TU Delft

Delft University of Technology

Document Version
Final published version

Licence
CC BY

Citation (APA)
Qudah, N. (2024). *In Search of Al Wehdat Camp: A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camps*. [Dissertation (TU Delft), Delft University of Technology]. https://doi.org/10.71690/abe.2024.13

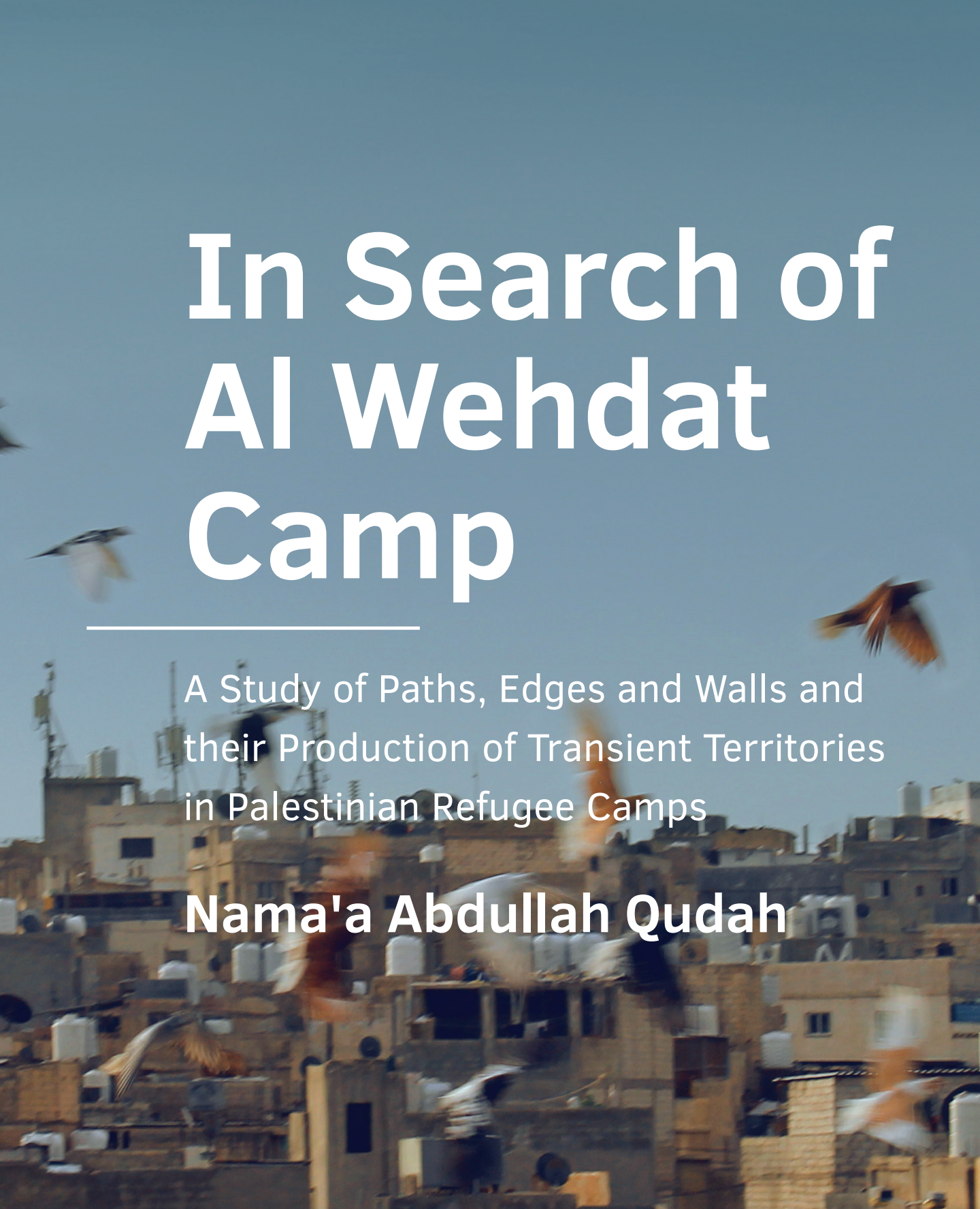
Important note
To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

Copyright
In case the licence states “Dutch Copyright Act (Article 25fa)”, this publication was made available Green Open Access via the TU Delft Institutional Repository pursuant to Dutch Copyright Act (Article 25fa, the Taverne amendment). This provision does not affect copyright ownership.
Unless copyright is transferred by contract or statute, it remains with the copyright holder.

Sharing and reuse
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

Takedown policy
Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

This work is downloaded from Delft University of Technology.



In Search of Al Wehdat Camp

A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camps

Nama'a Abdullah Qudah

In Search of Al Wehdat Camp

A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camps

Nama'a Abdullah Qudah

TOC

A+BE | Architecture and the Built Environment | TU Delft BK

24#13

Design | Sirene Ontwerpers, Véro Crickx

Cover photo | Flocks of Immigrants moving across and over Al Wehdat Camp, 2022
Photo by Author

Keywords | Palestinian Refugee Camps, Palestine, Al Nakba, Fieldwork, History

ISBN 978-94-6366-909-2

ISSN 2212-3202

© 2024 Nama'a Abdullah Qudah

This dissertation is open access at https://doi.org/10.7480/abe.2024.13

Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

This is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the license that you'll find at:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

You are free to:
Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material
for any purpose, even commercially.
This license is acceptable for Free Cultural Works.
The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:
Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Unless otherwise specified, all the photographs in this thesis were taken by the author. For the use of illustrations effort has been made to ask permission for the legal owners as far as possible. We apologize for those cases in which we did not succeed. These legal owners are kindly requested to contact the author.

TOC

In Search of Al Wehdat Camp

A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camps

Dissertation

for the purpose of obtaining the degree of doctor
at Delft University of Technology
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus, prof.dr.ir. T.H.J.J. van der Hagen
chair of the Board for Doctorates
to be defended publicly on
Monday 9 September 2024 at 17:30 o'clock

by

Nama'a Abdullah QUDAH
Master of Architecture in Theory and Design
The University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
born in Amman, Jordan

TOC

This dissertation has been approved by the promotors.

Composition of the doctoral committee:

Rector Magnificus,	chairperson
Prof.dr.ir. K.M. Havik	Delft University of Technology, promotor
Dr. L.G.A.J. Reinders	Delft University of Technology, copromotor

Independent members:

Prof.dr. J. Gosseye	Delft University of Technology
Prof. dr. A.C.A.E. Moors	University of Amsterdam
Prof.dr. M. Rawes	University College London, United Kingdom
Dr. S. Maqusi	University College London, United Kingdom
Prof.dr.ir. M.J. van Dorst	Delft University of Technology

Part of this study was financed by the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, through the Beyond Borders Scholarship.

To my parents, Abdullah and Buthaina.
To my Seedo and Tayta, Sameeh and Zahia.

And to the martyrs of Gaza,
May you find a better and more just world in Allah's heaven.



A bird lands on a branch in Palestine, with the city of Umm al-Fahm in the background.
(Photo taken by Marijke van der Molen in the city of Umm al-Fahm, 2020).

Oh dear bird flying home,
May my eyes protect you,
May the eyes of Allah shield you,
Oh dear traveler,
How jealous am I of you,
O Palestine, my homeland,
O Palestine, very beautiful Mashalla.

Oh dear bird, remember to fly over Safad,
Take a turn towards Tabaria,
Towards Akka and Haifa,
And send my greetings to its sea.
Don't forget Al Nasra, our strong Arab fort
And delight Bisan, with the news of its inhabitants' return.

Oh Al Quds, my tears have fallen,
My people have been dispersed everywhere.
History is proud of us, those displaced,
Proud of how much we have endured.

Oh dear bird,
Fly over Gaza and kiss its sand
That land with strong and brave men,
And Al Quds, our capital,
And Al Aqsa, its jewel.
Oh dear Allah, may we reunite with our home.

- From *Oh dear bird flying home*, a Palestinian folklore song.

Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation was the hardest thing I ever had to do. There were times when I did not think that this chapter of my life was ever going to finish. The dissertation kept growing bigger, getting more tangled and was continually interrupted by other things. But here we are, at the finish line, and for that, I am eternally grateful. First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah Almighty, for giving me the strength, the patience and the perseverance to complete this journey and for guiding my path through its different turns. Alhamdulilah. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to embark on this pursuit of knowledge, and get to where I am now.

From the wonderful people that have guided my path, I would like to begin by thanking my supervisors, Dr. Klaske Havik and Dr. Leeke Reinders, whose supervision and support have helped me develop my work and stay true to its essence, despite all the obstacles and challenges. To Dr. Klaske Havik, I would like to say, thank you for your kindness and warmth, which have helped me feel safe and inspired and gave me the ability to say the things that I wanted to say with great confidence. Thank you for generously sharing your knowledge and expertise, without ever holding back. Thank you for all the time you have put into meticulously reading and editing every line and chapter and for the long hours you have put into our discussions, which together reflected your great care and investment not only in the growth of the work but also my growth as a scholar. To Dr. Leeke Reinders, I would like to say, thank you for believing in me and giving me reassurance when I needed it the most. Thank you for teaching me to be humble, to stay true to my values and above all to be human, in a manner that helped me connect with people in the field and listen to them with curiousity and compassion. Thank you for teaching me that things could be done differently; for constantly challenging me and encouraging me to see things in a new light and for reminding me that writing a dissertation could also be enjoyable. I will always remember our discussions about birds and rooftops and Coney Island.

I would also like to thank my family, who are my backbone and biggest cheerleaders. I would like to thank my late father, Abdullah, to whom I owe the world; whose unconditional love and support helped me start this journey and also build the strength and perseverance to continue it after his passing in 2020.

TOC

Habibi Baba, thank you for instilling a love for knowledge in me and teaching me to always be kind and modest. Thank you for giving me the world and allowing me to discover all its wonders. I would also like to thank my beloved mother, Buthaina, whose strength and vigor made me believe I can achieve the impossible, and whose warmth and light have allowed me to continue growing, just as my name promises. The long hours we have spent discussing the work have rendered her as a third supervisor whose feedback and input have helped me stay focused and stay confident in who I am and all that I can become. I would also like to thank my Seedo and Tayta, Sameeh and Zahia, who introduced me to Palestine and helped me build my imagined homeland and my connection to it, from a distance. I would also like to thank my siblings, Bonyan, Yaqeen, Jana, Hamza, Mohammad and Abdulrahman, for their love and support, as well as my nieces and nephews, Saif, Meriam, Bassel, and baby Kenan, who together with my parents have built my home, that place that I know I will always be able to return to, no matter how far I have travel in the world.

I would also like to thank my Yacine, my husband, who despite having arrived on the show during the fifth season has had a huge impact on my life and work. Thank you for being so generous and so understanding, thank you for all the miles you have traveled between France and the Netherlands, thank you for crossing the border on foot to see me, and for all the hours you have spent listening to me talk about Al Wehdat Camp, Palestine and Um Hasan. Thank you for being there when I wasn't, for being so gently patient and unconditionally supportive and giving me the confidence and motivation to finish the work after only a few months of our marriage. Thank you for helping me edit the dissertation and for the long hours you spent in front of the screen for me. Thank you for expanding my worldview, for provoking me to see things differently, and for and sharing your beautiful world and Algeria with me.

I would also like to thank the people of Al Wehdat Camp, who have worked with me over the course of five years, generously opening their doors for me and welcoming me into their homes and lives, sharing their wonderful life stories and knowledge about Al Wehdat Camp and Palestine. I would like to thank my research facilitator Malek, who made the process of navigating the camp and its different communities much easier and manageable. I would also like to thank Mohammad Al Hajj for connecting me with his different networks and people in the camp. I would also like to extend my gratitude for the employees in the different DPA and UNRWA offices for their support and cooperation.

I am also thankful for a number of wonderful scholars whose feedback helped me see the research differently and approach it from new directions.

I would like to thank Dr. Nishwat Awan, Dr. Caren Kaplen, Dr. Adam Ramadan, Dr. Samar Maqusi, Dr. Dina Zbeidy, Dr. Ashjan Ajour, Dr. Afaf Jabiri, Dr. Janina Gosseye, Dr. Nurhan Abujidi, and Dr. Ismael Hassan. I would also like to thank Christopher Clarkson for his meticulous and excellent proofreading of my text and Véro Crickx for her patience and support in completing my dissertation's book design.

I would also like to thank my dear colleagues at the department who made this journey much more enjoyable and rewarding. Those long coffee breaks and lunches, those long hours of complaining and gossiping have together helped us build a network of support and a space of solidarity that we turned to in times of hardship and despair. I would like to thank Grazia, Dirim, Dorina, John, Burcu, Sabina, Alberto, Elena, Maria, and Eric.

