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Syrian refugees and other Syrian forced migrants in Jordan: forms of capital approach

Jussi S. Jauhiainen[a,b] and Ekaterina Vorobeva[c]

[a]Department of Geography and Geology, University of Turku, Turku, Finland; [b]Institute of Ecology and the Earth Sciences, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia; [c]Research Centre for East European Studies, University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany

ABSTRACT

The article explored human, social, and economic capital of Syrian refugees and other Syrian forced migrants in Jordan. Interrelations of their human, social, and economic forms of capital affected their everyday lives in Jordan as well as their future migration aspirations. The data consisted of a semi-structured survey among 408 Syrian refugees and other forced Syrian migrants in Jordan. Varied combinations of these forms of capital significantly impacted the well-being of these Syrians in the host state. Those who consolidated human capital and possessed dispersed and open social networks created coping strategies through education and employment that were more likely to be effective, and they considered immigrating to countries that are more developed. Syrians who lacked capital stocks in Jordan often found themselves at the risk of poverty, immobility or forced return to their ruined livelihoods in Syria. The article debunked the myth about powerlessness and passiveness of refugees and other forced migrants and drew attention to their agency and assets. Their levels of vulnerability in the host country significantly varied among individuals with different capital stocks. The authors provided policy recommendations on empowerment of these increasingly vulnerable migrants.

Introduction

The war in Syria became a key factor defining regional and global migration trends in the 2010s. Escaping violence and destruction, millions of Syrians had to flee to the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Initially, many Syrians hoped for a fast return to their country of origin. However, the protracted armed conflict forced Syrian refugees and other Syrian migrants to stay in the host states for an indefinite period.

Jordan has particularities as a major refugee receiving country. The relative share of Syrians in Jordan is globally the second highest compared with the national population, behind only Lebanon. Since 2014, more than 600,000 Syrians have lived in Jordan as refugees recognized by the national government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In 30 June 2021, this number

CONTACT Jussi S. Jauhiainen jusaja@utu.fi Department of Geography and Geology, University of Turku, Turku FI-20014, Finland

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was 658,000—almost without changes since the mid-2016.[1] Furthermore, more than half a million other Syrians were in Jordan as forced migrants without official refugee recognition. They often shared similar challenges as officially designated refugees.[2]

Although official refugee status usually makes a difference in the global context, the situation is different in the Jordanian context. Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, so various refugee-related international rights do not apply to officially designated refugees there. In Jordan, everyday lives of both Syrian refugees and other Syrian forced migrants without such official status are hindered in several ways, including restrictions on participation in the labour market. The similar challenges they face blur the differences between refugees and forced migrants in Jordan, especially outside the refugee camps.

Forming the largest refugee community in the world, Syrians have become a subject of public and academic scrutiny with many crucial topics. For example, scholars have investigated Syrian refugees' influence on employment, prices, education, and the health care system in Jordan.[3] Furthermore, researchers have explored numerous social aspects of refuge, namely, the everyday lives of Syrian refugees in Turkey, their integration, citizenship rights, and onward-migration aspirations.[4]

Nevertheless, Syrian refugees' and other forced migrants' forms of capital (i.e. human capital, e.g. their formal education and qualifications; economic capital, e.g. their material wealth and assets; and social capital, e.g. resources, trust, and norms in their social networks) have barely been investigated.[5] This scarce attention to these forms of capital and assets is at least partly attributed to the common image that portrays refugees as poor, passive, and vulnerable without valuable assets, voice or agency.[6] Such an image

[1]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021) *UNHCR Jordan Operational Portal*.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Luigi Achilli, 'Syrian refugees in Jordan: A reality check.' *Migration Policy Centre (EUI) Policy Briefs*, 2015/02 (2015); Doris Carrion, *Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Confronting Difficult Truths* (Middle East and North Africa Programme: Chatham House, 2015); Lewis Turner, 'Explaining the (non-) encampment of Syrian refugees: Security, class and labour market in Lebanon and Jordan.' *Mediterranean Politics* 20, no. 3 (2015): 386–404.; Paolo Verme and Chiara Gigliarano, *The Welfare of Syrian Refugees: Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015); Maha Kattaa and Meredith Byrne, 'Quality of work for Syrian refugees in Jordan'. *Forced Migration Review* 58 (2018): 45–46.; Caroline Krafft, Maia Sieverding, Caitlyn Salemi, and Colette Keo, 'Syrian refugees in Jordan: Demographics, livelihoods, education, and health'. *Working Paper* 1184 (2018), Economic Research Forum; Anna Kvittingen, Marko Valenta, Hanan Tabbara, Dina Baslan and Berit Berg, 'The conditions and migratory aspirations of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Jordan'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32, no. 1 (2018): 106–124; Judith Ann Cochran, 'Jordan's solution to the refugee crisis: idealistic and pragmatic education.' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 2 (2020), 153–171.

[4]Kemal Kirisci, *Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Going beyond Hospitality*. (Washington, D.C.: Bookings Institution, 2014); Bugra Kanat Kılıç and Ustun Kadir, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Towards Integration*. (Istanbul: SETA Publications, 2015); Ali Fakih and May Ibrahim, 'The impact of Syrian refugees on the labor market in neighboring countries: Empirical evidence from Jordan.' *Defence and Peace Economics* 27, no. 1 (2016): 64–86.; Ahmet Içduygu and Evin Millet, 'Syrian refugees in Turkey: Insecure lives in an environment of pseudo-integration.' *Global Turkey in Europe', Working Papers* 13 (2016); Feyzi Baban, Suzan Ilcan, and Kim Rygiel, 'Syrian refugees in Turkey: Pathways to precarity, differential inclusion, and negotiated citizenship rights.' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 41–57; Sebnem Koser Akcapar and Dogus Simsek, 'The politics of Syrian refugees in Turkey: A question of inclusion and exclusion through citizenship.' *Cogitatio* 6, no. 1 (2018): 176–187; Jussi Jauhiainen, 'Refugees and migrants in Turkey, 2018.' *Publications of the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Turku* 11 (2018).

[5]Manal Fathi Anabtawi and Tamara Hamza Al Amad, 'Influence of social capital on the experiences of married Syrian refugee women in Al-Mafraq Governorate.' *International Social Work* (2017); Ana Uzelac, Jos Meester, Markus Goransson and Willem van den Berg, 'The importance of social capital in protracted displacement.' *Forced Migration Review*, vol. 57 (2018).

