Refugee Hospitality in Lebanon and Turkey. On Making 'the Other'

INTRODUCTION

In this article, we examine the hospitality provided to Syrian refugees in staggered stages from 2011 to 2016 in the Akkar region (northern Lebanon) and the border city of Gaziantep (south-eastern Turkey). According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics in 2017, nearly 254,000 Syrian refugees were in northern Lebanon, while the border city of Gaziantep had approximately 350,000 off-camp refugees. In both border regions, the ratio of the refugee population to the local population was highly significant (nearly 22% in Akkar and 17% in Gaziantep).

Differently nuanced from refugee reception, hospitality has gradually become a paramount discursive strategy to enhance socio-spatial control and promote accountability for humanitarian agencies, local authorities, local citizens, and the international community concerned with the Middle Eastern region. As will be made evident, while hospitality (Shryock, 2008: 406) and humanitarian action (Prendergast, 1996) purport to act beyond politics, both actually act as assertive politics of sovereignty over social encounters. In this article, national borders echo such assertive politics. From the vantage point of the 'humanitarian border', where assistance and the search for livelihoods are attempted (Walters, 2011), we approach these two border regions as sites of humanitarian governance, which, lacking the sophisticated screening technologies associated with the migration control pertinent to asylum contexts, nevertheless interlock institutional and everyday workings of hospitality (Dağtaş, 2017).

By unpacking hospitality as a multi-purposed strategic discourse, we unfold the social and ethical implications of hospitality when it comes to comparing host societies neighbouring crises through binary accounts of greed and generosity. We will therefore question the rigid classification of social groups into 'refugees', 'hosts', and 'guests', in order to reflect on their encounters in northern Lebanon and south-eastern Turkey.

Both border regions are historically characterised by smuggling activities, economic exchanges, and socio-political ties, which historically made the border particularly porous. A vast border economy was the primary source for countless livelihoods before the Syrian crisis and, in particular, prior to the closure of the Lebanese-Syrian and Turkish-Syrian borders. The intervention of international humanitarian actors as a new actor governing the border (Walters, 2011) between Syria and its neighbouring countries altered the local development of coping mechanisms and access to sources of empowerment.

In legal terms, while Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention for Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, Turkey retained a geographic limitation to its ratification, recognising displaced people from Europe as refugees, and it currently adopts a 'temporary protection' framework for Syrian refugees (Art. 7 of the national regulation).[1] Lebanon, which officially remains a country of transit, has lately enacted official policies on Syrian displacement. In Lebanon, informality dominates the legal framework, which humanitarian practices and ordinary people need to navigate. This made crisis management decentralised, fragmented, and often informal. Most refugees reside in cities, unofficial camps, or informal gatherings (Yassin et al., 2015). Different to international humanitarian agencies, municipal and central government authorities took a direct role in the response to the Syrian crisis only at a later stage, with the enforcement of the 2015/16 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, which was meant to strengthen local cooperation and inter-agency coordination and, to a greater extent, involve local authorities (Boustani et al., 2016).

Indeed, Syrian migrant workers historically populated the Akkar region by carrying out menial and seasonal labour (Chalcraft, 2009). While the majority of Syrian labourers were seasonal, returning to Syria on a cyclic basis, where the cost of living was more affordable and service provision more effective than in Lebanon, some of these migrant workers brought their families to Lebanon when violence escalated after the spring of 2011 street protests. That is to say, some Syrian nationals in Akkar were perceived as intra-group strangers (the Greek *xénoi*) but never as unknown foreigners (the Greek *barbaroi*) (Pitt-Rivers, 2012: 504). Today's refugees in Akkar are an unavoidable spectre of Syrian control of Lebanon, sanctioned by the so-called 1976–2005 *Pax Syriana*, which ended the Lebanese civil war. Due to a complex historical relationship, Syrian refugees in Lebanon are now perceived as tangible signs that war may come closer at some stage. As a consequence, large segments of Akkar's residents associate those who fled the government's shelling from 2011 with the historical memory of the Syrian regime's repressive measures in Lebanon, despite a long porous border history. Indeed, the 1993 Agreement for Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination for goods and persons officially marked an open border policy between Syria and Lebanon. When the Syrian crisis broke out in the spring of 2011, nothing similar to the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UNHCR and Lebanon's government, which tackled the Iraqi refugee inflow, was introduced. In June 2014, only Syrians living in border areas where there was fighting could enter Lebanon. In January 2015, the first comprehensive policy on Syrian displacement was enacted, establishing a *kafala* system of business sponsorship or trade reasons for a six-month stay (Dionigi, 2017). According to the same decree, Syrian refugees

are now not allowed to work in Lebanon in sectors other than cleaning – now classified as 'environment' – gardening, agriculture, and construction (Janmyr, 2016) due to increasing local unemployment.

