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# Winking at Humanitarian Neutrality: The Liminal Politics of the State in Lebanon

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**Abstract:** Drawing on the July 2006 Israel–Lebanon War in Beirut’s southern suburbs and the Syrian refugee influx into the villages of Akkar in northern Lebanon, I suggest that the Lebanese state aspires to officially assert itself as a liminal space in a bid to survive crises and preserve its political capital, therefore aborting the attempts made by citizens and refugees to leave such liminality. I look at how professed state liminality meets with humanitarian neutrality, which is a principle of several international humanitarian agencies that assisted the internally displaced in 2006 and Syrian refugees from 2011 in Lebanon. Although in anthropology liminality has mostly been approached as anti-structural and an embodiment of the margins, by proceeding from people’s perception of state enmity and their frustrated aspirations to befriend the state, I suggest that state liminality rather captures the structural peculiarity of the Lebanese state’s agency and violent presence, made of repressive and neglectful politics.

**Keywords:** refugees, Lebanon, humanitarianism, welfare, NGOs

**Résumé :** Partant de la guerre israélo-libanaise de juillet 2006 dans la banlieue sud de Beyrouth et de l’afflux de réfugiés syriens dans les villages du Akkar au nord du Liban, j’é mets l’hypothèse que l’État libanais cherche à s’affirmer officiellement comme espace liminaire afin de survivre aux crises et de préserver son capital politique, faisant ainsi échec aux efforts de citoyens et de réfugiés pour quitter cette liminarité. J’examine l’intersection de la liminarité étatique proclamée et de la neutralité humanitaire, ce dernier principe étant mis en avant par de nombreuses agences humanitaires internationales qui ont assisté les déplacés internes en 2006 et qui accompagnent les réfugiés syriens au Liban depuis 2011. Si en anthropologie la liminarité est généralement abordée comme un phénomène anti-structurel et comme une incarnation des marges, je m’appuie sur la perception qu’ont les gens de l’inimitié étatique et de leurs aspirations frustrées à se rapprocher de l’État pour avancer que la liminarité étatique permet plutôt d’appréhender la particularité structurelle de l’agencéité et de la présence violente propres à l’État libanais, lesquelles sont marquées par une politique conjointe de répression et d’abandon.

**Mots clés :** réfugiés, Liban, humanitaire, protection sociale, ONG

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## Introduction

This paper will examine the ways in which local and refugee populations have perceived state enmity during the internal and temporary displacement that followed the July 2006 war in Lebanon, and the prolonged refugee inflow into the country from 2011, following the political and humanitarian crisis in Syria. I will illustrate how war-stricken Lebanese citizens’ and Syrian refugees’ perceptions of state enmity have been countered in these two “catastrophes” that hit Lebanon during the last decade, and to which a large number of humanitarian actors have responded, by the Lebanese state’s liminal politics. Common perceptions of state enmity, triggered by the liminal politics of the Lebanese state, generate an interspace where the voices of local citizens who were displaced by the July 2006 war, and of Syrian refugees who relocated to Lebanon from 2011, echo each other.

Here, I approach liminality as a deliberate political approach of the Lebanese state that preserves its agency but is practically translated into acts of repression and neglectfulness toward both local and refugee populations. In this sense, liminality can be described as a performative act rather than the ontological nature of the state or its actual positionality. I suggest that in times of emergency and crisis, the state adopts liminal politics, while in practice, myriad (in)formal, contradictory and multiscale powers interact to profoundly shape and rule over life on the ground. As I will illustrate, I think of the state’s liminal politics as being between one existential state and another – that is, at the *limen* (Bryant 2014, 126) – not as an inactive passiveness, but rather as the specific character of the Lebanese state’s agency.

To support my argument, I draw on local newspaper archives, municipality bulletins, participant observation, and more than 300 semi-structured interviews with humanitarian organisations, governmental actors and aid recipients<sup>1</sup> in Lebanon in a discontinuous time span from 2011 to 2016. The fieldwork for this study was conducted in Beirut’s southern suburbs (locally called Dahiye – “the

periphery” – in the Lebanese dialect) and the villages of Akkar (in northern Lebanon), areas largely characterised by poverty and social vulnerability. The urban area of Dahiye is run by distinct municipalities and hosts enclaves of illegal housing. Historically, outsiders have referred to this area as a rebel territory, the place of rural migrants from South Lebanon who gave rise to an unaddressed phenomenon of urbanisation in such rural peripheries (Harb 2006). Dahiye’s demographic geography is hybrid due to the continuous arrival of regional refugees and the recent gentrification of some districts in the aftermath of the July 2006 war. Fieldwork in Dahiye was conducted only in the eastern part of the area, which covers the districts of Haret Hreik, Borj al-Barajneh, al-Ghobeiry, ash-Shiyyah, Msharrafyie, Ruwess and Bi’r al-’Abed.<sup>2</sup> As Dahiye is connected to the capital, Beirut, its population increased from 50 percent in 1959 to 70 percent in 1970 (Makhoul and Harrison 2002, 615). Akkar, with nearly 500,000 inhabitants and 254,000 Syrian refugees according to the 2017 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics, is a region mostly composed of rural hamlets and has the highest poverty rate in the country: nearly 65 percent (Moushref 2008). Local poverty, absence of state services, a pseudo-feudal architecture of labour, and the predominance of rural livelihoods has led outsiders to view this region as backward (Abi-Habib Khoury, 2012; Gilsenan 1996). Fieldwork in Akkar was conducted in the main town of Halba and in the villages of al-Bahsa, Bebnin, Bellanet al-Hisa, al-’Abdeh and Wadi Khaled.

The increasing presence of the “aid industry” (Redfield 2013, 26) in Lebanon because of its cyclic history of displacement has transformed domestic social spaces into humanitarian transnational spaces. Dahiye is a highly urbanised conflict zone that has historically been exposed to war; and Akkar has been the destination for Syrian nationals seeking refuge from war and violence since 2011. Reflecting the idea of state enmity as liminality, humanitarian neutrality and impartiality (Blondel 1991),<sup>3</sup> which traditionally characterise service provision and assistance in crisis settings, match the existential need of the Lebanese state to perform as an entity positioned in a space of in-betweenness, in that any faux pas would endanger its stability. The current Lebanese government policy of power-sharing is in fact a colonial product of the creation of “Great Lebanon” by France at the time of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the San Remo Agreement (1920).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Lebanon coped with the Syrian army’s control and oppression (1976–2005), as well as Israeli invasions and military attacks throughout Lebanon’s recent history (those of 1978, 1982, 1996 and 2006 were among the most morally

and materially destructive), which challenged the country’s stability and therefore contributed to the current liminal politics of the state.