My sincerest gratitude is also extended to all my dear friends, who outside the classroom helped me stay inspired and determined to never give up. In the Netherlands, I would like to thank those who became my family while living abroad, who with their home cooked food and visits made life in Delft a lot more memorable, including Oumkolthoum, Fatima, Salma, Razan, Layan, Fawzi, Yasmin, Nada, Arwa and Suhaila. Back home, I would like to thank Sandra, Rana, Farah, Ola, Jude, Suhad, Maram, Razan, Rawan, Heba, Zaid, Ezz, Mamoon, Ali and Hana with whom I had numerous conversations in person and over voice notes that have positively reflected on the research's development. I would also like to thank my Twitter and Instagram communities, who kept the conversation going and helped me develop my thinking and argumentation skills; with whom I was able to share my ideas in their rawest form and – with their very opinionated points of view – helped me deal with the toughest forms of criticism, navigating the most intense of debates.

I would like to conclude by thanking Palestine, my Falasteen, our homeland, for teaching all of us, generation after another, how to be honest and fair, how to stay dedicated and true to ourselves and to how to continue fighting for life and our right to all of its wonders even during the darkest of hours. I would like to thank Palestine, for constantly reminding us of the things that matter the most, for being the compass, the path and the destination and for helping us see the truth within ourselves, people and the world.

Until we meet one day, once this bird manages to fly back home.

Contents

List of Tables 17
List of Figures 18
Summary 24
Samenvatting 26

0 Introduction 31

0.1 **The History, Architecture and Transformation of Palestinian Refugee Camps** 34
0.2 **Research Approach, Question and Significance** 41
0.3 **Research Structure** 43

1 Paths of Investigation 47

On the body, movement, and the territory

1.0 **Arriving at Al Wehdat Camp** 47

1.1 **Introduction** 51
1.2 **Research Framework: Body - Movement - Territory** 51

1.3 **The Body as a Site of Knowledge Production** 54
1.3.1 Embodied and Situated Knowledge 54
1.3.2 Position and Positionality: From the threshold, at once inside and outside. 56
1.3.3 Prepositions, Places and Distances 64

1.4 **Movement: A Study of Paths and Distances** 70
1.4.1 Paths of Displacement 71
1.4.2 Paths of Investigation: Taqato'at or the spatio-temporal Intersections 73

1.5 **Visual Elements: Photographs, Sketches, Mappings, Collages and Serial Vision** 77

1.6 **The Focus Group Design: Observing Power Dynamics** 80
1.6.1 The First Session: Eyes and Ears 82
1.6.2 The Second Session: Hands and Feet 84
1.6.3 The Third Session: The Camp's Youth. 85

1.7 **Ethical Considerations** 87
1.8 **Eyes, Everywhere: My own experience of moving in the camp** 88

2 **Paths of Displacement** 91

Knowing Al Blad, Leaving Al Blad

2.0 **Arriving from Al Blad** 91

2.1 **Introduction** 94

2.2 **How do Palestinian refugees know their past and land?** 94
2.2.1 Knowing the past: Heritage and History: Between Being and Knowing 95
2.2.2 Knowing Al Blad: Rootedness and Sense of Place: Knowing and Knowing About 97

2.3 **The ongoing Nakba: a discontinuity in time and place** 103
2.3.1 The imperial production of history in Palestine. 105

2.4 **Paths of Displacement: Multiple Points Across Time and Space** 108

2.5 **Ten Paths of Displacement: From Al Blad to Al Wehdat Camp** 110
2.5.1 Path 1: Um Hasan: Bait ‘Affa - Iraq Suwaydan - Al-Faluja - Beit Lahia - Remal Neighborhood- Nuseirat Camp- Shuja’iyya neighborhood- Al Wehdat Camp. 112
2.5.2 Path 2: Ibrahim Nasrallah: Bureij - Gaza -Hebron- Dheisheh - Amman - Al Wehdat Camp 124
2.5.3 Path 3 - Path 10: The Focus group mappings. 128

3 **Al Wehdat Camp Boundaries** 147

Where is the camp?

3.0 **The alley** 147

3.1 **Introduction** 150

3.2 **The ambivalent condition of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan** 151
3.2.1 The invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan 157

3.3 **Where is the boundary? Where is everything else?** 159

3.3.1 Boundary Demarcating Elements 162

3.4 **The Redline: The formal boundary** 163
3.4.1 Inside the UNRWA Office 163
3.4.2 Inside the DPA Office 168

3.5 **The Greenline: The informal boundary** 173
3.6 **The less obvious ways of distinguishing between the formal and the informal boundary of Al Wehdat Camp** 181

4 **The Terrain, the Overspills, the Streets, and the Markets** 189

4.0 **Al Jabal** 189

4.1 **Introduction** 192

4.2 **The Greenline: A Dynamic and Transformative boundary** 193
4.2.1 The Terrain and the camp's relationship with the city. 194

4.3 **Settling and Resettling in and around the camp** 214
4.3.1 The case of East Wehdat: The camp's growth in time due to continued displacement and population overspills. 214
4.3.2 Wadi Al Seer Camp: Arriving at the camp from Elsewhere 224

4.4 **The streets, the markets, and the flows of activity and movement** 231
4.4.1 The Street Hierarchy: the Main and Secondary, the Center Stage and its Backstage 233
4.4.2 Sumaya Street and the spatial fragmentation of the camp 239
4.4.3 The Markets and Flows of Activity as Connectors with the city 243
4.4.4 The Merchants and the Domination over the camp space 248
4.4.5 The Fountain Market: Flows of Bodies, Memories and Water 251
4.4.6 The Gendering of Spaces in the Streets and Markets of Al Wehdat Camp 264

5 **The Walls of the Communal Spaces** 275

The Home-camp

5.0 **The Women's center** 275

5.1 **Introduction** 279

5.2 **Walls as Boundary Demarcating Elements: The Communal Spaces** 280
5.2.1 The Women's Center: A safe space for women and children. 280
5.2.2 Al Wehdat Sports Club. 294
5.2.3 The UNRWA Complex. 306

5.3 **Walls as mediums of communication and interfaces between different groups** 327
5.3.1 Graffiti in the Urban Landscape 328
5.3.2 The drawings on the UNRWA Walls and along Um Fakhri Street 330
5.3.3 The drawings around the camp walls, remembering Palestine and celebrating Al Wehdat Camp. 341
5.3.4 5.3.3.3 Belonging to Al Wehdat Camp and other Existential and Territorial Notions 347

6 **Walls of the Domestic Spaces** 353

The Home-Home

6.0 **Um Hasan's Home** 353

6.1 **Introduction** 357
6.2 **The Wehda in Al Wehdat Camp: A space of temporary refuge** 359

6.3 **On the Inside: Beyond the walls, into the Lived experiences** 370
6.3.1 Younes and Nassmin: Comrades in arms. 371
6.3.2 Nawaf: In pursuit of a home. 381
6.3.3 Hisham and Al Nawar – The Palestinian Gypsies 389
6.3.4 Um Hasan and Sameera: Moving outside the camp and taking the camp with her. 394

7 **Conclusion** 403

On the Roof: the Birds and the Refugee's Return

Epilogue 421
Bibliography 427
Curriculum vitae 433

List of Tables

1.1 Research Framework with its three pillars: The Body-Movement-Territory. 53

2.1 Classification of Palestinian Refugees into three Generations, which I have developed in reference to the work of both scholars Loren D. Lybarger (2005) and Sophie Richter-Devroe (2012) 98

3.1 The 10 official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, prepared from information obtained from UNRWA. 153

5.1 Different Types of Graffiti found in Al Wehdat Map. 350

List of Figures

0.1 An overview of Al Wehdat Camp from above. 45

1.1 The center stage where the everyday performances take place. 50

1.2 Prepositions, places and distances to and from different architectural elements in Al Wehdat Camp. 66

1.3 The boundary demarcating elements that produce and shape the transient territory. 68

1.4 Taqato'at, the vertical and horizontal distance, and the transient territory. 78

2.1 My mother with her aunt Asmahan, in front of the Dome of the Rock, Al Quds, 1983 93

2.2 My late Seedo Sameeh, in his Jordanian air force uniform, Amman, 1966 93

2.3 Modes of knowing the past and the land, prepared by the author, illustrating the work of E. Valentine Daniel (1996) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1980). 100

2.4 Knowing Al Blad between a Rootedness in Place and a Sense of Place: The different ways generations of Palestinian refugees know Palestine. 101

2.5 A Folding of Time and Space: Palestine and Al Wehdat Camp between Al Nakba and Today. 107

2.6 The inside of Um Hasan's home, rich with plants and decorations. 113

2.7 Path 1: Um Hasan's Path of Displacement from Beit 'Affa to Wehdat Camp. 122

2.8 Path 2: Ibrahim Nasrallah family's Path of Displacement from Bruiej to Al Wehdat Camp. 126

2.9 Path 3: From Islin to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Islin sketched this path of displacement in Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 129

2.10 Path 4: From Ed Dawayima to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Ed Dawayima sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 130

2.11 Path 5: From El Qubab to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from El Qubab sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 131

2.12 Path 6: From Beit Nabala to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Beit Nabala sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 132

2.13 Path 7: From Beit Nabala to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Beit Dajan sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 133

2.14 Path 8: From Beit Dajan to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Simsum sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 134

2.15 Path 9: From Simsim village to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Simsum sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 135

2.16 Path 10: From Al-'Abbasiyya to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Al-'Abbasiyya sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021) 136

2.17 10 Displacement Paths from the home-villages in Palestine to Amman after Al Nakba of 1948. 138

2.18 Home-villages of Paths (1-4), before Al Nakba and in the present. 141

2.19 Home-villages of Paths (5-10), before Al Nakba and in the present. 142

3.1 The alley that separates Qawasheen from Wakaleh 149

3.2 Google images of the 10 official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, in chronological order. 154

3.3 Kids playing in a residential alley in Al Wehdat camp. 158

3.4 Al Wehdat Camp nested into the surrounding context in southeast Amman as shown on Google Maps. 159

3.5 The camp from above, nested into the city of Amman. 160

3.6 Institutional drawings representing Al Wehdat Camp, collected from several UNRWA and DPA offices. 161

3.7 A solid and void map of Al Wehdat Camp Map hanging in UNRWA's camp director's office. 165

3.8 An official UNRWA map showing Amman New Camp, existing in isolation from the city. 166

3.9 The Map found hanging on the wall in the DPA office in Al Wehdat Camp, hidden behind the curtain. (I have blurred the image to conceal the unit numbers that were indicated on the map) 170

3.10 The redline superimposed on a Google Maps image. 172

3.11 The general map of Al Wehdat Camp that I prepared and distributed to the focus group participants. 174

3.12 Examples of the maps that show the camp boundary as annotated by the focus group participants, also showing the elements that were used to demarcate that boundary. 177

3.13 A superimposition of the elements highlighted in the focus group discussions on a Google Maps image to show the boundary of the camp as understood by the participants. 178

3.14 A comparison between the redline and the greenline, representing the formal and the informal boundaries respectively. 179

3.15 The old and the new camp as described by the camp inhabitants. 182

3.16 The camp as seen from one of its roofs, against the backdrop of the city. 186

4.1 Sumaya Street as an edge where the camp ends. 191

4.2 Al Jabal, a cliff that connects the camp with the city 191

4.3 The redline and the greenline. 192

4.4 Jabal Al Quisemeh as seen from Al Jabal, also showing Al Quisemeh Stadium. 196

4.5 Wadi Al Remam and the busy Al Yarmouk Street as seen from Al Jabal. 198

4.6 A section through the formal and the informal boundaries of the camp, showing the terrain, Al Jabal, Al Yarmouk Street and Al Quiesmeh Stadium. 199

4.7 Al Jabal on the right side and Al Wehdat Camp as seen from Al Yarmouk Street. 200

4.8 Al Wehdat Camp and Al Jabal as seen from Al Quisemeh. 200

4.9 My mental map of Al Wehdat Camp and its edges. 202

4.10 Al Jabal, a body that disconnects the camp from the city. 204

4.11 A pause, a stop, along a path of movement. 205

4.12 The camp in the foreground, and the city in the background. 205

4.13 The descend concludes in Al Yarmouk Street. 206

4.14 A sharp cut through Al Jabal's body reveals its different layers and the passing of time. 207

4.15 The camp at the top, and the city at the bottom. 208

4.16 The location of Tal'et Al Amaneh in relation to the main streets and the camp boundaries. 210

4.17 Entering Al Wehdat Camp through Tal'et Al Amaneh. 212

4.18 Semi public space along Tal'et Al Amaneh. 213

4.19 The area of East Wehdat growing next to the old camp in 1978 before the development project began. I added the annotations and the zoomed in image on the right next to the original archival photo on the left. (Source: the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center, Amman, Jordan, 2019). 216

4.20 Archival Photo of East Wehdat Urban Development project. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC). 217

4.21 The area of East Wehdat after the development project was completed. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC). 218

