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BORDERING PRINCIPLES AND INTEGRATION IN URBAN CONTEXT: PARALLEL INSIGHTS FROM LUND AND IRBID

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we reflect on how bordering processes influence architectural and urban formation in and around two cities of different geopolitical belonging. The paper emanates from a performative dialogic event, the Lund Irbid Parallel Walk, connecting one region in Europe in the city of Lund in Sweden, with another in the Middle East, in Irbid in the North of Jordan. Here, we reflect on key areas explored in our walking acts, looking at the effects of bordering processes, especially as related to newcomers' settlements in and around the two cities. By reflecting on cultural heritage areas, official government buildings, but above all areas where newcomers have settled and been placed, we trace histories, architecture, and contestations around different bordering processes, exploring how they have shifted and emerged. The geopolitical belongings of Lund and Irbid, representing a division between the Global North and South, show territorial complexities of managing housing for newcomers, especially refugees. We point at varying mechanisms of newcomers' integration in the two cities and how various types of physical and social border-formation appear.

INTRODUCTION

Through their historically conditioned multi-scalar and temporal relations, Lund and Irbid, mid-sized cities located in Europe and Middle East, show an ongoing dependency on global and multi-scalar forces of bordering. The choice to link these cities in this project addresses their position as cities conditioned by their respective locations and cultures in different parts of the world. Their geographical locations reflect the geopolitical division of 'Global North/South', connoting a colonial history of unequal socio-political conditions and exploitative economic trajectories.¹ It serves also to point out that this often-used terminology, despite making clear a colonial history, has also been criticised as stigmatising and 'inaccurate, homogenising and misleading on a global scale.'² Various political, discursive and artistic attempts have been made to both manifest and bridge over this global bordering of division, sometimes with contested outcomes.³ Here, we recognize that the colonial lines of history at large have influenced how Lund and Irbid have been formed as geopolitical entities, but also that there are dilemmas that deserve to be viewed as local bordering issues in their own closer context, for instance as tied to (policies of) the cities' placing of newcomers inside or outside the denser city structure. We argue that by reflecting on cultural heritage areas, official governmental buildings and areas of newcomers' settlements in such a parallel perspective – through letting a walking and talking act inspire textual elaboration – it is possible to elevate some mechanisms in how bordering processes influence part of the architectural and urban formation of the cities. In recognition of local as well as global dynamic bordering regimes, we aim to discern the agentic spatial principles by which cities respond to historical changes, and include new populations, transforming as architectural and urban environments.

GEOPOLITICAL BACKGROUND LUND AND IRBID

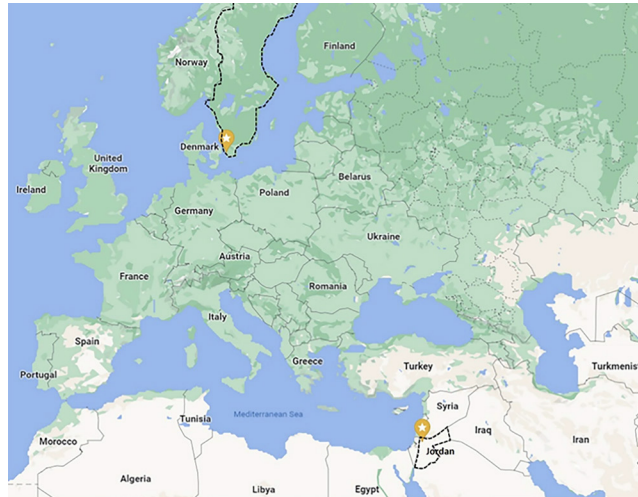


Figure 1 The geographical location of Lund and Irbid, in Europe and Middle East.

Behind the straight borderlines of Jordan in the Middle East, in comparison to the more frequent natural borderlines of Sweden in North Europe (seas, mountains, locally grown cultures), there are region-specific historical and geopolitical narratives (Fig 1). In their national contexts, each of the two cities hold positions as important nodes located outside the capital region in their respective countries (Fig 2). Historically, this includes relations of trading and migration to a row of neighbouring nations, important for the development of the two cities.

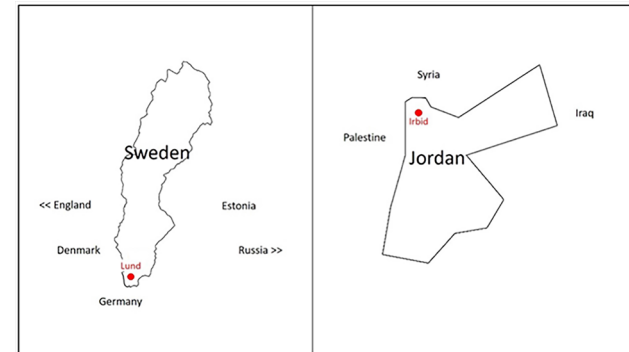


Figure 2 The positions, respectively, of Lund in Sweden and Irbid in Jordan, with noted neighbouring countries.