In Turkey, a new Law on Foreigners and International Protection came into force in 2014. Syrian refugees entered the temporary protection regime once they registered with the Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD), then replaced by the General Directorate of Migration Management (DGMM). However, the role of the AFAD in Syrian refugee camps remains persistent. The Turkish migration regime maintains 'differential inclusion' (Baban et al., 2016) of Syrian refugees, offering some social citizenship rights (i.e. access to basic healthcare, education, and social assistance) while denying them asylum. The humanitarian acknowledgment of the Turkish 'open-border policy' (UNHCR, 2016) largely results from the non-*refoulement* of Syrian refugees who enter the country documented or undocumented. However, this policy becomes questionable as Turkey starts to impose tighter border restrictions relating to the crossing of Syrian refugees (Amnesty International, 2016). The humanitarian concerns about border restrictions have been made clear as early as mid-2012, when the Turkish state started to implement limited entry to the refugees, and makeshift settlements of internally displaced people (IDP) on the Syrian side of the border increased (Dinçer et al., 2013). Pushbacks, forced returns, and anti-refugee violence have been increasingly reported, while field research has shown that new registrations at the Migration Management in Gaziantep had ceased by mid-2016. According to the UNHCR, a significant backlog exists in this city, with 81,977 Syrians waiting for registration (UNHCR, 2017b).

Despite this legally uncertain environment, Gaziantep is an export giant in the region, producing textiles, food, chemicals, and plastic products in five organised industrial zones – the largest in the country. The 2007 Free Trade, the 2009 Regional Cooperation, and the 2009 Visa Exemption agreements with Syria have made Gaziantep local residents and Syrian nationals stronger business and trading partners. This background facilitates the reception of Syrian refugee entrepreneurs and their economic emplacement. However, the large number of working-class refugees are either employed in deregulated industries or on an informal basis.[2]

METHODS

This paper is based on distinct ethnographic studies conducted in two border regions that became primary destinations for Syrian refugees: The Akkar governorate (northern Lebanon) and the city of Gaziantep (south-eastern Turkey). Even though the two ethnographic experiences were not initially meant to result in a comparative study, the convergence of the

Lebanese and the Turkish experience remains theoretically relevant in spite of their highly diverse political and social configurations. Similarly, such convergence brings about salient questions regarding humanitarian policies and practices, their impact on public morality, and a local sense of territorial belonging. Nevertheless, the lack of an original comparative research plan remains the limit of this study, as it cannot forward symmetrical findings, which can only stem from a collectively pre-arranged methodology.

In Lebanon, ethnographic accounts were collected in the Akkar villages of Bebnin, al-Bahsa, al-'Abdeh, and the small city of Halba, where local people were already sharing spaces and resources with the refugee newcomers prior to the arrival of international humanitarian agencies. In-depth interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation were conducted in Arabic at staggered stages between September 2011 and March 2017, with approximately one hundred and forty Syrian individuals and fourteen Lebanese residents. Local and refugee gatekeepers helped identify Syrian and Lebanese interviewees. Forty-three semi-structured interviews were also conducted with humanitarian practitioners working in NGOs and UN agencies located throughout the Akkar region. In Turkey, participant observation was carried out on a continual basis in the border city of Gaziantep between January 2015 and June 2016. Participation in the coordination meetings held in the city Governorate with international, local, and Syrian NGOs was also part of the participant observation. Focus group discussions and surveys were conducted in the framework of humanitarian action-related meetings. In-depth interviews were mainly conducted between April and June 2016, and completed in August 2016, with twenty-nine Syrian individuals and twenty Turkish residents in slum areas, the old city centre, and in deregulated industrial sites. Furthermore, seven semi-structured interviews were carried out with humanitarian practitioners and NGO spokespersons, in addition to informal interviews with Syrian youth in a slum where the murder of a Turkish landlord by his Syrian tenant sparked anti-Syrian resentment. Interviews were also conducted with a group of Syrian young male and female workers, in the Ünaldı and the Gazikent deregulated industrial sites respectively.

THE HOSPITALITY DISCOURSE IN LEBANON

Hospitality, the international media, and the state

Humanitarian assistance provision has often been associated with hospitality. During emergency crises, in fact, hospitality has often served as a public discourse (el-Abed, 2014) for 'measuring' and assessing either the host's generosity or hostility; this discourse has therefore embedded local populations in a generosity-hostility dichotomy. The 'mediatisation' of

hospitality is no exception in the Middle Eastern context, as it makes - among the several cultural identities populating this area – 'Arab hospitality' a national public virtue (Shryock, 2004: 60). Among the means of expression that the so-called international community can adopt to assess, acknowledge, or ignore crises, media coverage has tied morality to the local material (in)capacity to host and welcome refugees (Carpi, 2016). Accounts of greed or grievances as sparks of enduring conflicts in the Middle East and war economies have remained widespread (Collier, 2000), which have silenced the nuanced realities of ordinary people who found themselves in the necessity of providing hospitality.

The desperate fight for economic survival in Akkar (Zakhour, 2005; Abi-Habib Khoury, 2012; Moushref, 2008), whose inhabitants have been chronically neglected since the French Mandate (1920), the National Pact State (1943) and the Ta'ef Agreement State (1990), appeared in the media and in humanitarian literature, with the main goal of emphasising the strain that Lebanon has been under since 2011 while also reifying local generosity (McVeigh, 2013). Nowadays, the local residents of the northern region still deal with a twenty-hour power cut on a daily basis, a lack of drinking water, and an overall scarcity of public schools and local hospitals. The under-performing infrastructure and service provisions are indeed the main sources of today's local tensions in this region (Harb and Saab, 2014).