[6]Navjot K. Lamba, 'Social capital and refugee resettlement: The social networks of refugees in Canada.' *JIMI/RIMI*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2003): 335–360; Julia Hope, 'New insights into family learning for refugees: Bonding, bridging and building transcultural capital.' *Literacy* 45, no. 2 (2011): 91–97.

disempowers refugees in general and individual refugees in particular. Moreover, the ways in which refugees' forms of capital function in transition and affect their everyday lives and their plans in a host country remain unclear. Shedding light on these questions helps to understand heterogeneity within the refugee community (including forced migrants living in refugee-like circumstances) and diversity in their experiences of refuge, as well as outline their possible migration trajectories in the future. As pointed out by previous research in other contexts, various forms of capital are crucial for the well-being of refugees. For example, scholarly attention has been paid to capital of refugees in Australia,[7] Canada,[8] the United Kingdom,[9] Sweden,[10] and Tanzania.[11] The research suggests that utilization, maintenance, and transition of refugees' assets are not fully understood and need to be studied in greater depth.

To fill in the existing knowledge gap, this article studies human, economic and social forms of capital of Syrian refugees (including other Syrian forced migrants) in Jordan. The research questions were as follow: What relations exist between different forms of capital that Syrians brought along from Syria or managed to accumulate in Jordan? To what extent could future migration aspirations of Syrian refugees in Jordan be attributed to the forms of capital they possess? The research is based on answers to a semi-structured survey of 408 Syrian refugees and other Syrian forced migrants in Jordan in March 2017.

Capital in transition and the Jordanian context

The notion of capital has received considerable scholarly attention from a wide range of disciplines—from economics to sociology—over recent decades. Pierre Bourdieu[12] established the basic principle by defining capital as 'the immanent structure of the social world' and 'a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures' that provides advantage to certain individuals or groups. The conversion of an individual's resources into different but tightly interconnected forms of capital (e.g. economic, human, and social capital) affects his or her chances of success, empowerment or disempowerment depending on contexts and situations. Individuals can reproduce capital over time and increase their socioeconomic status.[13]

[7]Val Colic-Peisker and Iain Walker, 'Human capital, accumulation and social identity: Bosnian refugees in Australia.' *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 13 (2003): 337–360; Roger Patulny, 'A spectrum of integration: Examining combinations of bonding and bridging social capital and network heterogeneity among Australian refugee and skilled migrants.' In *Migrant Capital: Networks, Identities and Strategies*, edited by Louise Ryan, Umut Erel and Alessio D'Angelo (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[8]Navjot K. Lamba, 'Employment experiences of Canadian refugees: Measuring the impact of human and social capital on quality of employment.' *CRSA/RCSA* 40, no. 1, (2003): 45–64.

[9]Linda Morrice, 'Lifelong learning and the social integration of refugees in the UK: The significance of social capital.' *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 26, no. 2 (2007): 155–172.

[10]Maja Cederberg, 'Embodied cultural capital and the study of ethnic inequalities.' In *Migrant Capital: Networks, Identities and Strategies*, edited by Louise Ryan, Umut Erel and Alessio D'Angelo (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[11]Javier E. Baez, 'Civil wars beyond their borders: The human capital and health consequences of hosting refugees.' *Journal of Development Economics* 96, no. 2 (2011): 391–408.

[12]Pierre Bourdieu, 'The forms of capital'. In: J Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986, 241).

[13]Finn Stepputat and Ninna Nyberg Sorensen, 'Sociology and forced migration.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Maja Cederberg and Maria Villares-Varela, 'Ethnic entrepreneurship and the question of agency: The role of different forms of capital, and the relevance of social class.' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2018)

Individuals relate to each other, communities, and societal institutions through forms of capital that constitute an integral part of refugees' everyday lives. Forms of capital often travel with refugees and other people on move. They are 'embedded in migrants', but must be 'articulated through social and economic relationships'.[14] According to previous studies, various types of capital give advantages to refugees and immigrants, at least, when they become settled. For instance, immigrants with large capital stocks increase, diversify, and transfer their assets as well as tackle difficulties more efficiently. Furthermore, refugees with different forms of capital seem to be more successful as regards employment and social inclusion in the host country.[15] Thus, refugees with various forms of capital secure an advantage over other forced migrants.

Forms of capitals in the context of refuge

Looking at refugee communities through the lens of forms of capital helps to recognize heterogeneity within the social group: not all refugees are equally exposed to vulnerabilities and risks of poverty and unemployment. To operationalize these forms of capital for research, they need to be defined in the context of refuge. *Economic capital* refers to material wealth owned by a refugee and economic assets that enhance his or her position.[16] Despite the importance of all forms of capital for the well-being of individuals, the value of social and human capital is often evaluated in relation to its ability to produce economic capital that can be used to secure material well-being. Economic capital is the most common way of measuring one's wealth, but it is only one form of capital.

Human capital is measured by a refugee's level of formal education and qualifications, knowledge and ability to learn, and the ways in which these related competences add value to a refugee's everyday life.[17] Human capital (or *cultural capital*, as discussed by Bourdieu,[18] or *human–cultural* capital as labelled by Nee and Sanders[19]) is embodied in personal knowledge of a refugee and educational qualifications he or she possesses. Reproduction of human capital requires a good understanding of the complex system of gains coming from it. Moreover, human capital is relational; for example, a simple ability to read may provide a significant advantage only in a community of illiterate people.[20] Thus, unequal distribution of human capital among refugees affects an individual refugee's opportunities.

Social capital is the broadest and most complex of the forms of capital, and more often referred to by forced migration studies. It stems from an individual refugee's membership in social groups that allows access to collectively owned capital.[21] It encompasses

[14]Allan M. Williams, Vladimir Balaz and Claire Wallace, 'International labor mobility and uneven regional development in Europe: Human capital, knowledge and entrepreneurship.' *European Urban and Regional Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 27–46.

[15]Jeanette A. J. Renema and Marcel Lubbers, 'Welfare-based income among immigrants in the Netherlands: Differences in social and human capital.' *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 17, no. 2 (2019): 128–151; Petra M. Eggenhofer-Rehart, Markus Latzke, Katharina Pernkopf, Dominik Zellhofer, Wolfgang Mayrhofer, and Johannes Steyrer, 'Refugees' career capital welcome? Afghan and Syrian refugee job seekers in Austria'. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 105 (2018), 131–145.

[16]Victor Nee and Jimmy Sanders, 'Understanding the diversity of immigrant incorporation: a forms-of-capital model', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 3 (2001), 386–411.

