear harmless to potential discriminators. The reason why the working-class choose to adopt the Lebanese dialect as symbolic power is somehow different from why the upper-class do. As we saw in the previous subchapter, the upper-class participants often switch to the Lebanese dialect for prestige, they want to be seen as members of the local upper-class community; speaking Lebanese with some English and French words and phrases inserted here and there. However, the working-class are aware of the power of the Lebanese dialect in fields [settings] where they have to be in contact with Lebanese people, so they switch to it from the Syrian one in order to hide their undesirable [to the Lebanese] identity and instead be recognized as just another fellow Lebanese. They do so to avoid situations of discrimination and othering rather than to be recognized as part of the “integrated” elite. Although “I am the same as you” seems to be similar to “I am not different from you”, in this particular context, they are not exactly the same reasoning. Nada, who has fully adopted the Lebanese dialect told me about her experience with dialect:

“Sometimes they [customers at the shop she works in] curse Syrians in front of me, but I ignore them. I could not speak Lebanese that well at first, and when I was working in the shop, a woman came in to buy something. While helping her pick up what she needed, she heard me speak in a Syrian dialect, she started cursing at me and saying ‘I don't want your help! Where is the manager? What brought you Syrians here?’ My dialect and the way I speak eventually adapted to my surroundings because I do not interact with Syrians that much, so now I do not go through

this trouble myself, but I can assure you many Syrians change their dialect to be able to get by.”

I do not know how Rami looks like as I conducted this interview via phone, and while I do know what the view of what Syrians look like is according to the general opinion of the Lebanese public who believe all Syrians are construction workers or janitors, when I asked him if he has felt welcomed since his arrival, he answered:

“Not really, people immediately know I am Syrian, it’s the way I look and the way I speak.”

While this also goes under embodied cultural capital, I mention it here because Rami continues to tell me about all the instances he was faced with aggression the moment he uttered a word in the Syrian dialect, like when a service [shared taxi] driver kicked him out of the car when he heard them talk on the phone, when a café owner told him to “f\*ck off” when he asked if they are in need of workers “I don’t employ Syrians here, go back to your country！”, and the first time he got frowned at by a grocery shop cashier when he was buying a pack of cigarette they day he arrived in Beirut. He learned to dialect-switch the hard way, not for prestige, not for being interested in the status that comes with “Lebaneness”, but to dodge away any discrimination and aggression.

Here, I also want to bring an anecdote from Fares, an upper-class participant, where he tells me about a Syrian waiter who he met at a restaurant and who had adopted the Lebanese dialect.

“I was once in a fancy Lebanese restaurant, and I thought the waiter was Lebanese because of the way he spoke to us, but at the end of our meal, we wanted to order dessert, so I asked him what options are there, and he listed a few and then said ‘jibss. Nobody says ‘jibss’ in Lebanon, this is a term that is very specific to North Syria, even in Damascus, we say ‘batteekh’ and not ‘jibss’ for watermelon. I asked him where he’s from, and he responded, ‘from here (Lebanon) don’t worry’. I told him I am not worried – it’s all good, but I am sure you are from North Syria, nobody else would say ‘jibbs’. And then he finally said that he was from Reef Idlib. I think that the restaurant owner had instructed the waiters to

only speak in Lebanese because this waiter looked very worried and never returned to our table; he could have thought that one of us might be in the police, or that he would get scolded by his employer. We felt bad.”

Despite the fact that the habitus may change with time, there will always be a “deep-seated and embodied tendencies both to behave and to see others in distinctive ways” (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010).

The part where the waiter says “don't worry” may show that Lebanese customers do “worry” if a waiter is Syrian. It is not clear what it is that they would worry about in this context, but it shows that Syrians fear the potential discrimination they get if they speak in their Syrian dialect. The discrimination at a restaurant, a fancy one here, may be translated to a poor tip on the bill, for example. The symbolic violence, which the participants are well aware of, seems to be a constant worry on their mind; they have to be on their toes all times, to shapeshift to fit in, constantly.

#### *4.2.5 Dealing with the state and the people*

The combination of the different capitals, or the lack thereof, affects people's perceptions of others. This is visible when it comes to how Lebanese people perceive Syrians, especially the working-class, and more so when compared to the Syrian upper-class as we saw in the previous subchapter. This section also reveals the different ways the state discriminates against Syrians and how institutionalized this discrimination is. The working-class does not benefit from the same privileges that the upper-class has access to, while dealing with both, the state and the hosting community.

Before I asked them about their personal experiences with discrimination, I wanted to find out what they thought about how the Lebanese state has dealt with Syrian refugees since 2011, what they heard from the news or through word of mouth, or what they have experienced themselves. They, too, did not identify as refugees, not because they looked down at the term, but because they live in the city and they are able to work; they said they know that their living conditions are very different from those of the refugees' in the Bekaa valley or in North Lebanon, and more importantly, they did not consider themselves refugees because they are not registered with the

UNHCR. Nonetheless, they all had a lot to say about what they have observed regarding the situation of refugees, they kept up with the news, and they heard stories from relatives and other individuals who they identified with as fellow subjugated and struggling working-class compatriots. This topic was greatly infuriating to Nada. As a young adult who was not able to continue her studies, she is seriously worried about the future of young Syrian people in the camps.

“The government has greatly misdealt with the refugees and has been giving them a hard time since day one. They could have done better. They stole international organizations’ money and put it in their pockets while the refugees suffer in tents that flood and freeze in the winter. So many children died from the cold. So many children do not get adequate nutrition. But the worst part is that so many children will grow up without an education, and that has many, many negative consequences. This is the government’s fault. And then they blame everything on us.”