On the one hand, Akkar is a rural area, with poor local infrastructure that has been chronically neglected by both state and non-state actors (Makhoul and Harrison 2002; Moushref 2008). Local unemployment rates are high, and many locals seek employment in the Lebanese military (Abi-Habib 2012; Zakhour 2005). On the other hand, the diversified urban poverty of Dahiye (an area to which the national army seldom has access) does not consist of mere material deprivation, but also stigmatisation as a poor, working-class Shiite area lacking in social esteem (Deeb 2006; Harb 2006). Indeed, locals who no longer suffer from material deprivation have ended up making their historical exclusion into a token of present empowerment.<sup>5</sup> Despite the damage that any war has caused, both areas have been sites of socio-political mobilisation and transnational mobility (Gilsenan 1996; Khater 2001; Kobeissi 2009; Saad 1996) that have played an important role in determining the local configurations of spatial control, but this topic falls outside the scope of this article. Aside from the undefinable human cost, both areas have partially “benefited” from the emergencies because humanitarian interventions have drawn greater international attention to chronically disadvantaged areas and have generated a rapid mobilisation of resources and social services.

In this complex scenario where the role of the central state during crisis is apparently marginal, people’s perceptions of the Lebanese state as their rival is compounded by their emotional proximity to the state in both Dahiye and Akkar. In fact, any concept of the state in Lebanon must take into account the ambivalence of its citizens, who look at it with resentment as a result of its neglectful or repressive behaviour, but at the same time see it as a desired provider of resources and services – such characteristics make up the so-called “seductive” character of the state (Jeffrey 2013). The state in Lebanon is “awaited,” so to speak (Mouawad 2015, 54). In this way, the state becomes a frustrated individual aspiration that defines citizens’ and refugees’ culturally peculiar “orientation to the future” (Appadurai 2004, 60). As will become evident in my historical review, the liminal politics of the state entails political agency rather than passivity, such as carrying out nepotistic and repressive practices.

### **The Morphology of Power and the State’s Liminal Politics in Crisis Management**

While Lebanon is often depicted as a warring “land of chaos” (Kosmatopoulos 2011, 124), Lebanese politicians have tried to preserve domestic stability despite the

current whirlwind of the Syrian crisis, even though their strategies for achieving this stability have varied significantly (Trombetta 2014). It is noteworthy that the Lebanese confessional system has historically been based on the principle of convenient balance and power-sharing (Firro 2002; Kerr 2006); diverse actors such as non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies, and state institutions contribute to the maintenance of a socio-political status quo. In this scenario, the state can be framed as a human achievement of order and control rather than a natural expression of political power (Jeffrey 2013).

The maintenance of this socio-political order has in fact been observable in the compensation policies pursued by Hezbollah in the reconstruction after the 2006 war, which were aimed at preventing social mobilisation against the clientelism of Lebanese political elites, who look for followers in return for everyday access to welfare (Baumann 2016, 636; Cammett 2014; Nucho 2016). The same effort is observable in the actions of Akkar-based NGOs that seek to satisfy the chronic needs of both local communities and Syrian refugees in order to avoid the emergence of frictions between national groups sharing space and resources (Carpi 2014).

Because of repeated states of emergency, non-state actors in the country have come to form a sort of “hyper-governance” (Bhatt 2007), which has emerged as a form of sovereignty alongside the Lebanese state. Such non-state organisations behave as a para-state by offering “good governance” through humanitarian relief, education, health care, capacity building and infrastructural development. International humanitarian interventions and their growing politics of neutrality develop informal powers that are accountable in the international scenario and preserve social order (Vazquez-Arroyo 2013). Against this backdrop, in the eyes of my local and refugee interlocutors, the everyday workings of humanitarianism after the 2006 war and during the Syrian refugee influx from 2011 preserve and value the liminal politics of the Lebanese state.

In this framework of frequent states of emergency, the Lebanese state has been shaping a politics of *super partes* – a legacy of Lebanese confessional consociationalism (Corm 2006) – in response to the emerging sovereignty of humanitarian actors. Being a “consociational” (Apter 1961, 24) ruling entity, the Lebanese state’s political culture is fragmented, and its stability is maintained – and at the same time challenged – by its multiple memberships (Lijphart 1969, 209). A consociational entity is defined as an arena in which “the leaders of rival subcultures may engage in competitive behaviour . . . and aggravate political instability but may also make

deliberate efforts to counteract the unstabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation” (Lijphart 1969, 212).

As this paper will make evident, the respondents’ accounts point to a state (in Dahiye) and international humanitarian system (in Akkar) of neutrality and anti-politicisation that accomplish the basic political functions of a state. In these frameworks, the state seeks to build an objective and impartial image among a crisis-triggered competition over aid provision; indeed, in recent decades, states have increasingly been undertaking governmental practices through the development of humanitarian rhetoric (Carpi 2014). In the same vein, “catastrophization” has become the latest form of governmentality, ceasing to be exclusively non-governmental (Ophir 2010, 77) and increasingly involving the central state, which relies on emergency resources to provide everyday welfare (Eng and Martínez 2017).

Against the “new global danger of increasingly open borders” (Duffield and Waddell 2004, 24), the stability of the state has clearly been prioritised in Lebanon’s national political agenda (Fukuyama 2004, 92). In this sense, contemporary humanitarianism seems to contribute to the maintenance of the geopolitical order while purporting to have a people-centred approach and hinging on the biopolitical values of human dignity, protection and survival. Lebanon is no exception to this; the UNHCR has often been prohibited from starting income-generating activities for the Syrian refugees in the country on the basis of government warnings regarding the high unemployment rate among local people. Moreover, in order to avoid social disorder, the Lebanese government prohibited marches and demonstrations from taking place on International Refugee Day in June 2014.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have proposed that Lebanese state sovereignty is fragmented rather than absent (Ramadan and Fregonese 2017; Stel 2016) and, moreover, that “the absent state imagery acts like the opium of the citizens where the practices of ruling elites are masked by the state idea to undertake their own political projects . . . and systems of rule” (Mouawad 2015, 107). I likewise contest this idea of absence by identifying a hybrid space through which diverse powerholders play out. Among the latter, the central state performs a liminal politics that conveniently meets the international humanitarian principle of neutrality embraced by most of the international agencies that have intervened in Lebanon’s crises. As a result of this performance, its liminality is an emanation of agency and violent presence.