[17]Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003

[18]Bourdieu, 1986

[19]Nee and Sanders, 2001

[20]Bourdieu, 1986

[21]Ibid.

refugees' interpersonal relationships and social networks as well as trust, norms, cooperation, shared understanding, and relationship resources distributed within these relationships and networks.[22] An individual's social capital is measured through the size and significance of his or her networks. The benefits granted by the membership encourage refugees to maintain and develop social connections. Social capital is generated in interactions that require constant effort to maintain and reproduce interpersonal ties.[23] Networks facilitate refugees' access to vital information, support, employment, cultural continuity, and identity maintenance.[24] Having an inward orientation, bonding social capital refers to dense within-group ties such as those between family members and compatriots, whereas bridging social capital is outward-oriented and aims at establishing loose and wide between-group connections, and more specifically, ties between people with different ethnic backgrounds.[25]

High human capital contributes to the better well-being of a refugee. For instance, Renema and Lubbers[26] confirmed, 'Human and social capital also increases knowledge to find the way through the bureaucratic procedures for applying for benefits'. Forced migrants with higher levels of education thus have a better understanding of ways to seek and receive assistance when needed. Moreover, the capacity to analyse an unfavourable situation and build an efficient strategy to cope with it appears to be better developed by refugees with high rather than low levels of education.[27] Indeed, studies also demonstrate that a high level of education and employment positively correlates with refugees' effective coping strategies and abilities to solve current challenges.[28]

The positive effects of human capital have not raised many doubts, but social capital has mixed consequences for different kinds of immigrants in different contexts.[29] On the one hand, a closed social network becomes an anchor that keeps a refugee connected to network members. However, if these network members are in a marginal position in a host country, the network is not necessarily useful for a refugee. On the other hand, social networks often provide beneficial resources and information for refugees who are able to connect to such advantageous networks.[30] The accumulation of social capital through such networks enables mobilization and co-design of individual refugees' interests and actions, as well as those of their communities, to enhance their level of education as well as employment opportunities and social status.[31]

The strength of social relations and ties can result in an advantage or disadvantage for an individual refugee. The indicators of network strength such as the amount of time

[22]Hope, 2011; Uzelak et al., 2018
[23]Victor Nee, Forms of capital and the incorporation of immigrants, *In Defence of the Alien*, 13 (1990), pp. 24–37.
[24]Hope, 2011
[25]Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Bram Lancee, 'The economic returns of immigrants' bonding and bridging social capital: The case of the Netherlands', *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010), 202–226.
[26]Renema and Lubbers, 2019, 145
[27]Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003
[28]Fatmeh Ahmad Alzoubi, Ahmed Al-Smadi, and Yazeed Mohammad Gougazeh, 'Coping strategies used by Syrian refugees in Jordan'. *Clinical Nursing Research* 28, no. 4, (2019): 396–421.
[29]Miriam Potocky-Tripodi, 'The role of social capital in immigrant and refugee economic adaptation.' *The Journal of Social Service Research* 31, no. 1 (2004): 59–91.
[30]Morrice, 2007
[31]see James S. Coleman, 'Social capital in the creation of human capital.' *The American Journal of Sociology* 94, (1988): S95–S120.; Putnam 1995; Ferragina & Arrigoni 2017

spent together, emotional intensity, and intimacy[32] confirm nuclear family members, as a rule, develop strong networks. Strong ties in such a closed network tend to be less of a resource for refugees to attract new forms of capital.[33] On the contrary, weak connections seem to help a refugee get ahead instead of just getting by. When a refugee has distinctly weak and scattered social ties, new social networks tend to be useful for generation of new social and human capital.[34]

Connections between different social or ethnic groups (i.e. bridging capital) in a host country may assist in achieving newcomers' goals more effectively than bonding capital. Indeed, when one is connected mostly to people with the same ethnic background, the ties limit one's access to resources and knowledge outside of this ethnic community.[35] In fact, a close interaction with compatriots usually means less interaction with locals, which often lessens refugees' learning of a local language and subsequently reduces their employment opportunities.[36] Moreover, tight intra-ethnic and refugee-centric social networks may reduce ambitions and expectations of refugees towards higher standards of living and levels of employment. For example, if the majority of socially connected members of an ethnic community are low-skilled workers, then it could limit opportunities to obtain a high-skilled job through this social network. In addition, previously arrived compatriots who started their own businesses to reach a better position in a host country can merely offer low-skilled jobs (e.g. cleaning or construction) for those arriving later.[37]

Furthermore, refugees' unfavourable position in power relations creates barriers to accumulating capital. Refugees cannot enjoy generation, preservation or mobilization of capital using the same opportunities in a host country as citizens or voluntary immigrants. A range of additional constraints and barriers influences the development of refugees' capital.[38] First, refugees' migration is involuntary. Forced migrants seldom have enough time to collect their assets, transfer capital or establish necessary connections in a forthcoming host country. Many initially oppose the idea of migrating abroad, but they are forcedly displaced. Therefore, at least in the beginning of relocation and while still nurturing hopes to return, they lack the desire to integrate into a host community and participate fully in its local social life and labour market. Indeed, Chatty[39] found 'voluntary migrants adjusted faster and their adjustment to their new physical and social environments was more stable and less conflict-ridden than those forced to move'. In addition, refugees often face societal stigma: unlike voluntary immigrants, who are often

[32]see Mark S. Granovetter, 'The strength of weak ties.' *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 4 (1973): 1360–1380.
[33]Morrice, 2007; see Granovetter, 1973
[34]see Putnam, 2000
[35]Moricce, 2007
[36]Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003
[37]Ibid.
[38]Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, 'Introduction: Refugee and forced migration studies in transition.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Karen Jacobsen, 'Livelihoods and forced migration.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[39]Dawn Chatty, 'Anthropology and forced migration.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78.

portrayed as active and entrepreneurial, refugees are often imagined as passive, ignorant, and lacking capital.[40]

Second, refugees are subjected to manipulation by authorities, humanitarian organizations, mass media, and society. They are often controlled, economically exploited, and denied their agency, and their activities and rights are restricted.[41] Some scholars argue, 'Humanitarian institutions and political structures created and even demanded the dependency of forced migrants upon donors and providers of assistance', which assumes the non-mobilization of refugees' capital.[42] In addition, refugees are at least partially excluded from educational, financial, and other essential services in their host country. Therefore, the creation of and access to new capital is substantially hindered.[43]

Contexts of Syrian refugees in Jordan

Fleeing from home in Syria to a foreign country (e.g. Jordan) has depleted many Syrians' forms of capital and disrupted their social ties. With the protracted exile, most refugees have gradually spent all their financial assets (i.e. economic capital) to cover their everyday needs in Jordan.[44] An improvement in refugees' livelihoods is challenging due to social and structural constraints and the mismatch between their skills and needs of the host country' labour market. Such an unfavourable position pushes individual refugees to mobilize or optimize their resources to improve their well-being and overcome disadvantage and exclusion,[45] but not necessarily with successful outcomes.