4.22 East Wehdat Master plan. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC). 219

4.23 The deteriorated state of the East Wehdat and narrow pathways. 220

4.24 A chaotic staircase in East Wehdat. 221

4.25 A narrow and poorly maintained alley in East Wehdat. 223

4.26 The site of what used to be Wadi Al Seer camp as seen from the top 225

4.27 The huge mural opposite to the site depicting an elderly Palestinian woman waiting 226

4.28 Two graffiti writings opposite to the site with the words "Resist Resist Resist" and "All of Palestine". 227

4.29 Panoramic view of the skatepark as seen from above 228

4.30 The Skatepark in the foreground, with the neighborhood of Jabal Al Weibdeh in the background. 229

4.31 Wadi Al Seer Camp in the past, turned today into a skatepark. (Source: Images at the top are from Google Maps with my annotations. Bottom three archival images are from the UNRWA archive). 230

4.32 The street that separates the old camp from East Wehdat. 233

4.33 Al Nadi Street at night,, bustling with activity, people and items. 234

4.34 Al Maghfar Street bustling with shoppers, kiosks, street vendors and shops. 235

4.35 Al Maghfar Street as seen from the top. 236

4.36 Serial Vision: A sequence of photographs capturing movement from the center stage to the backstage. 238

4.37 A half demolished unit in Sumaya Street. 241

4.38 Sumaya Street and the flows of cars disconnecting the camp fabric. 242

4.39 Standing in the middle of a busy commercial street in the camp. 243

4.40 A generic section through Al Wehdat Market, showing the market's different divisions and elements. 245

4.41 Carts used for transportation inside the camp. 247

4.42 Al Bastat occupying the space in Al Maghfar Street. 249

4.43 The fountain in the fountain market, a reminder of the camp's earlier days. 252

4.44 Women in search of water in the water plots in the camp. 254

4.45 A collage showing women out to get water for their families in the past, in the present. 256

4.46 A double folding of time and space, the space of the camp in the past onto the space of the camp in the present, both folded on the space of Palestine, as shown in the background. 259

4.47 The fountain market from the top, taking the place of what used to be a water plot. 260

4.48 Locating the water plots on the map of the camp, with the plots colored in blue, showing their location in relation to the main streets of the camp and the redline. 261

4.49 A mapping of the new buildings that were erected on top of the blue squares in Al Wehdat camp. 262

4.50 Where is the danger? Six Maps from the Focus Group.
(Source: This a selection of maps that were annotated by the participants in the focus group session).. 267

4.51 The vegetable market in Al Wehdat Camp. 268

5.1 Lost between the stacks of items while attempting to find the women's center. 276

5.2 The green door at the entrance of the women's center. 277

5.3 Inside the Women's Center, inside the walls with the friendly murals.. 278

5.4 The Secret Garden: The Women's Center as seen from above. 283

5.5 Writing and Learning. Afaf practicing writing in the literacy class in the Women's Center. 286

5.6 A diagram of the Women's Center as seen from above, produced through my field observations.. 290

5.7 The Women's center after the demolition in 2023. 291

5.8 The Women's Center opened to the neighboring plot after the destruction of the fourth wall. 293

5.9 The newly built Women's Center. 294

5.10 The locations of the new and the old Al Wehdat Sports Club buildings and the old and new Women's Center, mapped on a diagram that I produced in reference to my conversations with the camp inhabitants.. 296

5.11 Al Wehdat Sports Club entrance, almost swallowed by the commercial activity. 297

5.12 "We will return" written on a stone plaque on the club's entrance. 298

5.13 The poster of Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque at the entrance of Al Wehdat Sports Club.. 299

5.14 The Newspaper Office (left), and the first issue of the newspaper (right).. 301

5.15 The Trophy room, lined up with trophies, awards and pictures of the Royal Hashemite Family. 303

5.16 The press conference room, lined up with chairs, a podium and picture of King Abdullah of Jordan. 303

5.17 The logo of Al Wehdat Club with its Dome of the Rock and connection to Palestine. 304

5.18 The UNRWA complex as seen from the top. 309

5.19 A glimpse into the UNRW complex through an opening in the wall. 314

5.20 A girl's classroom in one of UNRWA schools in Al Wehdat Camp. (Source: the UNRWA Digital Archive).). 316

5.21 Al Sudasiyat inside the UNRWA playgrounds, organized by the camp's youth. (Source: photo sent to me by Ali). 319

5.22 The UNRWA school appears in the background of the soccer matches. (Source: photo sent to me by Ali). 319

5.23 An archival photo showing the UNRWA playgrounds, busy with students. (Source: the UNRWA Digital Archive). 321

5.24 Children in line at the health-care center in Amman New Camp, Jordan. (Source: UNRWA Archive). 322

5.25 Daily milk distribution for Palestine refugee children under fifteen years of age, Amman New camp, east Jordan. (UNRWA Archive. Photo by George Nehmeh). 323

5.26 The UNRWA Complex: A diagram mapping the buildings and amenities inside the UNRWA complex while also showing the complex's relation to the surrounding streets. 326

5.27 The exterior wall of the UNRWA complex with the words "Palestine, we will return" next to a map of Palestine, as seen from Sumaya Street. 328

5.28 Samples of the street art on the inside of the UNRWA complex walls. 331

5.29 A Verse from A Quran on the outside of the UNRWA complex wall reading: "And say, My Lord, increase me in knowledge." 332

5.30 Street Art outside the UNRWA complex, along Al Madares Street. 332

5.31 A drawing inside UNRWA complex depicting dancing Women in traditional Palestinian thobe. 333

5.32 Two sofa chairs, reviving the memory and the presence of Um Fakhri. 335

5.33 Parts of the Mural that artist Hussein Al Asmar had drawn in Um Fakhri Street. 336

5.34 Um Fakhri Street in 2020, with the chairs removed and the mural painted over. 338

5.35 The mural in 2020 after being painted over in Um Fakhri Street, with generic statements that promote good virtues. 338

5.36 The story of Um Fakhri, the street, the wall, and the school narrated through a collage that I created combining a number of archival photos and photos I took in the camp. (Source: Picture on the left is from the UNRWA digital archive. The picture on the right is from a Facebook post commemorating Um Fakhri). 339

5.37 Dome of the Rock on the wall of UNRWA as seen from Sumaya Street. 340

5.38 Graffiti spotted around Al Wehdat Camp remembering "Palestine", both written and drawn. 341

5.39 Graffiti Writing, "Palestine, We are the children of War, Surrendering does not suit us." 343

5.40 Hanthala finding refuge on the walls of Al Wehdat camp. 344

5.41 Graffiti with the names of different Palestinian cities and villages. 344

5.42 Graffiti expressing the significance of Al Quds. 345

5.43 Graffiti calling for the Boycott of Israeli Products. 346

5.44 A number of drawings that emphasize the importance of unity between Palestine and Jordan. 347

5.45 Graffiti celebrating Al Wehdat and belonging to Al Wehdat Camp. 348

5.46 Different tagging examples of logos and signatures around the camp. 349

6.1 Some of the plants in Sameera's front yard in the new house. 354

6.2 Another corner from Sameera's front garden. 355

6.3 The two sofas we sat on for our conversation in front of the main entrance. 356

6.4 The residential unit in Al Wehdat Camp, or the Wehda, the single family unit. 358

6.5 The morphological transformation of the residential unit in Al Wehdat Camp.. 360

6.6 Typological mapping of some of the units in the camp today. 363

6.7 External steel stairs connecting floors on the outside, extending beyond the parameter of the unit. 365

6.8 An entire room that was added as a spatial violation. 365

6.9 Thresholds in front of the house used for sitting and socializing on the neighborhood scale. 366

6.10 Sofas in front of units that create thresholds for socializing. 367

6.11 A beige sofa in front of a community building in the camp. 367

6.12 Women socializing on the thresholds in front of their homes. (Photo anyonomized). 368

6.13 Ahmad Al Lidawi sitting in front of his house, in 2019 and also in 2022. 370

6.14 Younes's sketch of his family unit's expansion. (Source: Younes, sketched in his home, 2021, Amman, Jordan). 374

6.15 A sketch I produced of the interior of Younes and Heba's family unit. 375

6.16 An overview of Al Wehdat Camp showing the size of the destruction after the end of clashes in 1970. (Source: UNRWA Digital Archive). 378

6.17 A wall as the only surviving element from a residential unit in the camp. (Source: UNRWA Digital Archive). 378

6.18 A narrow alley in the southern part of Al Wehdat camp. 382

6.19 The map of Palestine drawn on the facade of an original UNRWA Unit. 383

6.20 The inside of the original UNRWA unit where Nawaf and I had our conversation. 384

6.21 Electricity pole with bullet holes fired during the events of Black September in 1970. 387

6.22 One of the walls inside the home commemorating Palestine, taken in Um Hasan's old house in 2019. 395

6.23 A poster showing the wall of Al Quds and Dome of the Rock, taken in Um Hasan's old house in 2019. 395

6.24 Items celebrating Palestine lined up on a shelf, taken in Um Hasan's new house in 2021. 397

6.25 The photo of the late Abu Hasan, hanging in his family's living room, taken in Um Hasan's new home, in 2021. 398

6.26 Looking out at Al Wehdat Camp from inside a residential building. 400

7.1 Birds on the roof, immigrants from everywhere. 405

7.2 A pigeon breeder in his pigeon shed, on a roof in Al Wehdat camp. 406

7.3 A flock of pigeons flies over Al Wehdat camp. 407

7.4 Artwork titled anti nationalists by Palestinian artist Suhad Al Khatib (source: www.suhadalkhatib.com) 408

7.5 The pigeon cages behind red doors on the roof of a building in Al Wehdat camp. 410

7.6 A woman takes care of her garden on a rooftop in Al Wehdat camp. 412

7.7 Rooftops in Al Wehdat camp. 413

7.8 A minaret in the middle of flocks of immigrants in the camp. 417

7.9 Graffiti on a roof of Al Wehdat Camp that reads, "The camp will always remind us of the smell of Palestine. We will return." 419

Summary

Al Wehdat Camp, like all Palestinian refugee camps, was built in response to *Al Nakba* as a space of temporary refuge to generations of Palestinian refugees who were uprooted from their homes. In this research I have conceptualized *home* as a multi-scalar territory that exists in different places and time intervals all at once through a spatio-temporal simultaneity. This produces Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory existing here and there, now and then, at home and in exile. Through the different chapters of this dissertation, I studied those different scales of home — the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home — through an interdisciplinary research approach and framework that is built around three pillars: the body, movement, and territory. I have also studied the socio-spatial relationship between these different territories and the boundary-demarcating elements that work on connecting and disconnecting these territories from one another, shaped by flows of movement and activity.

Through my interdisciplinary research methodology, encompassing methods from the fields of architecture, anthropology, and the visual arts, I conceptualized my research methodology as *Taq'otat*, or a set of spatio-temporal intersections with both the camp's spaces and its inhabitants. I used my movement in the camp's space along the vertical axis to shift along the different scales of home and also shift between the symbolic understanding of the camp and its intimate material reality; as well as my movement along the horizontal axis and my position within the camp relative to its inhabitants as a way to produce knowledge about the camp, its inhabitants and its architecture.In my research I studied a number of paths of displacement that the Palestinian refugees have traveled across during their uprooting from Palestine, mapping their movement across the landscape and the different locations they have settled in, to reach Al Wehdat Camp. Through that tracing of different paths I was able to conceptualize the camp as a point that exists at the intersection of a number of paths that have led the Palestinian refugees to the camp and also allowed them to move past it to different locations within the city. This continuous movement of displaced bodies from Palestine to Al Wehdat Camp, with the embodied knowledge, memories, culture and traditions that Palestinian refugees have transferred with them has allowed them to transgress the colonial borders that have disconnected them from the space of the home-land, and allowed them to reproduce the space of Palestine in the space of Al Wehdat Camp.

The Palestinian refugees have also intergenerationally transferred that knowledge to the younger generations, who have constructed their own versions of an imagined home-land in the spaces of their home-camp. By tracing these paths of displacement, I have also been able to conceptualize the camp as a transient territory that transcends colonial borders and exists beyond its demarcations as a moving and transformative space which continues to move with the movement and activity of Palestinian refugees.
I have also studied the home-camp's socio-spatial relationship with the home-city, shifting the scale of the investigation closer to the ground and investigating the boundary that distinguishes the territory of Al Wehdat Camp from the city of Amman. I created a comparison between the institutional ways of demarcating the camp, through the formal boundary or the redline, unchanged since the camp's establishment in 1955, and the camp inhabitants' ways of knowing and demarcating their camp through what I referred to as the informal boundary or the greenline.
I was able to conclude that when putting Al Wehdat Camp in comparison with itself, moving the investigation inwards and studying the camp as a network of nodes, landmarks, streets, edges and districts, it becomes clear that it is neither homogeneous nor uniform, but rather, it is characterized by a multiplicity of spaces and lived realities that are the result of the interplay of power relations that continue to shape the camp's lived reality and architecture. By stepping into the interiors of the lives of the Palestinian refugees, into the homes of the inhabitants, I was able to conclude how different and heterogeneous the camp inhabitants were and challenge the ways Palestinian refugees are represented as one homogeneous group with the same values and attitudes.