In anthropology, however, liminality is primarily tackled in relation to either the mobile or the marginal individual: it can be a mobile existential state through which individuals have experiences that can transform

their identities, realign social hierarchies or reinforce power inequalities (Ghannam 2011, 791). As such, because it benefits from an in-between state of being, liminality can be both a source of limitations and constraints and a negation of all such boundaries (Turner 1967, 97); also, because the liminal is a concept that brings the spatial and the temporal together, it is often thought of as a way of being neither here nor there (Turner 1967), which some scholars have identified as anti-structural, as a transitional stage between the pre- and the post-liminal (Van Gemep 1960). An example of this is Tillery's children's summer camp, which is described as a liminal environment with its own rituals and metaphoric processes (Tillery 1992, 380). Against this backdrop, rather than identifying liminality with the margins, I assert that it is at the core of Lebanon's state politics and particularly emerges in "transitional stages" (Tillery 1992, 381) that are labelled as crises, and that it is therefore different than Turner's concept of "conditions outside or on the peripheries of the everyday" (Turner 1974, 47). As such, while it conceptually exemplifies the "ambivalence of political subjectivity" (McConnell 2017, 139) toward other actors inhabiting the political scene, the Lebanese state's liminal politics practically produces perceptions of enmity among citizens and refugees resettled within its boundaries.

Against the background of the Lebanese state performing liminal politics in a scenario wherein multiple actors produce and share agency in times of crisis, I will now turn to the relationship between the central state and the two geographic sites in which I conducted research in order to clarify the motivations behind people's perceptions of state enmity.

### Dahiye and the Lebanese State: A Complex Relationship

Although Dahiye is a demographically mixed area in origin, and became predominantly Shi'a only in the late 1980s (Hourani 2015, 190), its recent relationship with the state is largely informed by Shiite political history in Lebanon. The relationship between Lebanese Shi'a and the central state is influenced not only by a long history of legislative under-representation in the Lebanese parliament, but also by acts of state violence and subtle disinvestment in the community through, for example, uncompleted urban projects.

During the years of King Faisal's rule (Harb 2010), the French colonial mandate was to oppose Shiite control of the area (1918–20) because they considered Lebanese Shi'a to be fierce opponents, as they were allied with "anti-western" Syria (Firro 2006). In 1926, unlike the Sunni community, the Shi'a supported the Beirut-based

government's adoption of the country's first national constitution to reciprocate the state's recognition of the Ja'fari school of jurisprudence in the same year. It was only after 1969, when the Shi'a Higher Council became operational and the Shi'a achieved greater autonomy from Sunni political dominance, that the community produced an urban-based middle class and a new generation of political *élites*, both of whom soon came to represent important segments of Dahiye's contemporary demography (Harb 2010).

The perception of state enmity among my interlocutors in Dahiye stems from historical experiences, as the state has long opposed Dahiye's admission within Lebanese society. The Lebanese Shi'a community migrated in increasing numbers from the south to Dahiye in the 1980s, suffering not only displacement and destruction, but also isolation and abandonment at the hands of its own government. In addition, when Lebanon's agricultural exports declined by 50 percent because of the acceptance of Israeli imports into the country in 1983 (Saad 1996, 195), the Lebanese government was seen to be adopting a compliant attitude toward its southern neighbour. The same state attitude toward Israel was also observed during *ḥarb tammūz* (the "July war" between Lebanon and Israel), and it aroused similar public contempt.<sup>7</sup>

In the southern suburbs of Beirut, people's perception of state enmity was also nurtured during Israel's "Operation Peace for Galilee" (1982), carried out under the direction of then Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, who ordered the invasion of West Beirut. The Christian Phalangist leader Amin Gemayel tried to restore authority over this area and destroyed 400 illegal dwellings in Ouzai, where the militia of the Lebanese Shi'ite party Harakat Amal violently confronted Gemayel's troops. In this area, armed groups were used to "parasite state institutions, tax the residents and redistribute their resources to the clientele" (Picard 1999).

Throughout the years of the Lebanese Civil War, the reputation of the state, which had significantly improved under the reforms of former president Fouad Chéhab (1958–64), quickly collapsed (Khazen 2000). A statement issued by the Shi'a Community Supreme Council in December 1983 articulates this clearly: "The southern suburbs are pounded as if their inhabitants were not citizens of this country. The state by its actions in the last few days has committed suicide by seeking to eliminate its own citizens." Analogically, state planning in Dahiye proved to be a combination of coercive and violent urban policies with the aim of modernising Beirut's periphery (Fawaz and Harb 2010, 23).<sup>8</sup> The 1990s Solidère Project, which was started by soon-to-be-assassinated prime

minister Rafiq al-Hariri and developed into one of the largest corporations in the Middle East (Becherer 2005), generated disaffection and hostility among the Shi'a who inhabited the *centre ville* because they were relocated to other areas such as Dahiye. This experience made many Dahiye residents highly sceptical of state intervention in their residential areas, unlike the public acclamation that followed Hezbollah's accomplishment of its promises in the post-2006-war reconstruction (Fawaz 2014; Hourani 2015, 196; Mac Ginty 2007, 475). In this framework, from a historical perspective, Hezbollah has both endangered its existence through and benefited from a successfully self-crafted image of an actor acting separately from the state, even when working as a majority party within the state apparatus (as per the latest May 2018 elections). Moreover, Hezbollah's positionality vis-à-vis the Lebanese state sheds light on a generalisable complex relationship between political parties and state institutions, which, in scholarly and media accounts, are seldom referred to as a single entity.