Irbid is located in the North of Jordan, not more than thirty kilometres from Palestine and twenty from Syria. The borders to Iraq is about 150 km away eastwards. Early maps show that Irbid's development was originally influenced by the main trade axis of Bisan-Ghor-Houran connecting the area between the Euphrat and Tigris in the East with areas across the Jordan River to the Mediterranean in the West.⁴ From an administrative point of view, Irbid first became a municipality in 1887, during the Ottoman occupation.⁵ A second turning point was during the period 1920-1946, when grid patterning and organizational compartmentalisation, influenced by the British advisory system, were seen as more appropriate than the historically dominant radial type of establishment, claiming that Jordan had 'little conceptual language to employ in their drive to establish sovereignty.'⁶ The straight lines carried out in the colonial bordering practice failed to consider existing economic, cultural and social frontiers, and encapsulated countries such as Jordan (or what was first established as Transjordan in 1921) to become test-beds for colonial Western, or putatively 'British-style' planning principles.⁷

Lund is located in the south of Scandinavia in a peninsula which has been Swedish territory since 1658. The city is close to Denmark (to which it belonged for a period before 1658) and separated from Germany, Poland and the Baltic countries by the Östersjön (Baltic Sea). Lund has also been, more remotely linked, historically, to early Catholic England and Russia, and was declared a place of religious and political prominence via a bishopric edict in the 12th century. The territory of Lund has thus also historically been contested as part of recurrent conflicts between Sweden and Russia over Östersjön seashores and nearby land.

On closer inspection, the urban distribution of Lund and Irbid shows similarities over the overall encapsulation of districts around a fairly well-kept centre, and roads connecting to other cities and regions. Their respective histories show how forces that emerged from outside of Jordan and Sweden respectively influenced the bordering processes on a local and national level, with social, political, or material consequences. More recent events of global importance have also influenced these bordering processes. Forces like direct or nested (transnational) refugee movement, pandemics, and climate change have challenged the fixity of borders globally, instead making them into 'dynamic and creative discontinuities that play a crucial role in encouraging the multiple, complex interplay between political and territorial, as well as between cultural and identity-building processes.'⁸ To study, as we do here, the bordering processes in and of cities thus requires acknowledging recent reorientations in geopolitical affairs as well as changes in everyday life practices.⁹

1 See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1974), p. 327; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1994), p. 21; Faranak Miraftab and Neema Kudva, *Cities of the Global South Reader* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 3-4.

2 Dimitar Toshkov, 'The 'Global South' is a Terrible Term. Don't use it!', *Research Design Matters* (2018), <<http://re-design.dimitar.eu/?p=969>>.

3 One example being the recent (2022) *Documenta 15*, where the difficulty of mixed curatorial attendance to singular artistic expressions in the end became also hard political stuff, forcing politicians to engage. See Kabir Jhala, "'Germany has cancelled us': as embattled Documenta 15 closes, its curators ruangrupa reflect on the exhibition – and what they would have done differently". *The Art Newspaper*, 22 Sep 2022.

4 BGottlieb Schumacher, *Abila, Pilla and Northern Ajluon* (London: Alexander Watt, 1890), p. 150.

5 Eman Fraihat, 'The Historical Development of Municipality Laws in Jordan (1925-2014)', *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 3 (2016), p. 27- 81 (p. 48-49).

6 Nezar AlSayyad, 'Inclusion and Exclusion in the Arab City: Discourses on Identity and Urbanism in the Middle East', in *Sites of Pluralism: Community Politics in the Middle East*, ed. by Firat Oruc (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 117-132 (p. 119).

7 Emma Laurie and Christopher Philo, 'The Post(-) Colonial Arab City', *Space and Polity*, 24 (2020), p. 262-282 (p. 270); Stephen Ward, 'A Cultural History of Modern Urban Planning', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning and Culture*, ed. by Greg Young (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 37-53 (p. 41).

In quite different ways, Irbid and Lund have both been affected by the recent Syrian war complex, which started in 2012 and is ongoing as we write this in 2023, albeit with reduced operations since 2017. While Jordan has, since the beginning of the war, experienced its effects and received large numbers of people fleeing Syria, Sweden started experiencing the effects in 2015-2016, as did many other European nations, during the most intense war period. Lund received around 3000 Syrian refugees, a number considered extreme by locals but falling well short of the 127 000 registered Syrian refugees absorbed by Irbid.¹⁰ The sudden increase in Sweden (even if small compared to Jordan) of people fleeing Syria made the Social Democratic government abandon one of their core principles: the

long lasting, newcomer-friendly, so-called Swedish welfare model. Instead, they introduced a restricted immigration policy performed at national borders, as well as more restricted housing policies.¹¹

In the light of transnational as well as regional conditions, we reflect in the following on how bordering processes were enacted and materialised locally and how they stand in relation to architectural/urban formation patterns in Lund and Irbid. We address how bordering forces in local decisions tied to physical space produce similarity as well as differentiation between city parts. Before expanding on these patterns, we give a brief view of the walking act that preceded and inspired this paper.



Figure 3 Rough pre-sketched walking route schemas, and trans-dialogic spots in the two cities.

