2

Anticipation

Uprooting and Unsettling

> The huge lorry was carrying them along the road, together with their dreams, their families, their hopes and ambitions, their misery and despair, their strength and weakness, their past and future, as if it were pushing against the immense door to a new, unknown destiny, and all eyes were fixed on the door's surface as though bound to it by invisible threads.
>
> –Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in the Sun*

> I felt that I was running away from death. When I reached the Turkish borders, when the smuggler said that we are in Turkey, you can't believe how fast my heart was beating. I felt safe.
>
> –Razia, thirty-two years old, a mother in Izmir

Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* is considered a key piece of modern Arabic literature. In it, Kanafani describes the exploitation and humiliation of Palestinian refugees at the borders of Arab countries in the 1960s. His tale of three Palestinian men in search of a better future who ultimately meet a tragic end illustrates the ways in which so many refugees fleeing life-threatening circumstances face other forms of misery and hardship on their way to safer destinations. In the scene depicted in this chapter's epigraph, Kanafani portrays the border as a space on the distant horizon, across the scorching heat of the desert, a destination that also represents their destiny.

Kanafani's image of the border as a door to the future epitomizes what Rebecca Bryant and Daniel Knight (2019) describe as "thresholds of anticipation," in which the present is a liminal space leading one to an imminent future that one imagines and anticipates. "A threshold," they note, "implies both the imminence of the future and the idea of pressing forward into it, potentially crossing into it" (2019: 35). Moreover, as Bryant and Knight's historical and ethnographic examples show, mass displacement tends to be predicated on fears of impending danger and loss–not a horizon of expecta-

tion but a threat that appears on one's doorstep (2019: 35). One crosses that threshold into a presumably new space of time, one that radically reorients past and present. Bryant and Knight give the example of partitioning projects that created borders and exchanged populations across them in a violent rending of peoples that was predicated on the anticipation of violence. For Kanafani's Palestinian protagonists, the border is an "immense door" representing a "new, unknown destiny." It represents, then, not only a space that they physically cross but also a new time in which they anticipate having a future (Agier 2016).

This chapter explores borders as both spatial and temporal thresholds where we anticipate, reorient, and attempt to control the future during moments of abrupt change. Not only is flight from one's home a major upheaval in individuals' lives, but the moment of border crossing is a defining event in the experience of uprooted populations. It is the moment where individuals pass from citizens of one country to refugees or asylum seekers in another, altering their identities and sense of stability and belonging (Haddad 2007). Border crossings are also significant in the material and psychological impact that they have on refugees, as their material and psychological well-being determine the lives that they are to build in the host country and the future that they anticipate living there. While border crossing is an actual lived experience in the present to ensure survival, it may also be a pivotal moment in allowing individuals to redefine themselves and their futures (Khosravi 2010). This is even more true in the case of refugee youth, who are still in the process of defining their future lives and selves at the moment of flight. Border crossing, then, becomes a turning point where they must reorient their hopes and dreams while foreseeing and planning a life ahead in a condition of uncertainty.

In this chapter, we see their attempts to find paths for themselves in times of upheaval as a form of navigation (Vigh 2008, 2009a) or wayfaring (Ingold 2011). Henrik Vigh uses the concept of social navigation to refer to the ways that individual movement and change intersect with social movement and change. In particular, he is interested in how people make choices regarding their lives in times of chronic crisis. The term, then, "highlights motion within motion; it is the act of moving in an environment that is wavering and unsettled" (2009a: 420). In the descriptions of the young Syrians with whom we spoke, their environment in their homeland often appears simply chaotic: neighborhoods and villages bombed, lives and livelihoods lost, safety always on the horizon but never quite reachable. They describe making choices in conditions of both existential and epistemic uncertainty—both the uncertainty of what one cannot control and the uncertainty of what one does not know.

In recent years, anthropology has understandably attempted to move away from descriptions of violence and crisis as eruptions into an otherwise

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harmonious present and to take seriously the idea that for many people around the world crisis is chronic, a way of life rather than an eruption into it (Knight 2021; Vigh 2008). It is also important, however, to take seriously our interlocutors' descriptions of the shock and disruption entailed by sudden violence. In almost all of our interviews, young people described normal, stable lives in the time before and attempts to hold onto or regain those lives as chaos descended. Certainly, we see in these young people's stories of serial displacement and learning to live with aerial bombardment how what begins as an eruption can become normalized. Henrik Vigh (2009a: 422) notes that "chronic social crisis creates an unsettled social orientation and awareness that is hyper-attentive to real and imaginary stimuli," and we see this in the stories of these young people's flights. But we also see how young people determine to move beyond it, to return to the "normality" they knew before. In this sense, Tim Ingold's description of wayfaring helps us understand how the paths that people create for themselves move them toward new futures. "Proceeding along a path," Ingold notes, "every inhabitant lays a trail. Where inhabitants meet, trails are entwined, as the life of each becomes bound with the other" (2011: 148). Moreover, "every entwining is a knot"–and we would add to this that such knots become handholds as one feels toward the future.