On the one hand, locals in Dahiye tend to interpret any form of state planning as threatening and suspicious; on the other, however, Lebanese state agencies are biased against any collective movement by residents, who have historically been assumed to be hostile and violent, traits that can be addressed only by imposing discipline. The construction of the airport road in 1998 is only one of several attempts to marginalise the area, making drivers take alternative routes (Deeb 2006). In sum, Dahiye has cultivated a feeling that it is the object of state enmity, given that the state has historically appeared to protect Dahiye's outsiders. Anthropologist Najib Hourani (2015, 188) claims that during his discussions with government and Solidère officials, war-stricken Shi'a were not represented as victims of war at all, "but rather as the carriers of a pre-modern ignorance and fanaticism that destroyed the cosmopolitan nation . . . They were described not as refugees (*muhajjarin*), but rather as invaders or occupiers (*muhtallin*) of others' property, and of cosmopolitan Beirut."

Hezbollah's campaigns have constantly been conducted against an anti-central-state political backdrop, even in periods when the prime minister seemed to be sympathising with their coalition, like with the government of Najib Miqati (2011–2014). Regarding this pseudo-sympathetic relationship between Hezbollah and the state, Hussein, a resident in the Dahiye suburb of Haret Hreik, told me, "Saiyyd Hasan Nasrallah [the leader of the Hezbollah party] will sooner or later offer our military forces to the state, but not yet . . . He has said this government does not sympathise enough with us."<sup>9</sup> In its campaigns, Hezbollah has often used an

anti-central-state rhetoric, that is, presenting the party and its outstanding networks of service provision as the best alternative to a wavering and lax state (Fawaz 2009, 330; Hourani 2015, 191; Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010, 50). The rapid success of the party's reconstruction strategy after the July 2006 war constituted a "victory against Israel and the Lebanese government, which Hezbollah accused of collaborating with the enemy" (Fawaz 2009, 329), and an act of resistance that institutionalised "an already accepted ideology" (Nuwayhid et al. 2011, 514). However, the state itself has seemed to delegate to and trust Hezbollah as a private actor in terms of planning responsibilities (Fawaz 2009, 324), and Hezbollah cannot be defined as a pure anti-state actor (Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010, 60).

Even though Dahiye's residents are familiar with state neglect, the interviews conducted nevertheless reveal their "desire" (Aretxaga 2003) for a more assertive social contract with the central state. Hezbollah's welfare system is, therefore, not conceived as the "only possible state" by the residents, and it is not even deemed a sufficient alternative to the central state. The words of an elderly shop assistant in Laylaki<sup>10</sup> are meaningful in this regard: "Hezbollah did a lot for us after the July war. But we didn't get any support from the state. Everything is useless without an efficient state; Hezbollah can keep on providing everything to us, but nothing is going to change without official state support." The southern suburbs of Beirut – which can be considered a slum, being overcrowded, a product of bad urban planning, and poorly serviced (Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010, 49) – faced particularly difficult challenges during the reconstruction following the 2006 war (Mac Ginty 2007, 464). During the 2006 Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the rift between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah widened. For instance, the Mouawad ministry<sup>11</sup> explicitly hoped that the Israeli government led by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would weaken Hezbollah in the course of the conflict,<sup>12</sup> reducing its political sway in the aftermath of the war. During the postwar reconstruction, the government and Hezbollah established a kind of undeclared partnership, since local people gave financial donations to the Hezbollah-initiated Wa'd Project, which was also funded by the government (Fawaz 2009, 327; Fawaz and Harb 2010, 29). After the July 2006 war, the failure of the state to quickly remove the war debris reinforced Dahiye residents' dependence on Hezbollah's provision of housing (Hilal 2008, 71). The state's delay in providing cash payments destined for those afflicted by the war was similarly interpreted as a lack of sympathy.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, while Hezbollah remains the only welfare provider in Dahiye and seems to be the only

alternative there to the disorder that the enduring Syrian conflict may bring to Lebanon, its municipal governance is questioned to a certain extent by the locals with whom I spoke, who also said that Hezbollah's effectiveness is limited. For instance, the kidnapping of Syrian citizens from Dahiye in August 2012 by the Moqdad family<sup>14</sup> suggested Hezbollah's restricted control on the ground (Deeb and Harb 2012). The day following the kidnappings, the party's leader, Hasan Nasrallah, announced in a televised speech that the party "did not control the situation on the street" (Deeb and Harb 2012). These events serve to showcase the muddled relations between Dahiye's inhabitants, Hezbollah's governance, and the Lebanese state, along with the ways in which the sites of power change situationally.

### "Offering Lebanon to Israel on a Silver Tray"

The dizzying divide between the state and Hezbollah during the July 2006 war was made clear by the two groups' respective public rhetoric, which informed local attitudes toward the intervention by the international community in crisis-stricken Dahiye. During the conflict, the Lebanese state gave some local residents the impression that it was "willing to offer Lebanon to Israel on a silver tray"<sup>15</sup> in order to weaken Hezbollah,<sup>16</sup> and was playing a kind of negotiating role between Israel and Hezbollah via the international community (Presidency of the Councils of Ministers in Lebanon 2007). As a result of this policy of the government, the perception of the state in postwar Dahiye was extremely negative. Furthermore, some scholars have discussed that the 2006 Wa'd reconstruction project, established by Hezbollah through the NGO Jihad al-Binaa, was implemented and financed not only *without* the government's help, but also *despite* the obstacles it put in place (Alamuddin 2010).

The neutral position that the Lebanese state seemed to stake out during the Lebanese-Israeli conflict generated widespread discontent and resentment on the street in Dahiye. Indeed, according to municipal officials and affiliated service providers, at the time of the July war, party political symbols were visibly removed from public institutions. In the same vein, the project manager<sup>17</sup> of the Ministry of Social Affairs branch in the Dahiye suburb of ash-Shiyyah said that politicians in Lebanon were deliberately dividing people by religion and culture. In other words, only the apolitical and the a-confessional seemed potentially capable of acting in a "humane" manner. Hezbollah's provision of aid was seen as an act of moral and political resistance and evidence of victory and contrasted with the central state's attempts to

uphold a stance of neutrality. The Dahiye municipalities that wanted to distinguish their political orientation from Hezbollah, such as al-Mreije and Hadath,<sup>18</sup> adopted a pro-government rhetoric, contending that the Lebanese state had become far more efficient in the suburbs since the July war.