In light of a longstanding relationship between the media and humanitarian assistance (Franks, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2010), media coverage has historically maintained and advertised the hospitality discourse in an effort to build and preserve the international image of receiving governments as welcoming hosts. These media narratives are forwarded in the framework of a civilisational geopolitics (Jeffrey, 2008) started by humanitarian agencies in the global South: The host represents an ethical hub, around which local values and public attitudes must revolve. Contrarily, some international accounts have denounced the abdication of the hospitality discourse in receiving societies, e.g. by portraying host populations as greedy and as craving and looking for profit in an attempt to take advantage of crisis. Lebanon is no exception, with rental market prices (Ashkar, 2015) and labour exploitation (Janmyr, 2016) making the media headlines in a bid to contest Lebanese xenophobia and racism.

Since 2011, the idea of a 'hosting Lebanon' has rested between the actual practice of hospitality offered by Lebanese nationals to Syrian newcomers – mostly due to family ties – and the necessity to respond locally to crisis by reclaiming their home and maintaining social order. In this scenario, the humanitarian rhetoric around the hospitality of the Lebanese government and society are presently purported as factors able to prevent or attenuate local tensions. The vast majority of humanitarian programmes, in fact, currently address multi-ethnic areas populated

by Syrian, Lebanese, or Palestinian populations. The multi-ethnic and multi-religious factors are therefore implicitly approached as the self-evidenced presence of local frictions (International Alert, 2015), and media coverage and humanitarian reports have largely followed such trends (Thompson, 2012; Fabre-Mata et al., 2015: 7). On the one hand, this humanitarian and media view of hosts' 'generosity' inadvertently implies that local people can be labelled as 'unwelcoming' and 'greedy' when material conditions are unsustainable in the long run. On the other hand, the international humanitarian system, with the traditional purpose of alleviating suffering and rescuing lives in emergency states (Fassin and Pandolfi, 2010), constructed Syrian refugees as deserving humanitarian victims rather than victims of human rights violations (Carpi, 2015). In this sense, the profile of the 'ideal refugee' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014) is expected by humanitarian agencies or self-constructed (Bouris, 2007) by refugees themselves in the effort to fit the eligibility criteria that allow for access to the assistance regime. Through the enduring hospitality discourse, Syrian refugees are therefore doomed to the reified condition of ideally temporary guests as long as they are willing to comply with the ethical code which, contextually, makes them 'proper guests' (Rozakou, 2012: 574). In this regard, such guests develop a sense of conditionality toward welfare provision and social protection. It is in this vein that the hospitality discourse has served the purpose of building or preserving contextual social orders in humanitarian settings. In this sense, humanitarian action turns into conflict transformation (Duffield, 2001), which the following section will further illustrate.

Hospitality as a humanitarian strategy

In Lebanon, the government's role has initially been marginal and mostly unofficial, thus baptised as the 'policy of no-policy' (el-Mufti, 2014). In fact, at the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the Lebanese government adopted a policy of disassociation (i.e. the 2012 Ba'bda Declaration) in a bid to preserve political stability and in regard to its historically complex relationship with the Asad regime in neighbouring Syria (Seale, 1989; Blanford, 2011). Instead, the UNHCR took the lead in response to the Syrian displacement within Lebanon (Boustani et al., 2016). In Lebanon, due to cyclic emergency states, many UN agencies and international NGOs (INGOs) were already on the ground prior to the Syrian crisis, potentially able to ease the process of setting up humanitarian coordination. As the crisis prolonged, the Lebanese government became increasingly involved and INGOs saw the importance of rigorously involving national authorities and host community representatives in the response, resulting in joint efforts to develop the first draft of the 2015/2016 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)

in late 2014, "a multi-year plan to address the stabilisation challenges of the country, while taking into account key protection and humanitarian issues, livelihoods and countering threats to security" (LCRP, 2014). The LCRP sanctioned an important national shift from emergency responses to longer-term development approaches, without having addressed the Syrian emergency in the first instance.

The international media often provides accounts of hospitality and generosity when referring to Lebanon. Likewise, Lebanese government ambassadors worldwide, such as Antoine Chedid in a public speech held in October 2013 in the United States, have also engaged with the hospitality discourse in the international arena. The state rhetoric has rather been concerned with portraying refugees as mere guests, whose temporariness in the Lebanese territory makes the option of official refugee encampment unsuitable and even undesirable (Yassin et al., 2015).

Throughout 2012 and 2013, INGOs began providing financial support to enable Lebanese families to temporarily host Syrian refugees. Since then, the Syrian influx into Lebanon became internationalised, enabling humanitarian agencies to hold sway in local social change (Jeffrey, 2008) and to ensure that the preferred resources and labourers are prioritised.

With the intervention of humanitarian agencies and the 'neoliberalisation' of local hospitality by financially supporting Lebanese families for a limited period of time – usually with the policy stating one year[3] – spontaneous hospitality has gradually diminished, even among families (Thorleifsson, 2016). Thereby, hospitality paradoxically became part of the humanitarian aid toolkit, leading to the 'humanitarianisation' of hospitality. However, with the humanitarianisation of the act of hosting, the *ad hoc* character of local hospitality has not faded away, even though local hardships in coping with protracted crises have not been sufficiently supported (Nicholson, 2017).