The iqama is one of the most serious burdens laid on the backs of the working-class. The state goes after the weak only, Fares, the photojournalist told me. “The state and its agents do not go after people driving a Porsche to check if they have identity documents on them, they are more likely to go after delivery guys on motorbikes.” In one of his observations, as someone who is always on the streets trying to capture daily life with his camera:

“I see it often in certain poor neighborhoods where delivery guys gather at cafes after their shifts. They get their motorbikes confiscated by the police just for the sake of collecting \$300 from them the next day. These people barely make any money, maybe \$150-200, they largely depend on delivery tips. What they make in one month gets wasted on useless, unnecessary fines to be able to get their means of labor back. Rinse and repeat.”

Rami told me that the experience of renewing his iqama at the General Security is very humiliating, and that is on top of all the frustration that is caused by having to secure the fees and the pile of required documents.

“I currently do not have a permit because the bureaucracy is very overwhelming. They make you go back and forth many times

before you have your documents right, and the fees are expensive. By the time I was able to pick up my last permit, it was almost expiring, although when I came back to get it months after applying, they told me it was not ready yet. The café owner who is my kafeel (sponsor) makes me pay the fees myself, and I can't afford to this anymore with the current economic situation. I am always vigilant on the streets and worried that a police officer would stop me to ask about my documents. It's a constant state of anxiety and frustration.”

Karim does not have an iqama either and for that, he got in trouble twice with the police. He now doesn't leave Hamra where he works and lives in fear of getting arrested again, or even worse, deported, with all the ongoing threats he hears from politicians.

“I was arrested twice, for 12 hours each time. They run a routine investigation, they take your fingerprints, they place you with 25 people in a 3m<sup>2</sup> prison cell, they yell at you and degrade you, you can't move, every 2 people are handcuffed together, they don't care about age/health situation, the toilet is in the room. I am afraid they would deport me. My employer does not want to sponsor me. It is possible to get sponsorship from someone else; the Lebanese know how to find loopholes and take advantage of every situation, but I also cannot afford these games. They really exploit your worries and needs; they offer to sponsor you if you pay them \$3000-\$4000.”

Opposite to what previously saw in the case of upper-class Syrians who had no trouble renewing their iqama or even obtaining citizenship and having their experience of settlement go smoothly, we see here that the working-class greatly struggle to access the legal field. They are often denied freedom of movement because they are not able to acquire legal documents. This in return reflects adversely on other areas of their lives; the ability to look for work outside the area they live, the ability to send money back, to access healthcare, to rent accommodation, etc.

All of the participants had the same answer when I asked them about what worries them most about living in Beirut. They all are afraid of getting sick and not being able to afford to go to the hospital. None of them have any social security or an insurance

plan that can cover hospitalization, doctor visits, or medication. At best, only one of them who has an iqama is insured against workplace injury.

Nada, who the Lebanese law does not allow her mother to pass the Lebanese citizenship to her, told me that her main worry about herself and her family is that they cannot afford the health system, and that even the public hospitals are not affordable to them because they are Syrians.

“I worry about getting sick, if I or someone from my family gets sick, we would die at the entrance of the hospital because they would not admit us (for free) as Syrians, we do not even have daman (social security). I was admitted to the public hospital for half a day a year ago, we had to pay 900,000 LBP. We do not have this money.”

Access to healthcare is already an anxiety-inducing issue to many who are not insured or are not enrolled in social security due to a lack of financial ability. Another layer comes on top of this for migrants, who can't even have access to a public hospital, although they do pay taxes, only because they are not citizens, so they have to pay fees which make up double their monthly salaries.

When it comes to engaging with the host community, it seems that most experiences are negative and harsh. The participants reported plenty of instances when they were faced with disrespect and aggression, and sometimes, physical violence. All of them told me that they know where this discrimination comes from; there's an unpleasant history with the Syrian regime which the Lebanese project on the Syrians, but they all also recognize that class plays a role in this discrimination. This is what Nada had to say regarding discrimination and class:

“I think people discriminate against Syrians because of what the Syrian regime did in Lebanon before 2005, but the Syrians are here because of this regime, they fled war and conflict and violence, and they received no empathy from the Lebanese. They curse us a lot, and they stereotype, and they blame us for all the problems, as if before we came here the electricity never cut. They degrade and us them. Also, if you have money or if you are educated, they treat you better than they treat agriculture or construction workers. These workers were doing well in Syria and

they lived a good life and are very knowledgeable in their fields, but when they had to come here because of the violence in Syria, people did not respect them; to them, they are of no value. They don't treat them like they treat the educated and 'mrattabeen'. There is a lot of classism, too."

Kamil, the street cleaner, also raised the issue of class as he also is treated with classism from the upper-class Syrian "el mrattabeen" because he believes that they see all people, no matter the nationality, as below them if they are doing menial jobs.

"I do not appreciate it and it hurts me a lot when the Lebanese treat me like a lower person, but I got used to it and I sometimes understand where this behavior comes from. The Syrian regime is criminal, and they committed many atrocities in Lebanon. But it's not only the Lebanese; the rich Syrians do it, too. I experienced it on my occasions. When I am cleaning certain neighbors with fancy buildings, they boss me around, ordering me to clean a certain space or near their cars. I do not know if they know that I am Syrian just like them, or that if they know but it doesn't matter to them."