Jordan intentionally excluded Syrian refugees from the labour market for many years. Due to the military conflicts in the neighbouring countries of Syria and Iraq, the Jordanian economy experienced a downturn in tourism, disruptions in regional trade, and rising unemployment among its citizens. Along with these growing economic challenges in Jordan, social tensions increased: after a few years of presence of Syrians in Jordan, 95% of Jordanians believed that Syrians might take their jobs.[46] Thus, until 2016, the overwhelming majority of Syrians were unable to obtain work permits.[47] However, between 2016 and 2019, the government of Jordan issued more than 159,000 work permits to Syrian refugees, in particular through the Jordan Compact programme in which Jordanian and international organizations cooperated.[48] However, the Jordan Compact falls mostly out of the empirical scope of this article.

Another tool of labour-related exclusion is the limitation of professions that Syrians and other non-Jordanians can exercise in Jordan.[49] This regulation aims at preventing Syrians and other newcomers from competition with Jordanians in certain employment

[40]Lamba, 2003; Hope, 2011
[41]Lamba, 2003; Hope, 2011; Jacobsen, 2014
[42]Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014, 6
[43]Jacobsen, 2014
[44]Achilli, 2015
[45]Moricce, 2017; Cederberg, 2015; Khalifah Alfadhli, and John Drury, 'The role of shared social Identity in mutual support among refugees of conflict: An ethnographic study of Syrian refugees in Jordan.' *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 28, no. 3, (2018): 142–155; Uzelac et al., 2018
[46]Victoria Kelberer, 'The work permit initiative for Syrian refugees in Jordan: Implications for policy and practice' (Policy Paper. Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies, 2017).
[47]Krafft et al., 2018
[48]UNHCR, 2020; for Jordan Compact, see Amanda Gray Meral, 'Assessing the Jordan Compact one year on: An opportunity or a barrier to better achieving refugees' right to work'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33, no. 1 (2020): 42–61.
[49]Turner, 2015

fields. On the other hand, the low-wage category professions in agriculture and construction were opened to refugees. However, working conditions in agriculture and construction, as a rule, are poor, which prevents Syrians (who more often have higher levels of education) from accepting these jobs.[50]

In 2017, more than 90% of Syrians in Jordan remained below the Jordanian national poverty line.[51] Only after 2017 did the government of Jordan begin issuing a more considerable number of work permits to Syrian refugees, but still in selected, lower-income labour fields.[52] However, Kattaa and Byrne[53] claim that this broader delivery of work permits to Syrians can also be a deceptive indicator of improvement in economic integration of refugees in Jordan. The permits measure legalization and formalization of Syrians' employment opportunities but do not necessarily enhance job creation or improvements in the quality of work. Thus, many refugees have been pushed to develop negative coping mechanisms. They have to participate in a shadow economy in Jordan that is usually characterized by employment insecurity, poor working conditions, chase by police forces, and condemnation by the public.[54] Furthermore, even the acclaimed Jordan Compact has failed to address fully the real barriers that remain for Syrian refugees' participation in the Jordanian labour market, in particular legal barriers and gender-related inequalities.[55] Only in 2018 did the Jordanian Ministry of Labour issue a new decision to allow Syrian refugees to register and operate home-based businesses. Thus, first alike enterprises of Syrians were launched in 2019.[56]

In addition, the government of Jordan and humanitarian organizations may controversially exclude the most vulnerable refugees from their benefits through selective processes.[57] In Jordan, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are supposed to align with national and local authorities in the refugee-related activities. For instance, if a Syrian does not have proper documentation approved by the national authorities of Jordan, then he or she might not obtain access to humanitarian services and welfare benefits. Thus, many Syrians who need assistance in Jordan do not have access to it and therefore lose their trust in NGOs.[58] According to Turner,[59] Syrian refugees with capital have better chances of avoiding encampment and reducing the risk of unemployment and immobility. Thus, the policies and practices in Jordan have 'simultaneously effectively consigned to camps the poorest Syrians, who might be expected to exert the strongest downward pressure on wages'.[60]

These unfavourable conditions for accumulating new forms of capital in Jordan made many Syrians consider continuing their fragmented journeys further on,[61] both legally

[50]Katharina Lenner and Lewis Turner, 'Making refugees work? The politics of integrating Syrian refugees into the labor market in Jordan', *Middle East Critique* 28, no. 1 (2019): 65–95.
[51]European Commission, *Jordan*. Brussels: European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2018).
[52]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *UNHCR Jordan Factsheet* (2018).
[53]Kattaa & Byrne, 2018
[54]Achilli, 2015; Kvittingen et al., 2018; Krafft et al., 2018
[55]Gray Meral, 2020
[56]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'First Syrian refugee-owned home-based business registered in Jordan'. UNHCR 10 December 2019 (2019).
[57]Achilli, 2015
[58]Achilli, 2015
[59]Turner, 2015
[60]Ibid, 395
[61]Kvittingen et al., 2018

and illegally, usually towards the European Union (EU). Nevertheless, to cover expenses for their journeys and settling down in a new country, refugees have to mobilize their financial capital through sales of assets, loans or borrowing. Again, this option is available only for those refugees who still have financial assets or possess networks through which they can acquire financial support. Apparently, poor refugees with depleted assets and without better-off relatives or friends have more difficulties to cover expenses of another immigration; therefore, they often have to remain immobile and vulnerable.