While some Lebanese families host Syrian refugees because of family ties, old friendships, and personal favours, other households receive cash from international humanitarian organisations and UN agencies in order to provisionally accommodate Syrian refugees. For example, in October 2012, a Lebanese family in the small Akkar town of al-'Abdeh recounted that they were hosting a Syrian family of five members out of a personal favour to their family doctor, with whom they had a very longstanding friendship. Nonetheless, the humanitarian interviewees discussed the financing of home-hosting as a flawed strategy. For instance, in January 2013, an international NGO worker based in the Akkar village of Qobaiyat affirmed: "I think it has not been a good move to pay families to host Syrians. We basically made them dependent on people that are not independent themselves, and we can arrange an

accommodation for them only for a period of one year. What are they going to do next? What have we changed by doing so?" In addition, local beneficiaries realise the limitedness of offering hospitality on a cyclic basis, as displacement becomes protracted. In October 2012, Walid, a Lebanese man in Halba, stressed that, at the beginning of the Syrian refugee influx, there used to be empathy – *ta'atwf* – towards the Syrians displaced in Lebanon, especially in the Akkar region, which also experienced the political oppression exercised by the Syrian regime over the history of the Arab Levant. This empathy, however, disappeared over the protracted crisis: "Everyone just wants to get rid of all the Syrians; you can perceive only tension now, and I'm not surprised. After having hosted them, we even get robbed by them. […] they are the ones getting aid, not us". Against the backdrop of increasing local xenophobia, hospitality has sometimes been discussed in terms of greed, as the arrival of Syrian refugees also became an unexpected economic opportunity for some local residents. For instance, Najwan, a Lebanese woman from the Bebnin village, mentioned that her father illegally built an upper floor in a building to rent out new properties to Syrian nationals and enhance his monthly income. The Syrian-Lebanese relationships during and after the *Pax Syriana* (1976–2005) are never mentioned in the humanitarian literature. The resulting process of de-historicisation has overshadowed the tardive character of international assistance in this border region and has illusively promoted the 'recruitment' of local hosts as an arm of human compassion. For example, in October 2012, a relatively wealthy Lebanese landowner hosted a Syrian family in the Akkar village of Bebnin without receiving any financial support from NGOs. He used to be well connected with the local *mukhtar* – the local governor managing local affairs – who recommended him to an international NGO in the local selection of refugee hosts. When the funding period ended after one year, he refrained from offering unpaid hospitality to the Syrian family that he had opened his doors to one year earlier.

This anecdote highlights that internationally funded hospitality has not promoted local solidarity and empathy with Syrian displacement in Akkar. In this setting, solidarity is historically entangled with local hostility against the Syrian government and army, as well as with labour competition prior to the presence of international humanitarian agencies. Rather, as has happened in different humanitarian settings such as Sri Lanka (Hasbullah and Korf, 2009; Brun, 2010), the assistance provided to the local hosts ceased after local initiatives had been made redundant under humanitarian governance. Hospitality rather became a *necessary discourse* to finance and enfranchise local residents, acknowledge them as hosts, and systematise hospitality as a form of welfare provision and local governance supervision.

If humanitarian agencies need to reach out to and select local families to guarantee local hospitality on a sustainable basis, prolonged refugee crises in chronically vulnerable settings generate unsustainable living conditions. In this framework, the hospitality discourse cannot act as a catalyst of social solidarity insofar as solidarity remains at the mercy of material wealth, and humanitarian arrangements necessarily follow the vacillating politics of global donors.

Hospitality discourse as a local way to cope with crisis

Hospitality in societies that neighbour crises has functioned as a conveniently imported multi-purposed discourse, which particularly arises after the intervention of humanitarian agencies in crisis-affected settings (Shryock, 2004; 2008). In the first instance, hospitality in Akkar's society was an unavoidable response to the arrival of the refugees (which also meant the return to this northern Lebanese region of some Syrian migrant workers). With the arrival of the international humanitarian agencies disciplining local hospitality and offering monetary assets to host families, hospitality became a markedly 'organising principle' (Brun, 2010: 348) of local society, where the politics prevail over the ethics of relating to others (Ibid.). A process of 'otherisation' of Syrian nationals in Lebanon – most of whom had already set foot in the Akkar region for work, family reasons, or were even born there – significantly took place after the international acknowledgment and declaration of the Syrian emergency crisis. The regional process of Syrian 'refugee-ness' (Malkki, 1995) began to be a local citizens' improvised way of dealing with the influx and of marking the Akkar territory as *theirs*, in an effort to manage and control 'the home'. In fact, hosts must have power over the domain in which they host, as well as power over the guest (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000).

Following the implementation of international arrangements meant to manage crisis in the region, the reconfiguration of the refugee-host social encounter in terms of hospitality started to reproduce spaces to which some inhabitants belonged – whose sense of belonging was reinforced by their act of hosting – and to which others did not (Carpi, 2016). Thereby, 'guests' and 'hosts' noticeably became distinct social categories (Brun, 2010: 351). Syrian nationals therefore turned into temporary guests, even when they were already inhabiting the same space as cheap labourers. This process of guest-making marked the continuity of the sovereign Akkari landlord, now internationally legitimised as 'host'. Hospitality, as a form of unwilling humanitarianism, made the traditionally porous borders between Lebanon and Syria socially *meaningful*. In light of the Syrian army's presence and control in Lebanon (1976–2005), the production of an *outside* served the purpose of Lebanese Akkaris to preserve social order and claim the region as *theirs*, while 'othering' Syrian nationals.