This is an additional example of the upper-class who tend to identify with those who carry similar cultural capital, no matter the nationality; one is still perceived and treated according to their class, the combination of their economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals.

#### 4.3 The Lebanese Perception

I wanted to corroborate the observations I had living in Beirut during the past 9 years, the claims of the Syrian participants, and the literature I had studied, so I asked 4 Lebanese people about their opinions regarding the Syrian presence in Lebanon. The answers were not entirely in accordance with what one would hypothesize about the Lebanese and how to see and treat Syrians. This may be due to the small sample interviewed, and if compared to surveys polling Lebanese attitudes towards Syrian refugees, we could say that those polled lived close to refugee camps, and thus have different experiences, and that the Syrians in Beirut, whether working-class or upper-class, are not “refugees” and have completely different profiles and roles in the urban society.

Before asking any specific questions, I asked them what they thought the two major issues Lebanon is facing today; I wanted to check whether they think one of the issues is Syrian people, and they all, in fact, said that the first issue is the economic situation and the second is the Syrian refugees/people. Salim, a 30-year-old architect, believes that the refugee crisis is a critical issue because it weighed heavily on the Lebanese economy, both positively and negatively.

“There are people who benefitted a lot from it, but on the other hand, it had a negative effect on others, especially with the huge influx. There are 5 million Lebanese, and at least 1 million Syrians, that’s one-fifth of the population, so this definitely creates an economic strain. Also, there were many things on the verge of collapsing, so this influx only exacerbated the situation. For example, when it comes to infrastructure, there are things with limited capacity and that were not even enough for the locals, so it couldn’t contain these huge numbers, and the job market as well was limited.”

This brought me to the next question; I asked about how they personally feel about the Syrian presence in Lebanon and whether, as the media tells us, their presence has any impact on the sectarian balance or national identity, and here I had mixed responses. Naji's sentiments about the Syrian presence changed over time, especially when he made a personal effort to learn about the reasons why they fled their home country. Naji is a 39-year-old manager at an art institute in Beirut.

"At first I was not aware of what is happening in Syria; I had hatred towards people who were in conflict in there in order to dominate the country, it was a very harsh and strong feeling, but I didn't have this feeling towards those who left and had to come here. Some people believe that their presence affects the sectarian balance. I was born in a community that rejects the Muslim, even the Lebanese Muslim, but I was able to let go of this community and its mentality and behaviors. This mentality is the product of the civil war and pre-civil war, I had this mentality myself, but I made the effort to change. And thus, this harsh feeling I had at first transformed when I became more aware, I had to learn more about what's happening, and I got to know some of these stories firsthand through interviews I did with some of the people who left from Kessab, northwest Syria. I felt that I am very much like these people, they are humans just like me, they have their little stories that give meaning to their lives, in a community that has started to collapse because of conflict, which reminded me of the situation here in Lebanon and the problems we go through because of similar things."

Salim feels it is a duty to receive humans in this kind of condition, given that they were either going to come here, or they were going to face their death or persecution or starvation in Syria. He says he does not feel any resentment towards the refugees but acknowledges that the general sentiment in Lebanon is negative towards them

"Because of the history of the Syrian army in Lebanon, the Mukhabarat (intelligence), there is a lingering history, I want to say between governments, not the people, but this has its effect on people, Lebanese people suffered a lot under the Syrian's regime presence in Lebanon, and therefore the resentment towards the people. But we already had lots of Syrians in Lebanon before 2011, the economy depends on Syrian labor, especially

construction workers, they were already here, but the difference is the huge influx.”

Remarkably, none of the Lebanese participants has any Syrian friends. They all stated knowing Syrian people like the concierge, the guy from the grocery store, or previous college classmates, but none had any deep relationship with a Syrian.

Two of them thought that Syrians have a positive impact on the Lebanese economy, while also identifying a negative effect; it is noteworthy to mention; however, that they attribute the positive impact to the upper-class Syrians. Salim gives a clear insight on how he views the economic situation since the arrival of Syrians in 2011:

“The more well-to-do were able to consume and contribute to the economy positively (renting, spending money on services and restaurants, etc). On the other hand, the negative comes to play from the Lebanese side, there are opportunists, some people took advantage of the influx and raised rent prices because of the high demand, so this affected the Lebanese, and when it comes to employment, employers sometimes rather hire Syrians than Lebanese because they can pay them less and not give them benefits, which they have to give the Lebanese, so this caused a displacement of the Lebanese workforce, but this is caused by the exploitation of the Lebanese, these are the ones who benefitted from the Syrian presences, the owners of land and property and businesses, the rich. The negative effect hit the working-class Lebanese.”

All but Noura said that Syrians should go back to Syria only if they want to and only when it is safe for them to go back and that the Lebanese government must not engage in any deportation activity. She strongly believes they must leave immediately as Syria is now safe, and the sooner they cross the border, the sooner the economic situation will improve, which is contrary to what Salma, a 31-year-old medical doctor believes:

“There is a discourse here, amplified by mainstream media, that Syria is now considered a safe country. This is misinformation that many Lebanese believe, and it makes them want the Syrians to go back as soon as possible, but this is surely not the case; it is

far from what the reality on the ground is. Syria is not safe and we have already heard about many returnees who got arrested and forced into military service as soon as they crossed the border.”

Noura is a 55-year-old woman, occupied with housework, and whose husband has been working 2 jobs to make ends meet. She has two sons in their mid-twenties, one is unemployed, and the other just graduated and works at an unstable social media startup, and his salary is not what she had hoped for him.