Dahiye's public morality, promoted by Hezbollah, aimed to bring to light who had aligned with the party and who had not during the conflict. This process tended to retrospectively consolidate aid recipients' attachment to their local territory, as a response to a combination of both state neglectfulness and state enmity. Local relief provision to co-residents in times of conflict has intensified people's intimate attachment to Dahiye while further "othering" the touristic presence of the international humanitarian apparatus and its purported aim of supporting those affected by conflicts (Carpi 2014; Mac Ginty 2007). Media accounts also show evidence of the long-standing mistrust of some segments of Dahiye's population toward the international community, which has rushed to rescue them during crises. A Lebanese press release published in *al-Akhbār* (Ghandour 2006) newspaper reported that tons of emergency relief products supplied by the UNHCR had been burned before they could be distributed because of inadequate protection in storage. This was associated with the "smell of corruption" (*rayḥat al-fasād*) in the state-connected High Relief Commission and with the total unreliability of United Nations staff, who were seen to have little regard for people's safety.

From a local perspective, international aid organisations did not view the July war as part of the historical (or temporal) continuity of the area and its everyday provision of services. The social response to humanitarian assistance in 2006 led locals to feel a greater entitlement to claim that the territory was *theirs* – an attachment to place that went beyond cycles of crisis and aid provision. This can be contrasted with the temporary exploitation of war-affected areas by the international aid industry, whose temporally contingent interventions in Dahiye complied with the Lebanese state's interests rather than responding to preexisting local needs. The departure of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), decided on the basis of its risk-management assessment, also served to create greater disaffection toward the "international saviours" in the suburbs. This growing endemic mistrust is captured by 'Ali<sup>19</sup> from ash-Shiyyah, who observed: "Nothing dies if it comes from the inside [*mā fy shy bymūt min juwa*]. Corruption and exploitation have increased due to the presence of the foreigners here." Likewise, on the al-Jazeera television channel,<sup>20</sup> the UN and the United States were often described as

“the real criminals” and “people who have always lied.”<sup>21</sup> By the same token, Mahmoud,<sup>22</sup> a local resident, denied *tout court* that international NGOs had provided aid in Dahiye during the July war. *Al-Akhhbār* journalist Rajana Hammiye (2012) stated that foreigners visiting Dahiye after *ḥarb tammūz* were usually referred to by locals as *‘aber sabīl* (“a passer-by”) – that is, people who leave after fuelling the spirit of the Israeli humiliation – as opposed to *sha’b al-mankūb* (“the people of the disgrace”). When local residents referred to foreign-funded reconstruction programs, they expressed resentment and suspicion toward the international community as well as the Lebanese state. The temporariness of international humanitarian aid in Dahiye and the state’s abdication of responsibility – or even compliance with the “Zionist entity” – contrasts with the system of mutual care that Dahiye’s communities have developed throughout a history of abandonment.

The politicisation of aid has a long genealogy in humanitarian thinking, and exclusion from regimes of assistance is normally explained as part of a politically biased distribution of resources that is directed by higher powers (Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010). In this respect, the Dahiye scenario appears diverse; on the one hand, one can see Hezbollah’s politics of inclusion and popular empowerment (Roy 2008), which purports to enhance the agentive role of its political membership, while on the other, one can see that most of the international humanitarian agencies believe they are operating on pathological subjects, that is, victims of war violence and displacement who need to be “healed,” using neutrality as the ultimate approach to uphold morality and social order in times of crisis. Similarly, governmental and other political actors have tended to view each other as using humanitarianism to strengthen, weaken or contest the claims of their counterparts and to moralise their political agendas (Carpí 2014). Ahmed<sup>23</sup> from ash-Shiyyah explained to me how, during the July war, “everyone bringing aid wanted their logo to be shown . . . and this time, there were definitely more international brands than usual.” Ahmed presented this as evidence that humanitarianism in Lebanon is mostly used as an opportunity to gain political capital while alleviating war-inflicted suffering. In this regard, the words of the ex-Lebanese minister of social affairs Nayla Mouawad in July 2006 reveal how local order is not a developmental stage or status that can be reached once and for all, but rather a relational balance: “I ask the US government to intercede to permit the establishment of humanitarian corridors, to show the Lebanese people that the Seniora<sup>24</sup> government is effective.”<sup>25</sup> Former Lebanese prime minister Fouad Seniora was indeed seen as a local agent

of the West in the implementation of a “liberal peace” (Mac Ginty 2007, 472).

In this sense, local residents read the ambivalent liminal politics of the attacked Lebanese state as straightforward enmity, offering Lebanese land to Israel on a silver tray. The state’s behaviour was associated with what is commonly defined by local citizens as a war-related touristic approach of the international community (*al-ḥarb hiyye siyahat al-mujtama’ ad-dwali*), here embodied by humanitarian agencies on the ground that came to know and work in Dahiye only after war and destruction while ignoring historical continuity. International humanitarian agencies were purportedly showing empathy to people but positioning their practices within a neutral and impartial rubric, that is, respectively, not taking sides in conflicts and being driven by needs to make decisions independently (Mačák 2015, 161).

### The Villages of Akkar and the Syrian Refugee Influx

Akkar’s previous history of displacements and the indirect legacy of war often go unheeded in contemporary accounts of international humanitarian agencies dealing with the Syrian refugee influx. The northern region of the country has long been home to large numbers of Lebanese migrants (Gilsenan 1996), as well as returnees who resettled in the country at the end of the civil war, while it has also suffered from infrastructural neglect in postwar periods (Moghnie 2015) because it has been considered to be less affected by the fallout of conflicts with Israel. For instance, no political forces invested in the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp after the 2007 clashes between the Islamist group Fath al-Islam and the Lebanese army (Hassan and Hanafi 2010). These clashes negatively impacted the northern Lebanese economy, while the United Nations Refugee Works Agency did not hold the type of mandate necessary to rebuild parts of the urban area that used to delineate the camp space (Hassan and Hanafi 2010, 40).

During one of his visits to Akkar, Sa’ad al-Hariri, leading the *Tayyar al-Mustaqbal* party, stressed the needs of this region and the importance of providing care,<sup>26</sup> by symbolically connecting Akkar to the state in the wake of Akkaris’ participations in the “Cedar revolution” (Knudsen and Kerr 2013, 3). The latter was in fact sparked by the death of al-Hariri’s father, Rafiq, on 14 February 2005 and by the demonstrations of the Syrian regime’s allies on 8 March 2005.