This social 'neo-borderisation' of Akkar, i.e. the creation of in-city 'borderscapes' (Lebuhn, 2013) of inclusion and exclusion, informs the way in which Akkar's residents presently undercut the past Syrian presence and seasonal labour before the crisis. As a Lebanese resident recounted in late 2013: "We've always shared food, beds, and water with the Syrians here. They used to come here for work, but they were not so many. We cannot take this any longer. External help has been mobilised only in the wake of the Syrian crisis. Before then, I had never seen international agencies in this village". This is also meant to put emphasis on the continuous burden on Akkar's inhabitants in managing the crisis and tackling rapid and unregulated population growth. In such a context, making the border socially meaningful is a reminder of Akkar's economic hardships and an invitation to recognise local needs and support the local workforce.

In this framework, the hospitality discourse that local people developed in response to official crisis management more neatly polarised two populations whose lives, due to a common political economy, cultural history, and family ties, were enmeshed while sharing the same public and private spaces. In this sense, the discourse of hospitality paradoxically ended up heightening local 'anxieties about the Other' (el-Abed, 2014: 89): The rights, empowerment, and temporal duration of the Other have come to be socio-moral threats within the host society.

THE HOSPITALITY DISCOURSE IN TURKEY

Hospitality, international media, and the state

Unlike the Lebanese case, the international media remains largely indifferent to the Turkish government's endeavour to publicise its hospitality and seldom forwards humanitarian narratives about 'Turkish generosity' in receiving Syrian refugees. It is mainly the international pages of the Turkish media enterprise, under the control of an increasingly authoritarian government, that assume an active role in creating the image of a generous country. The Turkish media accounts, as well as occasional international newspaper articles, forward the narratives of international humanitarian organisations about the refugee reception in the border camps, the latter functioning as a litmus paper to 'measure' the level of hospitality (Anadolu Agency, 2017; see also McClelland, 2014).

The narratives of a generous country also improve prospects for negotiations and stronger cooperation between the international humanitarian organisations and the Turkish government, which, at the beginning of the refugee emergency, dragged its feet in accepting international aid as part of its humanitarian politics. Presently, the UNHCR, together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), agrees with the Turkish government in regard to working

as auxiliaries in matters related to camp management, as well as in the protection of and assistance to camp-dwellers under the government's leadership (UNHCR, 2017a). International humanitarian actors have overlooked the constraints put in place by the Turkish government that have set 'the rules to the humanitarian game' (Zaman, 2016: 176). INGOs have to comply with the regulations enforced by the Turkish government, which requires the establishment of official partnerships with national organisations as a *sine qua non* condition of running their projects across Turkey, according to a former UNHCR staff member interviewed in Gaziantep in 2016. The international media – and, with limited exceptions, humanitarian reports – have hardly recognised the inter-communal unrest deepened by the selective humanitarianism (Korkut, 2016) of the government and the outbreaks of social conflict between refugees and hosts along ethno-religious lines, although they are happening in the context of multi-ethnic and multi-religious border cities (Özden, 2013; Şimşek, 2015). Moreover, the international reputation of Turkish generosity is hyped by the government as well as the local state institutions in Gaziantep, which reciprocate and publicise such media accounts. An example of this attempt is provided by the local authorities – the city municipality and governorate, together with the neighbouring city of Kilis – which ran for the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of their city dwellers for honouring local hospitality. Hence, in contrast to Lebanon, hospitality in the Turkish context is a state-introduced discourse, which is unfolded in political, administrative, and legal spaces as well as in the international media.

Acts of hospitality as a moral imperative towards the 'stranger' assume cultural affinity with the latter (Rozakou, 2010). Thus, the focus on family and kinship is not uncommon in the hospitality discourse. The hospitality and reception of refugees may also be enacted by a "public culture around the generosity of a father figure ruler" (Chatty, 2017: 193). In this case, hospitality becomes both a national and an individual act. While, in the framework of a Syria-dominated politics, the Lebanese refugee hospitality discourse has not been monopolised by the central state, the Turkish assertive leadership, embodied by President Erdoğan, adopts such a discourse as the epitome of his self-constructed image of a generous father (to both Turks and Syrians).

The hospitality discourse typifies Erdoğan as one of the Middle Eastern leaders who assumes the role of guardianship protecting 'suffering Muslims' as well as other religious communities in the name of Islam and Islamic brotherhood. Erdoğan's leadership evokes the legacy of the late Jordanian King Hussein Bin Talal who, according to el-Abed (2014), established a direct link between the hospitality offered to Palestinian refugees and the Islamic history of *hijra*, the migration of Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca, the Islamic holy city, and the

major site of pilgrimage (*hajj*), by drawing on his own lineage to the noble Sharif family from Mecca.