“The Syrians must go back to Syria today before tomorrow. If they don’t like it there, they can go to Europe or the Gulf, ‘blad allah was’aa’ [God’s land is wide], they have to leave our country, we can’t afford their presence anymore. They took our children’s jobs. Look at how many young people are unemployed because of them, and how many are on the verge of immigrating. My children can’t even dream about ‘opening a house’ [meaning: getting married]. Rent has been skyrocketing since they came here. Our economy was not good, but they have made it worse. We have had enough of them. They did nothing good for our country. They are dirty ‘nawar’ [a derogatory term used to describe nomads] and there are too many of them here, and they are taking over our country.”

In light of Bourdieusian concepts, Hage (1998) would refer to Noura’s statement as “management of space” where the superior group, the Lebanese in this context, use categories of spatial management like “too many of them here” and “taking over our country” to assert domination over the “national space” or field, which Syrians do not belong to, according to Noura. She is, in the terms of Hage, a “nationalist manager”, who treats the “other”, the Syrian, as an object to be managed, to be removed for the national space.

All of the participants, except for Noura did not state an opinion about sponsorship, believe that the Lebanese labor law is not fair to migrant workers, the Syrians, and those from different nationalities, and assert that reform is needed in order to protect the rights of the workers.

“No, they should have a fair contract with clear rights and duties, in addition to insurance. The problem lies within the labor policies

that did not create fair job opportunities for the Lebanese and for the migrant workers that respect their rights where everyone is treated with justice.”

Salim agrees with Naji’s statement above but believes that for a Syrian or a citizen from any other nationality to start a business in Lebanon, they must have a Lebanese partner in order to protect the local economy given how shaky it is and how exploitative people tend to be when the law does not protect workers.

When it comes to their views on education and whether they agree Syrian children should be integrated into classes with Lebanese children, I received mixed answers, but the general opinion was that it is best that children go together to school, except those in an age group where they had already gotten used to the Syrian curriculum and need remedial classes to be able to catch up with their Lebanese peers. Again, Noura thinks classes should not be mixed because the Syrian kids are not at the same level as the Lebanese, they are and that they would hinder their development. She believes it is best they go back to Syria because the schools here are already overcapacity and the government is not able to provide for people equally.

I asked them about their observations of how other Lebanese treat Syrians and whether they think Lebanese people see Syrians from a class lens and treat them accordingly, they all think this is the case, including Noura, who thinks that “el soureh el mrattab ahla w sahla fih” (Syrians of high social status are welcome here). Naji who works with artists confirms there is a class factor:

“I don’t think they [the Lebanese] treat the rich Syrians the same way they treat the waiters or construction workers or valet parking workers. I was at a previous boss’s place doing some work, and she heard on TV that the Syrians are increasing the crime rate, they steal, etc., and she was doing some renovation for her house and the workers were all Syrian, so since then, she said: “el shagheel el soureh ana battalet fawto aa bayte” [I do not allow any Syrian worker in my house anymore]. But on the other hand, she did a partnership with an upper-class Syrian businessman so that she can increase profits from her art business.”

This particular sample of Lebanese seems to see that the Syrians are an active part of society and that they deserve rights, albeit not rights that would disturb the Lebanese national space. I would say; however, that Noura's views are indeed representative of a big part of Lebanese society, or at least this is what one would conclude given all that we hear from the media, and from politicians, and even from people who often protest from their rights of employment, decent work, health care, and social security, they are struggling to access to their fields, just like Noura and her family, and they do not want "foreign" competition. want "foreign" competition.

# **Chapter Five**

## **Conclusion**

Despite Syrians being present in Lebanon for decades, mostly for labor, their experience and the experience of the Lebanese as a hosting community has been different since 2011, the beginning of the arrival of refugees to Lebanon due to the ongoing conflict in Syria.

In an attempt to fill a gap in the literature which is rich in studies on Syrian refugees in the camps and workers in the urban setting, I took interest in Syrians who belong to the middle and upper-class, as they have become part of the social scene in Lebanon. My findings show a blunt difference between the way middle and upper-class Syrian experienced settling in Beirut and how the working class experienced it and continue to struggle through it. Class stratification is starkly witnessed in the way that some migrants are able to gain access to many benefits and opportunities like securing jobs, enrolling in higher education, renewing residence permits, and even obtaining citizenship. The easier and smoother access to fields of education, art, and social life, in general, were made possible by the upper-class participants' economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals, those which the working-class participants lacked. It is as if migrants' capitals act as gatekeepers to many essential and desired gains. Migrants represent a significant sector both of the labor forces as well as of the population, be it in Lebanon, or the world. Capitalists draw profit by exploiting migrant workers by paying them below the value of their labor. The working-class Syrians face precarious market situations, and with limited governances, and discriminatory governance, they are left insecure and vulnerable to exploitation.

Jaeeun Kim (2018) introduces the notion "migration-facilitating capital" which is the variety of social, cultural, and economic capitals that migrants had already acquired before their migration and which enable them to access multiple forms of authorized and unauthorized passages into their desired destinations. All of the cases presented in this paper are of migrants whose "migration-facilitating capital" helped them settle and integrate into their new hosting country, Lebanon, especially that this hosting

society has the respective fields that validate their types of capital. They were settled in a smoother manner than their compatriots who do not possess as much capital, and they were given recognition by the fields of their host society.