A MULTI-AGENTIC PERFORMATIVE METHOD FOR ARTICULATING URBAN STORIES

On 12 September 2020, the two authors of this article staged a synchronised walking and talking act, by each inviting one friend to participate in a dialogic event using a video broadcast application, connecting Lund with Irbid in real time and hence Northern Europe (Sweden) with the Middle East (Jordan). The four individuals walked and talked in a manner, communicating what they encountered along two chosen routes to each other (and to an online audience of approximately twenty).¹²

The walking act was conceived as an artistic and experimental connection of two geopolitical spheres with a situated exchange of histories and narratives. The spots chosen for the cities' routes had been roughly discussed by the performers beforehand. Certain key places, such as official governmental buildings, and other nearby places of cultural heritage prominence, were chosen as preliminary spots of dialogue (Fig 3), leading to discussions of 'difference' that ultimately came to inform this paper's extended reflections on borders and directions in urban transformation. Through this walking act, each performer invited the fellow walkers and the connected audience to a collective engagement with the visited places, methodologically reminiscent of the early Situationist *dérive* of the 1960s, for the investigation of the built environment guided by spontaneous attraction of the encountered places. In our case, we stuck to agreed routes, letting the dialogic narrative expand. Some original Situationist drifting sessions made use of walkie-talkies to create

a collective experience, an inspirational feature which we build on and interpret through the use of contemporary telecommunication technology, allowing distance viewers/listeners.¹³ We also draw on a wealth of post-Situationist art walking acts aimed at producing a critical reflection on architectonic moderation of societal circumstances, including new types of artistic methods and media.¹⁴ Our walk act kept certain elements of autoethnographic accounts of walking as a method to discover the impact of physical urban space, acknowledging also that 'walks with video can be seen as forms of place-making'.¹⁵ In our case the temporal, verbal, and peripatetic communication created a common narrative and a temporal discursive place, which revealed urban and architectural relationships between the two cities, as well as bordering principles within each city.

The chosen spots, such as official governmental buildings and their nearby places, raise interesting questions from a representative point of view and in relation to the spaces they bordered to: What kind of spaces with no official representative power would catch our attention as heterotopically reflecting the governmental history of the two cities? And how can such bordering, such socially divided adjacency, as it were, be articulated by attending specifically to architectural and urban planning space? These became leading questions for us in the walk as well as in this paper. The preparation of the broadcasted event, just as the walk act itself and our analysis of it, thus came to drive our attention towards social contrasts in the two cities, pointing out areas and describing where and how newcomers, especially refugees, were forced or had the choice to settle.

8 Anssi Paasi, 'Border Studies Reanimated: Going Beyond the Territorial/Relational Divide', *Environment and Planning A*, 44 (2012), p. 2303-2309 (p. 2303); Chris Rumford, 'Towards a Multiperspectival Study of Borders', *Geopolitics*, 17 (2012), p. 887-902 (p. 893); Nira Yuval-Davis, George Wemyss and Kathryn Cassidy, *Bordering* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), p. 4-5.

9 James Sidaway, 'The Return and Eclipse of Border Studies? Charting Agendas', *Geopolitics*, 16 (2011), p. 969-976 (p. 970).

10 Lunds Kommun, 'Invandring, integration och nyanlända' [Immigration, integration and newcomers], January 2022, <<https://lund.se/kommun-och-politik/fakta-om-lund/invandring-integration-och-nyanlanda>>. Total numbers of Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2022/ August): Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response <<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/43>>.

11 Helmersson, Katarina 'Invandring och den svenska modellen i fokus vid Löfvens tal'. [Immigration and the Swedish model at focus in Löfven's speech]. *Sveriges Radio*, 2016. Received 2022-03-22 from: <<https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/6388727>>.

12 Marwa Al Khalidi was accompanied by Aya Musmar in Irbid, and Gunnar Sandin was accompanied by Kajsa Lawaczek Körner in Lund. The event was announced as such at the art gallery AURA Krognoshuset, with the title 'Lund-Irbid walk talk', 2020 <<https://www.krognoshuset.se/aura/program/>> [accessed 16 June 2023].

13 Kristin Ross, 'Lefebvre on the Situationists. An interview', *October* Vol. 79, Winter, MIT press, Mass. (1997), p. 69-83 (p. 79).

14 Such as, among numerous others, Apolonija Sustercic in a walk-and-talk session along the commercial streets of Malmö, 2002, with architect Tomas Wikström (Galleri Signal archive, Malmö), or Janet Cardiff's several aural

walks with head-phones guiding the listener/walker. For a recollection of Situationist and post-Situationist techniques, including those of Francis Alÿs, see Gunnar Sandin, 'Modalities of Place: On polarization and exclusion' (doctoral thesis, Lund University, 2003), p. 56-61, digitally available at <https://www.academia.edu/60585175/Modalities_of_Place_On_Polarisation_and_Exclusion_in_Concepts_of_Place_and_in_Site_Specific_Art>.

15 Sarah Pink, 'Walking with video', *Visual Studies*, 22 (2007), p. 240-252 (p. 249); For autoethnographic walking with camera, see also Kajsa Lawaczek Körner, 'Walking Along, Wandering Off and Going Astray' (doctoral thesis, Lund University, 2016), pp. 30-32, digitally available at <<https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/5452796/8812575.pdf>>



Figure 4 A view from the main facade of Dar As Saraya. Photo main author.