Through this dissertation, I have conducted a thorough investigation into Al Wehdat Camp, taking it as one example which, when studied, can help me better understand the political, the social and the economic factors that have influenced and transformed Palestinian camps in Jordan over the years. This investigation was carried out by studying its architecture as an expression of the shifts between these different factors, on a local and international scale. Through the work that I have produced in this research, I do not claim to have reached a conclusive and concrete understanding of what a Palestinian refugee camp is, and what makes a camp a camp, but I have worked on deconstructing the different material and immaterial layers that produce Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory that transcends time, space and borders.

Samenvatting

Net als alle andere Palestijnse vluchtelingenkampen werd het kamp Al Wehdat in Amman gebouwd als reactie op *Al Nakba*, als een ruimte voor tijdelijk onderdak voor Palestijnse vluchtelingen die van huis en haard verdreven waren. In dit onderzoek conceptualiseerde ik 'thuis' als een territorium dat meerdere schalen omvat en dat bestaat op verschillende plaatsen, in verschillende tijdsintervallen, allemaal tegelijk. Deze spatio-temporele gelijktijdigheid produceert Al Wehdat kamp als een territorium van voorbijgaande aard, dat zowel hier als daar bestaat, nu en toen, thuis en in ballingschap. In de verschillende hoofdstukken van dit proefschrift bestudeerde ik die verschillende schalen van dit begrip 'thuis': het thuisland, de thuisstad, het thuiskamp en het thuis-thuis, door middel van een interdisciplinaire onderzoeksbenadering. Het onderzoekskader voor dit proefschrift was opgebouwd rond drie pijlers: het lichaam, beweging en territorium. Via deze begrippen bestudeerde ik de sociaal-ruimtelijke relatie tussen deze verschillende territoria en de elementen van begrenzing die deze territoria met elkaar verbinden en van elkaar scheiden, gevormd door stromen van beweging en activiteit.

Door middel van mijn interdisciplinaire onderzoeksmethodologie, die gebruikt maakt van methoden uit de architectuur, antropologie en beeldende kunst, heb ik mijn onderzoeksmethodologie geconceptualiseerd als *Taq'otat*: een reeks ruimtelijk-temporele ontmoetingen met zowel de ruimten van het kamp als zijn inwoners.

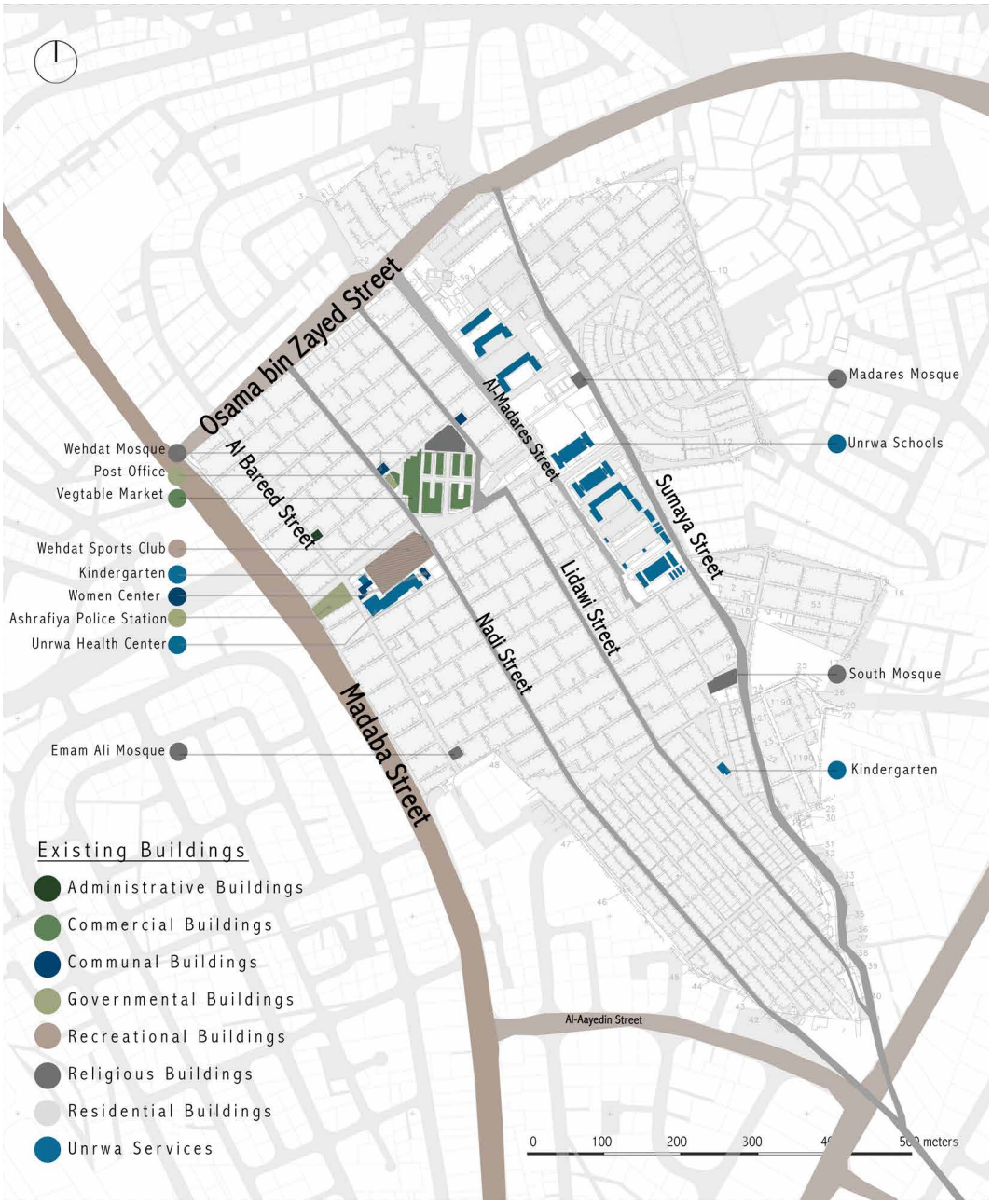
Ik gebruikte mijn eigen beweging in de ruimte van het kamp, als een manier om kennis te produceren over het kamp, zijn inwoners en zijn architectuur. Deze vond enerzijds plaats langs de verticale dimensie die me in staat stelde om van schaal te veranderen tussen de verschillende schalen van 'thuis' en tussen het symbolische begrip van het kamp van veraf en zijn intieme materiële realiteit van dichtbij, en anderzijds bewoog ik binnen de horizontale dimensie om mijn positie binnen het kamp en zijn inwoners te duiden. In mijn onderzoek bestudeerde ik een aantal routes die de Palestijnse vluchtelingen hebben afgelegd tijdens hun ontworteling uit Palestina. Ik bracht hun beweging door het landschap in kaart en de verschillende locaties waar ze zich vestigden alvorens om in het kamp Al Wehdat terecht te komen.

Door deze verschillende routes te volgen, kon ik het kamp conceptualiseren als een punt dat bestaat op het kruispunt van een aantal paden die de Palestijnse vluchtelingen naar het kamp hebben geleid en hen ook in staat hebben gesteld om er voorbij te trekken naar verschillende locaties in de stad.
Die voortdurende beweging van ontheemde lichamen van Palestina naar het kamp Al Wehdat, tezamen met wat de Palestijnse vluchtelingen hebben overgedragen aan belichaamde kennis, herinneringen, cultuur en tradities, hebben hen in staat gesteld de koloniale grenzen te overschrijden die hen hebben losgemaakt van de ruimte van het thuisland, en hen in staat gesteld de ruimte van Palestina te reproduceren in de ruimte van het kamp Al Wehdat.

De Palestijnse vluchtelingen hebben die kennis ook intergenerationeel overgedragen op de jongere generaties, die hun eigen versies van een verbeeld thuisland hebben gebouwd in de ruimten van hun thuiskamp. Door deze verplaatsingsroutes te volgen, heb ik het kamp ook kunnen conceptualiseren als een voorbijgaand territorium dat de koloniale grenzen overstijgt en voorbij zijn fysieke grenzen bestaat, als een bewegende en transformerende ruimte die in beweging blijft – meebewegend met de Palestijnse vluchtelingen en hun activiteiten.

Ik heb ook de sociaal-ruimtelijke relatie tussen het thuiskamp en de thuisstad bestudeerd, door de schaal van het onderzoek dichter bij de grond te brengen en de grens te onderzoeken die het grondgebied van het Al Wehdat-kamp onderscheidt van de stad Amman. Ik vergeleek de institutionele manieren om het kamp af te bakenen, via de formele grens of de rode lijn, die sinds de oprichting van het kamp in 1955 onveranderd is gebleven, met de manieren waarop de kampbewoners zelf hun kamp kennen en definieren via wat ik de informele grens of de groene lijn heb genoemd. Ik kon concluderen dat wanneer ik het kamp Al Wehdat als het ware met zichzelf vergelijk, het onderzoek naar binnen verleg en het kamp bestudeer als een netwerk van knooppunten, herkenningspunten, straten, randen en wijken, het duidelijk wordt dat het kamp niet homogeen of uniform is, maar eerder gekenmerkt wordt door een veelvoud aan ruimtes en geleefde realiteiten die het resultaat zijn van het samenspel van machtsrelaties die de geleefde realiteit en architectuur van het kamp blijven vormgeven. Door binnen te stappen in de interieurs van het leven van de Palestijnse vluchtelingen, in de huizen van de bewoners, kon ik vaststellen hoe verschillend en heterogeen de kampbewoners waren. Dit inzicht daagt de gebruikelijke manier uit waarop Palestijnse vluchtelingen worden voorgesteld als één homogene groep met dezelfde waarden en houdingen.

Door middel van dit proefschrift heb ik een grondig onderzoek uitgevoerd naar het kamp Al Wehdat. Het kamp diende voor mij als exemplarische casus om de politieke, sociale en economische factoren die de Palestijnse kampen door de jaren heen hebben beïnvloed en getransformeerd beter te begrijpen, waarbij ik de architectuur bestudeer als een uitdrukking van de verschuivingen tussen deze verschillende factoren, op lokale en internationale schaal. Ik beweer ik dat ik met dit onderzoek ik een sluitend en concreet begrip heb bereikt van wat een Palestijns vluchtelingenkamp is, en wat een kamp tot een kamp maakt, maar door het deconstrueren van de verschillende materiële en immateriële lagen heb ik een inzicht kunnen bieden in hoe deze lagen Al Wehdat kamp maken tot een voorbijgaand gebied dat tijd, ruimte en grenzen overstijgt.



An overview of Al Wehdat Camp's main landmarks, nodes, paths, districts and edges.

TOC


TOC

0 Introduction

In search of Al Wehdat Camp, in search of Palestine

The first time I visited Al Wehdat Camp was when I was 12 years old, in July of 2001. I specifically recall the date because my mother took my sisters and I to Al Wehdat Camp to buy dresses for my uncle's wedding from Al Wehdat Market. In my head, that visit stood in isolation from what shaped my understanding of Palestinian refugee camps later on in life. These were two different places; Al Wehdat was one thing and Palestinian refugee camps were another.As an adult, I thought of Palestinian refugee camps as abstract notions, places that were defined by the events that produced them. *Al Nakba* or the Catastrophe of 1948 happened, Palestinians became refugees, and then the camps were built to shelter them until a political resolution was reached. The limits of my knowledge ended there, where the camp began. What did it look like, how was life in it? These were questions that I had no answers for, despite my visit to one when I was a young girl. Very vague images have survived from that visit. What I did manage to recall was my confusion with the name, *Al Wehdat*, which is an Arabic word that translates to, *The Units*. I remember asking my mother about the name, why was it called the units? What units? I remember how the name gave me the impression that the camp was built out of Lego pieces assembled on top of each other, units that divided the space of the camp, with each Lego piece resembling a house that people lived inside. She briefed me about the camp's history in a way that did not help clear my confusion. Who built those units?

Reflecting on it now, I can say that the memories that I have of that trip back in 2001 were very vague, lacking any spatial qualities. I remember us being inside the shop, looking at a selection of different dresses. I do not remember how we got there, I just remember following my mother from the taxi to the market. The fact that I was following her might have played a role in my lack of engagement with the surroundings. I was not paying attention to the place because I knew that I would not need to memorize any directions. It might have also been because there was nothing that stood out about the journey of getting there that was remarkable enough to a 12 year old, remarkable enough to retain its space in my memory. I just remember that the dress that I bought was blue.
Growing up, I had heard several stories about Al Wehdat Camp, because my second aunt used to live there and my mother and her parents would occasionally visit

her. My mother was also a frequent visitor of Al Wehdat market as a young woman, given how the camp was one of the big commercial centers in the area of southeast Amman, and it was relatively close to where she lived, in an area called Al Mahatta. *Al Mahatta* is an Arabic word that translates to, *The Station,* and it is an area that earned its name from the presence of the former Hejaz railway station. I later learned from my mother that she had also bought her wedding dress from Al Wehdat market.