President Erdoğan's speeches – mostly addressing Syrian refugees in the camps – reveal both his personification of hospitality as the father of nation(s) and an Islamic reference to the hospitality discourse in crystallised form (CNN Türk, 2015), while this religious reference is echoed by a multitude of governmental and civil society actors, ranging from high-ranking government officials and officers sitting in the migration management departments to elected mayors and Islamic NGOs. While President Erdoğan traces the reception of Syrian refugees back to Islamic history and morals, scholars point to the ideals of hospitality as a shared moral value in Abrahamic traditions (Brun, 2010; Shryock, 2008). Accordingly, the Islamic tenets of hospitality require the offer of unconditional help and protection to the needy as an unreserved act of generosity. Erdoğan's speeches likewise refer to the Islamic conception of hospitality, invoking the religious significance of the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medinah. Endangered in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad and his followers – *al-Muhajirun* (the 'emigrants') – emigrated to Medinah, where they were received by the locals and the supporters of Islam, *al-Ansar* (the 'helpers'). Their encounter is regarded in Islamic doctrine as the promotion of democracy and unity within Islamic communities, based on "the lack of distance between the leader and his 'people'" (Mernissi, 1991: 111, quoted in Brun, 2010). A fraternal link between the *Ansar* and the *Muhajirun* develops out of this encounter, helping the latter to put down their roots again. President Erdoğan identifies the Turkish citizens with *Ansar*, who should help the Syrian brother *Muhajirun*, depicted as fleeing the Syrian leader Bashar al-Asad.

Hospitality as a humanitarian strategy

The humanitarian intervention in south-eastern Turkey, where, following the intensification of violence in Syria, the massive refugee influx required crisis management, creates urban borderscapes, marking out enclaves of Syrian aid recipients and diverse aid-givers. Unlike the Lebanese state's wavering aid and service provisions, the Turkish state is a high-profile partner in the humanitarian field. Hence, humanitarian work is increasingly centralised and professionalised under the highly authoritarian Turkish regime (Danış, 2017), a condition that leads to the diffusion of humanitarianised faith-based charities to proliferating local associations, established with the purpose of assisting their Syrian brothers. With a religious reference, the state discourse of hospitality reworks an 'Islamic construction of belonging' (Arat, 2004) on the basis of a transnational Islamic brotherhood, as explicitly stated by the Islamist political currents that can be traced back to the ruling Justice and Development Party

(AKP) in Turkey in the 1980s. Within the framework of crisis responses, the 'ethics of hospitality', as Derrida puts it, is transformed into a humanitarian strategy, turning the gift-giving nature of hospitality into a contract and a disinterested act of welcoming the guest into a policed pact (Derrida, 2011: 6).

The hospitality discourse is instilled in the management of humanitarian assistance supervised by the Governorate of Gaziantep. While hospitality qualifies the cooperation between national and Syrian NGOs (Anadolu Platformu, 2016), the latter easily get identified and sanctioned by the government. In fact, new applications from Syrian initiatives aimed at founding legal NGOs and obtaining permission to carry out assistance projects have recently been rejected by the city Governorate, unless such Syrian-commenced initiatives are involved in cooperation networks with national entities.[4] Despite the co-optation efforts of humanitarian work by the Turkish government, the emergence of humanitarian borderwork adjacent to the Syrian war enables the international and Syrian organisations, as well as small-scale grassroots-provided assistance, to escape its control .

Gaziantep borders have witnessed a rise in the number of humanitarian organisations establishing their offices in the city to provide assistance to urban and camp refugees. These NGOs normally engage themselves in the support of local livelihoods, including food vouchers/cards and projects concerning healthcare, education, and child protection as well as the cross-border delivery of aid. The UNHCR, not allowed to officially register the Syrian refugees, maintains an active monitoring and coordinating presence in the region. It established an inter-agency coordination structure and a working group in the south-east in order to enhance the coordination of humanitarian efforts, presently led by 35 actors, including the Turkish governmental agencies as well as national and international NGOs (UNHCR, 2017a). The humanitarian coordination based in Gaziantep extends over a larger network of cross-border humanitarianism, including the Syrian National Coalition Government – which has its headquarters in the city – and local coordination committees in northern Syria (Hamdan, 2017). Still, the co-optation efforts by the Turkish government impose constraints on humanitarian work. International and Syrian NGOs have faced challenges lately with the government's persistent demand for accreditation and renewal of work permits. An interview conducted in May 2016 with a Syrian aid worker from a Syrian NGO, responsible for supervising their activities inside Syria, reveals that he would be unable to continue cross-border supervision due to the difficulty of obtaining a new work permit, which he had actually renewed less than a year ago. Also, a national NGO had to end its ongoing project with international cooperation

on the education of Syrian children, as the Turkish government aims to enforce central control over the educational services to the refugee youth.

The international media presently reports the refusal of permit renewals to several INGO workers and even their deportation by the government (Porter, 2017; Cupolo, 2017; Longton, 2017). Even though the rumours of local residents indicate that the reason behind such acts is the willingness of the Turkish government to replace Syrian aid workers with Turkish nationals, the news coverage stresses governmental concerns about the collusion of these NGOs with the Kurdish autonomous administration in northern Syria, as NGO cross-border operations seek to reach the displaced in those regions.