In addition, even if the context of refuge is accommodating, only certain combinations of knowledge and skills may result in the increased well-being of these forced immigrants.[62] For example, some Syrian refugees came to Jordan with economic assets.[63] However, because they lacked contextual cultural knowledge (i.e. they did not know practical ways to navigate through Jordan's social and legal systems) and social capital as well as faced legal constraints, they did not obtain decent jobs, lost their initial economic capital, and became vulnerable towards encampment and shocks.[64]

Finally, an intra-generational effect of the lack of capital raises certain concerns in the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan. As noted by Bourdieu,[65] families play a crucial role in transmission of capital. In refugees' families with low or no income, children have to work or otherwise gain financial resources. One reason for involving children in illegal employment is that underage Syrians working illegally 'can more easily pass under the radar' of the police.[66] Achilli[67] and Fakih and Ibrahim[68] argued that every second Syrian family in Jordan has a child who is engaged in employment. Thus, children of poor refugees with low levels of education have only small chances to accumulate appropriate and competitive human and social capital. Indeed, the school enrolment rates of children of Syrian refugees in Jordan raise a strong concern: 'In 2016, less than 60% of six year-old girls and less than 80% of six year-old boys from Syrian refugee households were enrolled in school'.[69] Thus, they are forced to rely heavily on scarce family resources, which does not let them move forward in life. The access to education for Syrian refugees in Jordan has improved, but it is still far from the levels of the titular nation. Furthermore, pragmatic education principles are applied to Syrians that are less comprehensive than those for the titular nation.[70]

Data and methods

To investigate capital in the everyday lives of Syrian refugees in Jordan, we collected original empirical field data with a semi-structured survey among Syrians residing outside refugee camps in Jordan. The survey consisted of questions about pre-migration, migration, and post-migration stages of Syrian refugees' lives. We asked about their family situations, education, previous occupations, current employment, journey to Jordan,

[62]Hope, 2011
[63]Achilli, 2015
[64]Megan Passey, 'How migration to Europe affects those left behind.' *Forced Migration Review* 57 (2018).
[65]Bourdieu, 1986
[66]Rodolfo E. Manuelli and Ananth Seshadri, 'Human capital and the wealth of nations.' *American Economic Review* 104, no. 9 (2014): 2736–2762.; Achilli, 2015; Carrion, 2015; Fakih and Ibrahim, 2016
[67]Achilli, 2015
[68]Fakih and Ibrahim, 2016
[69]Krafft et al., 2018, 21
[70]Cochran, 2020

socialization, satisfaction with life in Jordan, and future migration plans. Some of the above-mentioned questions were utilized for the purposes of the current study. This original quantitative data helped us to identify different forms of capital possessed by Syrian refugees in Jordan.

In practice, the first author of the article directed the field research and took part in conducting surveys in research sites. In addition, local research assistants and members of refugee-related NGOs helped conduct the survey. The first author and the associates gave the questionnaire to Syrian refugees and other Syrian forced migrants who then gave it back immediately after filling it in. The aims of the research and their rights in regards to answering the survey were explained to respondents (in Arabic), and this information was written (in Arabic) on the survey sheet. The participants' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, and the consent of each participant was received. If a respondent wished, he or she could interrupt the survey at any time. The responses were inserted into an SPSS database. We used quantitative methods to measure the participants' capital: direct descriptive statistics summarizing the data with basic indexes and cross-tables displaying the multivariate frequency distribution of the variables and assessing the significance of the difference between the two proportions with the Pearson's chi-squared test. In the article, the statistical significance of the relation between measured joint distribution of two or more variables (i.e. bi- or multivariate relationships and their p values) is presented as follows: statistically highly significant when $p < 0.001$, statistically very significant when $p < 0.01$, and statistically significant when $p < 0.05$.

In total, 408 survey respondents answered the survey on March 6–19, 2017. Syrians residing outside refugee camps in Jordan were selected as the study group because they represented the majority of Syrian refugees and other forced migrants in Jordan: In 2017, 81% of Syrian refugees in Jordan lived outside the refugee camps.[71] This figure has remained practically unchanged over the recent past years, being 82% in May of 2020.[72] Moreover, because the overwhelming majority (more than 95%) of Syrians in Jordan live in the northern part of the country, all of our respondents were recruited from that region.[73] Of the respondents, 36% lived in Zarqa, 23% in Amman, 15% in Mafraq, 10% in Saeediyeh, 8% in Irbid and 8% in North Badia, close to the refugee camp of Zaatari.

In this study, the respondents with the official recognition and registration with the UNHCR in Jordan are defined as Syrian refugees, and those without such recognition and registration are addressed as Syrian forced migrants in refugee-like situations in Jordan. However, the Jordanian government defines and calls Syrians without official refugee status in Jordan as 'irregular migrants'.[74] However, almost all refugees and other forced migrants subjectively felt as and called themselves refugees. For many Syrians outside the refugee camps, there was no difference in everyday lives whether they were officially designated refugees or not.

Concerning the year of immigration, 5% of our respondents moved to Jordan between 2009 and 2011, 40% in 2012, 47% in 2013, 6% in 2014, and 2% between 2015 and 2017. The age distribution of the respondents was very close to that among all Syrian refugees in Jordan: 59% were 18–35 years old; 33% were 36–59 years old; and 8% were 60 or

[71]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017
[72]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020
[73]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018
[74]Kvittingen, 2018

older.[75] However, the gender distribution among the respondents had small difference compared with the situation in reality. In Jordan, registered female Syrian refugees were 52% of all Syrian refugees, both in urban settlements and in the refugee camps.[76] However, in our sample, 60% were female. Therefore, we corrected the gender-related difference in the sample by using computed weight by assigning the female respondents with 0.87 of weight and male respondents with 1.19. Thus, the gender distribution of our sample corresponded to the real demographic (as of gender and age) backgrounds of Syrian refugees in Jordan. All the above-mentioned facts indicated that the data utilized for the article were overall demographically and geographically representative.

To identify indicators for each form of capital, we rely on practices of previous studies such as research of Nee and Sanders,[77] Colic-Peisker and Walker,[78] and Hope.[79] Thus, human capital was identified as the respondents' level of education, knowledge of English, and statements about learning something useful during the time of refuge in Jordan. Most respondents' human capital had been gained in Syria, such as formal education and training, but some respondents had been able to enhance their human capital assets in Jordan as well. We found the ability to learn new things very important because it helps refugees accumulate new human capital, which was a rationale behind including this question into the current study. The respondents' economic capital derived from a direct result of the current employment in the form of a salary they gained. Furthermore, some respondents expressed hopes of working in the EU to improve their financial situations, and others already had made first steps towards their goal and searched the Internet for information about work opportunities in the EU. All these answers were taken into consideration as reasons for assessing refugees' economic capital. Due to ethical considerations, we did not ask respondents about their property in Syria; similar questions might have evoked unpleasant memories about war experiences. The respondents' social capital was measured by the presence of nuclear or extended family in Jordan, the ability to make new friends inside and outside their ethnic community, having family members and/or friends in the EU, and having access to the Internet. The latter was seen as a tool to maintain or accumulate social capital because the overwhelming majority of respondents used it for communication and networking purposes.