During the spring of 2011, the villages of Akkar and the small city of Halba became the first destination for Syrians fleeing shelling by the Syrian government. The

region, which ranks lowest in terms of receipt of government-provided services in Lebanon (Abi-Khoury 2012), was already hosting a large number of Syrian migrant workers who had arrived prior to the Syrian political crisis (Chalcraft 2009). These villages are mostly rural hamlets where the local political economy has historically been formed by feudal-like relationships, and where Syrians have worked mostly as peasants, cleaners, gardeners and constructors. In Akkar, social networks have always been “mechanisms of governance crossing over state boundaries” (Haas 1992), where informal powerholders still retain local sway and authority. This has engendered local “governance without government” (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992), as the central state normally neglects such areas. The intervention of the international humanitarian apparatus reconfigured the political assemblage governing the Akkar space, in which the central state is only one among several actors seeking to preserve local order.

When not engaged in menial labour, the Syrian nationals who were living in Akkar before 2011 were generally employed in the Syrian national army, which had been active in Lebanese territory since 1976, with the alleged motivation of protecting Lebanon’s stability following the 1975–90 civil war (Abi-Khoury 2012). Even though Syrian president Bashar al-Assad withdrew his troops in April 2005 in response to international and local pressure, Lebanese citizens nowadays still tend to identify Syrian labourers with their “Leviathan” regime, leading to a complex relationship between the former military occupation and current refugeehood. I will now show how today’s Syrian refugees perceive the Lebanese state’s and the international humanitarian apparatus’s enmity in similar ways to the Lebanese who were displaced during the July 2006 war.

The Lebanese state, historically at the mercy of Syrian political decisions, has pursued a continuous politics of balance out of its need to survive and preserve political order. However, the liminal politics that the Lebanese state tends to embrace in times of crisis stands in contradiction with its repressive acts. For instance, assassinated Lebanese journalist Gibran Tuani wrote in November 2000 about the Lebanese state crushing protesters at the University of Saint-Joseph in Beirut who were voicing their opposition to the Syrian occupation. Moreover, although there are many complexities to this issue that fall outside the scope of this article, the Lebanese government had supported the Pax Syria in Lebanon until the Syrian troops’ withdrawal in 2005.

Likewise, the governmental response to the Syrian crisis and the subsequent refugee influx has been rather controversial, falling between anti-refugee acts and a

normative liminal politics. Since the very beginning of the crisis, the Lebanese government has regarded the Syrians as temporary residents and in legal documentation has employed the term “displaced” (*nazihūn*) rather than “refugees” (*lajy’ūn*), consolidating the fact that Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Indeed, a Ministry of Social Affairs official, Makram Malaeb,<sup>27</sup> declared that the Lebanese government’s intention was certainly not to let refugees feel “comfortable,” but rather to prompt them to resettle elsewhere or return to Syria in safe conditions. The government has followed the same anti-naturalisation (*tawfīn*) narrative for Syrians as it has for Palestinian refugees, who have only sporadically been allowed to obtain Lebanese citizenship.<sup>28</sup> The spectre of *tawfīn* in Lebanon has consequently cemented crisis repertoires caused by long-term refugeehoods and by political failures to prevent the emergence of new, unwanted citizens.

The so-called Ba’bda Declaration (issued in June 2012) normatively asserted Lebanon’s neutrality and disengagement from the Syrian crisis. Unlike the 2003–06 Iraqi crisis, during which a memorandum of understanding was swiftly signed between the Lebanese government and the UNHCR, Lebanon did not adopt any formal policy vis-à-vis the Syrian displacement until late 2014 (Janmyr 2017). While the previous Lebanese minister of social affairs, Abou Fa’our, had initially followed a de facto relatively open-door policy in line with a humanitarian approach,<sup>29</sup> other leading politicians such as the then minister of the interior, Marwan Charbel, showed reticence and even racism toward the Syrian newcomers, suggesting that the Lebanese border be closed in early 2012. On a similar note, Gebran Bassil, at that time energy minister, who was affiliated with the ‘Aoun-led Free Patriotic Movement,<sup>30</sup> had already called for Syrians to be denied entry and for the repatriation of those who were already inside Lebanon in September 2013 (NowLebanon 2013).<sup>31</sup> The temporary acceptance of Syrian refugees to Lebanon continued periodically until January 2015, when the decision was made to restrict entry to those refugees who had a hotel booking or USD \$1,000 in cash (Dionigi 2017; Janmyr 2017).<sup>32</sup>

In order to cope with the refugee influx and uphold public accountability, Lebanon’s government strategy has made use of external resources while simultaneously denying the scale of the Syrian crisis.<sup>33</sup> Most local parties that have provided aid to Syrian refugees belong to the Sa’d Hariri-led March 14 coalition, which sympathised with some segments of the Syrian opposition, such as Arab Gulf NGOs. The March 14 coalition has a long history of providing assistance and reconstruction support in times of crisis. For instance, the Future Movement



intervened as an aid provider during the July 2006 war, as well as in the wake of the Beirut street clashes in May 2008, when it distributed \$1.2 million in direct compensation to those affected by the violence, especially in the Tripoli neighbourhood of Bab at-Tabbaneh (Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010, 55).

Those who support the Syrian opposition, and who have helped Syrian refugees in Akkar, have voiced their perception of state enmity. For example, the administrative head<sup>34</sup> of the Lebanese NGO 'Akkarouna has argued that the Lebanese state allocated greater funding to the displaced of the July war than to Syrian refugees fleeing violence and persecution. Furthermore, Lebanon's High Relief Council, which is funded by the government, stopped giving financial assistance to the Syrian refugees and supporting those who helped refugees in Akkar because of a supposed lack of resources. Similarly, in the interviews I conducted, local residents highlighted that the central government had consistently stopped projects sponsored by Lebanese parties that are generally sympathetic to the Syrian opposition.<sup>35</sup> The Lebanese state therefore is not perceived to be neutral with regard to the Syrian conflict; in practice, by aligning itself with the Assad regime, its performance of neutrality even produces enmity toward the people of Akkar and Akkar's Syrian refugees.<sup>36</sup>

A recurrent theme of Arab Gulf-funded NGOs that have provided aid to Syrians in Akkar<sup>37</sup> is state enmity as a form of passivity – a nuanced effect of liminality – toward crisis and crisis-stricken victims. Until late 2013, some local exponents of the March 14 coalition declared that they would give assistance to the Syrians “mostly due to the absence of services provided by the state. *We* are the only human beings here who are doing something for our Syrian brethren.”<sup>38</sup> The anti-state rhetoric of the residents of Akkar parallels the Dahiye anti-state – or “anti-system” (Di Peri 2014) – rhetoric, despite the differing political environments. Similarly to Dahiye, however, this anti-stateness is not a clear-cut stance, but rather the product of the perception of state enmity combined with individuals' frustrated attempts to befriend the state. I will now turn to Akkar's humanitarian economy, where both the state and the international humanitarian apparatus are thought to be “winking at each other” in their liminal preservation of the socio-political order.