After getting married, my parents, Abdullah and Buthaina, moved to Saudi Arabia, where my family lived for 35 years. I grew up and spent the first 18 years of my life there. We used to return to Amman during summer and, during those visits, my mom would be keen on visiting some of the places she frequented as a young woman. She used to feel nostalgic for the places of her childhood and the places she visited when she was in university, having completed her degree in the University of Jordan in Amman. Al Wehdat Market/Camp was one of these places that she returned to, taking us with her. She used to tell us, "Al Wehdat Market has everything! Whatever it is you are looking for, you will find it there."

Al Wehdat Camp was a 'site of memory' for my mother, as the French historian, Pierre Nora (1997), would call it. My mother's memories of that *lieu de mémoire* were transmitted to me throughout the years in a way that might have, alongside other factors, inspired the selection of Al Wehdat Camp as the focus of my research. In retrospect, my mother's memories and stories of Al Wehdat Camp were simple and ordinary in their everydayness, but there was something about the way she had told them that made them remarkable. Her attachment to the place might have been what led us back to Al Wehdat Camp to buy the dresses when I was 12, and it might have been what brought me back to it in 2019 to conduct my doctoral research. That attachment is what inclined her to accompany me on several of my field visits after, proudly presenting herself as an expert of that area, insisting that with her help I would be able to better navigate the camp and conduct my fieldwork. She too was an architect; we two had a lot in common, or perhaps, in so many ways, I wanted to be like her, following in her footsteps, to several destinations in my life, including Al Wehdat Camp.Al Wehdat Camp's central location within the city of Amman was another factor that made me decide to choose it as the focus of my study. I was interested in studying the social, the economic, the political and the spatial relationship between the camp and the city and the different ways each influenced the other, without necessarily putting them in comparison to each other. Rather, I wished to study the networks and the flows of activity and movement from the camp to the city and from the city to the camp as a way of understanding each one's growth and development.

Before having started this investigation into Al Wehdat Camp, I used to think of Palestinian refugee camps as abstract concepts, existing in many cities around the region as political symbols that represent Palestine and act as custodians of the Palestinian refugees' right to return. Almost six decades after their establishment, that level of abstraction made me think that these camps have remained intact and preserved, as waiting terminals which have not changed nor transformed, stuck in time and place in isolation from their surroundings. In my head, a camp was more of an idea than a place, flat and two-dimensional. I started this research wanting to step into the third dimension, to understand the space of camps and understand camps as spaces by setting foot into the flows of their everyday life, to know them better through my own bodily movement and experiences of navigating their spaces from the ground. I also wanted to know whether camps were still camps. And if so, what about them that makes them camps? Is it the architecture? Is it the political identity? Are they the social networks? Are they the legal boundaries?
Established as temporary spaces of refuge for Palestinians after Al Nakba of 1948, are Palestinian refugee camps still camps, or did they socially and spatially integrate with their surroundings, becoming neighborhoods in the cities where they were located? More broadly, what makes a territory? What produces its boundaries and distinguishes it from its surrounding context?
With my research focused on Al Wehdat Camp, in Amman, Jordan, I wanted to study the space of the camp and understand its spatial relation with the city, beyond my initial understanding of it as a political symbol. I wanted to do so while also understanding its spatial production and transformation through time, investigating it as a dynamic and shifting spatial setting that is continually shaped by the political, economic and social influences that are both transforming the immediate context of Amman and the larger context of the region.

Was Al Wehdat Camp still a camp?

With more reading, thinking and reflecting, I realized that for me, this pursuit was no longer about only finding an answer, but also about understanding the processes through which the architecture of the camp was produced. I wanted to understand why the camp, as a spatial setting, looked the way it did, and what were the social, economic, and political factors that drove that spatial transformation? Instead of moving from point A to point B, a question and an answer, I wanted to use the distance between the two, the length of this dissertation, to understand why things were the way they were.
That process resonated with the German political philosopher, Hannah Arendt (1964), who described her process and the influence of her work in an interview with Günter Gaus.

She started by saying, “I would like to say that what is important to me is that I must understand. This understanding for me also entails writing. Writing is part of the process of understanding.” She further elaborates by saying: “What is important to me is the process of thinking itself. When I have that, I am personally totally satisfied. And then, if I succeed in expressing it adequately in writing, then I am satisfied again. Now, you asked about the effect of my work. This — if I may speak ironically — is a masculine question. Men always want to be tremendously influential; but I see it from outside, so to speak. Do I see myself as influential? No, I want to understand. And if other people understand in the same sense as I have understood, this gives me satisfaction, a sense of being at home.” (Gaus & Arendt, 1964).

In line with the sentiments expressed by Arendt, I decided to use the process of conducting this research to better understand and hope that those who read and engage with it will also begin to understand Al Wehdat Camp and Palestinian refugee camps better. With that, I began an investigation of the existing literature on Palestinian refugee camps to form a better understanding of the contemporary discourse and also to highlight the gaps in knowledge, ones that I will, through this research, attempt to address.

0.1 The History, Architecture and Transformation of Palestinian Refugee Camps

The paradoxical nature of the refugee camp is a very prominent feature of its identity, a juxtaposition between “formality and informality, mobility and immobility, permanence and impermanence.” (Grbac, 2013). To Diken and Laustsen (2005), Turner (2005), and Agamben (2005), refugee camps are viewed as sites of exclusion, controlled by processes of confinement and alienation at the margins of society. To Lybarger (2005), Bshara (2012) and Ramadan (2012), on the other hand, refugee camps are perceived as islands of political and social activism, built around pillars of resistance and identity formation.
Ramadan (2012) rejected the notion that reduces the life of refugees to ‘Bare Life,’ with reference to Agamben’s (2005) notion of the *zoe*, given their high level of engagement in the political discourses that shape their lives.
Ramadan contends that refugees are a paradigm of a new historical consciousness and refugee camps are the paradigm for future human settlements. In such

settlements, the geopolitics cannot be separated from everyday life and power relations don't only operate through a top-down approach, but also through bottom-up approaches. To Petti (2013), if cities are considered spaces of democracy where citizens use public space for their political representation, then the birth of camps stands in contradiction with that notion; expressing what could be described as an anti-city, where refugees' political representation is challenged and continuously fought for. By putting the space of the camp within its context inside the city, the effects of the anti-democratic model are consequential for the political and public space of the city in general. The emerging political and social configurations of the 'camp condition' have introduced new ways of understanding the relation between people, space, and territory (Petti, 2013). Moreover, Ramadan (2012) further extended the argument by stating that refugee camps are manifestations of the different geopolitical shifts that shape their space and the different apparatuses of power that manifest in their settings. Refugees, on the other hand, are members of a political agency that come in response to those power relations, rather than being mere objects of its mechanisms.

Within the existing literature, the notion of identity formation is an extensively researched theme in the context of Palestinian refugee camps. With Al Wehdat Camp as the focus of his doctoral dissertation in Social Anthropology, Luigi Achilli (2014) discussed the political identity that developed in Al Wehdat Camp in response to what is known as Black September, during the armed clashes between the Jordanian Army and the Palestinian guerrilla fighters between the late 1960's and early 1970's. Achilli also wrote on the development of the hyper-masculine identity (*mukhayamji*) among the camp's youngsters and the performativity of that gender identity in the camp space in relation to the different political and social shifts in the camp's context. Also in relation to gender, Reem Abu Lughod (2010) focused on the female inhabitants of Al Wehdat Camp, specifically those who were victims of domestic violence in the camp households, assessing the impact of the social, economic and cultural norms on the society in Al Wehdat Camp, and how these factors play a role in increasing domestic violence practiced on some women in the camp.
The meanings ascribed to the Palestinian refugee camps by their inhabitants were studied by Ilana Feldman (2015) in her comparative analysis of three different camps: Al Yarmouk Camp in Syria, Deheishe Camp in Palestine, and Al Wehdat Camp in Jordan. Through her research, she studied the significance of each camp in relation to each camp's establishment, its transformation and the historical events that influenced each camp's social and political context.

As a result, Feldman (2015) considered Al Yarmouk Camp a humanitarian space, due to the significant role humanitarian actors played in it; and Deheishe Camp as a political space, given its inhabitants' political activism and the significance of their agency in shaping their camp. On the other hand, Feldman considered Al Wehdat Camp an *emotional space*, given the deeply rooted sentimental notions carried by its inhabitants towards their camp. This is linked to the inhabitant's place attachment and sense of belonging to the camp, reflected in their self-identification and where they placed themselves in relation to the city and their place of origin.

Studying Al Wehdat Camp, Jordanian scholar Ala Hamarneh (2002) traced the major local and international events that have influenced Al Wehdat Camp, with emphasis on the transformation of the camp from a "Factory of Return illusions" to a more urbanized setting. This development is in line with a process of depoliticization of the camp in general, mirrored in the change in the buildings' regulations in the past few decades that has transformed the camp space in the direction of material permanence.

As per the discussed literature, one can argue that the politics of refugee camps and the meanings ascribed to them have been more extensively investigated than the physical architecture of camps, which remains a field that is relatively understudied. Even in the discussed literature which concerns the architecture of Palestinian refugee camps, more emphasis is put on the spatial practices of the inhabitants that have transformed the camp rather than the actual buildings and their different architectural qualities, such as spatial layout, materiality, form and morphology. One argument that could explain this tendency would be that camps have been perceived as temporary spaces due to their political and contractual impermanence; this could questionably undermine their architecture, given that their structures were built out of pure necessity through mass production in response to a humanitarian emergency (Hailey, 2009). The existing literature also tends to adopt historical trajectories to explain camp transformations (Al Daly, 1999; Hamarneh, 2002; Maraqa, 2004; Abreek-Zubiedat, 2014) in a manner that investigates the camp through a sequential and linear approach, which this research argues is an approach that eliminates the rather dynamic and multidirectional nature of the camp's transformation.

When it comes to the architecture of camps in particular, three important works were produced in recent literature, all of which were set in Palestine, specifically in Deheishe Camp in the West Bank. The first was conducted by Palestinian scholar Fatina Zubiedat (2014), who studied the spatial violations of the camp inhabitants and the spatial practices that gradually transformed the camp layout, which was initially planned and designed by European planners and architects for UNRWA, transgressing the building regulations and the institutional control. The top-down approach of designing the camp's layout was used to regulate the use of land, organizing what started off as a set of temporary scattered tents and

reordering them into permanent housing units that were planned around a grid layout. According to Zubiedat, the State was informally supportive of that camp's transformation into a more urbanized setting because that aligned with its unspoken resettlement strategy of the refugees in their current locations. Italian architect and scholar, Alessandro Petti (2013), worked on mapping Al Deheishe Camp's new public buildings, amenities and cultural projects to challenge the notion that necessitated that Palestinian refugees continue living in poor living conditions as a way of emphasizing their camp's temporariness and their preservation of their "right to return". Petti challenged that notion by documenting the ways through which the newly built projects helped empower the camp community and equipped the inhabitants with the knowledge and the skills that would theoretically better serve their fight for liberation. The third work is by Palestinian scholar Nasser Abourahme (2014), who criticizes the way that existing literature is divided between two binary approaches that either investigates camps as material or lived settings, or investigates camps for their symbolic or political role in representing Palestinian national discourses in a manner that is pragmatic and through a division that is not very expressive of the camps' fluid reality. Instead, Abourahme proposes a study of the camp's architectural environment as a mediator of human action; one that spills over the lived into the symbolic, instead of segregating the two. To do so, Abourahme conducted an ethnographic study of cement in Deheishe Camp, investigating the camp as a material assemblage whose materiality reflected a transformation of the camp towards permanence, and whose buildings were the mediators of the inhabitants' actions and everyday practices which in their ordinariness and repetition gave a better spatial understanding of the camp's urban condition. By conducting an ethnographic study of cement as a mediator of life in the camp and how notions of the quotidian life spill over into the political, Abourahme aimed to capture the tension between the temporary and the permanent, between aspirations of return and the built reality.

What follows is a review of the various literature to gain insight into the ways refugee camps have been analyzed and what their key findings are.In the Gaza Strip, specifically Jabalia Camp, an environmental investigation of the camp's shelters assessed their users' thermal comfort in relation to a number of physical and environmental factors such as the shelter's envelope, window to wall ratio, orientation and materiality. Recommendations were also given to improve users' thermal comfort against the hot climate of the area and the camp's very high levels of compactness and overcrowding (Saleh and Gadi, 2016).
In Jordan, the architecture of Al Baqa'a Camp was the focus of two dissertations. For her master's thesis in architecture, Hania Maraqa (2004) mapped the inhabitants' various spatial practices that collectively aimed to recreate inhabitants' lives before displacement in their more recent space of exile.