Crucially, both navigating and wayfaring rely on the futural orientation of anticipation. Whereas, as we saw in chapter 1, expectation involves the future coming toward us, to anticipate is to be pulled in the direction of the not-yet. "Unlike expectation, anticipation specifically contains the sense of thrusting or pressing forward, where the past is called upon in this movement toward the future" (Bryant and Knight 2019: 28). When one anticipates, one steers a path in conditions of uncertainty, where expectation is on hold. One casts a line into the future, which in our case is across a border that is itself unknown and that leads to the unknown. One does this, however, based on the resources at hand, which include knowledge of what has gone before.

This chapter, then, shows the ways the young people in our study found paths for themselves that left trails and entwined them with other people and other places. Of course, as we see below, the paths that people find for themselves vary both in the magnitude of exposure to violence and in the material means available to facilitate crossing and settlement. In tracing these paths, we look first at the moment of flight or the anticipations of violence that led to uprooting. We then turn to how they anticipated the border crossing itself, and how such anticipations shaped the routes and means of flight. That section further describes how the decisions that refugees make at the moment of border crossing in terms of their destination are attempts to introduce a sense of normality and stability in the face of looming uncertainty. Finally, we examine the immediate means that refugees used

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to determine their routes, particularly knowledge gained from family and friends.

What becomes clear is how the need to anticipate so often fractures families and isolates individuals, but also how it relies on pre-existing connections and how it creates new relations of obligation. Anticipation is based on the past, on previous experiences that teach us both the meaning of certain signs and how to react to them. When people choose to flee, it is often not because they are literally running from danger in that moment but because they have reason to believe–based on what has happened to neighbors, people in another district, or to people like them in the past–that danger is approaching. Moreover, *how* we anticipate, the path we take, is often shaped by social relations. If the term "path dependence" describes the ways that past choices and actions determine the present, we may think of the way that relations shape anticipation as "path emergence." In a condition where all seems unclear, certain paths emerge as thin lines of connection across time and distance. Those paths may later truncate, or they may branch into pathways to new futures.

Anticipation, Violence, and Displacement

> I am from Homs. I was very happy in my home. I was still single and then war happened, and we moved from one area to another, and we suffered a lot during the war. From one area to another. You lost people, you lost your money and home, your land and cars. One suffers a lot, to the extent that in the last period we lived in tents, not a house where there is a roof over your head. We were living in tents, and we heard that there are work opportunities in Turkey, that there is safety and stability. That no one tells you go away, come and go . . . no, no . . . there is freedom for Syrian citizens in Turkey, and so we came. We crossed by smuggling, and we passed through difficult areas.

At the time of our interview in 2018, Amal had been in Turkey for one year. The war had truncated her studies, and she had not finished high school, despite having ambitions to go to university like her siblings and become a lawyer. Although she was unmarried when their displacement within Syria began, she later married and had a small child. She explained how she made the trip across the border illegally with her husband, mother-in-law, and baby, using smugglers. They went first to Sakarya, a city to the east of Istanbul, where her husband had a cousin who had already been in Turkey for five years and who helped them get an identity card. She did not want to describe her trip across the border, which she only said was "very, very difficult." She described in detail, however, how her husband's cousin immediately found a house for them.

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> We came here, and his cousin rented a house for us. He said that his Turkish neighbor had a house. He said the house is in your name, and we rented it. And we came and found this house. And someone would bring a carpet and another a pillow, and when I entered my home, I found the only thing missing was appliances. The only thing missing was to buy food. At first, there was not a fridge or a washing machine because it was new and despite this, I would say "thank God." The last period in Syria was very difficult for me. And I said, "thank God." Yes, it is a house with power and water.

There are several elements of Amal's story that are worth examining more closely. The first is that, like so many of our interviewees, crossing the border was intended as an *end* to anticipation. Amal describes how she and her small family were first serially displaced within Syria, gradually losing everything that they had until they were left destitute in a tent. Fleeing across the border was not something that they had considered, particularly because the border closure after 2016 meant that they needed to use a smuggler and take a particularly dangerous route. Like the men in Kanafani's truck, however, there seemed to be a threshold, the border, beyond which there was safety, stability, freedom, and work. There was the possibility of a "normal life," meaning one where "no one tells you go away, come and go." There seemed, in other words, to be a threshold beyond which they would not need constantly to anticipate violence.

Hence, while Amal's anticipatory act–crossing the border–is preemptive, a response to repeated violence and serial displacement, it is also an attempt to step into a new future, one where expectation, rather than anticipation, will be the norm. This is what Rebeccca Bryant (2012: 339) calls a "threshold of anticipation," which "implies crossing into another space of time and a radical reorientation" of the present and future. While the threshold that Bryant discusses is metaphorical, we see here how border crossing becomes a literal threshold of anticipation, one in which Amal will enter a new temporality that will not be defined by constant anticipation and movement. She will be able to settle down, to have a real home "with power and water"–a time of everyday life rather than a time of war.

The idea that crossing the border would be a step into such a new temporality emerged again and again in our interviews. Kamal, for instance, was fifteen years old and living in the eastern countryside of the Aleppo district when his family decided to flee because of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) taking control of the region.

> I came with my sisters, father, and mother. Part of the family came and a part stayed there. I came first with my sisters. We went to Istanbul in the beginning. The reason was to study and the situation in Syria made it not possible to live there. I left four years ago. I left because . . . there is no specific reason apart from living under ISIS control. There was no life, and we wanted just to

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> go, and we did not have details about what there is elsewhere. We just wanted relief.