Tables 1 and 2 present interdependencies existing among various forms of human capital. Human capital was chosen as the starting point in our study. Human capital was measured with concrete and clear categories, such as having a higher education degree. Such answers would be less subjective, for instance, than those related to making friends in Jordan, which embraces subjectivity in regards to who is considered a friend. Moreover, during the analysis, it was noticed that human capital had a stronger effect on other variables than, for example, family ties did.

During the data analysis, three major groups were observed in respect to their human capital stocks. Thus, we identified people with high, low and mixed human capital. The

[75] Jussi S. Jauhiainen and Ekaterina Vorobeva, 'Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Jordan, 2017 . *Publications of the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Turku* 10 (2018).
[76] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017
[77] Nee and Sanders, 2001
[78] Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003
[79] Hope, 2011

people with high human capital were those respondents who had graduated from a college or university, had at least some command of English and demonstrated the ability to accumulate new human capital in Jordan (i.e. learn new things during their refuge). Refugees with low human capital were the opposite: their highest level of education was completion of elementary school, they did not know English, and they claimed to have not learned anything useful in Jordan. The rest of the respondents belonged to the mixed human capital group. Some had low levels of education but some command of English. Others had high levels of education but they had not gained new human capital in Jordan. Furthermore, some respondents had completed middle or high school but did not have any other human capital stocks (Table 2). These three groups (based on their human capital stocks) proved to be effective in the data analysis. It allowed observation of the ways the respondents' human capital stocks intersect with their social capital and economic capital stocks as well as the degree to which human capital influenced their future migration aspirations. The Pearson correlation coefficient was applied to measure the influence of respondents' education, their command of English, and ability to learn new things in Jordan and it was found statistically very significant (p was below 0.01). Regarding the respondents with high, mixed or low human capital, all ANOVA tests used showed that the results were statistically significant (p was at least below 0.05) if not very significant, and F levels were high, indicating a low variation within the groups of respondents with high, mixed or low human capital and a large variation between these groups.

The study has the following limitations. First, our original sample had a slight gender bias, although it was corrected with computed weight. Second, the forms of capital could have been identified more precisely with a larger number of specific survey questions. Third, for the purposes of the current study, groups with high, low and mixed human capital were created. Even though these groups outline real existing subgroups within the Syrian refugee community, they are not strictly separated or rigid but rather fluid and changing over time. Finally, the lack of appropriate variance in the data did not allow the use of advanced statistical tools such as multiple regression.

Findings

Human capital stocks of Syrian refugees in Jordan

Previous studies illustrate that refugees possess many kinds of capital. However, uses and types of capital may significantly differ from one group of refugees to another. Regarding human capital, the Syrian respondents in Jordan could have several assets: education, command of a foreign language, and ability to gain new knowledge and competences. One type of human capital can positively correlate with other types of resources. For instance, respondents who had obtained a good level of education also had better command of English and ability to generate new human capital through learning while in Jordan (Table 1).

In general, the higher a respondent's education level, the better was the command of English (0.686**, $p = 0.01$, according to the Pearson correlation coefficient). Practically all (98%) respondents who had college or university education had at least some command of English. However, only 7% of the respondents with uncompleted elementary education

Table 1. Syrian respondents' human capital: level of education vs. English language skills and learning in Jordan.

	Uncompleted elementary school %	Elementary shool %	Middle school %	High school %	College and university %	All %
*English skills (N = 286; Pearson correlation .686** significant at 0.01 level)*						
Good	0	3	1	13	26	11
Moderate	0	11	34	55	53	35
Little	7	32	39	21	19	24
Nothing	93	54	26	11	2	30
*Learning in Jordan (N = 293; Pearson correlation .486** significant at 0.01 level))*						
I have learned something useful	24	35	70	70	89	62

Table 2. Syrian respondents' human capital stocks vs. their employment matters, social ties, and future migration plans (N = 289).

Indicators	High human capital %	Mixed human capital %	Low human capital %	All %
Economic capital indicators				
Employed in Jordan	42	17	15	21
In Jordan, I spend majority of my everyday time working	24	11	5	13
I search from the Internet about work opportunities in Europe	60	54	31	50
I would like to work in the EU	82	60	33	60
Social capital indicators				
Nuclear and extended family in Jordan	25	57	76	54
Only nuclear family in Jordan	8	13	5	10
Only extended family in Jordan	55	20	15	26
None family members in Jordan	12	10	4	10
In Jordan, I spend majority of my everyday time socializing	37	21	25	26
I have friends or family members living in the EU	87	66	47	69
I have made friends in Jordan	92	81	68	80
I have made Jordanian friends	81	76	63	74
I use the Internet every day	78	34	13	40
Future migration aspirations				
I plan to return to Syria	60	53	81	63
I may stay in Jordan	8	22	36	21
I plan to move the EU	55	48	30	47

(High human capital—Syrian respondents with college or university education, some command of English and ability to learn useful things in Jordan; Low human capital—Syrian respondents with education under elementary school, no command of English and with no declared ability to learn useful things in Jordan; Medium human capital—Syrian respondents with mixed variables of education, command of English and abilities to learn useful things in Jordan)

could speak some English, and the rest (93%) did not have any English language skills. Supposedly, respondents with higher levels of education and command of English have better access to a larger amount of information, networks, training opportunities, and employment. Furthermore, English functions as a language of refugee aid and assistance that supports the well-being and empowerment of refugees with the help of English. Thus, a respondent with a high level of education would typically have diverse human capital embodied in his or her formal qualifications and knowledge of English. Moreover, those with higher human capital were more inclined to recognize opportunities to accumulate new knowledge and skills during their refuge in Jordan. The higher the

respondents' education level was, the more they agreed they had learned something useful in Jordan (0.486**, p = 0.01, according to the Pearson correlation coefficient).

Of respondents with college or university degrees, an overwhelming majority (89%) had learned something useful in Jordan, whereas that was experienced by 24% of the respondents with the lowest level of education (Table 1). Moreover, the number of Syrian refugees who continued their education in Jordan was almost five times higher among people with college or university degrees than it was among their compatriots who had either completed or not completed elementary school. Human capital creation obviously demands not only action but also a certain perspective over the current situation and a reflection upon available opportunities. However, there were also challenges as mentioned by one respondent: 'There are no jobs in my field. I can't continue my master studies because it's too expensive', and by another respondent 'There's no value for my certificates and my studies here.' One respondent described harsh living conditions as the main reason for not studying: 'I can't commit to the universities, although scholarships for Syrians exist, because of my job, which I need to pay living expenses'.