The focus was on notions of village life in Palestine and how those notions were recreated in the context of Al Baqa'a Camp in Jordan. One example of this was the way the spatial organization of the camp was according to kinship and village of origin, mirroring the way extended families resided in clusters of houses in the villages of Palestine. As part of her doctoral dissertation in architecture, Samar Maqusi (2017) conducted a comparative analysis between Al Baqa'a Camp and Burj Al Barajneh in Lebanon, mapping what she termed the 'spatial violations' of the inhabitants of both camps and the different ways they transgressed the legal and physical boundaries of the institutional building regulations. Through her research, Maqusi argued that these spatial violations have come in response to the Palestinian refugees' protracted displacement and that these violations helped inhabitants reclaim the space of their camp and resist the State's measures of spatial and political control. Maqusi also introduced the notion of 'the Palestinian scale,' correlating the urban form of the two camps to their respective everyday life practices that helped produce them, all in relation to scale, compactness and building heights. Together, these factors affected mobility, perception of space, and connectivity of the camp space with the surrounding context.

As for Alnsour and Meaton (2014), their research assesses the physical condition of houses in Al Baqa'a Camp, Jordan, and the living conditions these houses provided to their residents, thereby linking the deterioration of the camp's neighborhoods to the building regulations that maximize compactness and limit maintenance and rehabilitation.

To Palestinian architect and scholar, Khaldun Bshara (2014), the transformation of the Palestinian refugee camps came as the result of, what he refers to as, "processes of making and unmaking of the camp space". The making of the camp includes processes of construction, development and urbanization, while the unmaking of the camp includes the processes that dismantle its status as a temporary humanitarian space and reverse the status of the refugees as humanitarian subjects. As such, what was made into a space of habitation is unmade into a space of refuge, and what were made as permanent living spaces are subsequently unmade as temporary shelters. According to Bshara, the simultaneous processes of making and unmaking the camp were guided by a set of spatial practices conducted by both institutional and communal bodies, by both formal and informal groups, both consciously and unconsciously. As such, the simultaneous production of the camp space by numerous bodies resulted in producing a camp space that "is simultaneously imaginary (symbolic) and real (material), oscillating between two discrete, yet interconnected, temporal and spatial worlds"(Bshara, 2014; p.15). Along these lines, Bshara argues that the Palestinian identity was constructed in camps through memory and spatial practices (e.g. the way Palestinian refugees have self-organized

in their neighborhoods according to the village of origin) in a manner that led him to conclude that the Palestinian national identity is distinctly made in the space of refugee camps.

Moreover, a number of other scholars worked on studying Palestinian refugee camps with their surrounding contexts and the different social and spatial levels of their integration with the cities they are built in. In Lebanon, scholar, Diana Martin (2015), used the term 'campscape' to describe the informal settlements that grew around Palestinian refugee camps, primarily Shatila Camp in Beirut which was the focus of her study, due to patterns of activity and natural population growth around the camps in the six decades following their establishment. Studying the campscapes, Martin traced the different ways the physical and symbolic boundaries between the camp and the city were blurred, rendering the campscapes as a threshold where the inhabitants of the camp and the city get to meet. Also in Lebanon, scholar Adam Ramadan (2012) argues that Palestinian refugee camps are characterized with a spatial and temporal liminality that comes as a result of their politics and history, particularly due to their exceptional sovereignty that never allows them to fully integrate with the city or the host country they are located in. Palestinian refugees and their camps, to Ramadan, have been produced through social, political and cultural dimensions that come from elsewhere, connected to a different time and place that exists in Palestine. In Gaza, Palestinian scholar, Shadi Saleh (2020), argued against conceptualizing Palestinian refugee camps as spaces of exception by highlighting the different ways Jabalya Palestinian Refugee Camp is connected to the city, or what he refers to as camp and noncamp areas, on spatial, social, economic and political levels. Due to the fact that the majority of Palestinians in The Gaza Strip are refugees that fled to that area after Al Nakba of 1948, Saleh argues that the level of interconnectivity between the camps in Gaza and the territory has turned the entire strip into a large refugee space. In the old city of Damascus, scholar Faedah M. Totah (2020) was able to conclude that urban Palestinian refugee camps are simultaneously connected and disconnected from the city depending on a number of factors. Through her study, she was able to find that Palestinian refugees in the camp were keen on distinguishing the camp from the city as a way of building their collective national identity while in Syria, rendering the camp as a distinctive territory with its own identity. On the other hand, the Palestinian refugees also saw the camp as part of the city, thereby socially distinguishing themselves from other refugees elsewhere and expressing their personal aspirations within their everyday lives.

When it comes to Al Wehdat Camp in particular, it has been the topic of anthropological (Achilli, 2014, 2015), political (Hamarneh, 2002), economic (Khawaja, 2003) and social (Abu Lughod, 2010; Feldman, 2015) investigations.

Less emphasis has been put on its architectural setting or built environment despite the fact that it is the camp with the highest population density in Jordan (UNRWA, 2023), especially when compared to Al Baqa'a Camp, which has been the most investigated camp in Jordan (Farah, 1999; Maraqa, 2004; Bshara, 2012; Abourahme, 2014; Alnsour and Meaton, 2014; Maqusi, 2017), arguably for the fact that it is the largest camp in terms of area (UNRWA, 2023).
In terms of research context, Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan are relatively understudied when compared to the camps in Lebanon (Ramadan, 2009, 2012; Hanafi and Long, 2010; Dot-Pouillard, 2013; Martin, 2015; Stephan, 2016) , Syria (Irfan, 2016; Chatty, 2017), and those in Palestine, whether in the West Bank (Bshara, 2012; Petti, 2013; Abreek-Zubeidat, 2014; Lehec, 2016) or The Gaza Strip (Humphris and Abuhaloob, 2015; Saleh and Gadi, 2016; Badawy, 2016). Arguably, it could be because in Jordan, a huge number of Palestinian Refugees have been granted the Jordanian Citizenship, while officially retaining their political refugee status, as opposed to the refugees in other host countries who remain stateless until today, giving Palestinian refugees in Jordan the choice to reside either in camps or elsewhere and also giving them accessibility to the majority of governmental services and civil rights (Al Husseini and Bocco, 2009).

As a result, researchers have put more focus on the 'more obvious' case studies in countries such as Lebanon, choosing a field where refugees have remained stateless, with that legal status manifesting into restrictions on mobility and a heavy reliance on UNRWA for services in a manner that more clearly exemplifies the social, political and economic dimensions of life in Palestinian camps, and their spatial setup and relation to the city.

I aim to use this research to study the more subtle manifestations of the refugee status of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan, specifically in Amman. The research analyzes their everyday lives and how these manifestations are reflected in the social, economic, political and spatial transformations of the camps through time. In doing so, the dissertation considers the Palestinian refugees within a legal framework that views them as both Palestinian refugees inhabiting a temporary space of refuge, and also, as Jordanian citizens who are inhabiting the city of Amman.

0.2 Research Approach, Question and Significance

Upon reviewing the existing literature, I've come to recognize the significance of embracing an interdisciplinary approach for my research into Al Wehdat Camp. Having been educated and trained as an architect and having conducted this research in the department of architecture at TU Delft, I have benefited greatly from the expertise of my two dissertation supervisors and their vast breadth of knowledge in several different fields. I have benefited from Dr. Klaske Havik for her expertise and knowledge in the fields of architecture and literature and Dr. Leeke Reinders for his expertise and knowledge in the field of anthropology and visual arts, helping me utilize multiple methods from different fields as part of my interdisciplinary approach.

An interdisciplinary approach enables me to delve into both the material and immaterial aspects that have contributed to the production of Al Wehdat Camp's space over time as well as the forces guiding its transformation. Rather than adopting a purely political perspective that may abstract the camp, divorcing it from its lived experiences and historical context, or conversely viewing its architecture as a material product in isolation from the political, social and economic backdrop, I intend to explore the camp as a fluid and evolving entity whose spaces and architecture are continually produced and transformed along these different dimensions. This entails studying the camp's ongoing transformation in relation to the political, social and economic influences shaping both its architectural landscape and everyday life. My approach aligns with the arguments presented by Palestinian scholar, Nasser Abourahme (2014), who argues in favor of an approach that acknowledges the intersectionality between the political dimensions of Palestinian refugee camps and their lived realities and architecture.

As such, I will study the architecture of the camp as one that was produced through a layering of both material and immaterial layers, encompassing the tangible as well as the intangible; not only the physical features but also the oral histories, the narratives, the memories, and the lived experiences who in their layering, produce the architecture of the camp as it stands today. I will also work on contextualizing the camp and connecting its history to the longer history of Palestine and its settler colonialism in a manner that aims to challenge the colonial production of borders and history; one that disconnects the space and the history of Palestinian refugee camps from that of Palestine.

From there, I argue that to understand the architecture of Al Wehdat Camp as it exists today, one needs to study the overlapping of the material and the immaterial layers of the camp through time and generations, which have together produced a distinctive spatio-temporal simultaneity that allows Al Wehdat Camp to exist here and there, in the present and also in the past, in exile but also at home. That spatio-temporal simultaneity is what led me to conceptualize the camp as a transient territory, one that is continually and dynamically evolving and also moving along, what I term as, paths of displacement and paths of everyday activity, which together work on shaping the camp's relation with the city of Amman where it is currently located, and also Palestine, from which the Palestinian refugees have been displaced after Al Nakba of 1948.

That being said, the main research question that will guide my research is simply:

Where is the camp?

This question aims to understand the spatial relationship the camp has with its surrounding context and the different ways it has been connected and disconnected from the rest of the city due to a number of social, economic and political factors. The question also aims to study the camp's relationship with Palestine as the point of departure in 1948 for thousands of Palestinian refugees that are still residing in camps today, 75 years after their displacement. Once again, my research question does not only aim to help me arrive at an answer, but will be used as a navigational compass that will help me understand the different processes that have shaped the camp's relationship with what I term as the home-city and the home-land. Further, it will help understand how the camp has been produced as a transient territory that is continually transforming and dynamically evolving in relation to its inhabitants' movement and everyday activities. Because of the different dimensions and layers of investigation, my research will continue to shift in scale between the city of Amman (the home-city) and Palestine (the home-land), while also investigating the spatial relation of the camp, which I will be referring to as the home-camp, with itself and its different neighborhoods. The investigation will conclude in the home-home, which are the residential units, where different aspects of everyday life have been unfolding, also shaped by a number of social, economic and political dimensions.
As such, this is an investigation into *Al Wehdat Camp* – which translates to '*the camp of the units*' in plural form – and also an investigation into *Al Wehda* – translating into '*the unit*' in its singular form – through a multiscalar investigation.

That shift in scale is not linear, because I will continue to zoom in and out as needed to inspect the camp's spatial relationship with the city, itself and its neighborhoods and its different public and domestic buildings, using the architectural investigation as a way of understanding the spatio-temporal simultaneity and what produced it. To be able to address the research question, I built my research framework around three pillars: the body, movement and territory, as a way of understanding how territories are produced and how territories also move with the movement of bodies and flows of activity along paths of displacement and of everyday life. Building my research framework as such helped me develop my research structure and consequently my chapters, with the aim of drawing knowledge from the space that exists between the research's three pillars across the different scales and in relation to the different dimensions, where the transient territory is produced and transformed.

0.3 Research Structure

In **Chapter 1**, I will begin by studying my own path of investigation, reflecting on my own process of conducting this research, my research methodology and the research framework. I will reflect on both the vertical and horizontal distances that separated me from the field and the research context, and how that distance decreased in time, shaped by my position and positionality as a researcher.

In **Chapter 2**, I will study paths of displacement, sharing the stories of a number of camp inhabitants who have been displaced from their villages in Palestine in 1948, tracing where they moved from and where they settled before they arrived in Al Wehdat Camp. As such, I will study Al Wehdat Camp as a point along a much longer path of displacement that originated in Palestine, moved across the landscape and arrived in Al Wehdat Camp, and in some cases moved beyond it. That conceptualization works on connecting the space of the camp to the space of Palestine, while also connecting the present of the camp to the history of Palestine, emphasizing that Palestinian refugee camps exist today because of the settler colonialism of Palestine.

In **Chapter 3**, I will study the camp boundaries and their relation to the city of Amman, attempting to trace the camp's boundary and question whether it has changed in time.

I will study the institutional boundary and that is the formal boundary of the camp, attempting to understand its manifestations and implications in the everyday lives of the camp's inhabitants. As a second step, I study whether the camp inhabitants understand the territory of their camp the same way the institution does by investigating the camp inhabitants' ways of knowing the camp and how they understand its boundary, while also studying how they relate the camp to the rest of the city.

In Chapter 4, I will be studying the terrain, the population overspills, and the streets and the markets as boundary-demarcating elements that influence the camp's relationship with Amman and with Palestine. I will be focusing on a number of main and secondary streets, in addition to a number of markets in the camp, for their significant history, their role in influencing the camp territory and how movement along them has shaped the camp space and boundary. In the last part of the chapter, I will study the ways streets and markets have produced a gendering of the camp space as a way of understanding the differences in the lived experiences of the camp inhabitants and some of the social dynamics influencing the camp space and its transformation.