Economic capital plays an essential role in this process of settlement as migrants who are rich in cultural capital are typically resourceful in economic capital as well, and this facilitates and eases their procedure of settlement. The presented findings make a case for the relevance of these different capitals, and not only the migrants' economic capital, in the context of migration and thereby adds an important perspective to the study of migration. Pierre Bourdieu offers a theoretical framework of the different capitals which is an important lens to use in order to examine the experience of migration resettlement.

Most of the middle and upper-class participants, rich in different capitals, and able to mobilize their capital in corresponding fields, acknowledge their privilege, and realize that the smooth experience they are having is due to their social status. On top of all the benefits they gained access to, they always were treated with respect from both the state and the people, although sometimes, they had to adapt their behavior to fit in and to be recognized for their prestige, like switching from the Syrian dialect to the Lebanese one. They mobilize this symbolic capital in order to enhance a sense of inclusion in a social context. Contrary to the reason the working-class participants changed their dialect: to avoid situations of discrimination and potential harm.

Choosing to use the Lebanese dialect is not a behavior isolated from the larger political, historical, and social picture. Choosing to use the Lebanese dialect is to associate with a group, one that is not at the receiving end of discrimination but one that discriminates. Putting on a performance either for prestige or for avoiding situations of discrimination, Syrians use symbolic capital as a performative adaptation to the new setting. In doing so, they attempt to insert themselves into acceptance or tolerance or mere existence without going through the trouble.

The Lebanese assertion of superiority exhibited in the way they treat Syrians was confirmed in the literature, in the words of both the working class and the upper-class participants, as well as in the words of the Lebanese participants who contributed to

my understanding of how the hosting society perceives and deals with Syrians in Beirut, as the literature only reports on the Lebanese in refugee camp areas.

The state's unrelenting failure to protect its own citizens, mostly the working-class underprivileged ones, as we are seeing today amidst an economic collapse, also translates to a failure in protecting the underprivileged working-class of noncitizens. One reason is its refusal to be a signatory of the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol. The other reason is its complex history of conflict and sectarianism which has resulted in nationalistic populist attitudes by many politicians who use refugees as scapegoats they can blame for the country's many troubles.

Finally, the class stratification we see in the findings presented is indeed an issue that is not be neglected when studying the life experiences of migrants, be it in the region or internationally. A migrant's class indeed plays an essential role in the kind of life they lead in their new setting. When the middle and upper-class migrants have their families with them or in other (better) countries (in Europe, UAE, Canada...) and the working-class have recreated "home" on WhatsApp groups because their families are left behind in Syria, it is evident that the impact of class is in every detail of their lives. The capitalist world will continue to draw profit by underpaying migrant workers, and thus oppressing them, albeit symbolically, and even quite literally and physically in the Lebanese context. The capitalist world will also continue to treat the upper-class in higher regard, for the exchange and boosting of benefits.

This is not to say that migrants should be portrayed as laborers who are of use. The argument that migrants are good for the economy, and that states must monetize refugees, is in itself problematic and potentially dehumanizing. The "usefulness" of migrants does not grant them rights and humane treatment. Lebanon, for example, needs Syrian construction workers, and yet they are at the margins of society.

Migrants who are "not useful" by standards that see success as a utility, those who had to flee conflict and violence, are also kept in oppressive environments, mostly in camps away from the urban setting, all while the upper-class migrants enjoy benefits and luxuries, and mostly not "othered". This differential treatment reinforces inequalities and exploitation and hinders the creation of communities built on solidarity and social cohesion.

A lot remains to be revealed in future studies with larger samples and different modes of theoretical analysis. Questions arise regarding how we can extend this analysis beyond the level of the individual migrant account to the collective groups. In addition, further research may investigate these migrants' experiences through carefully differentiating their habitus by age and gender.

For example, from a gender perspective, when I asked the participants whether they would consider going back to Syria if circumstances allow it, all of the middle and upper-class participants said that they have already established a life outside Syria and that returning is not on the table. Two of the women also said that Syria has become more conservative, and they feel "free" in Lebanon, and if they decide to leave eventually, it would be to a country in Europe or the US. The working-class men, on the other hand, all said they would love to go back to Syria and that the regime falls, and reform takes place so that they can return to their families. However, Nada echoed the sentiments of the two upper-class women; she believes she can dress the way she wants in Lebanon, do whatever she wants without judgment, and not be threatened by conservative and extremist groups. She does not believe anything would change. It would also be beneficial to produce discourse analysis based on Syrian migrants' experiences in the press, as well as the discourse adopted by the state. It would also be useful to use different theoretical concepts to draw data valuable to our understanding of the process of migrants' settlement.

I believe my contribution is a step towards opening new research avenues like the abovementioned examples and more; what does it mean to be a non-refugee migrant in countries with poor migration governance like Lebanon, and how can inequalities be reduced in a system that thrives on them?

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# Appendix A: Questionnaires

## Profile

Age:  
Sex:  
Hometown:  
Current place of residence:  
Educational attainment:  
Marital status:

## Conditions of Migration

1. When did you arrive in Lebanon?
2. Why did you come to Lebanon? Was your hometown experiencing conflict?
3. Where did you live when you first arrived?
4. Are you still living there? (If not, how many times did you move?)
5. Did someone help you come here? (could also go under Social Capital)
6. Whom do you currently live with?
7. Is your family with you? If not, why not? Where are they?

## Economic Capital

8. What did you do for a living before you arrived here?
9. What do you do now?
10. What's your income per month? (give ranges)
11. Do you have a bank account in Lebanon? (If not, do you have one in Syria/another country?)
12. Do you still have assets in Syria or in another country including Lebanon? What are they?
13. Do you send money to family (if the family is in another country)?
14. Do you receive any money from family abroad?
15. Approximately, how much money do you send?
16. Do you own a business in Lebanon? Are you the only owner?
17. Did you/do you still own a business in Syria? (If yes, how are you still running it? Do you have partners?)
18. Do you have any kind of investments in Lebanon or in another country?