A corollary of the hospitality-turned-into-humanitarian strategy is the deep sense of resentment among the lower strata of Turkish nationals dealing with poverty and unemployment. Feeling themselves to be 'second-class citizens', discriminated against by their own government, they nevertheless scapegoat Syrian refugees for the increasing rental prices and lack of employment. According to an INGO staff member, Syrian refugees manipulate humanitarian aid, despite current efforts towards greater transparency and coordination, a fact that further ignites resentment and affirms the idea of 'unworthy guests'. For instance, a young Turkish woman running her small grocery shop in the slum neighbourhood of Karayılan criticises her Syrian neighbours who sold the coal allowance distributed by the municipality in order to enhance their monthly income. The woman, who is familiar with the coal allowance (in fact, the slum residents depend on it to survive the cold winter), was not surprised to see her Syrian neighbours receive allowance rather than her, despite her dire straits. Rather, she deplores the sale, an act that shows how the Syrian refugees deemed as 'needy' are actually not so. Such accounts often ignore the chaotic and unplanned nature of assistance provision, as well as the manoeuvring capacity of refugees pursuing survival strategies, like the case of coal allowance, which, if delayed until the early spring, makes the refugees even more vulnerable, as unable to look ahead under precarious conditions. The humanitarian enterprise, on the other hand, cast on the Syrian refugees the mere role of aid-recipients on the basis of hierarchies of vulnerabilities, through which, in time, they have learned to navigate.

Hospitality as a local way to cope with the crisis

Among Gaziantep city dwellers, hospitality is a cultural value and a common practice. However, similarly to the humanitarian discourse in the Lebanese case, the hospitality discourse embraced by the Turkish government rather puts emphasis on the burden local citizens are under for accommodating Syrian refugees. An anti-Syrian riot that broke out in late

summer 2014 reflects the local reactions to the duty of hosting Syrians, who are believed to have overstayed their welcome. The slum areas are tainted by widespread violence against the Syrian refugees and their properties; in some cases, law enforcement forces have had to intervene to regain control. Such urban slums are inhabited by a great number of refugees due to their proximity to deregulated worksites and the old city centre, where rents are affordable. Apparently sparked by the murder of a Turkish landlord by his Syrian tenant, the attacks led by the youth mobs expressed the desire to re-territorialise their neighbourhood as a home space. It was only after the anti-Syrian riot, which made local hostile sentiments in the slum areas visible to the eyes of local authorities looking for a 'model of integration peculiar to the city of Gaziantep' (Kozanoğlu, 2017), that the authorities retook responsibility for managing the crisis. The emergency measures enforced on 14 August 2014 comprised the evacuation of Syrian refugees from conflict-ridden areas in order to appease the anti-Syrian sentiments, on the grounds that the refugees living in unhealthy or makeshift dwellings should instead be resettled in camps. According to the city governor, the evacuation order would address approximately 7,800 dwellings (Milliyet, 2014). As the refugees were transported to the camps, those who refused had to leave the city or return to Syria, according to local witnesses interviewed in the neighbouring areas. The emergency measures have helped to anchor the stigmatisation of refugees to the image of being the 'source of trouble' in the slum areas. The containment of Syrian nationals – rather than the criminalisation of the actual attackers – is an example of the incrimination of refugees in receiving societies. Local anti-Syrian hostility may conceal rent extractions. For example, in the Düztepe neighbourhoods, landlords have a longstanding but rampant tendency to rent their houses to migrant newcomers – now mostly Syrian nationals – and move to the upgraded neighbourhoods of the Karataş district, a new urbanised site at the edge of the city offering affordable housing to lower and higher middle-class families. According to the locals renting to the Syrians, the conflicts erupting with the refugees are due to the refugees' failure to reciprocate local hospitality. A family in the slum neighbourhood of Cinderesi, whose son became involved in a quarrel with a Syrian boy in the vicinity and was stabbed in the back (with the knife almost hitting his lungs), explained their resentment about their son being harmed by Syrians whom, as war-torn and desperate, they had initially helped. The father, a landowner who rented a flat to a Syrian family in his two-storey building, affirmed: 'The fact that I have rented my house to the Syrians does not mean that I want them to stay in order to make money out of their rent. If you have pity on people, you will end up pitiable'. The father also expressed his concern about the security of his family, whose son had committed the assault. According to the father, a man beloved in the neighbourhood,

the neighbours vigilantly waited for the opportunity to drive out the Syrian family from the neighbourhood. Later on, as a young interviewee from the slum youth revealed, the father presumably feared retaliation from the Syrian side. The friends of the young boy who had been attacked stabbed four Syrian young men in an act of retaliation. Although the Syrian family attempted reconciliation by resorting to the local *mukhtar* as an intermediary, the father refused and preferred the Syrian family to leave the neighbourhood.

Anti-Syrian sentiment sparked by daily encounters with the refugees draws on the negative stereotypes of Arab identity historically produced by Turkish nationalism. The perception of Arabs in this border region is shaped by indoctrinated accounts of wartime history, thanks to World War I and Anglo-French colonialism imposing the 1916 Sykes-Picot order on the Ottoman geography to demarcate the frontiers of Syria and Iraq. These accounts, during the wartime and early Republican period, effectively crafted the image of 'Arab traitors' revolting during the World War against the Young Turks, a nationalist wave seeking to overthrow the Ottoman monarchy (Çiçek, 2012). The wartime history is reproduced through popularised accounts and urban iconography, which continues to glorify the 'heroic' resistance of Gaziantep locals against the Anglo-British occupation between 1919 and 1921. Hence, such accounts shape local 'mental maps' (Migdal, 2005) in line with Turkish nation-building, despite the city's imagined cosmopolitan identity and its Ottoman past. As Syrian refugees cross the border, the social boundaries between local residents and refugees are reinforced along these maps. In this context, the local hospitality discourse serves to reiterate the power of the host as the owner of the place: not only the dwellings where the refugee guests reside, but the whole nation.