For many of the young people with whom we spoke, leaving the country was not only about safety but also or primarily about having a future. In many cases, this was because studying had become impossible and finding work very difficult in the regions of Syria where they were living.

Asil for instance, was a middle school student in al-Raqqa when the revolution began, splitting his family over politics. While Asil and his brothers supported the revolution, their father had a government position and a loyalty to the Ba'ath regime. Eventually, their father "defected" to their side, fleeing with his sons to the countryside. Asil and his brothers worked with the Free Army until ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra overtook al-Raqqa in 2014. After more than two years of being unable to attend school, Asil gathered enough money to flee to Turkey, leaving his parents behind. At the time of our interview, he had not seen them for three years.

> I left to Khurbat Al-Joz, I tried seventeen times to cross the border, and the eighteenth time I made it to Turkey. I entered here and came directly to Istanbul. I went to my brother, and on the second day he took me to the Emniyet [security] to tell them that I just arrived and so they should register me. I stayed one month in his house, then I renewed all my information, and he took me to the school. I did a proficiency exam; I went to the school in the second semester. Finally, I finished high school.

For young people such as Asil or Kamal, the only way to plan for a future was through stepping into a new timespace where education could be an expectation.

Of course, for many other youths, the moment of flight was a preemptive act, one in which they escaped from anticipated violence. Yahya, for instance, was fourteen years old and living in Aleppo when the revolution began. Because his neighborhood was known for its regime support, the Syrian Free Army attacked it. "They attacked this place by mortar shells, artillery and gas tanks. When it was exploding, the buildings were falling over our heads. So, we fled from the bombardment! Me and all my family." They fled first to another part of Aleppo but found that some property owners were exploiting the situation to demand high rents. They paid to be smuggled through the lines of warring forces to their home village to the west of Aleppo. Soon his brother saved enough money to cross into Turkey, and a year later Yahya followed. "We just wanted to escape from the warring factions," he remarked.

The largest number of refugees in Turkey is from the Aleppo region, which borders Turkey. For many, all roads led to their northern neighbor. For Dawood, who was a high school student in Aleppo at the time the revolution began, there were no other choices.

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> It was a period when there were very violent bombings in Aleppo. At the beginning my family went to the Syrian army areas. They could go, but I stayed about one month–until it became too hard. My mother couldn't arrange for me to stay more, so we traveled to Turkey, because it was the closest to Aleppo. From where we were in Aleppo, the roads were all open toward Turkey.

We see, then, that while youth and their families anticipated violence and took preemptive action in fleeing across the border, that border represented not only safety but the opportunity to escape from the need constantly to anticipate. It was, then, not only a perceived place of safety but also a new space of time, a threshold that would allow them to step out of a time of conflict that had stalled their lives and begin to plan for the future. Navigating toward that future, however, would require other forms of anticipation that would shape their new lives as subjects of the Turkish state and as persons entangled in social relationships.

Interpellation and Iteration at the Border

In an article exploring the act of border crossing as a form of anticipation, Stef Jansen (2015b) compares his experiences crossing the Netherlands–Belgium border as a child with crossing the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia border in the company of local colleagues following the Yugoslav wars. While in the former case his family had driven across with no attention to the border as a line, in the second case, he and his colleagues had taken a long detour to avoid a particular border crossing where they anticipated that there would be trouble. "In practice," he remarks, "we encounter this state system as a structural effect through real and imagined interactions" that are "at least partly grounded in our own or vicarious previous experiences of interpellating border interactions" (2015b: 154). By "interpellating" here, he refers to Louis Althusser's argument that we emerge as subjects in the moment that we respond to the "call" of the state. Through anticipation–or in the Netherlands–Belgium case, non-anticipation–of border regimes and border practices, "we emerge as particular, unequal subjects" (2015b: 155).

For some of the young men with whom we spoke, displacement did not happen all at once but was an iterative process. Until 2014, it was relatively easy for Syrians to cross the border, and often families chose to send young men as emissaries–as well as, presumably, to distance them from the risk of recruitment into the Syrian military or militias. These young men would test the water, looking for jobs or trying to find a place where their families would be able to settle. Ihsan, whom we met at a community center in Gaziantep, remarked:

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> In the beginning–in 2012, 2013, 2014–crossing the borders was very, very easy. I mean, to an insane degree. I would leave in the morning to my job in Syria and return at night to Turkey. Leave in the morning and return at night. Borders were very easy. The Turkish government made it very easy. There was no strict checking, and the way they treated us was very nice in the beginning. Later, even regarding the official papers and permissions ordeal, Syrians were excused from all of that; they didn't bother us. Even if I didn't have my identity card or my passport, that didn't matter, they would just make sure that I am Syrian and living here, and they wouldn't bother me.

In this case, Ihsan retained his work in Syria but crossed the border to stay in Turkey, where he was helping to establish residence so that he could bring his family.

For Zeyad, whom we met managing a shop in Izmir, the draw was initially to find work. He had completed the ninth grade but had to leave Aleppo and his school there for safety reasons, taking refuge in his family's ancestral village. There, he struggled:

> The place that I was living in is a village. And there was no job opportunity. After a certain time, the money that we saved was almost depleted, and I was forced to find a place to work. We heard about many of my friends who came to Turkey who could start a business and build a business. So, we said we should go, also, why not!