## Social Capital

19. In which area of Beirut do you reside? Why did you choose this area specifically? Do family/friends/acquaintances reside there as well?
20. Do you know other Syrians who live in this area?
21. Were they helpful to you in settling in Lebanon? In what way and how?

22. Are you part of a group of a social group/collective of Syrians who have moved here since 2011? What brings you together?
23. What happened to your circle of friends in Syria? Are you still in touch?
24. Do you have Lebanese friends here?
25. What are the profiles of your immediate circle? What kind of jobs do they have?
26. Were they helpful to you in settling in Lebanon? In what way and how?
27. Are you a member of a charity or a philanthropic organization?
28. Was it helpful to you in settling in Lebanon? In what way and how?

## Cultural Capital

29. What educational level have you acquired?
30. Do you speak English or French? Any other languages?
31. Did you/are you learning any new skill here?
32. Do you practice/perform any arts?
33. Do you visit museums and art galleries often? Do you have a membership in any?
34. Do you attend concerts? Plays? Other performance arts?
35. What genre of music are you most into?
36. What kind of places do you usually hang out at?
37. Were you able to use your cultural capital (specify) in making your settlement in Lebanon easier or harder?

## Other

38. What are your thoughts on how the Lebanese government dealt with Syrian refugees?
39. Has it been an easy process for you to get your resident permit (iqama) done? How much do you pay for the renewal of the permit? Do you have a sponsor?
40. How do Lebanese people perceive Syrian refugees, from your own observation? Do you feel that, because of your status, you are perceived and treated in a different way?
41. Have you ever been discriminated against by a Lebanese person?
42. Have you, generally, felt safe in Beirut?
43. What are your main worries about life in Beirut?
44. Have you felt welcomed since your arrival?
45. Why did you decide to stay in Lebanon and not go to Turkey or Europe?
46. Are you aiming to go back to Syria when the situation allows it?
47. What are your plans for the future?

هل كانوا ذوي إفادة لك في عملية الاستقرار في لبنان؟ بأي طريقة وكيف؟  
 هل أنت عضو في جمعية / مؤسسة خيرية؟  
 هل كانت مقدمة لك في الاستقرار في لبنان؟ بأي طريقة وكيف؟

أسئلة المقابلة / السوريين من الطبقة العليا

الملف الشخصي

العمر:

الجنس:

مستطيل رأس:

مكان الإقامة الحالي:

التحصيل العلمي:

الوضع الاجتماعي (متزوج/أعزب/أرمل/الخ):

- تقاويا
- ما المستوى التعليمي الذي حصلته؟
- هل تتحدث الانجليزية أو الفرنسية/أي لغات أخرى؟
- هل تعليمت / هل تنعلم أي مهارة جديدة هنا؟
- هل تمارس أي فنون؟
- هل تزور المتاحف والمعارض الفنية؟ هل لديك عضوية في أي منها؟
- هل تحضر الفحالت الموسيقية؟ عروض مسرحية؟ فنون الأخرى؟
- ما هو نوع الموسيقى المفضل لديك؟
- ما نوع الأماكن التي ترتادها عادةً؟
- هل استخدمت رأس المال التقاويا في عملية الاستقرار في لبنان؟

استلة أخرى

- ما هي أرائك حول كيفية تعامل الحكومة اللبنانية مع اللاجئين السوريين؟
- هل كانت عملية الحصول على إقامة سهلة بالنسبة لك؟ كم تدفع مقابل تجديدها؟ هل لديك كفالة؟
- كيف ينظر اللبنانيون إلى اللاجئين السوريين، من خلال ملاحظتك اليومية؟ هل تشعر أنه بسبب وضعك الاجتماعي يتم معاملتك بطريقة مختلفة؟
- هل سبق لك أن تعرضت للتمييز/العنصرية من قبل شخص لبناني؟
- هل شعرت بالأمان بشكل عام في بيروت؟
- ما هي مخاوفك الرئيسية حول الحياة في بيروت؟
- هل شعرت بالترحيب منذ وصولك؟
- لماذا قررت البقاء في لبنان وعدم الذهاب إلى تركيا أو أوروبا؟
- هل تهدف إلى العودة إلى سوريا عندما يسمح الوضع بذلك؟
- ما هي خططك المستقبلية؟

ظروف الهجرة متى وصلت إلى لبنان؟

- لماذا أتيت إلى لبنان؟ هل كانت مدینتك/لديك تعانى من الصراع؟
- أين كنت تسكن عندما وصلت إلى لبنان في البداية؟
- هل ما زلت تسكن هناك؟ (إذا لم يكن كذلك، كم مرة انتقلت؟)
- هل ساعده أحدكم على المجيء إلى هنا؟
- مع من تعيش حالياً؟
- هل عائلتك معك؟ إذا لم يكن كذلك، لماذا؟ أين هم؟