Human capital and economic capital of Syrian refugees in Jordan

Regarding economic capital indicators (see Table 2), high human capital stocks positively correlated with the respondents' economic capital and their desire to find employment in the better paying European countries. The salary earned in Jordan was the most important source of economic capital for most refugee households. After a few years in refuge, almost all Syrian respondents had spent the money and other relevant financial assets they had brought from Syria. We did not ask the respondents directly about their current and previous financial and material assets, considering these questions sensitive and inappropriate in their harsh conditions. Nevertheless, we asked about their current employment and their future employment plans. The share of employed respondents with high human capital stocks was almost three times larger compared with respondents with low human capital stocks (42% vs. 15%). Moreover, the number of refugees who spent the majority of their daytime working in Jordan was almost five times higher among individuals with high human capital stocks than it was among people with low human capital (24% vs. 5%). Thus, high human capital enhanced the chances to accumulate economic capital, which then supported the resilience to challenges associated with refuge.[80] However, many respondents mentioned challenges regarding their access to the labour market in Jordan, as expressed by one respondent: 'I don't feel settled at all, because of being unable to own anything, not a house, nor a car, nor even having the right to work like any other citizen or human being.'

Outside the EU, many refugees and migrants in refugee-like situations perceive the EU countries as having relatively high salaries and better working conditions. One respondent commented: 'I wish to move to a European country because of having [there] justice and studying opportunities, a decent life, work, equality, and human rights'. Respondents with high human capital aimed to enhance their economic capital by onward migration to economically better off countries and to work there (Table 2). For example, of respondents with high human capital, 82% would like to work in the EU and 60% had already searched

[80]Vetter, 2013

for working opportunities there compared with 33% and 31%, respectively, among the respondents with the low human capital stocks. Knowledge and language skills of respondents with high education levels allowed them to create better strategies to enhance their own well-being.

Nevertheless, in general, working skills of Syrian refugees and other forced migrants may be devalued because of migrating to Jordan and local constraints to labour market participation. In these conditions, many refugees have to accept jobs for which they are overqualified or, otherwise, to remain unemployed.[81] One respondent complained, '[Would you] think that a man that has a bachelor degree in chemistry and unemployed would be satisfied?' However, comparing the former and current work positions of the respondents, almost half (49%) of former managers and professionals were employed in Jordan. Their employment rate was more than double in comparison with the average employment rate among all respondents (21%). Moreover, of those former managers and professionals among the respondents who specified their current occupations in Jordan, many mentioned similar professional activities they had in Syria. In Jordan, they were involved in the work of humanitarian, educational, health care, news, and religious organizations. Their former managerial skills and English proficiency helped to become involved in such employment.

Human capital and social ties of Syrian refugees in Jordan

Human capital stocks relate to family ties and other social links of Syrian refugees in Jordan (Table 2). The respondents' high human capital negatively correlated with their strong family ties. However, it positively correlated with the respondents' dispersed or weak social connections, including the so-called bridging social capital. The very frequent everyday use of the Internet among the respondents with high human capital can be explained, at least partly, by the need to maintain (spatially) dispersed social ties. In fact, many of them had social networks extending to Syria, the EU countries and beyond. Respondents with higher human capital represented a larger share of daily Internet users (Table 3). In detail, the share of the everyday users of the Internet was six times larger among respondents with college or university degrees compared to those having the lowest education levels. Respondents with higher levels of education used the Internet more frequently (strong Pearson's correlation coefficient, i.e. 0.518, $p = 0.01$).

Of Syrian respondents with low human capital, more (81%) had nuclear family members in Jordan compared with the respondents with high human capital (33%). Such tendency reversed regarding relatives or friends in the European countries: of Syrian respondents with high human capital, almost twice as many (87%) had such relatives or friends compared with compatriots with low human capital (47%). There were differences in socialization in Jordan among Syrian respondents with different human capital levels. In general, respondents with higher human capital were more likely to spend most of the day socializing or making friends in Jordan, and in particular Jordanian friends. Thus, people with high human capital were able to generate bridging capital that was more beneficial during their refuge.

[81]Hope, 2011; Gray Meral, 2020

Human capital and the future migration aspirations of Syrian refugees in Jordan

As stated above, refugees with high human capital seem to develop better strategies for improving their well-being. Syrian respondents with high education levels—both refugees and forced migrants in refugee-like situations—were especially inclined to consider on-migration to a third country (usually to the EU) or returning to Syria as coping mechanism. On the contrary, the respondents with low human capital tended to consider returning to Syria as their main coping strategy, with their second preference being to stay permanently in Jordan.

Respondents with higher human capital had stronger inclinations to migrate from Jordan to the EU (Table 2). The share of refugees with high human capital who aspired and planned migration to Europe was almost double (55% vs. 30%) compared to the respondents with low human capital. In her answer to an open survey question, one of our respondents outlined the benefits that she would enjoy after migrating to the EU: 'I wish to go to a country that considers human rights as a very important thing . . . to find a job and health services and other things, and to secure the future of my daughters in education, work, and a decent life in a normal environment, psychologically and socially, and that is what I look for in foreign countries'. Another aspirant of on-migration also expressed her reason: 'To secure the future of my kids and that they get a job to support their lives'.

By comparison, respondents with lower human capital had a greater desire to settle down in Jordan. The share of refugees who considered staying in Jordan for the rest of their lives was 4.5 times higher among respondents with low human capital (36%) compared with their compatriots with high levels of education (8%). Finally, the return to Syria was considered an option among all three studied groups of Syrian refugees in Jordan. A larger share of respondents with low human capital considered the return compared to respondents with high human capital stocks (81% vs. 60%). However, the possible return obligations also created anxiety, as one respondent expressed: '[I am] feeling unsafe, especially in our situation that is threatening to going back to Syria, and losing my job'.

Discussion and conclusions

What relations exist between different forms of capital that Syrians brought along from Syria or managed to accumulate in Jordan? To what extent might future migration aspirations of Syrian refugees in Jordan be attributed to the forms of capital they possess?