He crossed the border illegally then, staying in a house with thirteen other young men and looking for work. He stayed for less than a month before returning to Syria. He only returned again to Turkey when his father found a Turkish partner for their small garment factory and moved the entire enterprise across the border.

Salih, a young Syrian originally from Aleppo, crossed the border to Turkey alone in 2012 with his passport and settled in Mersin with his uncle prior to moving to Adana, where he works at an international organization. While he mentioned that the conditions of his crossing at the time were less restricted, his family members still in Aleppo need to seek a longer route should they choose to travel to Turkey, due to stricter entry requirements for Syrians:

> It has become difficult because now a visa is required. We live in the city of Aleppo; it is very hard for us to enter Turkey now. We normally go to Lebanon, then take a plane to come here legally. . . . I came here by car. There was nothing like that when I came. I entered with my passport, like I was traveling. Then the bombs went off . . .

Salih's experience is shared by most firstcomers who crossed the Syrian-Turkish borders at earlier stages of the conflict.

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Sumbul, a university student originally from Aleppo, had come with her family to Turkey in 2011 as protests were gradually emerging in various Syrian cities. She explains the ease with which Syrians were able to cross from and to Turkey for the first few years after 2011:

> We came to Turkey seven years ago, in 2011, just as the war was starting. We came illegally, and we came back and forth annually between Syria and Turkey until 2014. I came with my family straight to Mersin. My father is a trader, so his job never stopped between Turkey and Syria.

While these iterative and exploratory crossings were possible early in the conflict, the arrival of ISIS into northern Syria caused Turkey to tighten border restrictions, especially following terrorist incidents in the country in 2016. After this time, "legality" and "illegality" take on importance in the ways that Syrian youth describe their crossings. It should be noted that smuggling occurred even before this time for those who had no papers. Faiz, for instance, had already been living in Izmir for six years when we met him. He had crossed into Turkey with his parents and siblings in the first wave of 2012 with only the clothes on their backs.

> When the incidents started, we were smuggled into Turkey. I came in 2012–I think it was in December. The [Turkish] government arrested us when we crossed the border, and we stayed there [at the border] for six hours. They were so hospitable! They didn't say anything to us. For sure, this was in 2012! They were very good with us. It was in the winter and the weather was cold. They offered us tea and asked us if we were hungry. And there were translators because at that time we didn't know Turkish. In the end, after six hours, they let us go. They knew that we didn't make problems before, we just escaped from the war.

Even in 2014, many youths reported using smugglers but crossing relatively easily. We had met with Razia at a community center for refugee women and children in Izmir, where she worked to help children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Razia is originally from Aleppo and recounted her experience of arriving in Turkey with the help of smugglers in 2014:

> Four years ago, we came illegally–were smuggled. We didn't have passports, but the journey was very easy. I didn't face any difficulties. Now I think people are facing a lot of difficulties, but I didn't. At the time, there were two smugglers, one was Syrian and the second was Turkish. They were in contact with each other, and they managed to cover a hole in the ground with a big steel cover. They then asked us to go through, and I did, and that was it.

Not long after Razia's experience, however, restrictions tightened, with reported pushbacks beginning after Turkey's first military intervention into

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northern Syria in 2016. After that date, many Syrians attempting to cross had experiences so awful that they did not want to discuss them. For instance, Belal, whom we met in Mardin, had been a student at Aleppo University when the revolution began. He crossed the border in 2015, after restrictions had already hardened. Like Razia, he would only say, "I suffered so much. The smugglers were bad; the way was hard; they use people; and it was a bad experience."

Human smuggling is by definition a form of exploitation that in an era of mass migration has become what Ruben Andersson (2014b) calls an "illegality industry." It is this industry, Andersson illustrates, that not only makes the immigrant illegal but also "produces what it is meant to eliminate, curtail, or transform–more migrant illegality" (2014b: 8). Andersson's work is part of a broader body of ethnographic literature that has turned its gaze from the category of the illegal migrant to the states and institutions that produce illegality. Taking a cue from philosopher Ian Hacking, Andersson is interested in how the "ways of classifying human beings interact with the human beings who are classified" (Hacking 1999: 10, quoted in Andersson 2014b: 16).

The effects of categorization have long been discussed in refugee studies literature, particularly with regard to how "the refugee" and "refugeehood" are produced (Scheel and Squire 2014; Zetter 1991; also Demetriou 2018; Scaletarris 2007). Beginning with Roger Zetter's pathbreaking work, much of this literature has been concerned with "how an identity is formed, transformed and manipulated within the context of public policy and especially, bureaucratic practices" (Zetter 1991: 40; see also Gill and Good 2019; Willen 2007a, 2007b). This has largely concerned the experience of adopting such an identity in order to conform to the demands of asylum bureaucracies and other institutions.

As Shahram Khosravi (2010) emphasizes, however, much of this identity is already shaped in the act of border crossing. What Amitava Kumar (2000) calls "the shame of arrival" is the moment of interpellation, the moment one anticipates how the state one waits to enter will react to one's documents or lack of them. "A legal journey is regarded as an honourable act in the spirit of globalism and cosmopolitanism," Khosravi remarks (2007: 331). On the other hand, "the border transgressor is seen as anti-aesthetic and anti-ethical (they are called 'illegal' and are criminalised)." Shame, in Khosravi's description, is something that "illegal" migrants internalize even long after entry into a country, perhaps even after they have become "legal."