Figure 5 A photograph of Lund City Hall (Stadshallen). Photo co- author.



Figure 6 Images from the hilltop area of Irbid, including the main municipality building. Photo main author.

ROUTES REFLECTING BORDERING AND INTEGRATION IN TWO URBAN CONTEXTS

LUND: STARTING AT THE MUNICIPALITY BUILDING IN THE CITY CENTRE

In Lund, the route starts at Stadshallen, the City Hall, which has hosted the municipality board meetings since 1968. Apart from the original meeting room, a grand assembly hall (Fig 5), used for public events like concerts, was once considered one of the largest indoor conference arenas in Scandinavia. During a recent and protracted renovation, 2014-2022, the board meetings moved to a newly built municipality office building called Kristallen (the Crystal), located at the other side of the railroad dividing the city.

By the end of 2022, the municipality board meetings returned to the Stadshallen, now instead taking place in the large previous conference/concert hall. Behind this central building a small road, a walking path, leads to the nearby Lund Cathedral.

IRBID: DEPARTING FROM THE HISTORICAL HILLTOP CENTRE

In Irbid, the route starts at the historical centre of Irbid, in the hilltop area where the first urban settlements were formed in order to collect rain water needed for agriculture.¹⁶ At the hilltop lies the Dar As Saraya building, (Fig 4). In 1851 the building was established as a residence for one of the Ottoman rulers, and in 1886 it was turned into a women's prison.¹⁷ In 1994, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities adapted the building's rooms to host a historical museum.

The current main municipality building, erected in 1990, also lies in the hilltop area (Fig 6). This four-storey building has entrances on both its north and south sides. Its exterior design recalls a generic Arabic modernism with white concrete facades and vaulted or rectangular rows of windows. The daily use of buildings like this one – and in times of renovation, its nearby replacements – participates in the decision-making of how a city changes by its mere material and spatial presence and its own layout (assembly halls, offices, corridors, staircase, etc).¹⁸

The symbolic value of sovereignty tied to the central location of Dar As Saraya, together with the municipality building at the hilltop, constitutes a spatial demarcation operating as an ongoing bordering apparatus of differentiation from the rest of the city. The hilltop buildings convey a sense of panoptic surveillance based on how the hilltop expresses a historical sense of protection and defence, where the Dar As Saraya building itself shows an encapsulating shape, small openings, and solid materiality.¹⁹ The physical borders of the hilltop with its buildings' spatial and material form today also encapsulate an isolated territorial meaning, separating it out from its flat surroundings.²⁰ The population density close to the slope of the hill shows abrupt, site-specific variations, additionally making this into an area of stark social and material contrasts.

¹⁶ Tarawneh and Naamneh, 'Urbanization and Social Identities in Jordan: The Case of Irbid', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 42 (2011), p. 615- 635 (p. 621); Eugene Rogan, 'Bringing the State Back: The Limits of Ottoman Rule in Jordan, 1840-1910', in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, ed. by Eugene Rogan and Tariq Tell (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp. 32-57 (p. 36).

¹⁷ Ahmad Alzouby and Ahmed Attia, 'Reviving the Traditional House Architecture in Irbid City, Jordan', *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 17 (2022), p. 147-155 (p. 149).

¹⁸ Marwa Al Khalidi, 'Influential moments in city planning meetings: A study of decision-making situations in a Jordanian municipality' (doctoral thesis, Lund University, 2018), pp. 155-158, digitally available at <https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/files/51347857/Influential_Moments_in_City_Planning_Meetings_A_Study_of_Decision_Making_Situations_in_a_Jordanian_Municipality.pdf>

¹⁹ Natalia Ribas-Mateos and Timothy J. Dunn, *Handbook on Human Security, Borders and Migration*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021) p. 7.

²⁰ Marc Schoonderbeek, 'Complexity and Simultaneity. The Border as Spatial Condition', *Territorio*, 72 (2015), pp. 95-100 (p. 96).

LUND – HISTORICAL AND CURRENT DIRECTIONS

As regards the historic buildings of Lund, the cathedral maintains a stable position as a central node in, and symbolic value of the city. Lund is simply known for its cathedral, as it is for its university. For centuries, Lund has been the only university in southern Sweden. Today, the city expands along a northeast axis, where large-scale science research facilities and university departments are establishing new types of learning territories.²¹ The university is a magnet for international students and researchers, and represents a type of high-esteem internationalisation in the city. The larger neighbouring city of Malmö, known for its

wider and less controlled form for internationalisation, has one of the largest percentage of immigrant population of all cities in Sweden at 48 % (second generation counted).²² The issue of immigration's part in city planning has here be seen as an omittance of support of the spatial needs and architecturally innovative solutions for newcomers' activities.²³

A less well-known place of immigration, close to the university area and along the route in Lund, is the Estonian House (Fig 8). This building formerly contained a school for female students, and was restored in 1971 to serve exiled Estonians in southern Sweden. The place is modestly walled and gated towards the streets, but publicly accessible on request.