اقتصادياً

- ما كان نوع عملك قبل وصولك إلى هنا؟
- لماذا تعمل الآن؟
- ما هو دخلك الشهري تقريباً؟
- هل لديك حساب في البنك في لبنان؟ (إذا لم يكن كذلك، هل لديك حساب في سوريا / بلد آخر؟)
- هل لا تزال لديك ممتلكات في سوريا أو في بلد آخر بما في ذلك لبنان؟ ما هي؟
- هل ترسل الأموال إلى الأسرة (إذا كانت العائلة في بلد آخر؟)
- هل تتدفق أي أموال من الأسرة في الخارج؟
- ما هي قيمة الأموال التي ترسلها تقريباً؟
- هل تملك عمل تجاري في لبنان؟ هل أنت المالك الوحيد؟
- هل كنت/لا تزال تملك عمل تجاري في سوريا؟ (إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، كيف يرتبط عملك إدارة العمل من هنا؟ هل لديك شركاء؟)
- هل لديك أي نوع من الاستثمارات في لبنان أو في بلد آخر؟

اجتماعياً

- في أي منطقة في بيروت تقيم؟ لماذا امتنعت هذا المنطقة على وجه التحديد؟ هل هناك أشخاص من الأسرة / الأصدقاء / المعارف يقيمون هناك أيضاً؟
- هل تعرف السوريين الآخرين ويعيشون في هذه المنطقة؟
- هل كانوا ذوي إفادة لك في عملية الاستقرار في لبنان؟ بأي طريقة وكيف؟
- هل أنت جزء من مجموعة (منظمة/أندية/جمعية/الخ) من السوريين الذين انتقلوا إلى هنا منذ عام 2011؟ ما الذي يجمعكم؟
- ماذا حدث لدائرة أصدقائك في سوريا؟ هل ما زلت على تصال؟
- هل لديك أصدقاء لبنانيين هنا؟
- كيف تصف دائرة أصدقائك هنا؟ ما هي أنواع الأعمال التي يشغلونها؟

### **Profile**

Age:

Sex:

Hometown:

Current place of residence:

Educational attainment:

Marital status:

### **Perception of Syrians in Beirut**

-What do you think the two most important issues Lebanon is facing right now?

-How do you, in general, feel about the Syrians' presence in Lebanon since 2011? Do you think it has had any impact on the Lebanese national identity? Sectarian balance? (are they a threat to national identity).

-Do you have any Syrian friends? (If yes, how did you meet? What brings you together?)

-If not, why not?

-What would you do if you see someone insulting or assaulting a Syrian national? Why/not?

-Do you think Syrians have contributed positively to the economy? How?

-Do you think the crime rate has increased or decreased after 2011? Do you have examples?

-Do you think Lebanese people treat the Syrian upper class the same way they treat the working class? What about yourself?

-Do you think Syrians should have sponsors if they want to work in Lebanon (kafil)? If yes, do you feel the upper-class businessmen should undergo the same treatment?

-Do you think Syrian children should go to school with Lebanese children?

-Do you think Syrians should go back to Syria? If yes, under what conditions?

-Any other thoughts you would like to share?

المف الشخصي

العمر:  
الجنس:  
مسقط رأس:  
مكان الإقامة الحالي:  
التحصيل العلمي:  
الوضع الاجتماعي (متزوج/أعزب/أرمل/الخ):

- ما هي، في رأيك، أهم قضيّتين يواجههما لبنان حالياً؟
- كيف تشعر ، بشكل عام ، حيال وجود السوريين في لبنان منذ عام 2011؟ هل تعتقد أنه كان له أي تأثير على الهوية الوطنية اللبنانيّة؟ التوازن الطائفي؟ (هل هم تهديد للهوية الوطنية)
- هل لديك أي أصدقاء سوريين؟ (إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، كيف التقييم؟ ما الذي يجمعكم?)  
إذا لم لا ، لماذا لا؟
- ماذًا تفعل إذا رأيت شخصًا يهين مواطنًا سورياً أو يعتدي عليه؟
- هل تعتقد أن السوريين ساهموا بشكل إيجابي في الاقتصاد؟ كيف؟
- هل تعتقد أن معدل الجريمة قد زاد أو انخفض بعد عام 2011؟ هل لديك أمثلة؟
- هل تعتقد أن اللبنانيين يعاملون الطيقة العليا السورية بنفس الطريقة التي يعاملون بها الطيقة العاملة؟ ماذا عنك؟
- هل تعتقد أن السوريين يجب أن يكون لديهم كفيل إذا كانوا يريدون العمل في لبنان؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، هل تشعر أن رجال الأعمال من الطيقة العليا يجب أن يخضعوا لنفس المعاملة؟
- هل تعتقد أن على الأطفال السوريين الذهاب إلى المدرسة مع أطفال لبنانيين؟
- هل تعتقد أن على السوريين العودة إلى سوريا؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، تحت أي ظروف؟
- هل لديك أي أفكار أخرى ترغب في مشاركتها؟

# Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

لجنة الأخذات

## NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

To: Mr. Sarah Shmaitilly  
Dr. Paul Tabar  
Professor  
School of Arts & Sciences

Date: February 20, 2020  
RE: IRB #: LAU.SAS.PT1.20/Feb/2020  
*Protocol Title: The Impact of Class Stratification on the Settlement of Syrians in Beirut post-2011*

APPROVAL ISSUED: 20 February 2020  
EXPIRATION DATE: 20 February 2021  
REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED – INITIAL

Your application for the above referenced research project has been reviewed by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This research project qualifies as exempt under the category noted in the Review Type.

This notice is limited to the activities described in the Protocol Exempt Application and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. Enclosed with this letter are the stamped approved documents that must be used.

### CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

**LAU RESEARCH POLICIES:** All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB notice date or after the expiration date.

**EXEMPT CATEGORIES:** Activities that are exempt from IRB review are not exempt from IRB ethical review and the necessity for ethical conduct.