CONCLUSION
Social outcomes of the hospitality discourse

The humanitarian and political discourse of hospitality has not only fed the rhetoric of bountiful states put under strain, but it has also acted as a societal fragmentation force, undermining the previous relations that Syrian nationals used to hold in Lebanon and Turkey before the forced migration flows following the full-scale conflict. In this sense, in uncertain times, the hospitality discourse, boosting the political virtue of receiving states, has divided social groups rather than unifying them. As such, the hospitality discourse has remained inscribed in – and has further fed – the identity politics governing the region. If marking newcomers as 'guests' on a private and a public level is a causative act of social labelling, labelling tacitly opens 'a

space of competition between the guest, the citizen, the refugee, [and] the immigrant' (el-Abed, 2014: 82).

While the Ottoman management of migration flows, which historically underlies the Lebanese (1516-1918) and Turkish (1299-1922) history of hospitality, used to be decentralised, delegating reception and care of displaced populations to local communities (Chatty, 2010; Bayram, 2008), Western-born humanitarian management standardised and centralised humanitarian action, homogenising governance in a highly diversified region.

The Turkish government's efforts to receive international praise and its distanced relationship with INGOs, as well as the international humanitarian accounts commending a welcoming and bountiful Lebanon, all contributed to boosting the image of hospitable societies and, above all, welcoming nation-states. Conversely, the exploitative nature of the relationship between local hosts and Syrian refugees mostly went unheeded. While the state-centred refugee hospitality discourse has generated deep resentment among the neediest of Turkish society, the humanitarian-promoted hospitality discourse in Lebanon has rather (maybe ephemerally) produced a new form of Lebanese nationhood vis-à-vis the new Syrian 'Other'.

The social encounter between Turkish and Lebanese locals and Syrian refugees, defined as a host-guest relationship, renders the host powerful while exacerbating human capital exploitation, class divide, and frictions in the new borderscapes of Akkar's hamlets and Gaziantep, where large numbers of refugees presently reside. Paradoxically, the reported tensions and conflicts between different social groups are precisely shaped by these guest-host relationships, imbued with ethno-nationalist sentiments and stereotypes. The hospitality discourse, in this sense, stems from the nation-state framework and utilises such inter-group tensions as a restoration strategy for the power of the host. Thereby, apart from blurring the fundamental lines between a discourse of rights and a discourse of generosity (Rosello, 2002: 9), it helps receiving states to establish spatial and social control over the threatening displacement of people and resources.

Nevertheless, while this paper has sought to emphasise the articulated nature of the guest-host relationships, a further distinction emerges between 'worthy' and 'unworthy' guests along socio-economic lines. Should cooperative relations with refugee-led businesses, after determining 'the stranger's worth' (Pitt-Rivers, 2012: 502) ever restore normality for worthy Syrian refugees, this would happen through a practical rather than moral community membership. The state-centred hospitality narrative in Turkey and the neoliberalised hospitality provision in Lebanon, conceived of as a humanitarian toolkit item, still leave large segments of refugees outside of humanitarian and political agendas. In this sense, it is the

official hospitality discourse that contributes to sanctioning the unworthy guests, who possess neither the assets, capacities, nor social status that they deserve to be hosted for.

Ultimately, in this article, we have not tried to argue for an inherent harmfulness of the actual practice of hosting in the realm of human encounters; rather, we have shown how hospitality as a public discourse and 'cultural display' (Shryock, 2004: 37) contributes to the further nationalisation of host societies (historically in the case of Turkey and a complexly cyclic process in the case of Lebanon). In this sense, the new social meanings attributed to the physical border (here named 'new borderisation'), i.e. the externalisation of cultural, social affinities, and even kinship across borders, are local ways of strategizing the public acknowledgment of crisis. Such new social meanings are not simply praisable or reproachable responses to what is usually meant by 'crisis' – that is, forced migration influxes in nation-states.

Emerging Policy Recommendations

First, market-based arrangements have often been adopted as local solutions to crisis, such as the humanitarian financing of local hospitality. Nevertheless, these humanitarian practices have not necessarily led to higher societal cohesion and stability, as both the Lebanon and Turkey cases demonstrate. Educational strategies that drive towards these values should therefore be taken into account, as much as the participation in markets, in the process of guaranteeing safety and harmony among local and migrant populations.

Second, the humanitarian apparatus has largely replaced the programmes that previously used to address specific refugee populations with ethnically mixed programmes; however, they should avoid reproducing mono-ethnic regimes of cohesion and associating local stability with social homogeneity, i.e. humanitarian agencies tend to address ethnically mixed areas with the pre-assumption of finding more social tensions.

Third, as shown in the present paper, the local hospitality discourse has largely served the humanitarian purpose of monitoring and shaping social processes during refugee inflows. Humanitarian agencies should actively involve local populations in their work and create horizontal knowledge transfer networks rather than merely asking for consent and support to local authorities when they need to access local populations and obtain local legitimacy. Likewise, the unwillingness of some local authorities to be actively involved should be acknowledged and contextually tackled.

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