Figure 7 Dar As Saraya courtyard, in Irbid hilltop area. Photo main author.

21 Mattias Kärrholm and Albena Yaneva, 'Big Science and Urban Morphogenesis', in *Co-curating the City, Universities and Urban Heritage Past and Future*, ed. by Clare Melhuish, Henric Benesch, Dean Sully, and Ingrid Martins Holmberg (London: UCL Press, 2022), pp. 200-220 (p. 201).

22 SCB [Statistics Sweden] 2023-03-22, <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/>.

23 For a reflection of this omittance, see Katarina Nylund, 'Conceptions of Justice in the Planning of the New Urban Landscape –Recent Changes in the Comprehensive Planning Discourse in Malmö Sweden.' *Planning Theory and Practice*, 15 (2014), pp. 41-61 (p. 42). See also Laleh Foroughanfar, *The Street of Associations: Migration and the Infrastructural (Re)Production of Norra Grängesbergsgatan, Malmö*. (doctoral thesis, Lund University, 2022) pp. 79, digitally available at <https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/119948733/The_Street_of_Associations_Laleh_Foroughanfar.pdf>



Figure 8 Image of Estonian House in Lund. Photo co-author.

Some Estonians who came to Sweden after the end of World War II were extradited to the Soviet Union, together with other Balts, mostly Latvians, on request by Soviets claiming the soldiers had been on the German side in the Second World War.²⁴ This extradition decision, followed by jailing in the Soviet Union, was catastrophic for the former soldiers, in some cases causing their deaths before or just after arriving at the post-war camps.²⁵ Fifty years later, in 1994, the King of Sweden and the Minister of Foreign Affairs made an official apology on behalf of the nation. This house and its narrative recalls a Swedish border dilemma, namely the long-lasting period of claimed but also contested or 'outmoded' neutrality politics, a virtually impossible stance abruptly changing in 2022 with Sweden's application for NATO membership.²⁶

AXES OF MOVEMENT – ANCIENT BORDERS AND RECENT SETTLEMENTS IN LUND

From the early Middle Ages, there was both political and religious influence on Scandinavian culture, and one part of this connection was the decision by Danish and English kings and bishops in the 11th century, to place Lund under a bishopric authority on the east-west Catholic axis (partly mirroring a north-south one relating instead to Germany), leading to a change of representative power but also to new (types of) settlements in the region, including stone built cathedrals.²⁷ Today, a main force of population change is instead related to newcomers fleeing war zones, such as refugees from the recent years of conflict in Syria, and the even more recent Ukrainian diaspora. Lund has received a significant part of the Swedish distribution of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) refugee quota, met with resistance from locals in part due to new housing developments with ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, especially at the peripheries of Lund.



Figure 9 Map showing the location of the three suburbs with Lund municipality's refugee's housing

24 Dick Harrison, 'Vilka var det som Lämnades ut i Baltutlämningen?' ['Who were the Ones Extradited in the Balt Extradition?'] *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2016-03-11.

25 Curt Ekholm. *Balt- och tyskutlämningen 1945-1946*. [The Balt and German Extradition 1945-46], Uppsala, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Historica Upsaliensia 136 (224 pp.), 137 (444 pp.), 1984.

26 *Debatt I Lund*, public debate at Lund University, 3 March 2022 on "Yes or no to NATO-membership."

27 Maria Cinthio, 'Lund från första början' ['Lund's origins'], in Cinthio, (ed.), *Vägar mot Lund* [Eng: *Roads towards Lund*: an anthology about the rise of the city, its early development, and the contract for the large stone buildings], (Lund: Historiska Media, 2018), pp. 9-123.

The bordering processes of the recent newcomers and their inhabitation of housing has unfolded differently, responding to shifting policies and political climates. At first, housing was quick-fix, low-quality buildings, made by profit-driven developers. Thereafter, following a change in Swedish law allowing 'temporary' residencies to exist on a longer term, the municipality started 'Livskonceptet' (The Life Concept), a project which signalled an intention to create a socially and existentially sustainable condition in three suburbs east of the centre city of Lund (Linero, Dalby and Veberöd), (Fig 9).²⁸

In Linero, apartments are clustered in temporary, two-storey modules, each housing eighty refugees, close to a rural landscape with agrarian grounds, segregated from other housing (Fig 10). In the nearby village of Dalby, a similar number of blocks are developed but integrated more permanently in an ethnically mixed district. In Veberöd, a more distant suburb, the site initially identified for development (twenty-four apartments) had to be relocated from a central location in the suburb to an area with no existing housing. The decision came after local protests arguing the new development would threaten recreational facilities. In the overarching Life Concept project, the Swedish multinational

company, IKEA, was commissioned to design domestic interiors and public areas, signalling an overwhelming IKEA-ish interior design typology with bright light colours and minimalist construction, as if taken from a catalogue of things with no authentic cultural abode.