### The Local Reception of Syrian Refugees in Akkar

In the Akkar region, both official and informal access to resources is mostly guaranteed by local *zu'amā'*,<sup>39</sup> *makhātīr*,<sup>40</sup> and other local authorities (such as a

governmental representative called a *mandūb*, or a commissioner in charge of managing local affairs, known as a *mas'ūl*, meaning “responsible”). In this realm of multiple actors, it is the municipality's *mukhtār* who provides the list of beneficiaries to the international NGOs and UN agencies. If a cleavage between the central state and local powerholders was identifiable prior to the arrival of international humanitarians, foreign aid providers have reinforced the locally entrenched pseudo-tribalism and clientelism because they generally have to rely on local gatekeepers to gain safe and quick access to local communities and refugees (Mac Ginty and Hamieh 2010). As Feras told me in Bebnin,<sup>41</sup> international aid organisations are believed to “wink at our old local leaders, who all have an interest in monitoring the aid distribution process in the absence of the state. What is the result? The beneficiary group is still selected according to their corrupt criteria.” A UNICEF worker in the area expressed a similar idea: “The local authorities provided me with a list of people who were entitled to receive financial support for their children's schooling materials. After the distribution, several people came to me, complaining that they hadn't even heard about this possibility of help.”<sup>42</sup> In this framework, aid becomes a new resource within the local network of political clientelism (Cammatt 2014), which thrives in the historical absence of the central government in the northern region of Lebanon. In turn, most of the international humanitarian apparatus has justified their cooperation with local leaders – and, in some cases, the tendency to avoid cooperation with the central state – by arguing that their goal is not to change Akkar's society, but rather to maintain a neutral – and liminal – position within the humanitarian space.<sup>43</sup> Among my interlocutors, the local perception of state enmity was therefore accompanied by the refugees' belief that the political neutrality of international humanitarian agencies was actively feeding into state enmity.

I observed how small Lebanese villages feel bewildered at the hands of the transnational governance that has emerged as a result of the Syrian refugee influx. Some locals aspire to state centralisation and to counter external interventions in that they believe they are “offering” their land to the international humanitarian apparatus. External actors tend to rely on Akkar's pre-existing, fiefdom-like power structures and reinforced decentralised forms of governance to gain access to local villages and communities. In a region that has long tried to capture the friendlier “face of the state” (Obeid 2010), many locals have voiced their disaffection with both local powerholders and the international humanitarian apparatus that relies on their gatekeeping.

Fadi, a Syrian from Homs who had relocated to Wadi Khaled, affirmed:

I don't trust these new organisations that came here, saying that things will get better with them. I have fought with the *mukhtār* face to face, because I was not given enough. I have five kids to feed! He used to listen to my requests until a few months ago . . . but now he feels empowered and blessed by the West, because *they* also need his help. I know they all do business based on the Syrian suffering, while they wink at each other.<sup>44</sup>

In this hybrid space co-governed by international and local structures, the role of local powerholders is necessarily incorporated into the humanitarian apparatus, in a region where state funding has only reluctantly been pumped in. A pressing need among humanitarian structures, as well as host governments, is the ability to calm local tensions, which are commonly believed to have increased after the influx of refugees. In fact, rather than viewing the Syrian refugees as victims of human rights violations, the international humanitarian industry – based on the traditional aim of international aid organisations to maintain a geopolitical balance while professing “civilizational geopolitics” (Jeffrey 2008) – has constructed Syrians as deserving humanitarian victims. Against this backdrop, most of the refugee interviewees perceive the neutrality of international humanitarian actors as a tacit alliance with the Lebanese host state and a reinforcement of the legitimacy of the Assad regime. As a result, the humanitarian actors have sought to demonstrate that their intention is not to intervene in the real source of problems in Syria. This response confirms this idea of humanitarianism winking at local powers:

*They* [the staff of an international NGO in Halba] said their role is not to take sides at all, when I asked for medication. They are the same as the state. I have an injured hand, as you can see . . . I was fighting with the Free Syrian Army [FSA], and they know that.<sup>45</sup>

As the liminal politics of the Lebanese state, the humanitarian compliance with the former, and a reinforced local clientelism have emerged, both local citizens and Syrian refugees in the Akkar region have reconfigured and rearticulated their perceptions of the enmity of the governing bodies.

## Conclusion

As Lebanon witnesses a continual rescaling of power, both local and refugee populations draw on a similar repertoire of crisis created by chronic abandonment, a

perception of state enmity, and frustrated aspirations to befriend the state. The Lebanese state constructs an apparent liminal positionality within crisis settings; however, in the eyes of denied citizens and fabricated humanitarian victims, it appears practically aligned with the situational enemy. In the context of the state “offering Lebanon to Israel on a silver tray,” local political forces other than the central government and other than international humanitarian actors seem to be the only possible protection system against instability and neglect. Likewise, the official neutrality politics of many international humanitarian agencies in Akkar satisfy the existential need of the Lebanese Dionysian state to maintain domestic stability vis-à-vis the crisis of the Syrian Apollonian state: a liminality officially marked by the 2012 Ba'bda Declaration. However, as outlined in this paper, apparent state liminality is actually operationalised through repressive acts and violent neglect. Indeed, historical experience has shown how the Lebanese state reinforces its own agency as a full-fledged political actor by aborting change and adopting a politics of repression. In my hermeneutics of enmity, the state is therefore experienced as antithetical to the social and political efforts of citizens and refugees – a fickle figure winking, so to speak, at Israel since 1978 and at Syria before and after the 2011 the political crisis. Therefore, what my local and refugee interlocutors have described as a convenient complicity between the Lebanese state and the international humanitarian apparatus is not an exclusive relationship between state and non-state actors. As my research experience in the two field sites has shown, such a perceived complicity – which I have named “state enmity” in this article – rather reflects how local and refugee populations configure the historical positionality of the Lebanese state in regional geopolitics, as well as in Lebanon's state-to-state relationships.