In Chapter 5, I will study walls and interiors of communal spaces in the camp as a way of understanding their role in producing different territories within the camp itself, investigating what happens on their inside as a way of studying issues related to ownership, land use and privacy. I will also study the walls to discuss the interplay of power relations within them and the influence these spaces, with the different institutions they house, have on their surrounding context and the camp as a whole. In the second part of this chapter, I will study the walls of these communal spaces as interfaces of communication by studying graffiti as a medium of expression for the camp inhabitants, with all the meanings and ideas these graffiti drawings communicate. I will create a comparison between the institutional drawings, or what I will be referring to as Street Art, and the graffiti drawings of the camp inhabitants to highlight the differences and similarities between the two modes of expression, and by extension, the differences in the values of the institution and the camp inhabitants.

In **Chapter 6**, I will study the walls of the domestic spaces, the walls of the Wehda, by studying the morphological transformation of the refugee units in relation to the change in building regulations in the camp as a way of understanding the social, economic, and political shifts in the camp dynamics, and their reflection on the camp's architecture. I will also study these units as interiors that encompass the lived experiences of the camp inhabitants, which when studied, reveal many layers of the camp's history.

The walls of the domestic spaces will also be studied as boundary-demarcating elements that draw lines of ownership, safety and privacy. The domestic spaces will also be studied as homes of the refugees, ones they have been intergenerationally inhabiting for more than six decades since Al Wehdat Camp's establishment in 1955.

In **Chapter 7,** the final part of this dissertation, I will conclude the research on the roofs on the units by studying the ways roofs connect the camp with the rest of the city and also with Palestine through a vertical connection with the sky that knows no boundaries. I will also study some of the activities that take place on the roofs of the camp, predominantly pigeon breeding, highlighting the different ways I have created a correlation between the refugees and birds in this dissertation and conceptualized their movement as a transgression of borders and a collectively imagined return.



FIG. 0.1 An overview of Al Wehdat Camp from above.

TOC



TOC

1 Paths of Investigation

On the body, movement, and the territory

1.0 Arriving at Al Wehdat Camp

Generally speaking, I would describe myself as someone who has a poor sense of direction, despite being an architect, which I have learned is somewhat of a contradiction to some people. As a result, I rely heavily on technology, on navigational applications such as Google Maps, to help me to get to places.

In July of 2019, I returned to Al Wehdat Camp during my first year of PhD, to conduct my first round of fieldwork in the camp. I was back in Amman for the summer, after having spent six months living and studying in the Netherlands. That day was not an exception, nor were the many other days when I used Google maps to move around, into and out of the camp in the years that followed. On that day, I had a general idea of where the camp was located, but definitely needed clear directions to be able to get there. The drive from my house in an area called Dahiet Al Rasheed, a neighborhood in the northwest of Amman, to the camp, which was located in the southeast of Amman, took me around 30 minutes. The traffic was heavy on the way and I had to cross some of the busiest hotspots in the city. There was an element of uncertainty to that first visit, I was not sure what to expect. In my mind as a child, Al Wehdat was more of a market than a camp, it was where people went to shop, not where people lived and went home to sleep. The place that I had visited when I was young, not very different from other markets I have visited in Amman, did not register itself in my mind as a camp. What did I need to see to consider it a camp?

Perhaps I needed to see a place that was so different, for these differences to distinguish the camp from the rest of the city and register it in my mind as a camp

I parked my car after Google Maps signaled my arrival. I was warned about parking my car in the wrong spot, not to get a police ticket, have the car towed, or have my wheels burst if I happened to occupy someone's spot. Those warnings further contributed to my feeling of anxiety. The surrounding streets were packed with heavy traffic, while the street I had parked in was empty, perhaps more of an alley than a street.

Where was the camp?

I walked towards an old man sitting on a small step in front of his house.
"How do I get to Al Wehdat Camp?" I asked.
"You are in the camp! Where do you need to go? I can help you."

I was surprised, I expected that moment of arriving to the camp to be a lot more ceremonial and remarkable. When exactly did I enter the camp? I wasn't sure what I was expecting but it was definitely not an entry that was this seamless. What did I have in mind? A gate maybe? A dramatic shift in the building typology? A drastic deterioration in the physical condition of the built environment? A wall? A fence?These were all fleeting images that might have crossed my mind that day. Noticing that I still hadn't responded, the old man said, "This is Al Bareed [The Post Office] Street. Where do you need to go? I can give you directions."On that first visit, I didn't have any particular spot that I wanted to see, I was there on an exploratory trip. I wanted to know whether Al Wehdat Camp was still a camp.

"It's alright, thank you for your help. I think that I will walk to the market."
"In that case, just keep walking straight. You will recognize the market once you see it."

I thanked the friendly, old man and continued down that narrow street.

The further I walked down Al Bareed Street, the busier it got, before dramatically opening up to a much wider street bustling with people and activity. Kiosks, vendors, shops, shoppers, noise, colors, policemen, cars, children, shop signs, construction work, rubble, men, smells, women, food, fruits, canopies, garbage, electricity poles, shading elements, water puddles, mannequins, carts, kids pushing carts, cats, birds, graffiti, baby strollers, booths, apples, chicken, and parsley.

What was remarkable about that moment was that despite how chaotic and busy the street was, people seemed to find their way around the chaos and not crash into each other, as if each had a designated path of movement that minimized collision, as if it was all choreographed, as if this was a performance and we were on a stage. That street was known as Al Maghfar [The Police Station] Street, as I later learned, one of the busiest shopping streets in Al Wehdat Camp, having gained its name from Al Ashrafieh Police Station which stood at the beginning of the street. None of these street names were mentioned in any of the aerial images or drawings I had studied before coming here. I was learning the names of the streets as I navigated them, through my encounters with the people and the conversations I was having with them.I also learned, through observation this time, that a huge number of the streets in the camp were too narrow for vehicles to enter, turning them into streets only for pedestrians. Other streets were too narrow for two people to walk along, one had to wait for the other to pass. Al Maghfar Street, on the other hand, was wide enough for both vehicles and pedestrians, but was heavily occupied with kiosks, vendors and shoppers in a manner that made the entry of any vehicles almost impossible.

Al Wehdat Market consisted of several shopping streets that sprung out in several directions in the camp, lined with kiosks and vendors that occupied the pavements and the streets, taking up the space between the shops and stores along the streets. Some streets were sheltered with makeshift shading elements, while others were open to the sky. Commercial activity flowed out on the streets, moving with and around the shoppers and the street vendors while also continuing into and out of the shops, blurring the line between the outside and the inside, the public and the private, the moving and the static. I could not help but get the impression that the market streets were like the central stage on which commercial activity took place, so concentrated and intense, yet so choreographed and uninterrupted. I began to wonder what the presence and the spread of the market meant, in reference to my question of whether Al Wehdat Camp was still a camp? In the middle of that street the actual architecture of the camp was hardly visible, swallowed by the flow of moving people, the bright shop signs, the vendor kiosks and their overhanging shading elements.

Where were the inhabitants? Where did people live? Was there more to the camp than this, was there a reality that existed beyond this chaos and explosions of noise and color? I needed to find out and to do so, I needed to get out of there. I broke away from the flow of moving people and made my way out of Al Maghfar Street, away from the kiosks and shops, in the direction of a less compact street perpendicular to Al Maghfar Street.

The noise levels began to drop, the colors began to fade and the number of people dramatically decreased. Walking in those adjacent streets, lined up with concrete buildings with high walls and muted facades, I realized that the residential neighborhoods were the market's backstage.
Was this where Al Wehdat Camp became a camp again?

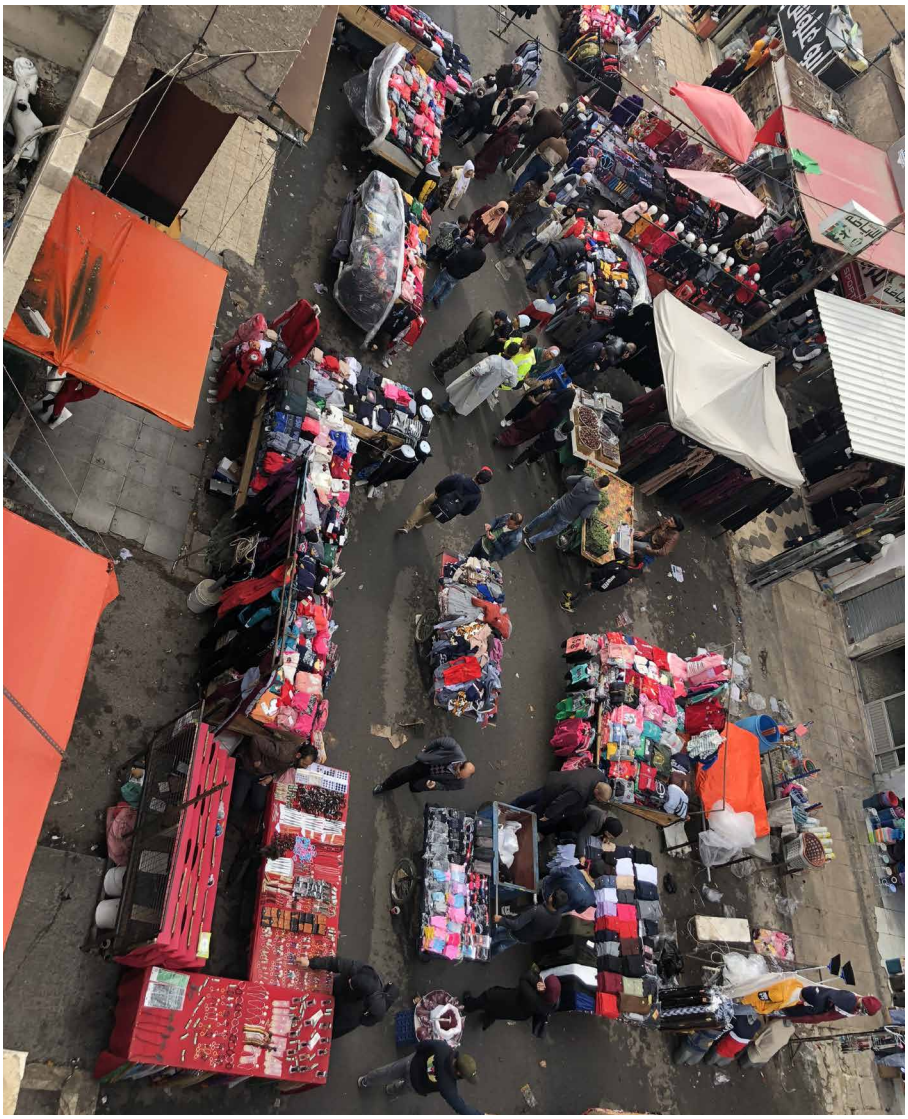


FIG. 1.1 The center stage where the everyday performances take place.

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss my research framework and methodology, focusing on my own path of investigation and the process of producing this research. As mentioned in the introduction, I have developed the epistemology and methodology in line with an interdisciplinary approach that aims to produce knowledge in the space that exists at the intersection of a number of fields, which are architecture, anthropology, literature and visual arts. I will be using methods from each to help me better understand the architecture of Al Wehdat Camp, its production, transformation and boundaries in relation to a number of social, political and economic dimensions.

1.2 Research Framework: Body - Movement - Territory

I have developed my research framework to help address my research question: *Where is the camp?*

The question comes with the aim of understanding the simultaneity in the camp's spatio-temporality and the production of a transient territory that is constantly moving and transforming between the home-city and the home-land, between here and there, now and then.

In this research, I am studying the relationship between the body, movement, and the territory, which paves the way to my research's sub questions:

How does the movement of bodies produce and transform a territory?

How does movement produce knowledge about a territory? How does one get to know a territory by physically being in it, as opposed to studying it from far?

The territory in my study is Al Wehdat Camp, a Palestinian refugee camp in Amman, Jordan that exists today in a state of permanent temporariness, a term used by architects, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti (2018), to describe the protracted state of "refugeehood" that the Palestinian refugees camps have been in since Al Nakba of 1948. Established in 1955 in response to Al Nakba, Al Wehdat Camp was the fourth official Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, established by the Jordanian State in coordination The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Al Wehdat Camp, like all other Palestinian refugee camps, is political at its core, an argument made by scholar Adam Ramadan (2009) and also by Sandi Hilal and Nasser Abourahmeh (2009), having been established as temporary spaces of refuge for Palestinian refugees who were awaiting a political resolution to the political crisis which produced those camps. Therefore, the existence of the Palestinian camps testifies to the existence of Palestinian refugees, standing as a custodian to their 'Right to Return.'

During the events that took place in 1948 or Al Nakba, which is an Arabic word that means Catastrophe, 800 000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed from their villages and hometowns in Palestine, setting the foundations to the establishment of the State of Israel, as documented by Palestinian historian, Walid Khalidi (1992), and Israeli historian, Illan Pappe (2007). Al Nakba was fashioned to become one of the largest "refugee problems" in history, hoping to be resolved through negotiations between what was announced as the victorious Israeli government and the defeated Arab states, awaiting a moment that never came (Abourahme, 2014).