In Linero, the refugee housing becomes itself a 'border establishment,' marking the end of the denser city of Lund. In Dalby, an ancient village once rivalling Lund for the most important church, the recent newcomer establishment is a courtyard block (Fig 10) hemmed in by villas and formally segregated, sticking out as slightly higher and less architecturally sophisticated, stigmatised rather than fully integrated as a natural physical and social belonging. In the Veberöd case the old (no longer working) railroad that bound the suburban village now becomes a border (marker), separating newcomers from the established locals. Apart from the scattered, distant sites and underwhelming design, the projects are defined by their ready-made conceptions of what a home is, including the IKEA interiors, and becoming bordering practices in themselves. Even if intended as a support for integration, the municipality decisions risk becoming 'technologies of separation' due to their one-sided choice of architectural setting.²⁹



Figure 10 Three municipality-governed settlements for newcomers in Lund, from left: Temporary module apartments in Linero; Temporary module apartments in Veberöd; Image of courtyard in permanent housing block, Dalby. Photo co-author.

NEW AND OLD SETTLEMENTS IN IRBID

Irbid has been one of the major cities providing a home to newcomers of different national origins: Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, and Sudanese who fled to Jordan for fear of personal security and declining infrastructure in their original countries, food resources, health facilities, or economic possibilities.³⁰ Syrians and Palestinians have benefited, in some cases, from 'tribal and familial connections that existed throughout the region from before the modern borderlines were drawn in the 20th century.'³¹



Figure 11 A view from Irbid hilltop towards Al Afrah neighbourhood.

IRBID AND BORDERS SLOWLY VANISHING

The walking act that initiated this study led us to address two newcomers' settlements in Irbid. The first one is the 1951 Palestinian camp shaped and organised by the UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency) in the western part of

the city. The second is the Al Afrah neighbourhood (Fig 11), appropriated by Syrian newcomers in the south-west district of the city. In these two settlements, the internal and external forces of the bordering processes are different, as regards how the spaces became inhabited and who or what enacted the borderscapes in each milieu.³²

In 1951 the Palestinian camp was established on an area of one-fourth square kilometre. Viewing the camp's location within the borders of Irbid, and reflecting on its geographical location in relation to the western border of Jordan (shared with Palestine), one may assume an attempt to maintain the physical proximity of the camp's residents to their home country. At the beginning, the camp consisted of tents, which by 1954 were replaced by mud shelters. Over the years, the camp's dwellings turned to small, permanent buildings to host 4 000 Palestinians. Between the two Palestinian-Israeli wars of 1949 and 1967, Irbid received and held Palestinian newcomers, who gained different rights depending on the year of their arrival, for instance in relation to the state of diplomatic relationships at the time, but also in relation to their matrilineal or patrilineal descent.³³

In his conception about the camp as a 'space of exception,' Agamben reads it as 'a piece of land placed outside the normal juridical order' – and quite literally such a juridical exception generated the borders of the camp in Irbid in 1951, turning it into a permanent state of exception located 'outside' and 'inside' the city's borders.³⁴ As time passed, the space of the camp and the space of the city have become indistinguishable. The 1951 camp nowadays resembles 'some of the urban quarters in Irbid.'³⁵ Even if a clear, physical separation between the camp and urban context could still be found, the architectural remains have slowly disappeared as social borders, fading into the dense urban fabric of Irbid.³⁵

28 LKF, 'Så hjälper LKF kommunen att ordna bostäder' ['How the municipal residency company LKF helps refugees to residences'], 72 *Kvadrat LKFs kundtidning* 2017:1, <<https://lkf.inpublix.com/72kvadrat-2017-1/sa-hjalper-lkf-kommunen-att-ordna-flyktingbostader/>>. By "existential sustainability" we here refer to the meaning-bearing factors in sustainability concepts discussed recently as involving for instance psychological and theological aspects. In relation to architecture, see the contribution: Ida Sandström and Sandra Kopljär, 'Existential Sustainability: An investigation of Loneliness and Belonging in Relation to Sustainable Housing', abstract to the conference 'Hope and meaning for a sustainable life', introduction by Marianne Loo, Lund University, 2022, <<https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/article/hope-and-meaning-sustainable-life>>

29 Nishat Awan, 'Introduction to Border Topologies', *GeoHumanities*, 2 (2016), pp. 279-283 (p. 279).

30 Terminologies like refugees, asylum seekers or 'persons of concern' have been used to indicate different political attribution and entitlements of newcomers' type of relation to the hosting countries. See Charles Simpson and Agyeade Abo Zayed, 'New Faces, Less Water, and a Changing Economy in a Growing City. A Case Study of Refugees in Towns, Irbid, Jordan', *Refugees in Towns*, (Boston: Feinstein International Centre, 2015), pp. 3-55, <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599720dc59cc68c3683049bc/t/5d35ec3ec4bce20001ed9028/1563815012312/RIT+Report+Irbid.pdf>>; Ribas-Mateos and Dunn, *Handbook on Human Security, Borders and Migration*, p. 2.

31 Simpson and Abo Zayed, 'New Faces, Less Water, and a Changing Economy in a Growing City. A Case Study of Refugees in Towns, Irbid, Jordan', 2015, p. 5.

32 Suvendrini Perera, 'A Pacific Zone? (In) Security, Sovereignty, and Stories of the Pacific Borderscape', in *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics and Territory's Edge*, ed. by Pre Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 201-227 (p. 206).

33 UNRWA, 'Irbid Camp' <<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan/irbid-camp>> [accessed 6 September 2022].

34 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: University Press, 1998) pp. 169-170. For an elaborated artistic research on the temporal development of the cultural, physical and existential borders of Palestinian camps, following Agamben's view of the refugee as destabilising the normal nation-state, see, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, *Refugee Heritage*, (Stockholm: Art and Theory Publishing, 1921), p.28.

35 UNRWA, 'Irbid Camp' <<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan/irbid-camp>>.

The effect of the plethora of internal and transnational relations have been shifting over the years transforming the architectural and urban status of the camp. Nowadays, some local nuances of power can be sensed by the inhabitants of the camp, speaking the agency of its original status.³⁶

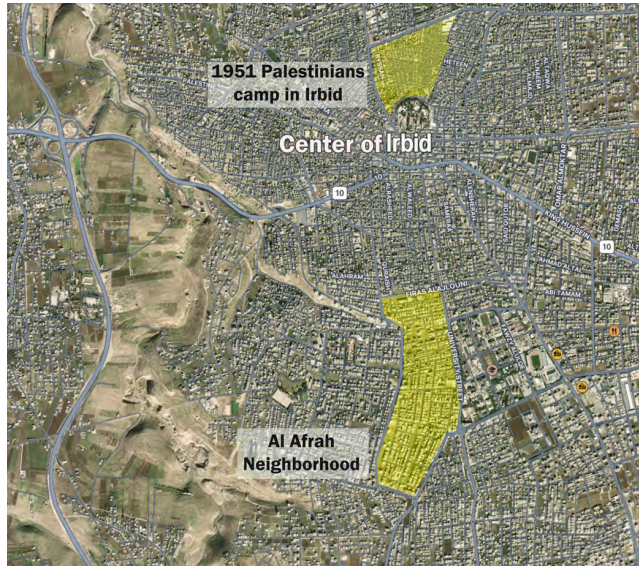


Figure 12 Location of two newcomers' settlements in Irbid: the 1951 camp area, and the Al Afrah neighbourhood.

IRBID AND INTEGRATED SETTLEMENTS

The year 2012 witnessed the outbreak of the Syrian war complex, and 40 000 Syrians arrived in Irbid.³⁷ By 2015, large neighbourhoods were inhabited by more Syrians who were classified as 'persons of concern,' displacing native Jordanians, like in Al Afrah.³⁸

The Al Afrah neighbourhood (Fig 12) is classified by Irbid municipality as a 'type C', low income residential area. It has a central location in the city, near Yarmouk University Street and other locations with social and economic characteristics that have supported the integration of Syrians via 'means of production, distribution, and financing' which also 'enact a form of foreclosure.'³⁹

The bordering process differs between the 1951 camp and the Al Afrah neighbourhood. A couple of years had to pass before the Palestinian newcomers performed independent agency to urbanise, perform, and resist the bordering forces imposed by the UNRWA and the Jordanian government, for instance: replacing tent structures with more stable shelter buildings. In contrast, in the Al Afrah neighbourhood, Syrian newcomers adapted their neighbourhoods as soon as they started to settle, due to economic and social struggles, but without the need to face or fear extrinsic threats. Since 2012, the bordering forces mobilised by the Syrian newcomers themselves have been essential in enacting the political project of their new belonging.⁴⁰ While security measures and directives from nongovernmental organisations and the Jordanian government defined the material bordering of the Palestinian areas in 1951, the features of cultural resemblance pursuing normal life were more defining characters in the Al Afrah area. Despite the differences as regards the character of integration, these patterns of de-bordering, displacing, adjustment and elimination of physical differences, tied to daily life processes, continues to be influential as integrational attempts in the society.

DISTINGUISHING BORDERING PRINCIPLES IN URBAN FORMATION

In this study, a 'parallel walking act' played a catalytic role as an attempt to overbridge the often-stated geopolitical zoning of a Global North and South. Extending on the walking act, we have here discussed similarities and differences related to bordering processes and their spatial formations, especially the distribution of newcomers' settlements and how they manifest in relation to international forces along the two cities' histories.. The bordering processes in Lund and Irbid's regional histories show, as in many other places, the double meaning of defined state territorial boundaries (historical formations), and the everyday maintenance of both material and 'fiat' boundaries, 'silently' existing as symbolic and social lines of exclusion and inclusion.⁴¹ We have specifically seen how local urban characteristics may encourage or prevent inclusion, and how this is differently exposed in the two cities. Questions related to urban extension and integration guided the analysis, and these questions can also be seen as generalizable for guiding urban design and planning practices, especially as regards temporary or permanent housing for newcomers. The questions are as follows: To what extent are both the original residents and the future holders of new settlements included in the planning?⁴² Who is openly listened to and acknowledged? How are borderlines-to-be (in and around new settlements) negotiated and contested by different actors? Or put in more proactive wording: To what extent is it possible to figure out, together, what type of architectural solutions fit families, individuals, and cultures, if unnecessary borders are to be avoided? Which type of architectural solutions do not fit? We have seen here how the more detailed housing design has formative bordering agency, and how in municipal refugee housing, there is a risk that the wishes of newcomers are not consulted.