Indeed, youth were eager to discuss the illegality or legality of their entry and their presence in Turkey. Many described how the struggle to acquire a legal identity had shaped years of their lives. Zuher, for instance, described how it led to further educational limbo, on top of the delays he had experienced in Syria:

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> Because of the war, I lost like two or three years in school; I stopped my studies against my will. If I had entered Turkey with a passport and legal papers, I would have applied to university and entered university straight away. But because I entered illegally–I fled because of the revolution. So this lasted about three years until we were able to resume studying in Turkey in a legal way.

The label "illegal," which refugees adopt in their narratives, already anticipatorily interpellates them in relation to the Turkish state and shapes their future actions and movements. In particular, it interpellates them as subjects in a less legitimate position to ask for assistance, as they "failed" to enter through the proper legal routes and to provide the necessary documentation and proof of the need to be protected. As we will see in subsequent chapters, "illegality" at the moment of border crossing means that refugees cannot leave anticipation at the threshold but must instead continue to anticipate in regard to schools, employers, and the Turkish bureaucracy.

Path Emergence: Finding Routes amid Uncertainty

In public discourse, there is usually a dichotomy presented between "voluntary" and "forced" migration, or between "refugees" and "economic migrants," in their immediate reasons for departure. Migration scholarship, in turn, shows how refugees exercise various forms of agency at the moment of displacement–how refugees may also have economic motivations or how so-called economic migrants may be fleeing conditions that cannot sustain life (Khosravi 2010; Mainwaring 2016; Piipponen and Virkkunen 2020; Van Liempt and Doomernik 2006). The most determinative form of agency exercised by refugees is through decisions made during border crossing and in the choice of destination–the if, the when, the how, and the where. These decisions are forms of anticipatory action shaped by personal capital, past experiences and the availability of information or lack thereof regarding the destination of choice. It is through such anticipatory choices that paths emerge, branching into new futures.

We remarked in the previous chapter that both resilience and aspirations were shaped by the various forms of capital at refugees' disposal. In the moment of border crossing, we see how refugees use these forms of capital to introduce a sense of familiarity to their journey and to reduce uncertainty, enabling paths to emerge. One of the most common of these was social capital, or networks of family and friends, which all the young refugees in our study employed to some degree.

Motaz's story is typical of this. He arrived in Turkey in early 2013, when entry was still easy, after first having fled from Damascus to Lebanon. One of the main reasons he booked a flight to Istanbul was that many of his friends had gone there and were living in the Fatih neighborhood.

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> I don't have people that I know in other cities, for example in Izmir and so on. I know one in Izmir, one in Mersin, and so on. But in Istanbul, most people are here so whatever happens I will have people here who will tell me what to do.

Taim, too, related how although they had no relatives in Gaziantep, his family encouraged him to go there because of acquaintances:

> I do not know, but my family were, like, go to Antep . . . go to Antep because there was a huge number . . . We had acquaintances, but they were not going to host me or something . . . but maybe there are people who might help you. For example, the brother of my sister's friend might help you find a job and so on. So, I found a job in a clothing store that way.

For others, such networks were ways of navigating new opportunities. When we asked Pasha why his family had settled in Mersin, he replied at first, "We haven't decided at all. We boarded the ship, got to Mersin, and stayed here. There is Taşucu Port, in Silifke, we went off the ship there. The closest city was Mersin, so we went there." He then elaborated, however. "We had a connection in Mersin who had rented an apartment for us upon our request, so we went there directly. People that got out (of Syria) one or two months before us." Pasha then went on to remark, "We have connections in every city, because this is war: It tore everyone apart, so we have people everywhere around Turkey. . . . Neighbors, relatives, friends. . . . We talk with or message each other." Pasha indicated, then, that although they settled in Mersin because of an acquaintance, it was random to the extent that it could have been anywhere else in Turkey because of the dispersal of the people they knew.

Migration scholarship has been attentive to the impact of social capital and social kin on the propensity of individuals or groups to migrate and their choice of destination. Although most of this scholarship has focused solely on cases of "voluntary" or economic migration, asylum seekers and refugees also greatly instrumentalize their social capital in choosing destinations (Garip 2008; Singer and Massey 1998). Existing social networks in the country of destination support refugees through the provision of information and knowledge regarding what to expect from the country that they are migrating to. Access to this knowledge consequently introduces a sense of familiarity and reduces the uncertainty and disorder caused by the experience of displacement (Khosravi 2010; Tilly and Brown 1967), helping refugees avoid further possible costs or the risk of being uprooted (Funkhouser and Ramos 1993).

This is prevalent in the experience of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Dunya, a young Syrian university student in Adana, recounted her family's experience when they first entered Turkey and were looking for a place to settle:

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> Turks were not accepting Syrians because there were a lot of Syrians here who ruined their houses, so we kept looking for two days, and we didn't find a place to stay until one of our acquaintances pointed us toward Antakya. So we went to Antakya, and he helped us find a house there.

Social networks play a notable role in facilitating migration, particularly in urban settings where the issue of housing can be a major destabilizing factor for refugees. As seen from both Dunya and Pasha's examples, these networks can provide newcomers with either immediate or long-term housing solutions, reducing the need for refugees to interact with either the host community or local bureaucracies (Tilly and Brown 1967).

These networks are indeed essential, particularly at earlier stages of the refugee experience, as they help refugees familiarize themselves with the host country and find paths through uncertainty. Kamal, a young Syrian living in Mardin, had experienced living in numerous Turkish cities prior to settling in that city. His first destination was Istanbul, which he emphasized was only a temporary arrangement until reaching self-sufficiency:

> I had an older brother in Antep before going to Istanbul, but we went to Istanbul because it was only temporary, and we had acquaintances and an apartment to stay. I mean, there were many reasons to go first to Istanbul. Then I decided to move to Antep, which was my personal decision, because I wanted to live in Antep. This decision was related to independence. After that my family moved to Antep as well.

Indeed, the presence of an established social network prior to migration proves to be an important resource that serves to help newcomers navigate through social life in the host community, providing them with information about what to anticipate (Garip 2008). Mustafa, a young Syrian working in the NGO sector in Gaziantep, was among the earlier groups of Syrians in Antep. He describes how he was part of a group of Syrians that worked to assist newcomers arriving to Turkey settle:

> As one of the first arrivals to the city, we started to introduce the new arrivals to the city and inform them about what is acceptable and what is not, where to live and so on. Then the coalition was formed, and we became involved. I was in touch with the opposition representatives. We started to become involved, especially that I have been involved in civil activism myself. I met other people who were involved in Syria Trust, Red Crescent, and other NGOs. We have agreed to establish a small association on a voluntary basis. Also, international friends helped us to start the work.

Mustafa explains how they try to help refugees settle by explaining to them the otherwise opaque law and bureaucracy of their host country.

Social capital, then, becomes a key "facilitating factor" in helping refugees find paths, which themselves then lead to trails intertwined with people

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and places. Mustafa further explains that these social networks are crucial in defining the dynamics of social relationships in Turkey:

> Here in Turkey the Syrians built their own communities, as you may have noticed. Like small communities. They integrate with the Turks, but they keep a closed Syrian community. There is integration, but there still is a shell that they leave and return to.

For many, then, the ability to reestablish oneself is highly reliant on recreating a familiar society within the host community as it not only provides refugees with the necessary tools to navigate life, but it also provides them with the sense of familiarity to build on.

These social networks are also important to the economic stability and security of refugees, as these networks can provide access to economic opportunities (Haug 2008). This is particularly the case where refugees have less economic or cultural capital, or fewer skill sets that are appropriate for the economic opportunities available in the host society (Funkhouser and Ramos 1993; Tilly and Brown 1967). We met Hazim and Faiz, two Syrian brothers of Kurdish descent, in their family home, which was situated in a neighborhood in Izmir where mainly Syrians resided. Like Kamal, the brothers also experienced temporary settlement in Gaziantep prior to moving to Izmir. These decisions were mainly driven by information regarding economic opportunities provided by family members who were already in Turkey:

> We came to our relatives in Gaziantep, but they gave us a low salary in Gaziantep, and we didn't know the country. Later, we knew the country better. . . . My uncle had relatives here in Izmir, so they came here because everyone resorts to their personal contacts. Then my uncle called me and explained to me that the salaries are better here. I was working at my relatives' factory, and I was making 150TL weekly. It was like I was working for free. But this was at first. . . . Then we learned [through the uncle] that it's not about money but the value of our efforts. . . . So I came here, and I brought my family, too, and now we're settled down.

Both brothers had come from Syria with only primary level education but were highly skilled in carpentry, which was their profession back in Syria. These particular skillsets led them to depend on economic opportunities provided by relatives, most of which are highly precarious:

> His [Faiz] work conditions were great compared to mine. He had an off day. It's true that his salary was low, but he had a holiday, and his work hours were clear, until 6:00 p.m. I worked for four months without a holiday. From 5:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m. carrying stuff like tomatoes. I lost a lot of weight doing that. . . . I didn't see Gaziantep when we lived there. My workplace was in front of my house. My daily rate was 20TL. I suffered a lot.

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We see, then, that networks serve as an important factor refugees rely on to determine their choice of destination in the immediate phase after border crossing. These relations allow refugees to establish a sense of normality and familiarity and often provide them with economic opportunities. In addition to kinship relations, though, ethnic relations and geographical proximity were also important in the ways that young Syrians in Turkey found paths in a new environment.

Many of our interlocutors identified as Kurdish, Turkmen, or Circassian, minority ethnic groups in Syria that have ethnic "kin" in Turkey. In many cases, members of these groups had already experienced some connectivity with their ethnic "kin" across the border before the war (Can 2020). Such connections gave some refugees an alternative to integrating into the host society, which was linguistically foreign to many (Funkhouser and Ramos 1993).

Faiz, who is of Kurdish descent, describes the importance of these historically rooted relationships to the decisions made by Syrian refugees: "We had Turkish relatives [in Turkey]. They were clans one hundred years ago, when there were no borders. In border areas from Qamishli to Gaziantep, all the people who were living there were relatives." Discovering where ethnic "kin" are located pushes some refugees to change their primary destination after becoming more familiar with the cultural diversity in Turkey's other cities. Pasha, a university student in Adana, was originally from a middle-class family of Circassian descent in Damascus. He explained how Circassian ancestry and linguistic capital helped him gradually integrate with the Turkish community in Adana compared to Istanbul, where he first lived:

> Living in Istanbul is quite costly. . . . Studying or working there is hard, people without their family there have a hard time. These types of issues make the situation tough for students. . . . I have a large circle. When we came here, we went to a Circassian Society. Everywhere in the world there are Circassian associations. We looked for it when we came here and went there. I can say that it is the only place where I don't feel like a stranger. I feel comfortable there, so I go there. I made a circle there, lots of friends. My Turkish got a bit better by talking with my friends there. Otherwise, I didn't know it at all.

As in Pasha's case, many youths in our study described relying on these historical or ethnic ties to help them settle, often determining where they settled. Zad, of Turkmen origin, had originally settled in Kilis because of close relatives there but was working in Adana when we met him because of more dispersed Turkmen connections. "My grandfather's family [extended kin] were here," he remarked. "So I came and started here."

Other youth, however, were disappointed that their ethnic "kin" did not help them more upon arrival or welcome them as warmly as expected. For

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instance, Sama, in Mardin, remarked, "We moved directly here. We are originally from here, and we have a relative here. That is why we came." When we asked if by "originally" she meant a century ago, she answered, "Yes, something like that."

> We had many relatives here. . . . My mother and father had visited before the war. Our relatives are from the Arab community in Mardin, so they could speak Arabic. When we first came here, they welcomed us for five days and then said "goodbye" [laughing]. After that we rented a house, and we have not seen them since then. Sometimes I see them accidentally in the street, and we have just a "hi" between us.

The experience of not receiving sufficient hospitality from relatives on the other side of the border was a common theme. As one young man, Zuher, living in Izmir, explained, these relatives who had been divided from them by a border had often come to Syria and received their hospitality there:

> They used to come at Eids and other times. They used to come for fifteen days or two weeks a year. They used to stay with us, and it was Latakia, Aleppo, or Damascus, and we used to take them to visit these places and so on. The connection was always there between us; it was not broken ever.

Yet, he expressed disappointment with their hospitality while at the same time excusing it, remarking, "It is true that we have relatives to help us, but no, in Turkey, people can barely make a living and get by, and that's it."

What is common in the experience of these young refugees is a search for familiarity through kinship relations or cultural and ethnic similarities. These help refugees find a community that is similar to their own, even if this means a trade-off between bigger cities with potentially more economic opportunities and smaller ones where they benefit from the cultural proximity of the host community. As Tim Ingold (2011) notes, such choices lay trails, creating new "knots" of entwined relations that become handholds as one reaches toward the future.

Carving One's Own Path

Although infrequent, there were youth in our study who had the symbolic capital, the degrees and other qualifications, that made Turkey only one among other possible routes to the future for them. Among these, quite a few were young women who insisted on pursuing dreams of higher education. One young woman, Farah, described to us how her older sister had preceded them all in coming to Turkey, because she found a scholarship at a Turkish university. As we mentioned in the introduction, higher education

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in Syria has been limited, and many young people who seek a university degree are not able to find a place. Her sister was in such a position: “She wanted to study outside the country because she was not accepted in any university department. My father did not mind; my father’s father studied medicine in France. So, he encouraged her. He told her to pack her stuff and leave for Turkey.” The sister later met and married a young Syrian man living in Istanbul and sent for her family to join her.

One of the more interesting stories is that of Dalia, who told us, “Since I was young my dream was to finish university and continue in graduate studies, even a doctorate.” Yet she came from Daraa, an area of Syria that suffered from some of the most intense fighting.

> Our situation was very difficult. We resisted; it is not easy to leave your country. We resisted for one, two years. I remember many times I would go to school and the gunfire shooting over our head or while we are taking classes, there is gunfire even at home. I remember one time we were sitting at home, and the fence of the home was destroyed, and the bullets came into the house.

Following those experiences, her family got passports and moved to Jordan, where she completed her baccalaureate, or high school leaving certificate. Although she was accepted to a Jordanian university, her family could not afford the expense.

> After that, I stayed at home for one year and then applied for a Turkish scholarship. When my father saw my situation, he told me you can apply to any scholarship you want. He said, “I do not mind you leaving for study. I am with you, and I encourage you.” This is very important, especially [if] you know the Arab societies and Daraa. To the extent that my relatives did not approve of my leaving for study and even the neighbors, but thank God. The neighbors [in Jordan] would come and give advice to my family not to send me abroad. But my father, thank God, he is open-minded a little bit, and he is with me studying, and he is against me getting married and destroying my dreams and so on. . . . I lived for almost two years in Jordan, and after that I got the scholarship, and I traveled alone.

Majida, another young woman, was living in Gaziantep when we met her. She had graduated in 2014 from an English literature department in Syria and described to us how she had gotten stuck in Turkey when she went for a training there. Although she had no plans to make such a move, she was able to turn her university degree and knowledge of English to her advantage, working in various companies and in humanitarian aid. It was because of her excellent English that she was first offered a well-paid job in a company that needed translation services: “When I started working with companies, the salary was really nice. They gave me two thousand dollars, and I was newly graduated from Syria. That is why I started to like living here. Good money,

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no war, no bombing, and friends around me." Eventually, she was able to bring her family and establish a life and career for herself in Gaziantep.

Indeed, young people often cited their knowledge of English as an advantage for them in a country where they perceived English to be less well known. Dalia, for instance, knew no Turkish but was able to demonstrate her English proficiency when she applied to English-language programs at Turkish universities. Language, then, constituted a form of cultural capital that she could employ in seeking a new path for herself. However, her case also indicates how language knowledge draws together the various fields, since only those persons from particular socioeconomic backgrounds, who were able to earn at least a baccalaureate, had sufficient knowledge of foreign languages to be able to use these to their advantage in the displacement process. This shows again, then, how anticipation of a new future across the border is not a complete break from the past but builds on it.

Thresholds to New Futures

What all of these cases show is that displacement is never a simple flight and that displaced persons seek out secure paths that they hope will lead them to desired futures. By necessity, such paths also involve economic considerations, generally considered the deciding factor of migration in cases of "voluntary" migration. Even in the moment of displacement, we see the search for "knots" that will give them handholds, whether these "knots" are social, cultural, or symbolic. Often, these knots must weave together in order to create new pathways.

This is demonstrated through the experiences of a number of refugees, including Ihsan, Alma's husband, who, prior to moving to Gaziantep, lived in numerous border cities, starting with Antakya:

> For us, Antakya is very close to the Syrian borders, and it's an area that has jobs that suit us. Second is the language: Antakya people speak Arabic. Turkish people don't even speak English. In general, Turkish people don't have the knowledge that we have when it comes to English. It's very hard for us to go to an area where we can't understand anyone at all. The people of Antakya talk Arabic a lot, and it's an area that is very close to the Syrian border, the jobs are all there. Even for work it's easier for me to go back and forth between the two countries.

Ihsan reminds us here that the decisions made by Syrian refugees include social, cultural, and economic factors combined. These reflect the multifaceted decision-making process that refugees employ at the time of uprooting. In response to this, his wife Alma describes the numerous times they had to relocate within Turkey, explaining that survival is paramount:

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> We don't choose the place, the place chooses us. For example, before we left for Gaziantep, his job was between Syria and Turkey, so I was living with his parents, and he was in Syria. The place chose for him to come to me because here there was money. Under these circumstances, if we don't work, we can't live.

The economic factor is thus a key determinant of how Syrians anticipate the future and decide their place of residence, if not during the moment of displacement, then in the short term after settling. In some cases, it was even a driving factor in choosing Turkey over other locations.

This was especially clear in the case of another couple, Jamil and Asala, who emphasize that they arrived legally in Turkey in 2017, even though their trip was a difficult one. They were both from middle-class families, educated, and newly married. While in Syria, they had ambitions to use their university degrees to work in tourism and the NGO sector, but Jamil explains the constraints of building a life together in the economy of a war-torn country:

> *Jamil*: To be honest, we decided to marry but because of the high rentals in Syria, we had to spend the whole salary for the rental! So we wanted to try and live abroad, why not! . . . . So we arrived to Turkey in August 2017.

Although they traveled to Turkey with passports and by boat from Latakia, the journey was still a difficult one, and the boat that they boarded also contained smugglers.

> *Asala*: They asked us, "So you want to go to Greece?" with a wink. He said to me, "Do you see the two people there? They also will go to Greece. Do you want to go with them?"
>
> *Jamil*: Actually I had this plan in my mind, but I was telling myself, "Don't do it! Are you crazy?!"
>
> *Interviewer*: You thought it was dangerous because of going by sea, or was there something else?
>
> *Asala*: Yes, and also because we don't need to do it. We can build ourselves in Turkey from nothing, and there are people who built their life, so why not do this plan? And actually, our plan succeeded. Who can imagine that one day we would acquire Turkish citizenship [which they had acquired immediately before the interview]?

In such a case, then, we see choices being made on the basis of limited knowledge acquired from friends and relatives, as well as reliance on cultural and symbolic capital. In cases such as that of Jamil and Asala, the border becomes not only a threshold beyond which one can be freed from anticipation, but also a line beyond which one can build expectations and have a future.

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Conclusion: From Anticipation to Expectation

At the beginning of this chapter, we heard from Amal, a young mother who had been unable to continue her studies and had been serially displaced within Syria, living in a tent before being smuggled across the border with her small family. When we spoke to her in Adana a year after her arrival, she reported being satisfied with her life at that moment, because it assured a future for her son:

> I feel like I am assured of my son's future. It's true he is still two years old, but maybe if I stayed here, he will study in Turkey, meaning the first thing is that he knows the language and also knows Arabic. Maybe if we stayed . . . inshallah that our country returns like before, and we return to our home. I say that I feel secure about him that he can study anything.

As we will see, the brackets that she leaves in her vision of her son's future ("inshallah that our country returns like before, and we return to our home") reflect a division that we found in many of our interlocutors' descriptions between what we call in later chapters "homing," or the process of building a home where one can have a future, and aspirations that might include the hope ultimately to return.

Homing involves building "normal lives," the loss of which many youths in our study described through the loss of expectation. It is expectation that had been missing from Amal's life before displacement and that made her home there unhomely. In the chaos of war, she and her family lived in constant anticipation–of bombs falling, militants attacking, and of someone telling them that they must again leave. She can now see her life returning to some form of normality, or being normalized where she is. As we will see, then, the passage of time complicates the possibilities of return and makes Amal's "inshallah" less hopeful than wistful.

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