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## Notes

- 1 These are precisely 68 aid providers in Dahiye and 43 in Akkar, as well as nearly 200 ordinary Lebanese citizens

- and Syrian refugees in the latter. Individual research participants, non-state organisations, and local municipalities have been selected for my study on the basis of their participation in aid provision during the July 2006 war and the Syrian refugee influx in Dahiye and Akkar, respectively.
- 2 Al-Mreije and Hadath, with a Christian majority and not governed by Hezbollah, claim a different territorial identity, yet they are geographically part of eastern Dahiye.
  - 3 The Swiss businessman Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1863), started the rhetoric of apolitical humanitarianism. Nevertheless, the current principles of neutrality and impartiality are based on international customary law rather than domestic legal systems (Blondel 1991).
  - 4 The system of the *qaimaqam*, a “sub-governor” during the Ottoman Empire, and the 1861 *Mutasarrifiyyah* semi-autonomous administration within Greater Syria (Kawtharani 2015) have also played an important role in giving rise to the current power-sharing model in Lebanon.
  - 5 This is linked to the Shiite legacies of victimhood and oppression that constitute what is perceived by most locals to be a sort of “genealogical” bedrock upon which to build their lives’ beliefs and values. Dahiye’s setting presents segregated communities that do not necessarily lack basic resources.
  - 6 Interview via Skype with a Beirut-based Italian NGO, 13 October 2014.
  - 7 Disaffection with the Lebanese state is long-standing. To provide one among several examples, during Israel’s “Operation Gift” on 28 and 29 December 1968, which demolished Beirut International Airport, the state’s inability to defend the country was made clear and was strongly criticised by Lebanese citizens, who protested on university campuses.
  - 8 For instance, the 1996 Elyssar Project, which went unfinished because of financial constraints.
  - 9 A conversation with the author held on 11 January 2013.
  - 10 A conversation with the author held on 3 October 2011.
  - 11 Nayla Mouawad was the Lebanese minister of social affairs at the time of the July war.
  - 12 Wikileaks cable, 21 July 2006, Beirut. Released on 15 March 2011.
  - 13 This led to 75 percent of local residents paying for the Wa’d Project, which was in turn paid for by the Lebanese government.
  - 14 Al-Moqdad is a powerful local family whose residence is well known in the Dahiye district of ar-Ruwess.
  - 15 Conversation with Intisar, Haret Hreik, on 13 November 2011, and ‘Ali, ash-Shiyyah, on 3 February 2012.
  - 16 In fact, Fouad Seniora, who was the prime minister at the time, gave a speech on 15 July 2006 from the Beirut Grand Serail, calling for national unity and blaming Hezbollah for the explosion in violence (Presidency of the Council of Ministers Lebanon 2007, Appendix I, 2–3).
  - 17 Interview conducted in ash-Shiyyah, 30 October 2011.
  - 18 Interviews conducted by the author with municipality residents on 14 November 2012.
  - 19 A conversation held with the author on 3 February 2012.
  - 20 It is worth noting that al-Jazeera was, at the time of the July war, certainly allied with Lebanon, not Israel. However, people in Dahiye used to refer to the channel by highlighting its current political attitude: opposing Hezbollah and the Axis of Resistance, and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, as became clear after the Egyptian regime change.
  - 21 Conversation with Intisar in her house in Haret Hreik on 24 November 2011.
  - 22 Conversation with Mahmud, al-Jnah on 30 December 2011.
  - 23 Interview conducted on 30 October 2011.
  - 24 Fouad Seniora was prime minister of the Lebanese Republic from 2005 to 2009, when Prime Minister Najib Miqati succeeded him.
  - 25 Wikileaks cable, 21 July 2006, accessed 11 May 2011.
  - 26 In regard to this issue, Jamil Mouawad (2015) mentions the 25 November 2010 *as-Safir* article.
  - 27 Discussion held at the Carnegie Middle East Center Conference, downtown Beirut, 25 June 2013.
  - 28 The Palestinians, however, are the only group considered to be legal refugees in Lebanon because of a bilateral agreement between the government and the United Nations Refugee Works Agency.
  - 29 Abou Faour and the predominantly March 14 coalition government have been accused by the Syrian ambassador in Lebanon of helping “terrorists” (referring to the Syrian opposition and many of the refugees) (Amrieh 2014).
  - 30 This political movement has been aligned with the March 8 coalition led by Hezbollah since 2006.
  - 31 Abou Faour, in response, ruled out such a decision.
  - 32 Before then, Syrians were allowed to stay in Lebanon with an ID card for up to one year, on the condition that the permit was renewed every six months.
  - 33 Interview with the leader of an Italian NGO based in Beirut, 2 February 2013.
  - 34 Tripoli, an interview conducted on 10 January 2013. *Akkarouna* means “our Akkar” in Arabic.
  - 35 Conversations with the author held between August 2012 and November 2013 in Halba.
  - 36 The former government of Najib Miqati was, at the time of the interviews, seen as aligned with the Assad regime.
  - 37 Interviews with the Kuwaiti Association in Tripoli, 14 January 2013, and the Qatari Initiative in Tripoli, 18 December 2012.
  - 38 These interlocutors expressed their wish to remain anonymous. Tripoli, 1 November 2013.
  - 39 *Zu’ama’* are village leaders and members of prominent landed families dating back to the Ottoman period. They usually have more contacts than politicians with their local supporters.
  - 40 Local *makhātir* (the plural of *mukhtār*) represent the formal organisation of power, but they are also powerbrokers who intercede between the villagers and international or local organisations.
  - 41 Interview conducted by the author on 23 September 2012.
  - 42 Interview conducted in Qobaiyat on 7 February 2013.
  - 43 Interview with an international NGO worker in Qobaiyat on 28 December 2013.
  - 44 A conversation with the author held on 19 January 2013.
  - 45 Interview conducted by the author with Hisham, a Syrian refugee and ex-FSA combatant. Al-’Abdeh, 24 December 2012.

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