**PROTOCOL EXPIRATION: PROTOCOL EXPIRATION:** The LAU IRB notice expiry date for studies that fall under Exemption is 2 years after this notice, as noted above. If the study will continue beyond this date, a request for an extension must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the Expiry date.

**MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS:** Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously IRB reviewed exempt study must be reviewed and cleared by the IRB before implementation.

**RETENTION:** Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of project completion.

**IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IRB OFFICE IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB CLEARANCE CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.**

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at [irb@lau.edu.lb](mailto:irb@lau.edu.lb)

BEIRUT CAMPUS	BYBLOS CAMPUS	NEW YORK OFFICE				
P.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran Beirut 1102 2801 Lebanon	Tel: +961 1 78 64 56 +961 3 60 37 03 Fax: +961 1 86 70 98	P.O. Box: 36 Byblos Lebanon	Tel: +961 9 54 72 62 +961 3 79 13 14 Fax: +961 9 54 62 62	475 Riverside Drive Suite 1846 New York, NY 10115	Tel: +1 212 870 2592 +1 212 870 2761 Fax: +1 212 870 2762	<a href="http://www.lau.edu.lb">www.lau.edu.lb</a>

## Appendix C: Consent Forms

### *Consent to participate in an Interview The Impact of Class Stratification on the Settlement of Syrians in Beirut post-2011*

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project by completing this interview. I am a student at the Lebanese American University and I am completing this research project as part of my Master's degree. The purpose of this interview aims to enhance and improve the understanding of the settlement of Syrians in Beirut post-2011.

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used in the ongoing research for my Master's thesis. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. The study will involve 12 participants. Completing the interview will take 30 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the interview, you agree with the following statements:

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.
2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.
3. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.
4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.
5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.
6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University
7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.
8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.
9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following interview.

If you have any questions, you may contact:

Name (PI)	Phone number	Email address
Sarah Shmaitilly	009613704347	Sarah.shmaitilly@lau.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:

Institutional Review Board Office,  
Lebanese American University  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus  
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)  
[irb@lau.edu.lb](mailto:irb@lau.edu.lb)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the LAU IRB:



## نموذج موافقة للمشاركة في مقابلة

تأثير التقسيم الطبقي على إقامة السوريين في بيروت بعد عام 2011

أود أن أدعوك للمشاركة في مشروع بحثي عبر المشاركة في هذه مقابلة . أنا طالبة في الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية واني اقوم بهذه الدراسة كجزء من شهادة الماجستير في دراسات الهجرة وتهدف هذه المقابله لتعمق في تجربة إقامة السوريين في بيروت من العام 2011

لا توجد مخاطر معروفة، أو أي ضرر مرتبط بهذه الدراسة خارج تلك التي تواجهونها في الحياة اليومية العادلة  
يُستفادُ من المعلومات التي ستقدّموها في البحث الجاري لأطروحة  
الماجستير . ستشمل الدراسة 12 مشارك. لن يستغرق إتمام الاستبيان أكثر من 30 دقيقة.

من خلال الاستمرار في المقابله ، فإنك توافق مع العبارات التالية :

1. لقد أعطيت ما يكفي من المعلومات حول هذا المشروع البحثي .
2. لن يتم التصريح او الإفراج عن ايجابياتي الى اي شخص ، وسوف تبقى هويتي مجهولة. لن يكتب اسمي على الاستبيان ولن يحفظ في أي سجلات أخرى.
3. عندما يتم تقديم نتائج الدراسة ، لن يتم التعريف الى بالاسم او أي معلومات أخرى يمكن أن تستخدم للاستدلال الى هويتي. الباحثون فقط لديهم الحق في الاستطلاع على البيانات التي تم جمعها خلال هذا البحث لكن البيانات لا يمكن أن تكون مرتبطة بي.
4. ادرك ان مشاركتي طوعية وبإمكانى الانسحاب من هذا البحث في أي وقت اشاء او تخطي اي سؤال لا اشعر بالرد عليه.
5. انا ادرك بان رفضي للمشاركة لا ينتج عنه اي جزاء او فقدان اي من الحقوق التي انا مؤهل لها.
6. لقد تم ابلاغي ان البحث يتلزم بتحميم القوانين الأخلاقية المعترف بها، وبيان هذه الدراسة تمت مراجعتها والموافقة عليها من قبل مكتب اللجنة الأخلاقية في الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية.
7. انا افهم أنه إذا كان لدي اي أسئلة إضافية يمكنني ان اطلب من فريق البحث المدرج اسمائهم في القائمة أدناه.
8. لقد قرأت وفهمت كل البيانات الواردة في هذا النموذج
9. انا أوافق طوعاً للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي من خلال استكمال الاستبيان التالي.

: إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة يمكنك الاتصال

الإسم	رقم الهاتف	البريد الإلكتروني
سارة الشميطلي	009613704347	sarah.shmaitilly@lau.edu

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول حقوقك كمشارك في هذه الدراسة ، أو كنت تريد التحدث إلى شخص خارج البحث ، يرجى  
الاتصال :

Institutional Review Board Office, Lebanese American University 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546) <a href="mailto:irb@lau.edu.lb">irb@lau.edu.lb</a>	مكتب لجنة الأخلاقيات، الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546) <a href="mailto:irb@lau.edu.lb">irb@lau.edu.lb</a>
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تم الموافقة على هذا الاستبيان من قبل مكتب اللجنة الأخلاقية في الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية

