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Beyond Displacement There Is a Search For Home

- **A Study of Displacement Journeys in North Iraq**

**Master of Science (MSc) in Development and International Relations
with a specialization in Global Refugee Studies
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Abstract

The last couple of decades the Iraqi people has experienced various conflicts and waves of displacement, most recently the fight against Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has left deep traces. In 2014 ISIS claimed Mosul to be the capital of the Islamic Caliphate, starting the battle of Mosul and the devastating destruction of areas in and around the city. This thesis takes its point of departure in three IDP camps in the east of Mosul on the border between Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the violent uprising of ISIS in these areas, people from and around Mosul have taken shelter in the camps Hassan Sham U2, Hasan Sham U3, and Khazir M1, which are managed by the Kurdish Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF). However, last year the Government of Iraq (GOI) made the decision to close all IDP camps in Iraq and withdraw funding to IDP camps managed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). This decision has left the IDPs settled in the East Mosul camps in a limbo, as the KRG refuses to forcibly return Iraqi IDPs while also struggling to support IDPs without funding.

This thesis intends to unfold the unique and personal displacement journeys of the eight participants and to relate these narratives to aspirations and ideals of home in order to answer the following research question: *How can we understand displacement experiences through the narratives of eight Iraqi IDPs in IDP camps East of Mosul? How do these IDPs narrate their displacement journeys? And how do their displacement experiences influence the IDPs' perception and aspiration for home?* To answer these questions a aspiration-capability framework proposed by de Hass (2017), have been utilised to study the agency of the displaced persons. My research findings demonstrates how the young men, who participated, perceived their immobility (lack of capability to move or stay) to be caused by their previous incarceration and the lack of procedures which could support their documents of pardon. For the women I interviewed, their perception of restrictions mainly focused on their gender, their status as widows and accusations of being related to ISIS. They find themselves to be rejected by communities and abandoned by family.

Inspired by Mallett's (2004) idea of home journeying I have discussed the connection between the IDPs' displacement journeys and their experiences and aspirations for home. This research argues for a close relation between the experiences of displacement the participants express and their perception of an ideal home. My research finding shows a prominent relation between how the participants discursively construct their notion of an ideal home and what they have experienced during their displacement journey. Hopefully the insights this thesis provides can contribute to the research and work done by organisations and people in and around Iraq who currently work for long-term solutions for Iraqi IDPs.

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Abbreviations

AoO	Area of Origin
BCF	Barzani Charity Foundation
GOI	Government of Iraq
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
	(also referred to as ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

Introduction

Walking into the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camp of East Mosul I am met by dry wind, a mix of dust and sand is soon noticeable on my shoes, clothes and in my nostrils. Some people are standing patiently in front of the office waiting for their turn to be heard by the camp staff or management. It is the first day of Ramadan, the holy month during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. For a non-believer like myself it is hard to understand the reasoning for this sacrifice, or perhaps even harder to understand how they, nevertheless, can go on with their day and actually be productive. Yet, arriving at the camp the atmosphere does not seem very different from my other visits.

The Iraqi people have over the last decades experienced various conflicts and waves of displacement, while most recently the fight against Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have left deep traces. In 2014 ISIS claimed Mosul to be the capital of the Islamic Caliphate, starting the battle of Mosul and the devastating destruction of areas in and around the city.

This thesis takes its point of departure in three IDP camps in the east of Mosul on the border between Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the violent uprising of ISIS in these areas, people from and around Mosul have taken shelter in the camps Hassan Sham U2, Hasan Sham U3, and Khazir M1, which are managed by the Kurdish Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF). Building on interviews with eight Iraqi IDPs in the three camps I will contribute to the research literature by pursuing the following questions:

- *How can we understand displacement experiences through the narratives of eight Iraqi IDPs in IDP camps East of Mosul?*
    - *How do these IDPs narrate their displacement journeys?*
    - *How do their displacement experiences influence the IDPs' perception and aspiration for home?*

By investigating these questions this thesis will hopefully shed light on the challenges IDPs face during displacement, especially in the context of Iraq, while further broadening our understanding of the influence displacement can have on their notion of home and settling. Hopefully authorities and organisations can benefit from this analysis in their work with IDPs across Iraq.

Context

> *"While recent displacement is the greatest immediate cause for concern, Iraq's past history of displacement plays a significant role in Iraq's current refugee and IDP crisis, contributing indirectly as a causal factor in the current displacement, and directly to the enormity of the problem to be remedied. Moreover, such massive and long-running displacement has vast humanitarian, political, and security implications in Iraq and in much of the surrounding region."*
>
> (Hess 2010: 3)

This thesis will focus on the experience of Iraqi IDPs in Kurdish managed camps in the North of Iraq. For many IDPs in Iraq their displacement is a result of a conflict with ties going back a long time in the divided and war-torn Iraq as Hess (2010) points out in the quote above. In this section I will try to present a brief historical overview of Iraq's displacement and some of the causes for this displacement. Following I will connect this historical overview with the recent fight against ISIS in and around Mosul where the research participants come from and finally briefly account for the future of the camps in question.

Iraq conflict and displacement : an overview

The issue of displacement and need for humanitarian aid in Iraq is very present. This is due to the various waves of displacement the country has experienced. This section will briefly account for the waves of displacement Iraq have experienced in the last decades since the '70 - '80 and the current state of issues in Iraq related to displacement. Additionally, it will present an overall view of the crisis, including the issue of protracted conflicts which relates to the current state and reality of the participants for this thesis.

In his article "Introduction to Special Issue on Displacement in Iraq" Rochelle Davis (2019) provides us with a review of these waves of displacement. Starting in the post-World War II

period he describes how Iraq experienced a rapid urbanization in the 1940s and 1950s, resulting in many people moving to larger cities such as Baghdad and Basra. Due to rural families fleeing repressive policies of landowners (Phillips, 1959) the families settled in and around the mentioned cities in areas that later became thriving neighbourhoods (Davis, 2019; Koser & Martin 2011).

During the 1970s and 1980s Saddam Hussein's regime used policies of Arabization[1], marginalizing and displacing ethnic and religious minority groups. This resulted in the displacement of more than 1 million Kurds and Shi'as (Davis, 2019). The 2003 US invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime did not immediately trigger massive waves of displacement. Yet, the period after the instalment of an Iraqi led Government in 2006 was followed by sectarian violence and dominated by corruption, which resulted in waves of displaced people (Davis 2019) and "by 2008, 2.8 million Iraqis had become refugees and similar numbers were internally displaced (Davis 2019).

In his article "From Operation Iraqi Freedom to the Battle of Mosul: Fifteen years of displacement in Iraq" Cotter (2020) reviews and reflects on Iraq's issue in regards to protracted conflicts and their consequences. He provides an insight into the challenges Iraq faces due to the history of conflict, displacement and warfare. The main issue presented is the challenges various conflicts have brought with it and how Iraq for nearly two decades has been at a constant state of war (Cotter 2020). Due to sectarian conflict, war, and invasion among others Cotter (2020) states that: "[Iraq] suffers from a protracted conflict and the accumulated effects of various conflicts with no prospect of peace in sight" (Cotter 2020: 1033) hence the country have been the subject of multiple displacement crisis, with some of its population now experiencing a second displacement (Human Rights Watch 2020; Sydney 2018; Hudson 2019).

Due to Iraq's experience with protracted conflict and the various effects thereof, the sources of conflicts should be understood as interrelated "to varying extents and sometimes

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[1] The term *Arabization* refers to the imposition of Arab political values, beliefs and demographic changes. It occurred first when Islam was brought to Kurdish territories in the sixth century, and it stayed active in Arab political culture throughout Iraq's history. During the 1960s, Arabization was used by the consecutive regimes in Iraq to change the demography of Kurdistan [...] Arabization continued until the Ba'ath Socialist Party took over again through a military coup in 1968. Under the Ba'ath regime, particularly after Saddam Hussein became the president of Iraq in 1979, Arabization of Kurdistan intensified, and it continued until the collapse of his despotic rule in 2003. In order to complete the Arabization of Kurdistan, the Arab nationalist Ba'athist regime used the educational and judicial systems as well as the police and security forces as tools to implement their policies. This policy slowly turned into an ethnic cleansing operation aimed at destroying the Kurdish presence in the country. [...] Genocide has been used as a means to Arabization (Ihsan 2017: 25).

coincide, but do not always feature the same parties" (Cotter 2020: 1034). Thus reactions to prior unresolved conflict or the effects thereof have resulted in conflicts between new actors while simultaneously making Iraqi citizens vulnerable targets of recruitment or misinformation, which can spark new conflicts. This troubling cycle of conflict is described in Lischer's article "Security and Displacement in Iraq" 2008. In her article Lischer writes about the undermined security Iraq faces in relation to the effects of displacement among Iraqis:

> "*As a concentrated and vulnerable group, the displaced make easy targets for attackers. Although they fled their homes to escape conflict, the displaced may find their new accommodations even more dangerous. Such attacks could provoke a spiral of further displacement and sectarian violence.*"
> (Lischer 2008: 96)

Lischer continues in her article that "[u]nless this crisis is addressed, we may well look back in 10 years' time and see the seeds of the next generation of terrorists" (Lischer 2008: 96). A statement she wrote in 2008 and, surely to her regret, her prediction came to be true, considering the devastating violence and destruction of the terrorist group ISIS, among others. As conflict and war are the main contributors in Iraq to displacement, security and peace are the most important factors needed to secure voluntary return and durable solutions. Based on the longitudinal study conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Georgetown University, Rossi et. al. (2018) discuss the reasons, needs, and access to durable solutions for the displaced households in Iraq. They write in their conclusion and recommendations that "safety and security is the most important factor in IDPs' willingness to return, followed by housing, financial resources and livelihoods" (Rossi et. al. 2018: 62).

Although this research focuses on people who have been displaced by more recent conflicts due to the uprising of ISIS in Iraq, it can be relevant to understand the historical context. Even if the interviewed persons have not been directly affected by prior events it can be argued that Iraqis internalize war, loss, chaos, shaping their outlook on the past, present and future (Ehrkamp et. al. 2019).

Mosul and the fight against ISIS

As this thesis will investigate the situation of IDPs settling in camps around Mosul the following paragraph will look closer at the situation of Mosul and its current state. In 2013 the city of Mosul was violently taken over by ISIS, who in the following year appointed Mosul to be the capital of ISIS, the new caliphate. This takeover resulted in mainly two phases of displacement for the people of Ninewa and particularly Mosul (Sydney 2018). The first phase of displacement happened as a direct result of ISIS's advances into the Ninewa region of Iraq, while the second phase was caused by the operations against ISIS in 2016-2017 (ibid.). In the article "Introduction to Special Issue on Displacement in Iraq" (2019) Davis presents some of the numbers describing displacement in this period:

> "*By July 2017, the number of IDPs stood at over 3 million (IOM, 2017), but throughout this period, IDPs continued to move or return if they could. The military operations to retake Mosul and the surrounding areas from ISIS triggered further displacement but also allowed many to return. As of December 2018, the number of returnees was 4.1 million, with 1.8 million people still counted as IDPs (IOM, 2018). In 2017, an estimated 11 million people in Iraq were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 3 million vulnerable host community members and 1.4 million highly vulnerable people living in ISIS-controlled or other conflict areas. (OCHA, 2016: 8)*"
> (Davis 2019: 5)

As stated, the liberation of Mosul and the surrounding areas provided many displaced Iraqis with the opportunity to return to their Area of Origin (AoO). That being said, studies have shown that Mosul still needs a lot before it can be labelled as safe, or as a place with access to livelihood and housing. In a report from IDMC[2] and NRC[3], Sydney writes the following about the state of Mosul:

> "*Given the scale of destruction, the World Bank estimates that the reconstruction of Mosul will take close to a decade. Hundreds of families have returned only to leave*

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[2] Internally Displaced Monitering Center https://www.internal-displacement.org/
[3] Norwegian Refugee Council https://www.nrc.no/

again. Across Ninewa, thousands more are living in unfinished buildings, informal settlements, religious buildings and schools. Existing research suggests that the main barriers to durable solutions are lack of housing and services, limited livelihood opportunities and continued insecurity. Extortion, threats and attacks against returnees have also been reported, at least some of them based on ethnicity and allegations of affiliation with ISIL"

(Sydney 2020: 8)

This shows how, although liberated from ISIS, the city of Mosul still struggles with providing its original citizens with basic needs. A point which has complicated and hindered the return for many IDPs. Furthermore, as noted by Sydney, many IDPs struggle with obtaining proper documentation upon their return. Lack of proper documentation leads to a variation of problems such as: finding a livelihood; obtaining health care; applying for welfare benefits; getting birth certificates for newborn children or children born when they lived under ISIS control; children denied birth certificates may not be allowed to enroll in school and are at risk of statelessness[4]. Furthermore, women are especially vulnerable and exposed in this situation since "Women unable to obtain death certificates for their spouses are unable to inherit property or remarry for several years. The absence of documents—or of the clearance to replace lost ones—effectively turns these people into disenfranchised non-citizens" (ibid).

The Government of Iraq's decision to close IDP camps

By the end of 2020 the Government of Iraq (GOI) independently decided to close all IDP camps in Iraq, starting the process right away, although thousands of IDPs resisted returning to their AoO "due to serious security concerns and lack of infrastructure and basic governance services"[5]. In a comment from Jan Egeland of the Norwegian Refugee Council he

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[4] https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/14/iraq-not-homecoming#

[5] file:///media/fuse/drivefs-cfb3977d21bcee2bce4ea5446d77ae08/root/AAU/10.%20sem%20-%20thesis/litterature/artikler/UN_%20Baghdad%20'independently'%20decided%20to%20shutter%20all%20IDP%20camps%20by%20end%20of%202020.pdf

states that: "there is no home waiting for them, no building, no water, no sanitation, [and] no school for the children"[6].

Furthermore, there is unrest in regards to people and family members previously associated with ISIS, since many communities are feeling a lack of structural or official retribution after the war against ISIS. Various actors have therefore raised concern for the fact that communities will take it upon themselves to attain or secure retribution if (former) members of ISIS or their relatives try to return to their AoO, placing them in imminent danger as addressed in the following quote:

> "ISIL families cannot return to their area, to their homes," said Zaal Latif al-Jabouri, a tribal leader in Qayyarah. "The reason is that ISIL was involved in bloodshed and [its members] wanted by every single house. "Until now, we have not agreed for them to return because that will cause problems. It's a matter of blood [retribution]. Nobody can guarantee their safety.[7]"

The GOI has encouraged the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to close the IDP camps in the autonomous region, but the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have rejected this request stating:

> "The policy of the Kurdistan Region Government and the Ministry of Interior is clear and firm. We support the voluntary return of the IDPs to their hometowns [...] "The KRG does not have any intention whatsoever to close the camps where the displaced populations are hosted. Such measures would be in contrast to our humanitarian policy,"

Director General of the KRG Joint Crisis Coordination (JCC), Hoshang Mohammed[8].

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file:///media/fuse/drivefs-cfb3977d21bcee2bce4ea5446d77ae08/root/AAU/10.%20sem%20-%20thesis/litterature/artikler/Iraq%E2%80%99s%20decision%20to%20shut%20down%20IDP%20camps%20too%20hasty,%20NGOs%20say%20_%20Human%20Rights%20News%20_%20Al%20Jazeera.pdf

[7]file:///media/fuse/drivefs-cfb3977d21bcee2bce4ea5446d77ae08/root/AAU/10.%20sem%20-%20thesis/litterature/artikler/Iraq%E2%80%99s%20decision%20to%20shut%20down%20IDP%20camps%20too%20hasty,%20NGOs%20say%20_%20Human%20Rights%20News%20_%20Al%20Jazeera.pdf

[8]file:///media/fuse/drivefs-cfb3977d21bcee2bce4ea5446d77ae08/root/AAU/10.%20sem%20-%20thesis/litterature/artikler/IDPs%20return%20to%20camps%20in%20Iraq,%20Kurdistan%20Region%20_%20Rudaw.net.pdf

This fact is relevant for my thesis since the IDP camps chosen for my fieldwork are under the governance of KRG, although being placed in Iraq. Community leaders of various cities in Iraq have agreed to issue a document that green-lights the security clearance of relatives of ISIS members, on the condition they make an official complaint - a practice called tabriya[9] - its effectiveness has been put into question. Many IDPs still fear returning due to threats of retribution.

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[9] https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/14/iraq-not-homecoming#

Methodology

Ontology and epistemology

"Research is a process, not just a product"
(England, 1994, p. 82)

In social science we, as researchers, must reflect on our own activity before embarking on research. The methodological framework has a crucial influence on the research process, as it pertains to the elemental assumptions of our interpretation of the social world (Lamont 2015: 15). Accordingly I will discuss the three following fundamental dimensions: (a) the *ontological* base, related to the existence of a real and objective world; (b) the *epistemological* base, related to the possibility of knowing this world and the forms this knowledge would take; (c) the *methodological* base, referring to the technical instruments that are used in order to acquire that knowledge (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 21). These considerations ought to be based in a discussion of the methodological choices we have to make in our research and of the approach to the research process. Later in this chapter I will present the research design for my research and describe the instruments, considerations, and strategies that structured the empirical data collection and how I intend to proceed analytically. Now I will present the ontological and epistemological approach for this thesis.

The ontological question is how the world fits together and how we make sense of it (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 21). Thus, this thesis will be inspired by the constructivist ontological stance, not denying the existence of the physical world, but that meaning are constructed and created by humans as social actors, thus, "the world is not just there to be discovered by empirical research; rather, knowledge is filtered through the theory the researcher adopts" (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 24). Hence I as a researcher give the world meaning depending on my own social interactions yet meaning is not solely produced through social interaction but "are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman 2015: 29). Therefore meaning is an ongoing process, and it is built up during interactions (Bryman

2015), suggesting that the ontological question of *what is home?* will have different meanings whether I or the participants answer.

In close connection to the ontological stance, this thesis will follow the epistemological stance of *interpretivism*, suggesting that the world should not be understood as an objective reality where we find a distinction between the researcher and the social world (Lamont 2015) because the "researcher intervenes in, or creates, observed social realities through their own role in knowledge production and thus alters the object under study" (Lamont 2015: 20). The focus should be on understanding human nature and the motivations which drive it. In doing so, it is of great importance to understand and reflect on ideas, cultures and norms which surround social actors. Or said with other words:

> *"interpretive/qualitative research aims at understanding events by discovering the meanings human beings attribute to their behaviour and the external world. The focus is not on discovering laws about causal relationships between variables, but on understanding human nature, including the diversity of societies and cultures."*
> (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 25)

As suggested above, this research was not approached with a preconceived hypothesis in order to test a specific theory in mind. The approach applied to this investigation has been inductive, as I intend to keep an open mind to the data collected, the themes, and questions arising from it. An inductive approach was chosen for this research because it grants the researcher, me, the opportunity to begin with an area of study and allow for the theory to emerge from the collected data (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Research design

> *"We recommend that the methods sections of all ethnographies be personal and reflexive, discussing the role, location, and feelings of the researcher(s). Only in this way can fieldworkers show readers how they managed to get close to and maintain the integrity of the phenomena they study"*
> (Adler, P. and Adler, O. 2010: 3)

In the fall of 2020 I spent almost 4 months with the BCF as an intern and as a result thereof I managed to make solid connections to BCF employees, furthermore, I got familiar with their work and procedures. During my internship, it came to my attention that the GOI was planning to close all IDP camps, which placed my internship host under pressure. The BCF officially declined to close camps under their management in Iraq, however, BCF's ability to manage the camps satisfactorily depends on the funding they receive from, among others, the GOI. Obviously, the decision from the GOI could affect the destiny of the many IDPs currently inhabiting the three camps in question. After discussing with the Head of Erbil office, who is responsible for the management of the three East Mosul camps we agreed that I would do an investigation into the upcoming possible closing of the three East Mosul IDPs and the effect on the IDPs settling there.

I assumed I would have good access to camps (: participants) and documents related to my topic, and I found that to be a great advantage and benefit to me. My idea was to collaborate with BCF as my gatekeeper to a field that otherwise would have been hard to access. For me, it presented a unique possibility of investigating the unsteady situation these IDPs find themselves in: not wishing to return to their AoO as well as unable to plan the near future in the closing camps. The KRG, with BCF supporting them in their decision, did not wish to follow the recommendation of the GOI and close the camps for the IDPs, which is why they found that a research into this topic would benefit their argument of keeping the camps open until a solid return plan and reconstruction of AoO have been presented by the GOI.

In February 2021, I was able to return to KRG and start on the actual planning and proceed with my investigation. After scheduling and planning how to proceed with the Head of Erbil Office, I was able to start my research. After clearing my intention with the Head of Erbil Office, which was more than excited to have a study made for the BCF, I made contact with the three camp managers in the East Mosul camps, Hassan Sham U3, Hassan Sham U2, and Khazir M1.

On March 4th, I scheduled a visit to the three camps. My intention was to get an insight into their understanding of the topic and furthermore to schedule the upcoming interviews. A car was provided for me and took me to all the camps. Upon arrival at the camps I was

welcomed by some familiar faces due to prior visits to the camps in relation to my internship. In my conversation with the camp managers, I explained the purpose of my visit and introduced them to my thesis topic. They all expressed great interest in the topic and in my investigation. From my conversations with the camp managers I learned how they struggle on a daily basis with the consequences of the decision by the GOI to close all IDP camps. They explained to me how electricity and kerasin (oil for heaters and cooking devices) have been lacking since November 2020. They told me that the KRG does not intend to close the camps and support the forced return of the IDPs as the GOI is doing. That being said, they struggled with making ends meet and viewed the actions of the GOI as indirectly forcing the IDPs to return. In line with these points of critique the camp managers and staff were more than open to supporting my study, which they believed could shed light on their dilemma.

My initial intention with my thesis was to make an investigation into the thought processes of IDPs living in a camp with a near closing date. I wanted to explore what preceding preparation IDPs in this position would contemplate, while simultaneously obtaining access to a unique insight into the dreams, hopes, and aspirations the IDPs would have for their future. During my research, I realized that my initial expectation had been rather naive, since I found that, although standing on the edge of a new reality, the participants were not in a position in which they could either dream of believing or hoping for a better future. The reality of their situation dawned on me after one of my first interview conducted with a young man who had been allegedly associated with ISIS (we did not dive into the allegations against him). A large part of my questions was targeted on the opportunities the young man would have if the camp closed. Questions in line with: 'where would you go?', 'have you made any preparation', 'if you decided to return to your AoO how would you imagine your every day?', and so on. The problem I encountered during the interview with the young man was the hard fact of his reality, visible in his response to me:

> Zain: *"if the camp closes down I will go sit by the roadside right outside the camp… I have nowhere to go; if I go back or anyways else [outside the camp] they will kill me or imprison me again"*
> (Zain 12:01)

Due to a lack of clear strategy from the GOI in terms of ensuring a fair trial, retribution, and security procedures for the persons allegedly associated with ISIS, Zain feared for his live if he were to leave the camp [10]. I found that others like Zain could not imagine to dream of a life outside the camp and their biggest hope was that the camp would stay open until proper procedures are put in place.

The findings I had made so far made me realize that I had to change my approach in future interviews and also my research as a whole. I therefore decided to anchor my interviews in the IDPs experiences and life stories. I wanted to understand their journey of displacement and their perspectives.

Interviewguide

As stated in above I decided to base my research on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview resembles a conversation among two participants, although the interviewer controls the conversation more than the interviewed person:

> *"The more spontaneous the interview procedure, the more likely one is to obtain spontaneous, lively, and unexpected answers from the interviewees. And vice versa: The more structured the interview situation is, the easier the later structuring of the interview by analysis will be"*
> (Kvale, 1996, p. 129)

The semi-structured interview opens up the possibility of spontaneity and encourages participants to express their own narrative, their memories, and their dreams. I prepared questions structured by themes under headlines of: '*time before displacement', 'displacement experience', 'thoughts about the future and aspirations', 'comments on the present situation of displacement in Iraq'*, creating a thematic relation between the questions (Appendix 1). That being said, I attempted to avoid fixed order in my questions in

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https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/16/iraqs-decision-to-shut-down-idp-camps-is-too-rushed-ngos-say

order to get access to topics, feelings, and opinions from the interviewed person themselves (Bryman 2012). In this research the respondent should *not* be understood as a representative of or an informant for a group (Tracy 2013), since I do not particularly seek to investigate one marginalized group and understand the differences within that certain e.g. cultural group. Rather I intended to understand a few individuals within a certain group of IDPs, which might or might not serve as a reflection of displacement experiences in Iraq. I rely on having respondents who will talk on behalf of his or her own feelings, experience, and motivations. Said with other words my aim is to provide "[in]depth analyses of social worlds from the members' perspectives" (Adler 2010:9). Referring to the above, the use of qualitative data in this research aligns with my research aim to investigate the experience of displacement for the interviewed participants.

Participant sampling

Although some researchers/scholars suggest that participant selection should be carried out by the researcher, I do not believe I was in a position to get to know the camps to such an extent. Therefore I had to rely on the camp managers' ability to find participants who would voluntarily participate in my research. The camp managers and I agreed on a specific group for each camp that I should interview and a set of specifications for the participants since a purposeful sampling is the foundation of valuable qualitative research (Tracy 2013; Bryman 2012). In this way I hoped to secure a selection of participants similar in age, gender, and other parameters. An impartial participant selection is pivotal in data collection, and if not done correctly the research will not be able to convey more than parts of the whole picture. In my considerations of participants I considered interviewing camp leaders or community leaders, people who were chosen to be the spokesperson for a specific area of the camp, while finally deciding to refrain from including this group in order to give other residents in the camp the opportunity to express themselves. Moreover to bring forward some of the voices which are often silenced (Krause 2017):

> "While researchers may assume that (e.g. camp) leaders have a good overview of issues in communities and can reveal their complexity in a relatively short time, researchers risk accepting representative roles with little or no questioning [...] [as] a consequence, researchers can unconsciously or unintentionally contribute to silencing

some people – and such neglect often occurs along lines of gender and age. While it is hardly possible to involve all members of a community in social science projects, sensitivity to processes of inclusion and exclusion is crucial."
(Krause 2017: 9)

In continuation hereof two groups of participants were selected for interview. The selection of participants happened in conversation between me and the camp managers. The camp managers advised, independently of each other, to investigate groups that were similarly exposed and vulnerable, the groups being:

- *'Single cases'*: young men allegedly associated with ISIS living in the camp alone,
- *'Female head of household'*

For each group I agreed with the camp manager on a certain set of characteristics, e.g. I asked for persons of the same age group, for the participants to have a certain level of compatibility. Furthermore, the participants were all from or around Mosul, which could make their experience of displacement somehow relatable and for each group the gender was the same. Upon arrival the IDPs are categorized as part of the registration process with the aim of producing an overview of the inhabitants of the camp. Therefore the camp managers could tell me that statistically the vulnerable groups in their camps would consist of these two categories. I then had to choose between interviewing persons from both categories or focus on one. I saw my fairly open access to the camps as an unique opportunity to engage in conversations with often silenced groups. Furthermore, I was interested in the qualitative data that the broader selection of participants would deliver. The selected groups of participants represent a variety in the data set with a comprehensive insight into a broader demographic. In terms of actually contacting the participants I had to leave this responsibility to the camp manager who assured me of a fair process.

Since I was not present for the conversation between the participants and the camp staff I can not be sure how voluntarily the selection had taken place. But from the interaction I had with the participants during the interview I felt like none of them were uncomfortable doing the interview, some of them even seemed quite used to doing such an interview. That being

said, some of the participants were not fully informed on the details of my study and the purpose of the interview, something I informed them of before we started each interview.

Positionality

When doing fieldwork it is important to consider one's own role as a researcher in relation to the participants and the research field. As I am following the epistemological stance of interpretivism I am aware that I, as a researcher, and my research are inseparably connected and that I cannot consider myself to be impartial or objective. As a researcher I bring my subjectivity (my views, perspectives, frameworks for making sense of the world; my politics; my passions) into the research process (Braun and Clarke 2013:).

In my case I am a mostly white, although with mixed Japanese-Danish heritage, dark haired, young female student from a good university in Denmark. I have a "good" passport and the privilege to move freely as I please (in most cases, especially in relation to travelling and crossing borders). "Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to 'the other'" (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411) suggesting a careful reflection on one's own appearance (Berger 2015), especially in the context of researching vulnerable groups such as IDPs.

By acknowledging and recognizing my own potential biases towards the participants and their narratives I make an effort to understand my data from the point of view of the participants and not my own. As pointed out above it would be a naive quest to believe I could truly separate myself from my subjectivity, so I must be forever mindful of my own subjectivity (Bourke 2014: 3). Berger (2015) writes how she makes an effort of putting herself "in the role of a learner from my teachers, the participants [...], to develop reciprocity with participants for the goal of equalizing the research relationship and conducting research 'with' rather than 'on' "(Pillow, 2003 in Berger 2015: 11). This point, Berger emphasises, is especially relevant when analysing the collected data set, remembering that I am to learn from the participants' narratives and not judge them from my own experience. As a young woman from Denmark I have not experienced displacement, war, vulnerability e.g. as the participants have, and I can therefore not view their narratives through the lense of my own experiences. Rather I should make an effort to educate myself

on the topics relevant for the analysis, such as displacement, migration literature e.g. to view the data from an educated and enlightened position:

> *"For example, not having experienced the feeling of being trapped, which is typical to victims of abuse, we may have viewed participants' stories through judging lenses, such as asking ourselves why they endured and did not leave, which may influence the conceptualization of the research question and eventually the interpretation of participants' experiences (Smith 1999)"*
> (Berger 2015: 10)

My Arabic is very basic, nonetheless it helped me to convey a sense of effort from my side and build trust with the participants. Furthermore, Krause (2017) suggests that entering into conversations with the participants in a language where they are the experts and I (the researcher) is novice would affect the unequal power balance which is present. Even though my Arabic is not good enough to make the whole interview in Arabic I believe a small conversation or introduction in Arabic could "break the ice" and show a sense of effort from my side. Thus, striving to meet the participant as a equal human being and not a research object as England (1994) puts it: "those who are researched should be treated like people and not as mere mines of information to be exploited by the researcher as the neutral collector of "facts"" (England 1994: 243).

Since this is only a thesis and not a well founded longer term research project I do not have the time nor the funds to establish a research team. That being said, I did indeed receive the support from staff in the BCF, camp managers and their employers. Therefore it will be important to consider how the relationship between the BCF staff and the participants is, and how it affects their participation. Ellis et. al. notes in their article *"Ethical Research in Refugee Communities and the Use of Community Participatory Methods''* (2007) how interviewing a refugee (:or IDP) involves specific elements of awareness:

> *"If a refugee's experience has been that officials will stop at nothing to get a person to cooperate, and that authorities often hold inordinate power over one's future, being told that a study is 'voluntary' may seem absolutely meaningless. Particularly if*

the study is housed within an official institution [...] participation may be seen as mandatory. In other instances, fear of deportation or a desire to achieve legal status may lead a refugee to feel forced to participate. In addition, cultural traditions of unquestioning respect for authorities may influence acquiescence to a professional's request to participate in research"

(Ellis. et. al. 2007: 468)

Ellis et. al. (2007) shed light on the ambiguity of 'voluntary' participation and his observations are all relevant for my research. The participants find themselves in an official institution, the camp, where they depend on the attention or mercy of the camp staff. It would be naive of me to think the participants participated in my research solely to contribute to building research on IDPs, rather we must assume they had their personal reasons for participating as mentioned in the above quote.

This brings me to the position of the participants, because it seems essential to consider the position from which the participants are speaking prior to analysing their narratives. In other words, it is important to reflect on the validity of the narratives presented to me in the interviews. That being said, I do not intend to judge whether or not the statements given by the participants are true or not. I wish to highlight potential motives rather than questioning the integrity of their stories, while also bringing attention to possible objectives which might have influenced our conversation. The participants are not to be understood just as victims (because of their displacement situation), nor pure sources of information, rather the participants are persons with an objective of their own (Galal 2015). As we are all persons with an agenda of our own, unconsciously or unknowingly performed, the researcher should explore and reflect on the positioning of the participant. Regarding the positioning of the participants in our interview I would like to present some quotes from the interviews:

Translator: *"so before you stop [the recorder] she talked about that they have lost their ID because they have been taken from them and they appreciate if there was a team to come and, because they need to renew their ID so whenever they happened to go somewhere they need these IDs but IDs are lost during the part when the management or the forces I don't*

know that took it from them and they say that it is lost now and they
cannot give it back to them … I said it is not in our hands but I will
pass on the word"
(Aisha 29:05)

Yasmine: *"We had a meeting like this and my mother participated and she said*
the same thing that we just hope we stay under the protection of this
government, and we hope that we don't go back to our hometown
since we don't have anything to rely on in terms of finance and
houses, and we don't want our children face the same things that we
have faced"
(Yasmine 55:00)

Vera: *"does he have anything to add?"*

Muhammed: *"so I said that was is going on right now … a lot of people does not*
even have a living so I hopes that we can offers help to those people
who are in need, they don't have anything, so I was asking if it is
possible to bring a chanel like that could take my voice to Masud
Barzani because I thinks that he has the biggest heart and I thinks that
he can change situation in here [Iraq]… "
(Mohammed 22:10)

These quotes suggest that the participants viewed me not just as a researcher but as a part of the organisations that manage the camp. Even in the interaction with Mohammed it seems he thought I might be able to bring the president of the KRG a message. Perhaps, the participants saw me as an employee of the organisation, BCF, and not as a separate student. Therefore must I as a researcher be aware of the unique circumstances of our interactions. We are all people, and people position themselves in social interactions. As a researcher it is my duty to consider the possibility of the participants positioning themselves in a certain way. I will expand on this more in the section: *Analytical approach.*

Ethics

"Informing participants about the research project and their rights, fostering a trustful environment, and ensuring voluntary participation are crucial."
(Krause 2017:20)

When conducting my interviews it was important to provide the participants with a space to freely speak and be able to participate shaping the direction of the interview, which is why I choose to conduct semi-structured interviews. Krause emphasises in her article "Researching Forced Migration: critical reflections on research ethics during fieldwork" (2017) that "when participants can speak out about issues that are relevant for them, they are not treated as 'data sources' but as persons [...] it is up to principal investigators to create space for them to provide input and subsequently adjust approaches'' (Krause 2017:20). This is especially relevant for research done with refugees and IDPs. Due to their status as displaced one must assume they have experienced war, loss of friends, houses, death and so on. This leaves them in a vulnerable situation in which interviews can bring forward terrible memories and unpleasant feelings. It is therefore essential that researchers have in mind the vulnerable situation these persons are in. That being said it should *not* be understood that IDPs are *only* vulnerable victims of war, rather a sensibility is strongly encouraged (Krause 2017). In my situation, I tried to aim for a calm and private space in which to conduct the interviews and made sure the participants were fully aware of their rights not to answer questions they felt uncomfortable with, right to anonymity, and sought to provide space for them to add what they felt important. Due to their status as refugees or IDPs it must be understood how the participants potentially have experienced human rights violations:

"These circumstances are frequently part of research projects, which is why it is even more important for scholars to regard participants' rights in their research processes instead of considering them as privileges which can be granted"
(Krause 2017: 8)

Limitations

The vision for this thesis is to put forward experiences, stories, coping methods, and motivations IDPs in camps around Mosul possess. I am not setting out to delineate a certain community or group (e.g. marginalized IDPs), rather I intend to make a research into the experience of a limited number of IDPs, which suggests I will not be able to draw any general conclusions for the experiences of IDPs in Iraq.

Since I do not speak Arabic at a level which allowed me to talk directly to the participants I had to use a translator. As such, could there likely have been information lost in translation, both during the interviews and the following transcription.

Analytical approach

In this section I will describe the manner in which the data set collected during my fieldwork have been processed and analysed. My process was inspired by the (reflexive) Thematic Analysis by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). In their article "Using thematic analysis in psychology" (2006) Braun and Clarke outline the principles, disadvantages, and advantages of Thematic Analysis as well as providing clear guidelines of how to analyse qualitative data. Thematic Analysis is one of the most common approaches in content analysis (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004) and is widely used, yet it is not clearly agreed upon as a method in the same way other methods are e.g. narrative analysis or grounded theory (Braun and Clarke 2006). With Thematic Analysis as an umbrella term, the reflexive thematic analysis approach is:

> *"considered a reflection of the researcher's interpretive analysis of the data conducted at the intersection of: (1) the dataset; (2) the theoretical assumptions of the analysis, and; (3) the analytical skills/resources of the researcher"*
> (Byrne, 2021: 3)

It is shaped by the organic process of coding and flexibility, while highlighting "the researcher's active role in knowledge production" (Byrne, 2021: 3). Braun and Clarke states that one of the main advantages with the Thematic Analysis approach is that "through its

theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data (Braun & Clarke 2006: 78). (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis is not detached from methodological considerations, yet the methodological and theoretical flexibility that Thematic Analysis encompasses gives the researcher an active role in identifying patterns/ themes from the data, "selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers" (Braun & Clarke 2006, 80).

In their article Braun and Clarke (2006) present six phases which make up the process of (reflexive) Thematic Analysis. It is essential to understand these phases as fluid, organic, and recursive with movement back and forth "between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing" (Braun & Clarke 2006, 86). The six phases are as following:

Figure 1

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

As suggested I firstly familiarised myself with the data I had collected, after which I proceeded to produce initial codes to identify interesting features of the data set. As I needed to have great parts of my interviews translated, the process of familiarising myself with the data set, generating the initial codes and searching for themes was a dynamic and evolving process. As I received the translated interview sporadically I continually proceeded to do several rounds of coding and reflections, which is advised to do as the original codes and themes will change throughout the process (Braun & Clarke 2006). In closing I developed a complex and broad set of themes and codes which were highly interrelated, yet I managed to cluster these into a final thematic map (phase 5). The following figure presents the latest version I developed:
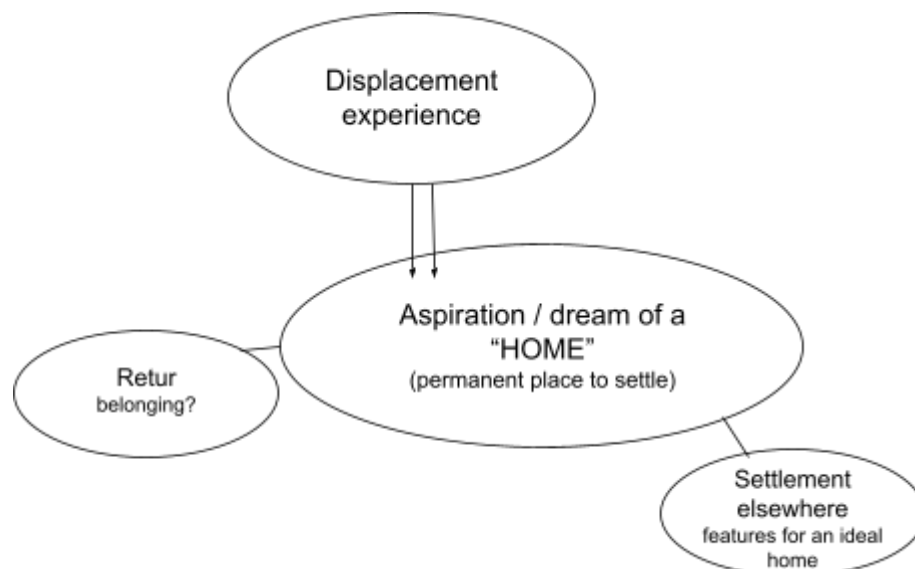

Figure 2

At the end I had generated and defined the themes I would present in my analysis, in other words I had identified the essence of each theme.

At this point, I would like to note that I have attempted to base my process on the IDPs' testimonials rather than on preconceived theoretical topics and assumptions. Yet, as I proceeded in my process I found myself engaging in conceptual frameworks to improve the connection between theory and practice. This became relevant for me when I found concepts such as 'home' and 'hope' emerge from the coding process. That being said it is arguably impossible not to use a combination of an inductive >< deductive / data-driven >< theory-driven approach, as Braun & Clarke (2012) clarifies:

"one approach does tend to predominate over the other, and that the predominance of the deductive or inductive approach can indicate an overall orientation towards prioritising either researcher/theory based meaning or respondent/data-based meaning, respectively"
(Byrne, 2021: 7)

Discursive psychology

In the paragraph above have I attempted to demonstrate my process of familiarising myself with the newly collected data set in order to define themes of interest based on my research. Before presenting the following chapter I would like to present the analytical framework.

Discourse analysis and social constructivism have a common epistemological assumption, claiming that our access to reality is always through language (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999) and by means of language we create representations of the world. A discourse can be described as a certain way in which we talk or understand the world, in other words, physical objects do exist but "they only gain meaning through discourse" (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 17). In the practice of discourse analyses we find different analytical focuses with different approaches to discourse analysis. In their book "Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method" (1999) Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips offer an introduction into the discipline of discourse analyses. In their book they present three approaches: Discourse Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Discursive Psychology. The authors write in the introduction how these three approaches differ in their analytical focuses, as presented with the following figure:

Figure 3:

This thesis employs discursive psychology as its analytical method, which offers a concrete analytical framework for textual analysis. Discursive Psychology approaches texts and spoken language as constructions of the world which are oriented towards social actions and practices in social interactions:

> *"The aim of discursive psychologists is not so much to analyse the changes in society's 'large-scale discourses', which concrete language use can bring about, as to investigate how people use the available discourses flexibly in creating and negotiating representations of the world and identities in talk-in-interaction and to analyse the social consequences of this"*
> (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 16)

> *"Ved empirisk at analysere sprogbrugen i de 'kontekster', hvor den udfoldes, adskiller diskurspsykologien sig både fra de tilgange inden for kognitiv psykologi, der fokuserer på sprog (herunder Chomskys tilgang), og fra strukturalistiske og poststrukturalistiske diskursteorier (herunder Foucaults og Laclau og Mouffes diskursteorier), som ikke ser på konkret social interaktion"*
> (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999; 106)

Drawing on the work of Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, with regards to theory, method, and empirical research, Jørgensen and Phillips emphasise that discursive psychology analyze how discourse is constructed in connection to social actions, how people construct world views in social interactions and how these pictures are part of ideological pracises (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999: 124). Based on the assumption that texts and spoken language are action oriented Potter and Wetherell emphasise how peoples' use of discourses as resources variates depending on social context (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999; 125). As people draw on different discourses in different contexts we cannot expect their

talk to be consistent, in e.g. an interview setting. In relation to discursive psychology in operation Edwards (2009) states that "if we examine talk for the situated actions it performs, then inconsistencies and contradictions are best used as potential paths into those actions for analysts, rather than as the basic phenomena themselves, or analytic conclusions about those phenomena" (Edwards 2009).

Theory

In this chapter I will give an overview of the theoretical concepts which are the focus of this thesis taking point of departure in the research question presented in the introduction:

- *How can we understand displacement experiences through the narratives of eight Iraqi IDPs in IDP camps East of Mosul?*
    - *How do these IDPs narrate their displacement journeys?*
    - *How do their displacement experiences influence the IDPs' perception and aspiration for home?*

After working with the empirical data I collected throughout my fieldwork I found that certain theoretical concepts became relevant to explore in order to answer my research question. As this thesis sets out to research a set of IDPs' displacement journeys and the potential impact of their experiences on their aspirations for home it seems appropriate to present a clarification of how this thesis will approach theoretical concepts such as: *displacement, agency, and home*.

I will start this theoretical chapter by focusing on the theoretical field of displacement, how does displacement differ from migration (Koser & Martin 2011)? And how are we to understand displacement journeys? The expression of agency in relation to their displacement journeys calls for a clarification of the interplay between displacement experience, challenges and agency on the IDPs' journeys.

I intend to connect the experience of displacement to the way participants perceive their visions of an ideal home. Therefore, I find it appropriate to offer a theoretical introduction to the concept *home*. Firstly, I will present how the concept of home can be interpreted while secondly connect this concept to the displacement experience. By drawing on the idea of home journeying/ home as journey by Mallet (2004), in order to better grasp the home-making process displaced persons experience.

Displacement

As the main empirical and analytical core of this thesis is the narrated displacement experiences of eighth IDPs, I find it relevant to dwell on the theoretical framework, which revolves around displacement. For this reason this section will present the theoretical understanding of displacement before proceeding with the analysis. Furthermore, I intend to discuss the relationship between migration and displacement.

As I have accounted for above, all participants are currently living in IDP camps around Mosul. As such, we must logically assume that they are all categorised as IDPs. According to UNHCR's *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement'*, internally displaced persons are:

> *"persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border"*
> (UNOCHA 2004, p. 1) (Asali 2019: 830)

While the legal categorisation of displaced persons is important to both their access to rights and aid, such a categorisation cannot tell us much about their displacement experience. Hence, the methodological and analytical considerations of this thesis calls for a different approach to displacement. The question then becomes, how can we understand displacement? And, where does displacement differ from migration?

The study of forced migration emerged in the 1980s, yet, it has since been dogged by debates surrounding its relationship with other fields and academic disciplines. While there appears to be consensus that it should be seen as a multidisciplinary endeavour, there is much less agreement about its scope (Koser & Martin 2011). Initially forced migration was focussed on refugees as their main subject yet with time the narrow-minded focus came under pressure. An expansion of the field occured to extend the boundaries of forced migration study and encompass other groups, in particular IDPs (Adey 2020). Money (2003)

argues that when IDPs experience the violation of displacement "IDPs are rendered particularly vulnerable to further abuse of their rights as a result of their displacement. Their position is therefore distinctive and should not be conflated with that of other victims of war" (Money 2003 in Koser & Martin 2011: 15). In the book '*The Migration-Displacement Nexus'* (2011) edited by Khalid Koser and Susan Martin, Bakewell ends his chapter by stating:

> *"If we can do better at understanding the complex processes of migration, the shifting conditions of displacement and their relationship with the categories that frame policy, we may be in a better position to recognise and facilitate new solutions to the problems of displacement"*
> (Koser & Martin 2011:26)

The overlapping elements between displacement and migration is not a new or rare phenomenon. The case of Iraq serves as an example of just how intertwined displacement and migration are as concepts. This point is emphasised by Phil Marfleet in his chapter: "Displacement and the State: The Case of Iraq" (Koser & Martin 2011), in which he describes waves of displacement, transportation and resettlement in Iraq during the colonial period, and later perpetrated by the Ba'thist regime, and more recently still as a result of the American occupation. Bakewell (2011) argues that part of the problem with the conceptualisation of migration and displacement is that they are used in different senses at different times, which "creates the possibility of confusion as we slip incautiously from one sense to another" (Koser & Martin 2011: 18):

> *"The case for maintaining a clear separation between forced migrants (especially refugees) and other voluntary migrants looks quite weak if we are concerned with the process of movement. However, it is made much more convincing when we are considering these groups as categories of people. I suggest that the terms migration and displacement can be used in at least three senses – as a process, condition, or category – each of which relates to different concepts."*
> (Bakewell 2011: 19)

In continuation hereof I will briefly summarize the meanings of the three senses: *process; category; condition*, which Bakewell presents.

Process

As the words suggest migration and displacement are both processes, which bring about change in people's physical location. Bakewell suggests that displacement should be understood as a process that can be viewed as a particular sub-set of broader migration spaces. Yet, to identify 'underlying patterns' we must identify different dimensions in the field of migration, such as: *The level of agency involved; The rationales for migration; The timescale of migration ; The degree of change involved; The extent of migration; The level of institutional engagement* (Koser & Martin 2011 :20).

Category

The process of displacement in a sense encompasses the change in people's physical location (in relation to the process of movement). Whereas the categorisation of migrants and displaced persons relates to the distinguishing of categories "which someone may be assigned using criteria which are established by other actors" (Bakewell : 24). Categories play a big role in the legal sphere, yet, also with organisations, NGOs, advocacy groups among others. Bakewell notes that categories are meant to reflect different processes of movement. However, it can be difficult to distinguish for instance involuntary from forced migration, resulting in most agencies ending up working with a system of bureaucratic labelling, based on stereotypical identities and sets of assumed needs (Bakewell 2008; Zetter 1991 in Koser & Martin 2011: 24).

Condition

When displacement is to be understood as a condition, a 'state of being', it does look different from migration. As a physical process displacement may come to an end when the displaced person decides to settle permanently. However the condition or 'state of being' displaced might be maintained over time and reproduced through generations Bakewell argues:

"Unlike being a migrant, the condition of displacement does not become fixed with the end of movement; it remains an ongoing condition which is concerned with a separation from 'home', the place of origin from which people were compelled to move (displaced – process). It is about not being where one wants to be, and is often described in terms of exile, being cut off from one's roots and so forth (Malkki 1995)"
(Koser & Martin 2011 :22)

As so, displacement is not just an objective state, it also relates to a person's self perception of being out of place. Bakewell states that "to a large extent, I am only displaced as long as I feel myself to be displaced" (Koser & Martin 2011 :23). In relation to the methodological and analytical considerations for this research our understanding of displacement is relevant. For this reason Bakewell's three senses, process, condition, and category, seem useful as I intend to understand the participants' displacement process, or displacement journey, it is therefore the displacement condition, the participants' perception of being out of place that I find to be relevant.

Agency and displacement

The agency of migrants and displaced persons is an important part of the study of migration. It plays a central role both in the development of social scientific theory on migration and in shaping the policy responses to people's movement (Bakewell 2010: 1690). However, many theories of migration seem to rest on a dichotomy between forced and voluntary migration (Erdal & Oeppen 2018; Bakewell 2010). Such a distinction leaves little room for the recognition of agency. As Bakewell (2010) argues, in the following quote, many researchers either emphasise the structural factors surrounding the migration *or* the agency of the migrant:

"We may try to explore the political, economic or social factors which forced them to move, but we do not need to explain their arrival in terms of their exercising agency. Indeed to go too far towards explanation and ascribing any agency to such people may undermine their case for refugee status"
(Bakewell 2010: 1690)

Very briefly summarised can agency in migration study be referred to as "the capacity for social actors to reflect on their position, devise strategies and take action to achieve their desires" (Bakewell 2010: 1694). As such, to be an agent means having the capability to exert a degree of control over social relations "which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree (Sewell 1992 in Bakewell 2010: 1694). The notion of structure, in this regard, refers to "any recurring pattern of social behaviour; or, more specifically, the ordered interrelationships between the different elements of a social system or society (Scott and Marshall 2009 in Bakewell 2010 1694). Many scholars draw on Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration to balance a middle ground between structure and agency. Giddens' theory of structuration emcompasses an elegant bridging between broader social structures and everyday practices. Giddens proposed that not only does structures shape social practice "but is in turn reproduced and possibly transformed by this practice (Bakewell 2010: 1695).

Aspiration-Capability framework

However, Bakewell brings forward a critique of Giddens' structure-agency theory, arguing that: "structuration theory, while it may suggest an approach to research, offers very little in the way of guidance to show how the balance between structure and agency is achieved in any particular context" (Bakewell 2010: 1690). Hence, in order to account for both agency and structure *in practice*, de Haas (2021) presents a meta-theoretical conceptualisation of migration as a function of *aspiration* and *capability*.

In his article *'A theory of migration: the aspirations-capabilities framework'* (2021) de Haas presents a theoretical framework which conceptualises migration (displacement) as a function of people's capabilities and aspirations to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures (de Haas 2021: 2). Inspired by Jørgen Carling's seminal paper from 2002, de Haas has developed the metatheoretical framework of aspiration-capability. Carling's seminal paper explores the role of aspiration and abilities in migration processes. He found that a large group of displaced people suffered from 'displacement in place' through 'involuntary immobility' (de Haas 2021: 16). Carling argues

that a large group of displaced people are involuntary immobile because warfare trapped them in a place they wanted to leave. Building on Carling's findings de Haas built a framework which mirrors "people's general life preferences as well as their subjective perceptions about opportunities and life elsewhere" (de Haas 2002: 17). De Haas' core argument is that through such a framework virtually all forms of migration can be conceptualised as a *"function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunity structures"* (not my italic, de Haas 2002: 17):

> *Migration aspirations:* are a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived geographical opportunity structures.
> *Migration capabilities:* are contingent on positive ('freedom to') and negative ('freedom from') liberties.

In relation to his aspiration-capability framework de Haas calls for re-defining our understanding of human mobility. Hence, human mobility should not be defined by the criteria of actual movement, but as people's capability (freedom) to choose where to live. Thus, by shifting the definition of human mobility to include people's capability of choosing to stay, the categorisation of mobility types starts to include various forms of 'immobility'. The following table demonstrates a 'theoretical categorisation of five ideal-typical individual mobility types' (de Haas 2021: 22). Within the aspiration-capability framework are mobility types identified as the following involuntary immobility, acquiescent immobility, voluntary mobility, voluntary immobility and involuntary mobility. The presented table demonstrates the relation between capability - aspiration and mobility types:

Table 1 Aspiration - capability - derived individual mobility types				
		Migration capabilities		
		Low		*High*
Migration Aspirations (Intrinsic and/ or instrumental)	*High*	Involuntary immobility (feeling trapped)		Voluntary mobility (most forms of migration
	Low	Acquiescent immobility		Voluntary immobility and Involuntary mobility (e.g. refugees)

By drawing on de Haas' framework, I can better explore the experiences of displacement that the participants articulate. Hence, de Haas' framework presents an opportunity to explore the relationship between the participants' aspiration and capability.

Home

The legal framework surrounding displaced persons defines adequate housing to be a right in accordance with article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948). However, for the purpose of this research I will in this theoretical chapter look beyond the legal framework and the assumption that home is merely a shelter or housing. In relation to the methodological considerations and the empirical data, I will in this paragraph account for the concept of *home*. Firstly, I will bring forward some of the significant conceptual implications the concept of home encompasses. I set out to research the relationship between the participant's displacement journey and their aspirations for home, and so in the second part I will elaborate on Mallett's idea of *home journeying*.

Home and displacement

The literature dealing with 'home' as a theoretical concept is wide and the concept has been studied from many different perspectives such as "architecture, planning, and across social sciences – sociology and anthropology, but also geography, psychology, history, urban and cultural studies" (Boccagni 2016, xxiii). Following theoretical discussions of the concept of

home in various studies, we are to understand home as a multidimensional concept. Home is a physical location, a place, a spatial organisation, yet it differs from other places of dwelling. Home is defined by a special kind of relationship with a place, and specific sets of feelings, meanings and emotions (Asali 2017:830).

So how do we differentiate between a house and a home? Boccagni (2017) suggests that "in a nutshell, a house is static by definition; a home, instead, need not" (Boccagni 2017: 5). Here Boccagni succinctly sums up the matter, perhaps even oversimplifying things. For elaboration we can look to Mary Douglass' (1991) elegant reflections on the relationship between home and space of dwelling:

> "Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space ... it need not be a large space, but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control. [...] A home is not only a space, it also has some structure in time; and because it is for people who are living in that time and space, it has aesthetic and moral dimensions."
> (Mary Douglas 1991: 289)

For our purposes Boccagni (2017) presents a suitably broad definition of home. In the chapter 'A New Lens On The Migration-Home Nexus' Boccagni elaborates on his understanding of the most basic characteristics of the home making experience:

> (1) Security: a sense of personal protection and integrity which is attached to a place of one's own, where outsiders should not have free access and one's identity – whatever that means – is not in question. Next comes
> (2) Familiarity: both in an emotional sense, pointing to intimacy and comfort, and in a cognitive one, standing for orientation in space, stability, routine, continuity or even permanence – all implicit expectations that are not easy to reconcile with increasingly mobile life courses. The frequent connections between home and notions such as household, kinship, or neighbourhood are telling of the centrality of this factor. Last,
> (3) Control: as autonomy in using a certain place according to one's needs and tastes, in predicting the development of events in it, and in expressing oneself, inside it, out of the public gaze and judgement. Although this factor may be less obvious than the

others, it proves crucial to negotiating home in the public sphere and to its mixed political significance.

(Boccagni 2017: 7)

As demonstrated in the discussion above the concept of home is broadly researched. Hence, defining home as a concept would take up more space and time than I have. Rather I will focus on dynamically tracing out the prevalent meanings of home, the ways in which it works out as a social experience and its societal consequences *in practice* (Boccagni 2017). In order to do so I draw on Mallett's (2004) idea of home journeying to grasp the unique experience of home as a displaced person.

Home journeying

In her thorough literature review Shelley Mallett reviews the academic literature on home. In her article, Mallett presents the idea of home as journey/ home journeying. Home journeying embodies the idea of home-making and understands home both as a 'place of origin' as well as a 'place of destination' (Kabachnik 2010: 317; Mallett 2004: 77). As such, the idea of home and away, as dichotomous experiences and concepts, is rejected (Mallett 2004). Thus, Mallett (2004) describes home journeying as the "continuous process of transition between one's original or previous home to one's ideal or future home" (Kabachnik 2010: 323). Additionally, the path which one takes out of a house (chosen or forced) is crucial in how one's (past, present and future) homes are defined (Mallett 2004: 78). Therefore, home journeying as a conceptualization of home-making resonates well with this research as it captures the experience of forced migrants as they are displaced from and searching for a new home (Kabachnik 2010).

Concludingly, I will view displacement as a condition, 'a state of being', where the inherent agency of the displaced person is understood in a framework of aspiration and capability. Hence, the articulated displacement journeys will reveal the participants' aspiration for home based on the idea of home journeying.

Analysis

Displacement Journeys

Single cases

With this thesis I set out to investigate how we can understand the displacement experience of eight IDPs in North Iraq and their aspirations of home. To understand the participants displacement experience it seems inescapable to closely examine their journey from their AoO to the East Mosul camps, Hassan Sham U3, Hassan Sham U2, and Khazir M1. The intention with the following section is to give the reader a detailed account of the participants' displacement journeys and descriptions of constant navigation through challenges, danger and uncertainty. As demonstrated above many people are currently experiencing displacement inside Iraq due to the violence brought by ISIS and its aftermath. Violence, conflict and war leave a trail of mistrust, grief and despair among the survivors. The participants in my research all talk about experiencing loss, sorrow and injustice which I believe many IDPs can mirror themselves in. For this reason I have decided to dedicate space in this thesis to thoroughly unfold the personal experiences of the participants. Additionally, I intend to invite the reader to appreciate the unique insights of eight individuals' perception of displacement in one of the most discussed conflicts of modern times.

In this chapter the displacement journey of Yousef, Mohammed, Zain, Aisha, Fatima, Noor, Sarah and Yasmine[11] will be presented for the purpose of understanding the participants' individual perceptions of challenges, experiences, and choices. To understand why and how the participants have articulated their displacement journey is essential for the following analysis, in which I analyze the IDPs' relation to home in a displacement context.

In this section I will firstly elaborate on the displacement journeys told by the young men: 'the single cases', and secondly, I will present the displacement journeys of the women: the

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[11] In order to preserve the identity of the participants I have chosen to use aliases. The names presented are therefore not the participants real names.

'female heads of families'. Finally, I will discuss the participants' narratives in relation to the framework of aspiration-capability which was presented in the theoretical chapter.

During my fieldwork I interviewed three young men who were living together in a separate section of Hassan Sham U3. This camp in particular hosts a fairly big number of young men who are living alone without family. These young men, categorised as 'single cases', have all been incarcerated in Kurdistan due to alledged association with ISIS which is the reason the camp management have given to gather these young men in a separate section of the camp. The first young man I met was Yousef, an 18 years old young man, with tight jeans and a somewhat tired look on his face. Yousef originates from a small village near Kirkuk on the border between Kurdistan Region and Iraq. Before settling in Hassan Sham U3 camp Yousef lived 2 years in another camp named Debaga. From our conversation I understand that he was initially displaced from his village 4 years prior to our conversation, meaning that Yousef was just 13 years old when he fled with his family as ISIS arrived at his village. Yousef recalls how the arrival of ISIS started a chain reaction of events leading to his current settling in Hassan Sham U3. As we carry on the interview I ask Yousef about his view and relationship with ISIS. Although many of these young men declare their innocence in terms of being associated with ISIS, I still cannot be sure about their personal views. I therefore step into the topic carefully, to not offend Yousef. Yousef explains that he knew of ISIS and their existence, but did not know where they were in power. As such, ISIS was a distant element of Yousef's everyday life. Yet, one day they arrived at his village and as Yousef remembers, ISIS replaced the curriculum with their own. Yousef recalls how ISIS entered the schools and took away all books, replacing them with books ISIS considered appropriate:

> Yousef: "I was only 13 years old when ISIS came … I knew about them but I didn't know where they lived ... so before all this happened I was only 13 years old, but my life was much better than now ... So I was ... from ISIS went there, so they made me, so I was studying before but once ISIS came they brought their own books and we had to study them … but then we quite, we stopped...
>
> Vera: The ISIS study?
>
> Translator: Yes, afterward they quite ...

> *Yousef:* ... *ISIS they change your thinking/ ideas … that's what they do ... so when they first came in, they were very peaceful, they were just doing normal religious stuff, but then they started changing, that was the beginning of their plan, and then they started changed their ideas and they started killing people and then they destroyed everything.*
>
> *Vera:* *He thought they were okay in the beginning but then?*
>
> *Yousef:* *Yeah like everybody was thinking 'okay his is just normal doing his religion' but when we realized the killing part it was already to late and they [ISIS] destroyed everything, everyone's life"*
>
> (Yousef 2:54)

After these events Yousef and his family made the decision to leave their village. Yousef feared becoming forcefully recruited by ISIS if he stayed in his village. Yet, it did not go as planned and Yousef did not escape easily. During his journey Yousef was, in his own words, falsely accused of being part of ISIS and was sentenced to 6 months in prison in KRI. After Yousef was released from prison he went to the Debaga camp for two years, followed by 2 years in Hassan Sham U3, where we met. Yousef would like to go back, or to a place where he could find a job, he explains. He would like to go to Kurdistan (aka KRI) but because of his history, with incarceration, he does not believe it would be possible. Also he cannot go back to where he is from because he fears the militant Shia group Hashd al-Sha'bi[12]. Yousef believes he would be killed if he tried to return:

> *Yousef:* "My father was in the forces with the Americans [military]...
> when ISIS came in they didn't give me a change: either we kill you or you come with us and be a part of us, so I didn't have a choice ... so after that our lives started getting destroyed and that is why I was accused"
>
> (Yousef 5:25)

Another young man I interviewed during my fieldwork was Zain. On the day of our interview he arrived in slim jeans and a long sleeved t-shirt. His hair is dark and wavy, and his skin

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[12] https://tcf.org/content/report/understanding-iraqs-hashd-al-shabi/

shows signs of his young age as he has some pimples. Zain is a 17 years old boy who arrived at Hassan Sham U3 in 2015. Originally, he came from a village near Mosul in Nineveh where he lived with his family of 10: mother, father, two sisters and five brothers. Zain is the oldest of the children which entails a lot of responsibility, he explains. When Zain still lived with his family his father suffered from a blood clot which meant he couldn't work anymore, so Zain had to step in and became the main provider in the family. In the interview, Zain explains that the family's economical challenges combined with increasing conflict led his family to migrate:

> Zain: "Our lives were bad, ya3ni[13] there were no jobs, there was nothing, the food was bad and limited. Everything was bad. Suddenly there were bombings and people fled. People fled because of hunger and oppression"
>
> (Zain 3:30)

After Zain and his family made their decision to flee their area, they were helped by the Kurdish military forces. However, on their journey to the camp two people unknown to Zain made a complaint about him to the authorities. The two unknown people accused Zain of being part of ISIS, which led to a 18 month long imprisonment of Zain. After Zain was released from prison in the KRI, he realized that his family had returned to their village. Zain explains, with frustration, that he found it impossible to return to his family although he had the required "documents of pardon" which proves he served his time. When I ask why returning seemed impossible, Zain explains that he believes nobody would approve his documents and therefore fears being killed.

The last young man I spoke to was Mohammed. Mohammed, being 24 years old, was the oldest of the three young men I interviewed. He was originally from Mosul, but had been living in Hassan Sham U3 for 1 year and 4 months. I interviewed Mohammed during the month of Ramadan and since Mohammed was fasting we found a comfortable, quiet place in the shades. Wearing skinny jeans, stylish washed out in color and ripped over the knees, a red t-shirt and styled hair, Mohammed sat confident in front of me and the translator. He

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[13] 'ya3ni': its equivalent in English would be "umm", it can also be translated as "uhh," "well," "I mean," and basically any other filler word / phrase and is a very used in all Arabic dialects

told us that he lived in Mosul at the time of ISIS's arrival to the city. His uncle had joined the Iraqi army years before ISIS started their quest for an Islamic Caliphate. Nonetheless, Mohammed 's uncle was targeted as an enemy by ISIS which led to his killing. Soon after the killing of his uncle, Mohammed and his family chose to leave Mosul. Mohammed explains that ISIS started to target relatives and families of their opponents, which put Mohammed's family and himself at risk. As Mohammed explains these events for us he shares his sadness and emphasises how ISIS "took everything from them".

From Mosul Mohammed and his family traveled illegally to cities in Southern Iraq; Baghdad and Karbala. They paid smugglers a great amount of money to be smuggled safely, and in 2015 they arrived. Mohammed was able to continue his studies in fine arts, with a focus on acting and playing the organ. During his time as a student in the Southern part of Iraq Mohammed was invited to do a concert at the Islamic University of Duhok in the KRI. The concert went so well that Mohammed was invited to play a second concert at the university. As with the first concern, the second concert at the university went well and his hosts were very pleased, Mohammed recalls. However, the events following the concert yet again forced Mohammed into displacement. After the concert Mohammed states he was met by the Kurdish police who arrested him due to accusations against him. The police had been informed that Mohammed was part of ISIS, and when Mohammed rejected the accusations against him, he got into a fight with the police. At the police station, the police interrogated him and questioned him about his association with ISIS. Mohammed explains how the police used force and torture during the interrogation, trying to make him 'confess' being associated with ISIS but Mohammed did not confess. Therefore the police did not have enough evidence to charge him and they released him the following day. After his release he was sent to Erbil's police department, still in the KRI, where he tried to explain to the authorities how he was treated wrongly in the prison:

> Mohammed: "So after I was released from the jail in Dohuk I was sent to the Erbil department, so there they said they would do anything for me to make up for the torture that I had experienced in Dohuk and so then they forgave everything becuase they had nothing on me in the first place… and so they were like where do you wanna go? But I couldn't

go back to Mosul because HASHD is there and I'm Sunna and they are
Shi'a and they will do anything to get rid of me if they think I'm with
ISIS and so I'm afraid to go back"

(Mohammed 13:40)

In Erbil Mohammed received his documents of pardon, which should have cleared him of the charge against him. Yet Mohammed did not feel he could return to Mosul where his family resided. Although having his document of pardon Mohammed states how he feared the Shia Muslim militia HASHD al Sha'bi, which is dominating various parts of Iraq, as they do not recognice such documents. Considering how he also did not have anywhere else to go, Mohammed decided to settle in Hassan Sham U3 where I met him.

Female head of families

The second group of participants I interviewed during my fieldwork were 'female heads of families'. I met five women, Yasmine, Noor, Sarah, Aisha, and Fatima, who had all been widowed during the years of conflict in Iraq and were now settling in Khazir M1 camp with their families. During my first interview I spoke with Yasmine, Noor and Sarah who had all been widowed during the capture of Mosul by the Islamic terror group ISIS, and the fights and destruction up until the recapture of the city. I meet the three women outside the camp managers caravan, clustered close together glancing towards my translator and me. After shaking hands and the initial mandatory Arabic niceties we walked together to the caravan. The three women all seemed very anxious to talk about their issues with my translator, although I only understood little of their conversation due to my basic level of Arabic. Eventually my translator told the women that in the interview they would have more time to express their opinions, and walked into the caravan. We sat down, the women on one side and the translator and I on the other.

Yasmine is a young mother born in 1994, which makes her around 27 at the time we met. She originally comes from a village called Al Shora. When I met Yasmine she was wearing a cloth which covered her mouth and nose, resembling a niqab, yet it seemed more impoverished than the common niqabs you might see in public spaces. Yasmine was wearing

all black, from her hijab to her dress, and though she was initially covering her face she decided to show her face to my female translator and me.

Yasmine is a mother of five, four girls and one boy, and she has been living in Khazir M1 since 2016. As we start talking I learn that Yasmine was just 11 years old when she was forced to marry her older cousin, who became her sole provider after the marriage. Yasmine left school after 8th grade. Recalling the memories of her youth Yasmine said:

> Yasmine: *"I always blame my parents for such poor decisions. I was too young to hold such responsibility and have kids, now I look at my life and I don't see any future. I'm a young woman with 5 kids to support and educate. Yet, I feel I have no chance to do so"*
> (Yasmine 8:30)

In 2014, during the period when ISIS initiated their capture of Mosul, Yasmine and her family chose to leave their village Al Shora in order to seek refuge in the newly established camps around Mosul. During this period Yasmine lost her husband, who died due to the conflict. Yasmine explains that since 2016 she has been living in a camp around Al Salamia, yet, a few months prior to our interview they had been forced to leave. Yasmine did not share many details about this event but the decision from the GOI to forcefully close all IDP camps around Iraq have been documented by various organisations (see context chapter). As Yasmine recalls this episode she states that:

> Yasmine: *"they forced me to leave and I have been living in this camp for a month now because I have no other place to go … yesterday I saw that one of the kids was asked 'do you want to go back to your home?', and he said 'no they hate us where I'm from and I'm afraid to go back', these children will never be able to open a new page and start over like this if this goes on. We were living in very good places and with good finances. ISIS came and destroyed everything and now we are paying the prices"*
> (Yasmine 34:10)

At the interview I also met the young 22 years old mother Noor. As Yasmine, Noor was wearing black, and she had brought her son along with her. Noor is a mother of two, and while she was able to have her oldest child looked after during the interview, her youngest son seemed quite attached to her and spent the whole interview on her lap. Noor explained that she originally came from a village named Jalia but since 2017 she had been living in the camp Al Hammam. However, for some reasons, which she does not share in the interview, Noor and her family decided to move to Khazir M1 camp. During our conversation Noor explains that she was married young to a family member. When she was 14 years old her family arranged to have her married to a cousin. Noor explains how she became a house-wife as a young teenager and relied on her husband to take care of her and her kids:

> Noor: *"I was married when I was 14 to my cousin ... I was a housewife and didn't work, the men in the family usually do the working and women do the housekeeping"*
> (Noor 8:01)

Noor does not reveal many details about her migration journey from her village to the camp, yet she explains that her first husband, her cousin, was a member of ISIS. They lived together first in their house near Jalia followed by a period in Al Hammam camp. However, her husband was killed in a bombing, leaving her alone with the children. According to Noor she faced various challenges following the death of her husband:

> Noor: *"I have a child, three months old and I was about to remarry since I was a widow but the family of the man who was about to become my husband didn't allow the marriage to go on saying that my family have been ISIS. It's like a stain on us that will never go away. I'm still young but I still can't feel that I still have a long life to live.*
> Translator: *so, have you been married before? How did your husband die?*
> Noor: *yes, I was married, he died during the bombing,*
> Translator: *was he ISIS?*
> Noor: *Yes, he was ISIS. I married him when I was 14 years old. I didn't live*

with him a lot. We came to the camps afterwards and after that, I tried to remarry. But then we had to leave because they accused me of being ISIS since my previous husband was ISIS, and it's all because of the society and they won't accept us that easily. We want to express ourselves so people understand what is happening with us"

(Noor 45:30)

The last woman present in my first interview with the female head of family was Sarah. Sarah is in her early twenties; she has a round face and under average height. She explains that she is currently living with her mother in the camp and that she has a baby girl who also lives with her. Originally Sarah's family originated from a small village in the Nineveh province of Iraq, but Sarah has lived her whole life in the Mosul Dam area which is located on the Tigris river around 50 km upstream of the city of Mosul. Sarah was living with her family and going to school, however when she was in 9th grade ISIS arrived in the Mosul Dam area and she decided to flee the area due to violence, conflict and fighting. During our conversation, Sarah is slightly unclear about her arrival to the camp in 2018. I can understand Sarah lost her husband during her time of displacement, a husband who had been involved with ISIS. Sarah does not reveal her view on the terror organisation, yet she explains how she suffered gravely from being associated with ISIS:

Sarah: *"Even with ISIS gone, the military has been blackmailing families like us who have no protection, only because my husband chose to join ISIS. And I would show all the papers that prove that I have dishonored him, and they still don't care. I got harassed so many times or blackmailed for sexual favors only for that. I can never go back to my town. I can't go to hospitals if my kids get sick, I can't finish my paperwork, I can't go anywhere, only because I live in camps. To them it's an indicator that I'm involved with ISIS [...] I have tried visiting my old house and I found out that my house have been burnt, I would have cleaned the house and stayed there but the security issues were still unsolved that's why I couldn't"*

(Sarah 10:25)

In my second interview with the female heads of families I met Aisha and Fatima. Aisha was born in 1978 and is originally from an area named Salah Aldin. When I met her in the caravan reserved for our interview, we were in the middle of the holy Ramadan and the heat was strong outside, yet despite the heat, Aisha was wearing heavy black garments, which covered her figure and hair. Aisha explained how she arrived at the camp 4 years ago, and was at the time of our meeting living with her seven children in the camp. In 2016 her husband died, Aisha states without revealing too many details about his death. She shares with me how, when she lost her husband, her family lost their sole provider. In 2016 Aisha and her family decided to leave Salah Aldin due to the rising conflict between ISIS and the Iraqi forces:

> *Aisha:*   *"so I think that, that when we were there and ISIS came in we didn't have a lot of problems and we lived together like we were living on our own and they were on their own. So we didn't care but when the forces came to attack there was a blood shed everywhere so and then the war happened and nobody cared about our lives … we saw bodies all over the place like my little daughter was saying 'don't step on this don't step on that' because the bodies were everywhere. Yeah so […] was no place to stay because of the war … so in 2016 we decided to leave Salah Aldin where I'm from. So we came to Mosul because we had decided to go to a camp but there was no road to go to because it was all war and conflict and then in 2017 we were able to make it and come to this camp. The roads were open and we have been here since then [...]. So we hmm when we came we didn't know which camp was good or worse just the driver of the bus told us that this camp is a good one. So he had asked us which one do you wanna go to and he gave us the name of the camp, Hasan Sham U2-U3 and Khazir but the busdriver he mentioned that Khazir was a good one. So we said okay let's go there and we have been comfortable here since then and we have stayed here and never left this camp"*
>
> (Aisha 24:36)

As Aisha explains, their journey to the camp was complicated and challenged by the ongoing fighting. However, in the end Aisha arrived at Khazir M1 camp by the guidance of a helpful bus driver.

The last female head of family I interviewed during my field work was Fatima. She was small in height and had a round figure hiding under her black heavy dress and hijab. Born in 1981, Fatima was around 40 years old when I interviewed her. Currently living in Khazir M1 camp with her six children, Fatima is originally from the village Khazir which is a small village located next to the camp. The camp got its name from the village Khazir, and in order to arrive at the camp one has to drive through the village. Or rather, one has to drive through what was once the village of Khazir. Unfortunately, Khazir village was completely destroyed during the fighting against ISIS. Fatima explains how the terrorist group ISIS arrived in her village in 2014, an event that forced the people of Khazir to flee and seek refuge in other parts of Iraq. Fatima and her family went to Mosul like most of the people in her village. During the time between leaving Khazir in 2014 and arriving at the camp in 2017, Fatima lost her oldest son and her husband*:*

> *Vera:*   *"So what was your reason that you went first of all to Mosul?*
>
> *Fatima:*   *So in 2014 when ISIS came here the roads were open to go to Mosul all of the people in the village went to Mosul*
>
> *Translator:*   *Because of ISIS you left your village?*
>
> *Fatima:*   *Yeah ... and during that time I lost my husband and older son to ISIS and then we had nothing in Mosul so we decided in 2017 when there was no more ISIS around, we decided to come to this camp and we have been here since then"*
>
> (Fatima 6:25)

Like Aisha, Fatima did not have any information about the camps located outside Mosul when she and her family decided to leave Mosul. Fatima revealed in the interview how her choice of camp was based on the information provided by the bus driver who took them

from Mosul to the camps. Although Fatima is currently comfortable in the camp in terms of security, she states that life in the camp can be hard and challenging for a widowed mother:

Fatima: *"It was very difficult … during the war before we arrived at the camp I feared for my life and my childrens' life … there was war and you don't know where the attacks will come from … you don't know who could suddenly attack you and you get scares, we were constantly scared, we were scared of arriving in the camp … they made us scared in the camp and we arrived here crying and we were scared of the attacks and the violence … but since we arrived there has been peace alhamdulillah[14] … we are comfortable here so because of the safety … but living here has been very difficult and nobody so and I have five girls and one boy … there's organisations present and the bring emergency aid in shape of food and water but it's hard for widows to live in a camp without an income and food … the children need food, and need to go to school and have clothes on and it's difficult for me to give it to them … but what can I do alhamdulillah"*
(Fatima 16:02)

'Being displaced in place'

In the section above I have given a thorough account of how the participants recall their displacement journeys. By now, the reader has hopefully obtained a proper understanding of each of the participants' personal experiences with displacement. In this section, I will reflect on the participants' interpretations of displacement in relation to the theoretical concepts of displacement and agency.

To summarize the participants' accounts we can categorise the participants into two groups, without disregarding their personal experience. For the young men we can identify similar events shaping their displacement journeys. Firstly, the young men explain how their displacement happened at a young age, as Zain was around 15 or 16 years old, Mohammed 17 or 18 years old and Yousef only 13 years old when ISIS arrived at his doorstep. Since

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[14] Arabic phrase meaning "praise be to God", sometimes translated as "thank God"

becoming displaced from their homes the young men's displacement journeys have taken on different paths, however, they all suffered from being accused of alleged association with ISIS (they all claim the accusations were false). This event shaped the young men's journey both at the time of their incarceration and onwards. The challenges of having been accused of earlier association with ISIS are comprehensive. As touched upon in the context chapter, procedures are not in place to deal with this group after their release from prison. Even though boys and young men have 'taken their punishment' and endured time in prison, their 'documents of pardon' are often not recognised. In my conversation with Zain, he explains his experience of this malfunction in the system:

Zain:	*"I came out of jail and found that my family was back in their neighborhood and had a normal life ... I went to the camp because even though I had the 'documents of pardon', it was not recognized*
Translator:	*Where are your parents now?*
Zain:	*My parents are in the place we lived before*
Translator:	*Why are you not there?*
Zain:	*Because I am wanted … the people who informed against me will also do it there … they did not even give me an "hawiye[15]" ... I lived of the organizations funding*
Vera:	*In which year were you taken to prison?*
Zain:	*2015 and then our lives were bad. You can't either come and go. No jobs, no…*
Translator:	*so you can only stay in the camp?*
Zain:	*yes"*
	(Zain 4:45)

Following their arrival at the camp all the men, who had been incarcerated due to alleged association with ISIS, were placed together in a separate sector of the camp. In other words, the young men, or single cases, are not living in the camp among other IDPs. Muhammed, Yousef and Zain are categorised as 'single cases' which means they are living alone in the camp without family. Even if relatives were living in the same camp as them, the young men

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[15] Arabic word for identity card (ID)

would have to stay in their specific sector, which entails living without any family or relatives. I found that Mohammed, Yousef and Zain's young age, at their time of initial displacement, have resulted in a lack of connection to family. I will return to this point in the next section as I look at the relation between displacement journeys and home aspirations. For the three young men there were a few, yet important, similar events which had great influence on their displacement journey.

I will now summarize in brief the experiences of Yasmine, Noor, Sarah, Aisha, and Fatima who belong to the group: 'female head of family'. In the interview with Yasmine, Noor and Sarah all share having been married at a young age, and they all emphasised the effect it had on their lives. Yasmine expresses how she felt too young, barely a teenager yet, to take on the responsibility of raising children and becoming a house-wife. Aisha and Fatima do not share having been married early on, however the experience of being a wife and a mother is one all the women share. Furthermore, all of the five women have gone through the tragic experience of becoming a widow. During the conflict, which swept through Iraq and caused havoc in the women's communities, Yasmine, Noor, Sarah, Aisha, and Fatima lost their husbands among others. Currently, they are living in the Khazir M1 camp. Being the female head of a family is challenging, as all the women articulate struggling with the responsibility, in terms of providing for their families, securing their children's education and general wellbeing.

For now, I briefly want to return to the theoretical framework, presented in the chapter above. In the theoretical chapter, I stated that displacement for our purposes is to be understood as a condition, rather than a category or process. Having presented the participants' personal displacement journeys and familiarizing ourselves with their experiences, I would like to return to the concept of displacement. For our purposes, displacement is considered a condition, a 'state of being out of place'. It is important in relation to the methodological and analytical considerations. Instead of relying on generic legal categorisations, I rely on the participants' own perception of their condition and position. Methodologically, I intended to place the statements of the participants at the front of my research. Analytically, I base my analysis on the participants' perception of the world and how they present it to me. I do not intend to judge the statements of the

participants in order to confirm their truthfulness, because I intend to understand their perceived position of being displaced.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, a large group of displaced individuals not only suffer from 'being out of place', as much as 'being displaced in place' (de Haas 2021). Within the aspiration-capability framework, De Haas (2021) argues for grasping both *movement* and *non-movement.* Defining mobility as "people's capability (freedom) to choose where to live, including the option to stay" (de Haas 2021: 22) we include various forms of immobility (de Haas 2021). Based on the participants' accounts of displacement experiences it becomes relevant to utilize a framework that encompasses both movement and non-movement. In addition to 'being out of place' I would argue that Yousef, Zain, Mohammed, Yasmine, Noor, Sarah, Aisha and Fatima all are suffering from 'being displaced in place' or involuntary immobility (de Haas 2021). The camp is not a place they wish to settle in permanently, and all participants demonstrate general life aspirations beyond the camp. Referring back to de Haas' theoretical categorisation of five-typical individual mobility types we find two types of immobility: *acquiescent immobility* and *involuntary immobility*. Acquiescent immobility refers to low capabilities and low aspirations to move, in other words, people who are neither able to move nor desire to do so. These might be related as the person is "deprived of the capability to aspire as well as the capability to move" (de Haas 2021: 23). Whereas involuntary immobility is recognised by the person's high aspiration to move yet low capability to do so. This concerns people who wish to migrate or move but do not have the ability to do so, leaving them feeling trapped (de Haas 2021). I would argue that all the participants express high aspiration to leave the camp and express general life aspiration, a point I will return to in the following section. However, the participants perceive their capability or ability to move as non-existing. The young men believe they are trapped due to the accusation of alleged association with ISIS, while the women perceive their lack of capability as being connected with their gender and need of husband-providers. It has been important for me to demonstrate the difference between perceived capability and aspirations among the participants. As I move on to the second part of the analysis, I will draw on the accounts and discussion of this section in order to analyse the participants' aspiration for a future home.

Aspiring for a 'home'

In the chapter above I portrayed the participants' displacement journeys as they were presented to me, in order to give the reader a deep understanding of the participants' perception of their own journey and their current situation. In this chapter I will discuss the relation between the participants' displacement experiences in relation to their idea or aspiration for a future home. I found that the participants' aspiration and idea of home was not simply a product of their desire. Rather, it is closely connected to their displacement experience. Moreover, it is shaped by their perception of possibilities, both in terms of their capability to move and their capability to settle. Hence, the participants' displacement experiences, past and current, ultimately shapes their "connections with their living spaces as well as their conceptions of home" (Kabachnik 2010: 322).

In this section I will draw on Mallett's idea of home journeying (home as journey), as presented in the theoretical chapter. I assume a fluid connection between past, present and future home. In the case of researching forced migration the concept of home journeying becomes especially salient as argued by Mallett (2004) who describes "'home as journey' as the continuous process of transition between one's original or previous home to one's ideal or future home. While this can be applied to anyone, it is particularly salient for forced migrants, as they had no choice in leaving their homes" (Kabachnik 2010: 323). For most forced migrants, the experience of leaving home is often a very traumatic experience. Mallet (2004) emphasises that the manner in which we leave our homes is crucial to our perception of future homes, as discussed in the theoretical chapter. As such, I argue that for all eight participants the experience of separating with their homes is perceived, by themselves, to have been traumatic. In some cases, a traumatizing experience will leave an inherent nostalgia towards their AoO within the displaced person. Such nostalgia is related to a strong urge to return, Kabachnik (2010) argues in his study '*Where and When is Home? The Double Displacement of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia*' (2010). Kabachnik (2010), among others, argues that home (aka time before the displacement) for forced migrants (IDPs) is often situated in the past which is a time or place connected with normality:

"Forced migrants have been shown to cling to the past and focus on places of the past (Jansen 2008). Consequently, home is situated in the past as it is constructed and reproduced through nostalgia and memory (Ray 2000). When home is situated in the past, it becomes associated with normality, security, familiarity, wealth, and comfort, and one's current loss and hardships are defined against the normality of the past"
(Kabachnik 2010: 323)

In my conversations with the participants I noticed a divide between the female head of families and the young men regarding their view of past homes. As such, both groups recall the time before their displacement with a certain kind of nostalgia. Yet, in terms of yearning for return, the women and young boys articulate very different positions. I found that the women rejected the idea of returning and Yasmine, Sarah, and Noor painted a picture of an Area of Origin which had been distorted and become a place they no longer recognise or desire to return to. This change was both physical and emotional. Sarah explains how she once tried to return to find her house destroyed and gone, finding the physical frame she once considered home had disappeared. Additionally, not only the physical shape of her Area of Origin had changed:

> Sarah: *"I do have uncles back home but all of them have abandoned us … we have been through really rough time, my mom was jailed for 15 days because she tried to visit home, we still don't know what were the charges, we only know that one of the neighbors has filed charges against us, but we're thankful she got out of jail and we're never going back there again … with that, no one bothered to ask about us or help us, I also have a retardant sister, which we are supposed to have a social security paycheck for here, but we still don't … the paperwork is so complicated, and unfortunately, people in my town [Mosul] show no support ... she was born in 2012, and totally broken, can't do anything, not even the basics"*
> (Sarah 2:21)

Here Sarah is sorrowfully relating why she does not intend to return to her AoO. When explaining her statement Sarah emphasises how nobody was there to help or support her

and her family. Here I found a repetitive accusation from the women towards their former community. In the quote above we find a three-part repetition supporting the same argument: 'that no one in Mosul will stand up and help Sarah and her family'

> *"...I do have uncles back home but all of them have abandoned us ..."*
> *"...no one bothered to ask about us or help us..."*
> *"...people in my town (Mosul) show no support..."*

This narrative of being abandon by others who allegedly should have supported the women in some way, is very present in the following exchange:

> *Yasmine:*   *"I have uncles from both sides, some of them have died in bombing, others have joined ISIS. Only Allah is my protector.*
>
> *Sarah:*   *I have one uncle who's old and can't work and provide us, so I live here with my mom*
>
> *Noor:*   *I only have my mom who lives with me here and I don't have any other in my life.*
>
> *Sarah:*   *I do have uncles back home but all of them have abandoned us*
>
> *Yasmine:*   *I have gave up my hopes on my uncles, cause some of them actually live a quality life and never bothered to call or support us*
>   *(2:45)*

As we can see in this exchange, both Yasmine and Noor use the word *only* to emphasise their lack of connections outside the camp. Furthermore, this choice of word supports their position as abandoned by others. While Noor states that she *only* has her mother and does not have other people in her life, Yasmine refers to her God as her *only* protector because she '*gave up on her uncles'*. When Yasmine points to Allah as her only protector, Noor points to her lack of family connections, and Sarah points to the fact that none of her uncles can provide for her. In this way they stress their position as abandoned, vulnerable and alone.

I would argue that in their interaction with me, Yasmine, Sarah and Noor are creating a representation of the world in which they are left unfamiliar with their former hometown

and abandoned by its communities. This representation is further voiced in the following exchange:

> Sarah: "Mosul has changed, the lifestyle, people and it's rules, for example, a family with no male household are not allowed to live there on their own, because it's simply not safe even under our military, a lot of attacks still going on
>
> Translator: So it's not only ISIS that is corrupted, it's the military as well that spreads fear?
>
> Yasmine: Yes. Even with ISIS gone, the military has been blackmailing families like us who have no protection, only because my husband chose to join ISIS. And I would show all the papers that prove that I have dishonored him, and they still don't care. I got harassed so many times or blackmailed for sexual favors only for that. I can never go back to my town. I can't go to hospitals if my kids get sick, I can't finish my paperwork, I can't go anywhere, only because I live in camps, to them it's an indicator that I'm involved with ISIS.
>
> Translator: Who is still living there in your town?
>
> Sarah: Small groups of people do. The empowered ones [males] who belong to big tribes and have WASTA[16] and security … I have tried visiting my old house and I found out that my house have been burnt, I would have cleaned the house and stayed there but the security issues were still unsolved that's why I couldn't
>
> Yasmine: Yes my house as well and I've asked many people if they could just take responsibility for our protection since we were four young women but no one was ready to take the responsibility
>
> Sarah: But I know a family since they have very good protection. They are now still living there"
>
> (10:13)

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[16] Arabic word that loosely translates into nepotism, 'clout' or 'who you know'

In this exchange the women state that there is no place in their hometowns for female lead families, who are lacking a male figure to present and protect the family. Sarah states that '*a family with no male household are not allowed to live there on their own, because it's simply not safe*' and that only '*the empowered ones [males] who belong to big tribes and have WASTA and security*' are still able to live in her town. While Yasmine supports this notion by saying that '*the military has been blackmailing families like us who have no protection*'. These statements serve as supporting arguments for the version of reality the women present for me, in which they are cut off from any support. Referring to Wardaugh (1999) Mallet (2004) states "those who are abused and violated within the family are likely to feel "homeless at home" [...] [E]qually those who reject or are unable to conform to conventional ideas [...] and class might be both symbolically and literally 'excluded" (Mallett 2004: 73). As such, the women do not recount direct violations inside their prior homes, yet they articulate a sense of violation by their communities and families.

As has been demonstrated in the discussion above, the women articulate uneasiness towards their former homes. Their displacement journeys reveal how nostalgia has turned into discomfort. Whereas the young men had a different narrative. Even though they all rejected the notion of returning home, due to fear of prosecution from militias, they all articulate a wish to eventually return. In our conversation I asked the young men to elaborate about their life prior to displacement, and they told me about their families and their everyday life. In the following statements from Yousef and then Muhammed their nostalgia of the past shows, as Kabachnik (2010) argues for is common with IDPs (see above):

> *Translator:*   *"How was your life?*
>
> *Yousef:*   *Wallah[17] ordinary, ya3ni beautiful was the life , but now it has changed , no family no relatives , very difficult ….*
>
> *Vera:*   *But there what did you like to do?*
>
> *Yousef:*   *Comfortable everything ... because I was with my family, life was beautiful and everything was perfect, yeah but then when I came here like everything was taken away from me so.."*
>
> (Yousef 5:30)

---

[17] Arabic word that means "by Allah!" or "I swear to God!" and often used in conversation to emphasise statement

Vera:	"So I wanna, can he tell me about before he was displaced?
Muhammed:	So when I was a child I would only study and be at home and never go out and I was in a good life with my family"
	(Mohammed 20:27)

There is a strong emphasis on the relation to and importance of family in their statements. Both Yousef and Mohammed connote family with good times: *'because I was with my family, life was beautiful'* (Yousef) and *'I was in a good life with my family'* (Mohammed). I found such statements to be repeated frequently. When asking Zain of his thoughts of returning, his answer reflected both responsibility and desire. Nonetheless, I found the statement to demonstrate the strong connection between home and family among the young men:

Zain:	"If they accept it, I need to go back to my (place). I need to help my father because he is alone. He does not have a job or anything, so I need to work instead. But It's not going to get better. I hope that it will happen, it's my only hope… It's been 6 years in the camp now. I've been living…
Vera:	What is your dream goal?
Zain:	My only dream is to see my mother. She lives near Mosul. That is my only dream. To go back to my village"
	(Zain 15:40)

The emphasis on family in relation to building a sense of home is also noted by Mallett (2004). As we shape our understanding of home based on our experiences, the relationship between home and family becomes a pivotal factor at some points in a person's life (Mallett 2004). The young men express a desire to return to their families (their original homes) if their perception of the security situation changed. I would argue that the young men's past and current situation thus play a part in their view on returning. Returning means returning to family. Mallett (2004) states that: "places have no fixed or essential past" (Mallett 2004: 70) as we always negotiate and adjust its meaning. Which suggests that the young men's traumatic experience of displacement and loss of family from a young age has shaped their

aspiration to return. Although they may not all recall their prior home with only fond memories, they articulate the idea of returning to 'home' with much aspiration. The young men have constructed a particular meaning of home, deeply marked by how they missed their families and felt alone in the camp.

In this section I have drawn on Mallett's idea of home journeying in order to connect the participants' displacement experiences to their ideas or aspirations with home. If the participants' experience of displacement is important for their present and future understanding of home, as Mallett (2004) argues, the participants' displacement journeys are important for their future return or resettlement process. I have argued for a strong connection between the participants' displacement experiences and their notion of home. In the case of the female heads of families have their experiences of losing familiarity and experiencing rejection from their former communities and family left them rejecting the notion of returning. As such, I would argue that it might be possible to return the women to their AoO, yet it would be highly impossible for them to recreate a feeling of home. In this case, the act of assisting the women's return would likely not result in a sustainable solution. In the case of the young men I have interviewed, I found that their notion of home relied heavily on their relationship with family. Hence, in order to properly assist the young men in building a home in the future, returning and reconnecting with their families would possible be of great importance.

The Ideal home

In this last section I will comment on the participants' notion of an ideal home. By now we have familiarised ourselves with the unique and personal experience of eighth IDPs from in and around Mosul. We have seen until now the participants perceive their position as highly challenged by their circumstances and experiences. This has left them hindered in expressing concrete dreams or desires for the future. Noor articulates the experienced lack of freedom to verbalise a better future very directly, in the following statement:

> *Noor:*   *"I'm still young but I can't feel that I still have a long life to live ... I'm a young woman with 5 kids to support and educate … yet, I feel I have no chance to do so..."*
> (Noor 8:27)

Their capability to move - or rather lack thereof - have affected the participants' ability to verbalise aspirations for the future (de Haas 2021). With that being said, I have argued that the participants still possess a strong sense of aspiration to move and change their current position. I have been able to identify ideas of ideal homes within the participants' rather hopeless perception of their future. In the following section I will give an account of these ideas which might inspire others to research further on the matter, that be organisations or people, who currently work on finding sustainable solutions for IDPs in Iraq.

Based on my conversations with Yousef, Zain, Mohammed, Yasmine, Noor, Sarah, Aisha and Fatima I was able to identify a set of ideal attributes which the participants individually and repeatedly articulated. I found these attributes to be reflected in Boccagni's description of the most basic characteristics of the home making experience: *security, familiarity,* and *control* (Boccagni 2017). By continuing this line of reasoning I have found these basic characteristics to crystallise in my data as the following: economic security; family connections; and control over their mobility and how they are perceived by others. I will elaborate further on these findings.

The relationship and reconnection with family is of great importance for the young men in order to 'feel at home'. The above discussion was seen in relation to a potential return, and the case of the young men and women unfolded differently. However, both in the conversation with the women and the young men I was able to identify a repeating pattern of statements. Family as such is extremely important in order for the participants to feel at home. As the young men focus on the reconnecting aspect, the women emphasise the importance of being with their families and being able to provide for them. Therefore, in relation to the importance of family, I identified a close connection to the importance of economic security. To be able to provide for themselves and their families, finding a livelihood and being economically comfortable was a great desire for participants in order to settle down comfortably. Especially in the case of the women, who found themselves challenged when trying to get employed. They argued that due to their age, gender and lack of experience, after a life of being housewives, finding a job was near to impossible:

> *Noor:*   *"I was married when I was 14 to my cousin. I was a housewife and didn't work, the men in the family usually do the working and women do the housekeeping"*
> (Noor 8:03)

Security and stability understood as lack of conflict and war seem like obvious attributes to an ideal home-making process, in the light of their displacement journeys and the context of Iraq. Consequently, I did notice how economic security was closely linked to a broader security understanding by the participants, and especially the women. By being economically secure one is able to build a house without depending on others, pay bribes, be able to settle in neighborhoods which are perceived safer and lastly avoid dangerous labor and recruitment. Additionally, physical security was linked to economic security, in the sense that protection and shelter from conflict and violence was only understood to be one dimension of security. Two of the women themselves and one of the young men's father suffered from medical issues which threatened their physical security. Economic security would then secure their ability to receive treatments and medicine.

Finally, my general interpretation of the participants' statements, in relation to ideal home attributes, is that they yearn for an element of control. Based on our conversations I would argue that the participants articulate a sense of lack of general control, in relation: to their mobility; to their relationship with their communities; to how they are perceived by their surroundings. E.g. Zain articulates the described resignation in the following statement:

> *Vera:* *"If you had to leave the camp what would happen to you?*
> *Zain:* *We would be sitting in the street … I would be sitting between two checkpoint"*
> (Zain 12:10)

Returning to the theoretical chapter Boccagni (2017) emphasises the importance of control in the home-making process. He defines control as: "...autonomy in using a certain place according to one's needs and tastes, in predicting the development of events in it, and in expressing oneself, inside it, out of the public gaze and judgement" (Boccagni 2017: 7). By emphasising the ability to express oneself without judgement and predict future events inside one's own house, Boccagni mirrors the participants' narratives.

At this point, I would like to comment on the identified attributes for an ideal home. For the purpose of this research I have related my empirical findings to the notion of home or home-making process, but they could just as fruitfully be analysed for other research purposes, such as research into the participants identity process.

Conclusion

In 2008 Lischer wrote in her article "Security and Displacement in Iraq" about the undermined security Iraq faces in relation to the effects of displacement among Iraqis:

> "*As a concentrated and vulnerable group, the displaced make easy targets for attackers. Although they fled their homes to escape conflict, the displaced may find their new accommodations even more dangerous. Such attacks could provoke a spiral of further displacement and sectarian violence*"
> (Lischer 2008: 96)

The recurring cycles of displacement and conflict Iraq has experienced has left its mark on the country's security, economic situation and stability. As Lischer emphasises in the quote above, internal displacement is a great factor of Iraq's vicious cycle. Conflict and war are perceived as the main contributors to displacement in Iraq, therefore can we logically conclude that security and peace most be understood as the most important factors needed to secure voluntary return and durable solutions since "safety and security is the most important factor in IDPs' willingness to return, followed by housing, financial resources and livelihoods" (Rossi et. al. 2018: 62)". Currently the government of Iraq has taken a strategy towards internally displaced persons in Iraq which entails closing all IDP camps without further concrete plans of resettling or returning initiatives. Such decisions have left a great number of Iraqi IDPs in a limbo.

In this research I have built on qualitative interviews with the eight Iraqi IDPs, Yousef, Mohammed, Zain, Aisha, Fatima, Noor, Sarah and Yasmine, from camps East of Mosul. These unique insights into the displacement journey of an Iraqi IDP make up the foundation for my research. Inspired by my fieldwork experiences, the narratives of the participants and the current events in Iraq regarding IDPs this thesis has set out to expand the understanding of displacement journeys. Through the lense of de Haas' (2021) capability and aspiration framework, I have found a great willingness towards moving, resettling or returning, within the narratives of the participants. However, all participants perceived their capability to

move outside the fences of the camps as almost non-existing. For the young men who participated, they perceived their immobility to be caused by their previous incarceration and the lack of procedures which could support their documents of pardon. For the women I interviewed, their perception of restrictions mainly focused on their gender, their status as widows and accusations of being related to ISIS. They find themselves to be rejected by communities and abandoned by family.

I found that the participants showcased a rather despairing state of mind regarding their position of displacement, during a period in which Iraq is forcefully closing IDP camps around the country and withdrawing funding for camps in Kurdistan. However, I have argued for the identification of certain characteristics which the participants reveal in the interviews: economic security; family connections; and control over their mobility and how they are perceived by others. In the analysis I have related these characteristicas to those Boccagni (2017) describes as the most basic characteristics of the home making experience: *security, familiarity,* and *control* (Boccagni 2017). I found Boccagni's (2017) characteristicas to reflect those identified within the statements of the participants, however I have demonstrated the importance of understanding forcibly displaced persons' aspiration for home in relation to their displacement journeys and experiences. Based on Mallett's (2004) idea of home journeying I found a prominent relation between how the participants discursively construct their notion of an ideal home and what they have experienced during their displacement journey. Hopefully the insights this thesis provides can contribute to the research and work done by organisations and people in and around Iraq who currently work for long-term solutions for Iraqi IDPs.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview question
<u>Intro about me</u>: the introduction should happen in Arabic so that the participant can feel more comfortable and trust. It will show respect from my side) - who am I? - why I'm here, what I want to do - what is the interview about
<u>Purpose:</u> The purpose of my investigation and the interview is to get a better understanding of the challenges IDPs face. I know that your situation is challenging. Hopefully, this investigation will make relevant actors aware of your challenges and act to help and assist.
<u>Ethics:</u> Explain
We will start with some basic questions about you, where you are from; your age, and so on. I won't take your name to protect your identity. Are you ready? - Age - Occupation if any? - The number of members in the household? - How long have you lived in the camp? I'm very interested in knowing your story of displacement because it will help people outside understand the gravity of the situation in Iraq for people like you and hopefully raise attention to these issues. - Where are you from? - How was life there before you left? Can you tell me about your life before your displacement? - What are your memories of this place?   - where you lived, with whom, what you did, and anything else you would like to add - Educational level? Did you have any thoughts back then about what you wanted to work with or study?

I would like to know more about how and why you had to leave your home and how you came to the camp.

- When did you first decide or realize you were forced to leave your home?
    - if you could tell me about that day if you are comfortable with it?
- Where did your family go?
- What was the main reason?
- At that time what were your initial thoughts? about where to go and what to do? and then what?

Please take your time and remember that you only have to share information you are comfortable sharing

- *do you remember if you had any ideas of how you imagine your future back then? (e.g. family, leaving the country, work)*

In the West we have heard a lot about ISIS, but you have actually seen and experienced them.

- Who is ISIS in your opinion?
- What role have they played in your life?
- *how is it to be falsely accused of something like that?*
- *why do you think that they would accuse you of that?*

I have been told that the Iraqi Central Government would like people living in camps to return to their houses (don't ask: will close the camp) in the nearest future

- What do you know about this topic?
- Can you explain to me where you have that information from? Do you follow the news? Is it from the camp staff? Or relatives and friends?

Then if you had to leave the camp (because let's say it was too close)

- What would have to change in order for you to wanna leave the camp?
- Could you imagine returning to your house or the village you come from?
    - why/ why not?
- What are your concerns about returning/ resettling? What are your expectations?
- When people say: ISIS is defeated so now you can return, what is it that they don't understand? Or miss of information?

(Let's say you return/ resettle

- *how do you imagine your life would look like? E.g. what kind of income/ occupation do you imagine finding? Who would you live with? How would you spend your time?*

if you choose to do that, do you have anyone who can help you there?)

Young men in the family are often expected to provide for the rest, and in some cases, this have led to young men joining military groups/ ISIL or working in exposed areas, or not going to school
- What challenges do you see young men have, especially when leaving the camp (either voluntary or forced)?

Let's say you had the power to make the plan for resettling, on behave of the government
- What would be the most important points for you?
- And what would you include in such a plan?
- And who do you think are the responsible actors in the subject of making sure displaced people in Iraq can return

To understand better and explain to others the impact displacement has had on people like you I would like to ask you about some more personal thoughts
- How would you explain to a person how it is to be displaced?
- What place do you feel most attached to now? And why?
- Do you still feel attached to… or do you think it has changed too much after you had to leave?

Evt.
In your own words,
- What are your hopes for the future?

Do you have any final comments?
Thank you so much for your time