In relation to the Global North and South, we have seen, apart from the immense difference in numbers of received refugees in the two regions here studied, that certain mechanisms of placement and integration appear. On the whole, however, we have seen how geopolitical relations of a more regional kind, related to old trading routes, long-standing border conflicts, similarities and differences regarding religion, or fluctuating defence coalition politics have had, and still have, influence for the development of cities.

When it comes to the distribution of housing, and the territorialisation related to these settlements, there are varying local governmental intentions and living conditions. Without engaging with situated knowledge of the life and demands of refugees, we have argued the importance of conceptualising bordering processes as enacting belonging, as well as allowing self-governing.⁴³ The examples here have shown bordering processes enacted in physical locations and urban characteristics that afford new settlements by stimulating – or not – daily activities for newcomers. We conclude by a description of these effects of bordering.

Geographical location has an evident role to play in the 'number of bodies, discourses, and relationships that highlight [...] shifts,' deciding to what degree newcomers can be integrated and cities allowed to expand.⁴⁴ For instance, for Syrians, the proximity to Jordan has been a natural decisive factor. Distance is, however, one factor alongside self-organisation. The urban characteristics of the receiving city may bestow the mutual possibilities to physically control the new location, thus avoiding unidirectional decisions or 'camp thinking,' where one agent solely arranges roads, hospitals, and other infrastructure for others.⁴⁵ We see in Lund, and in the initial stage of the Palestinian camp in Irbid, that because of their less dense urban characters, policy-driven and encapsulated types of social space were established.

³⁶ Romola Sanyal, 'Squatting in camps: Building and insurgency in spaces of refuge', *Urban Studies*, 48 (2010), pp. 877–890 (p. 880).

³⁷ Simpson and Abo Zayed, 'New Faces, Less Water, and a Changing Economy in a Growing City. A Case Study of Refugees in Towns, Irbid, Jordan', (Boston: Feinstein International Centre), 2015, p. 11.

³⁸ In 2020, Syrians amounted to 15.7% of Irbid's entire population. Sattam Al Shogoor et al, 'Evaluating the Impact of the Influx of Syrian Refugees on Land Use/ Land Cover Change in Irbid District, Northwestern Jordan', *Land*, 11 (2022), pp. 372– 384; (p. 374).

³⁹ Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, *Borderscapes Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. xi.

⁴⁰ Yuval-Davis, Weymyss and Cassidy, *Bordering* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), p. 39.

⁴¹ Nash and Reid, 'Border Crossings: New Approaches to the Irish Border', *Irish Studies Review*, 18 (2010), pp.265– 284 (p. 267); Gabriel Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century, Understanding Borders*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers) p. 18; Barry Smith and Achille C. Varzi, 'Fiat and Bona Fide Boundaries', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 60 (2000), pp. 401–420 (p. 402).

⁴² Gunnar Sandin, 'Spatial Renewal and Lost Voices', in *UIA23 conference: Sustainable futures—Leave no one behind/Design for Inclusivity*, (Copenhagen, 2023).

⁴³ See Aya Musmar, 'Witnessing as a Feminist Spatial Practice: Encountering the Refugee Camp Beyond Recognition' (doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2020), p. 9, digitally available at <<https://theses.whiterose.ac.uk/25927/1/Aya%20Musmar%20-%20PhD%20Thesis-%20file%201.pdf>>

In the Al Afrah case in Irbid, in contrast, the neighbourhood showed fewer governmental interventions at the same time as local commercial infrastructure afforded more natural and self-governed acts of bordering, thus shaping a local but open community.

In conclusion, we suggest that the spatial integration of migrants can be described in three types of bordering principles: *encapsulating*, *scattering* and *displacing*. The hyper-simplified architectural module-housing in Lund can be described as an encapsulating activity, whereas the location of particular newcomers' houses in outer areas or in architectonically deviant neighbourhoods can be described as scattering and displacing of groups of newcomers. In Irbid, the borders demarcating Palestinian camps in the 1950s represent displacing and encapsulating, and they were only slowly transformed into an integrated part of the city. The process for the Syrians in Al Afrah operated at a faster pace, stimulating a partial bordering and integration of groups and their everyday social needs by letting a more natural and spontaneous – but still not competition-free – displacing take place.

These bordering principles can be seen as influencing city formation and expansion in several ways. As agentic parts in the ever-returning negotiations of lived urban space, these three principal types of bordering processes address, and may help to modulate, the dichotomies of: insideness versus outsideness, control versus freedom, and familiarity versus differentiating.

44 Chiara Brambilla, 'Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept', *Geopolitics*, 20 (2015), pp. 14–34 (p. 19); Aya Musmar and Ann- Christin Zuntzn, 'Hospitality and violence. Writing for irresolution', in *The Entanglements of Ethnographic Fieldwork in a Violent World*, ed. by Nerina Weiss, Erella Grassiani and Linda Green (Oxon: Routledge, 2023), pp. 150–167 (p. 150).

45 Nishat Awan, 'Introduction to Border Topologies', *GeoHumanities*, 2 (2016), pp. 279–283 (p. 279)

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