In this article, we examined the ways in which human, economic, and social capital, brought or accumulated by Syrian refugees and Syrian forced migrants in refugee-like situations in Jordan, related to each other and their on-migration aspirations and plans. The research demonstrated that the Syrian refugee community was not homogeneous. Within the studied group, exposure to vulnerability significantly varied depending on assets an individual brought along or managed to accumulate in Jordan. The respondents with substantial stocks of human, economic, and social capital were able to cope with refuge more successfully; on the contrary, those with low capital stocks faced numerous hardships. Future trajectories of these two groups also appeared to part; the first intended to move to more developed countries to improve their well-being, whereas the second

might be pushed to torn apart postwar Syria. Vulnerabilities of the latter group may stem, on the one hand, from social inequality in pre-war Syria in a form of limited access to education, and, on the other hand, from the everyday challenges of refuge in Jordan. This situation demands policymakers' special attention to break the vicious circle of reproducing the inequalities in Jordan.

One type of human capital, namely the level of education prior to refuge, was positively correlated with other components of human capital stock. Moreover, high human capital enhanced the capacity of individual respondents to recognize available opportunities for the reproduction of capital, as previously proved by Renema and Lubbers.[82] They successfully converted high human capital stocks into economic capital. In addition, despite legal restrictions and social constraints regarding working opportunities in Jordan for Syrian refugees and forced migrants, some respondents with high human capital managed to avoid the downward job mobility in Jordan. This observation was different from an earlier study by Hope[83] and derived from these respondents' higher levels of education, English proficiency, and professional expertise. This favourable combination of human and economic capital allowed these Syrian respondents to create more efficient strategies in Jordan to improve their current and future well-being. These findings were similar to previous studies conducted with refugees elsewhere.[84]

As regards social connections, many Syrian respondents in Jordan with high human capital seemed to develop dispersed weak bridging social ties instead of strong closed bonding ties. As Moricce[85] also claimed, Syrians with high human capital were better at accumulating bridging capital that was vital for refugees' sustainable livelihoods. They had better command of related tools such as the Internet.

Syrian respondents with low human capital often had nuclear family members in Jordan. This reaffirms the findings of Cederberg,[86] who stated that the lack of human capital pushes refugees to rely more heavily on their families. Thus, the respondents with low human capital appeared to be tied into their ethnic enclaves with limited resources and have to remain dependent on humanitarian assistance as previously noted by Kelberer.[87] These respondents were exposed to higher risk of unemployment and immobility in Jordan or (involuntary) return to Syria. Low human capital might have limited their ability to build strategies to improve the well-being. Such strategies were, on the contrary, relatively common among respondents with high human capital.

Finally, the future trajectories of respondents was an especially intriguing topic. Vidal[88] and Stark et al.[89] argued that human capital formation in the source country (usually the country of origin) could positively correlate with the probability of on-migration to a third country. Similarly, Stepputat and Sorensen[90] formulated that better-off people are among the first to leave a country of refuge. Indeed, the better-off households and individuals

[82]Renema and Lubbers, 2018
[83]Hope, 2011
[84]Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003; Renema and Lubbers, 2019; Achilli, 2015; Carrion, 2015; Alzoubi, 2019
[85]Moricce, 2007
[86]Cederberg, 2015
[87]Kelberer, 2017
[88]Vidal, 1998
[89]Stark et al., 1998
[90]Stepputat and Sorensen, 2014

seemed to take advantage of migration abroad more frequently.[91] Our data supported these assumptions. As it is known, during 2015 and 2016, a large number of Syrians with higher education levels migrated to the EU.[92] Among our respondents, those with high human capital and dispersed social networks (often extending to the EU) were especially inclined to aspire towards migration to the EU as a coping strategy. Instead, the respondents with low human capital more frequently considered returning to Syria, which can be partly explained by the fear of losing established networks in a country of origin or refuge, as noted by Kvittingen et al.[93]

Although the war in Syria continues in 2021 without clear indication of cessation, scholars discuss forthcoming challenges of the postwar reconstruction of Syria. The need for economic stabilization, reduction of societal tensions, and reconstruction of ruined infrastructure in Syria are only a few of the profound obstacles that Syrian returnees will face.[94] Thus, the question arises: On whose shoulders will fall the burden of reconstruction?

According to our study, those Syrian respondents who did not manage to accumulate human capital, develop appropriate social networks in Jordan, gain assistance, or cover migration expenses to third countries were more inclined to return to Syria. Therefore, the circumstances would push the most vulnerable Syrian refugees and forced migrants to the ruined houses and livelihoods in Syria. Indeed, previous studies confirm that those refugees who returned early to the 'liberated' areas of Syria were mostly poor people with low levels of education.[95] Without adequate resources or relevant knowledge, they will be further exposed to poverty, stagnation, and risk of debt. Furthermore, the lack of capital negatively affects younger generations of Syrians because many of them had to withdraw from education activities to work and help their families. Their relatives or friends who were able to strengthen their positions in other countries might send remittances to Syria. However, this assistance has a low potential to provide long-term sustainable development for both the country and individuals.

These findings suggested several possible directions for future research and policy improvement in Jordan. Forthcoming studies could be enriched using insights from qualitative data on the interconnectedness between various forms of capital among Syrian refugees and other forced migrants. Moreover, although it is a sensitive topic, economic capital of forced migrants should receive greater scholarly attention. Regarding suggestions to policymakers, first, the transition of refugees' forms of capital from Syria to Jordan should be smoothened as much as possible. The qualifications and previous work experiences of Syrians should be officially recognized in Jordan. Second, the international and national agencies (e.g. the UNHCR or the Jordan Compact programme) have to facilitate the accumulation of new human capital of Syrians in Jordan and open access to education and the labour market there.[96] Third, networking events could assist Syrians in Jordan in creating valuable bridging capital. Fourth, special assistance would need to

[91] Hein De Haas, 'Migration and development: A theoretical perspective.' *International Migration Review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 227–264; Stepputat and Sorensen, 2014
[92] Kvittingen et al., 2018
[93] Ibid.
[94] Carrion, 2015; Içduygu and Millet, 2016; Martin Clutterbuck, 'Property restitution in post-conflict Syria.' *Forced Migration* 59 (2018): 66–69.
[95] Kvittingen et al., 2018
[96] see Cochran, 2020

be provided to Syrian refugees and other forced migrants with low levels of education. They in particular have trouble navigating through the aid system and the labour market. Finally, the children of vulnerable Syrians in Jordan require special attention to prevent the spread of intragenerational vulnerabilities. Youths need to be encouraged to engage with education and acquire necessary human capital instead of being engaged with low-skilled employment.

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