For Palestinians, Al Nakba is considered a defining moment in modern Palestinian history for the way its aftermath still persists and continues to shape the lives of Palestinians everywhere. Al Nakba is not a historical event that had concluded in a distant past, but a moment of dislocation from the time and space of life in Palestine pre-1948. Three generations of Palestinian refugees are still awaiting their return, not just to the homeland, but also to a life that was so abruptly interrupted (Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, 2007).

After Al Nakba, Al Wehdat Camp became a point of arrival for thousands of Palestinian refugees who settled there, and in time, it also became a point of departure, as Palestinian refugees continued to move elsewhere, rendering it as a point that exists along many paths of displacement that have led to it, settled in it, and moved beyond it. Together, these paths of displacement make it a territory whose boundaries can only be understood in relation to the flows of movement and activity that continue to produce and reproduce its socio-spatial setting over time.

For that, I argue that the territory of Al Wehdat Camp is a transient territory that is continually transformed, both on a social, spatial, political and economic levels, in relation to the movement of bodies into it, around it and out of it. By doing so, I aim to emphasize the dynamic nature of Palestinian refugee camps and the different socio-spatial networks each has with its context, despite the unchanged legal status of the camps as temporary spaces of refuge since their establishment and also the unchanged legal status of Palestinian refugees since Al Nakba. Therefore, it is important to note how Palestinian refugees are shaped by a tension and a contradiction between their material reality and the legal frameworks that govern them and how Palestinian refugee camps have been transforming in the spillovers between these two binaries, an argument explicitly made in the work of Palestinian scholar, Nasser Abourahmeh (2014).

To illustrate my research framework, I have produced Table 1.1 that helps explain the three research pillars more elaborately, in relation to what has been discussed above.

TABLE 1.1 Research Framework with its three pillars: The Body-Movement-Territory.

The Body	Movement	Territory
Embodied Knowledge	Displacement	Home-Land
Position	Paths	Home-City
Positionality	Spatio-Temporal Intersections	Home-Camp
Prepositions and Places	Horizontal/ Vertical Distance	Home-Home

With the three pillars at the top, each pillar will encompass a set of four sub-pillars that will relate to it in this research, used interchangeably in different chapters and sections of this dissertation.

An elaborate discussion of the first two pillars and sub-pillars, which together have helped me develop my research epistemology and methodology, will follow in the upcoming section. As for the third pillar and its sub-pillars *territory*, I will delve into an extensive discussion of each in the upcoming chapters, studying the socio-spatial relationships between the different scales of home and what lines and boundaries have demarcated the territories of each.

1.3 The Body as a Site of Knowledge Production

1.3.1 Embodied and Situated Knowledge

To make my research more representative of the everyday life of the camp and its inhabitants, I rely on the bodies of the camp inhabitants as sites of knowledge, trying to understand how they know the camp and what they know about life in the camp by being in it, smelling it, seeing it, touching it, hearing it, moving around it, and interacting with its built environment and spaces.

I focus on the different ways the camp inhabitants know and understand their camp, its territory and boundaries vis-a-vis the institutional way of knowing and officially demarcating the camp.

I also aim to understand the different ways the camp inhabitants understand their home-camp's relation with both the home-city (Amman) and its relation with their homeland (Palestine).

By focusing on the bodily practices of the camp inhabitants that produce embodied knowledge about the territory of Al Wehdat Camp, I am focusing on a way of knowing a territory that is personal, diverse, heterogeneous and inherently subjective, allowing me to know the camp from an intimate distance with a high level of detail. In that sense, I will shift from the abstract way of knowing Al Wehdat Camp, hovering above it from the sky and thinking of it as an idea rather than a place, to a more grounded and situated way of knowing it as a territory shaped by the everyday life of its inhabitants with all the heterogeneity and multiplicities that embodies.

Understanding Al Wehdat Camp through the knowledge that is embodied in its inhabitants, with the ambiguity, uncertainty and the messiness of everyday life, opens up the space for different experiences and perspectives to be shared and understood, celebrating the complexities of knowledge production with all the contradictions and the tensions they encompass, instead of trying to gloss them over in favor of glorified objectivity and disembodied epistemology, as argued by Laura L. Ellingson (2012).

In this study I use my own body as a tool of inquiry, drawing insights and reflections from my personal experiences in the camp by walking around it, smelling it, hearing it, seeing it, touching it, and drawing from the different encounters I have with the camp inhabitants during the walking tours and the more formal interviews and focus groups. In this chapter, I reflect on the process of conducting research with what it encompasses of bodily practices such as writing, sketching, speaking, that I will, as explained before, be using as a tool of thinking and understanding. For that reason, I decided to write this dissertation using "I," acknowledging my own positionality and subjectivity and the role this plays in the knowledge that is produced, situated in time and place, aligning my approach with that of Australian architect and researcher, Naomi Stead, who argues in favor of authors acknowledging their own positions by writing:

"It is clear that to write academic essays in the first person is to be political. As a matter of principle and also politics, to use 'I' is to make a point of framing one's own authorial voice as subjective, and one's knowledge as particular to a given place and time and circumstance."
(Stead, 2022, p.70)

Stead also challenges the notion of the disembodied knowledge production and argues, "This is an ethical stance – making transparent the construction of knowledge, its specificity and individuation. But it also implies a mode of connection with a reader or audience: a collapsing of the cold disembodied distance of the third person universal, deliberately inhabiting the live body of the author, projecting the timbre and tone of a particular human voice, narrating its own experience."
(Stead, 2022, p.70)

By adopting a view from the body, my body, and bringing myself into the frame of inquiry instead of staying outside it, I aim to better understand Al Wehdat Camp and get closer to the everyday life of its inhabitants. By positioning and situating myself on the ground, the physical field of the camp, while also positioning and situating myself in the field of knowledge about Palestinian refugee camps, I will be using my partial perspective to write about and research Al Wehdat Camp. In doing so, this approach aligns with Donna Haraway's writings on Situated Knowledge (1988) in which she states: "I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. Only the god trick is forbidden." (Haraway, 1988. p589).

Moreover, Haraway argues in favor of what she terms, feminist objectivity, which she explains by writing:

"The science question in feminism is about objectivity as positioned rationality. Its images are not the products of escape and transcendence of limits (the view from above) but the joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions – of views from somewhere." (Haraway, 1988. p590).

Reflecting that notion on my investigation of the camp, specifically the partial perspective and the partial views, I acknowledge that there are different, complex and contradictory experiences of living in the camp, which I will build this research around, not striving to produce universal knowledge about Palestinian refugee camps or Al Wehdat Camp, but rather, present this research as one that is situated in its time and location, conducted by myself and in reference to my background, coming as the result of my encounters with the camp inhabitants that I have met, engaged with, and interviewed during my fieldwork.

1.3.2 Position and Positionality: From the threshold, at once inside and outside.

In this section, I elaborate more on what I mean by position and positionality. Firstly, in this research, position relates to the body's physical position in relation to the territory that is studied, observed or known. That position in my research refers to both my position, as the researcher, and that of the camp inhabitants themselves, whether in relation to the home-camp, the home-city, or the home-land. More specifically, once the investigation changes to the scale of buildings, that position relates to where I am standing in relation to the building itself, whether I am inside it, outside it, or on its roof.

I also study the relationship between the distance that separates the body from the territory and the knowledge that gets produced of/about that territory. Moreover, I study the relationship between being in a territory, seeing and experiencing a territory on a sensory level, inherently bodily, and the knowledge that gets produced about it. By doing so, I make use of the work of John Brewer (2010), who distinguished between two modes of historical knowledge production, building on the work of Jay Appleton (1996) and his distinction between 'prospect' and 'refuge' landscapes.

According to Brewer, refuge history writing surveys small scaled landscapes from a close point of view from the ground, accepting and opening up the space for multiple and heterogeneous voices without a dominating voice, with a high level of detail and enclosure. Refuge history approaches history writing with a humanist approach that studies historical figures as subjects who are active agents in producing their histories, not passive objects without agency. In writing refuge history, what gets produced is microhistories, producing knowledge that is fragmented, subjective and personal. Prospect history, on the other hand, is written from a bird's-eye view, with a superior perspective that surveys a large-scale landscape, where the viewer is not inside the picture but outside it, and because of the scale and distance the landscape seems to lack detail and is observed as a whole. In this mode of history writing, historical figures are studied as objects, and the knowledge that is produced is abstract and formal. Prospect history writing produces a grand narrative, utilizing scientific and numerical tools that adhere to determinism.

Through the progress of my research, having adopted a refuge history writing approach and studied the camp from a close distance, I began to understand how heterogeneous the camp inhabitants were and how multiple were their lived experiences. There was not one definition of who the Palestinian refugee living in Al Wehdat should be or is. Through that approach, I also recognized people's agency in producing their histories and accepted the multiplicity of those microhistories, without needing to adhere to one grand narrative about Al Wehdat Camp.

For those reasons, I will be using the local names that the camp inhabitants use themselves when referring to their streets, nodes, and landmarks in their home-camp, as a way of focusing on their ways of knowing that are produced in response to their environment, and not the institutional ways of knowing Al Wehdat Camp that impose knowledge on the inhabitants from above through top down approaches.

Moreover, I will be using the Arabic names when referring to the cities and villages in Palestine, the ones that the camp inhabitants refer to when talking about their displacement or their home-land, as a way of countering the imperial modes of knowledge production about Palestine and its history and geography.

The relation between position and epistemology, between seeing and knowing, was also a theme discussed in the work of Palestinian author, Ibrahim Nasrallah (2009), who wrote a semi-autobiography about his childhood in Al Wehdat Camp, titled: Birds of Caution. Nasrallah writes, "A long period of time had passed before he knew that you cannot see the reality of something while you are away from it, then he learned that seeing it from the outside is not enough at all to know it." (Nasrallah, 2009, p. 25)

What Nasrallah wrote about is what I refer to as position. Being away from something, seeing something from the outside, is not enough to know it at all. The outside in this instance, means being physically outside the place or the territory, which highlights the relationship between one's own physical position and how much they get to know about the place or the territory itself. Nasrallah also creates a relation between seeing and knowing, which emphasizes the importance of seeing and experiencing if one wants to know and understand. The distance between the seer and the seen plays a role in the level of knowing and understanding.

Another way of interpreting the outside in that quotation could be related to one's own positionality and the experiential distance between the person and life in that territory, particularly whether one is an outsider or an insider to the experiences of people inhabiting that place or territory.

Nasrallah is someone who grew up in Al Wehdat Camp and experienced life in it as a child, in a manner that gave him insight and knowledge that an outsider would never have access to. Lived experiences, in this instance, become the interior where knowledge is produced. For someone who did not have these experiences, that knowledge will be limited and will not be as easily accessed. Nasrallah uses the novel to narrate his personal and situated reflections on everyday life in Al Wehdat Camp in a manner that helped me understand the camp on a more intimate level. The encounters in the book are authentic, raw, unpolished and even harsh sometimes. Nasrallah did not feel the need to romanticize displacement, nor life in the camp, but decided instead to share his personal experiences and reflections with all the hardships and challenges they contained.

Through Nasrallah's detailed descriptions of the everyday paths he had moved along; getting to school, out to play, out to work, out to get humanitarian aid, out to discover, I was able to better understand the spatial relations between a number of the camp's amenities and neighborhoods. In one instance he writes:

"No childhood was complete without playing in the narrow alleys and streets, but in the camp, there were none, only the strong cold that carved out a space that was always present. The winter in the camp was a red valley soaked in clouds, its beginning was a challenging return, with mud choking everyone's shoes with an invisible grip around their feet, exposing them naked. Few were those who had plastic shoes that went up to the knees, with winter weighing everyone and everything down, causing them all to move in slow motion. (Nasrallah, 2009, p. 80)

The level of detail in his descriptions, the spatial elements of his stories, mixed with the feelings and the reflections of Nasrallah proved to be helpful in making me understand the earlier days of the camp and step into the interior of his lived experiences in the camp as a young boy. According to Nasrallah, Palestinian refugees struggle every day in Al Wehdat Camp. Some of the hardships of the everyday included queuing to receive aid and fighting to get clean drinking water from the public drinking faucets. For those reasons, I decided to refer to the novel in my research, along with a number of other literary works about Palestinian refugees, cross referencing them with my observations from the field and what I was learning about the camp from my encounters with the camp inhabitants. The different spatial descriptions and reflections in the novel will be used in different sections of the dissertation, each corresponding to the discussed theme or space.

Another Palestinian author who reflected on his position and the knowledge he produced was the renowned philosopher, Edward Said's (1999), through the notion of 'Double Vision' which he had introduced in his book After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives. To write the book, Edward Said collaborated with Swiss Photographer Jean Mohr, who according to Said, managed to see Palestinians the way they saw themselves, "at once inside and outside our world" (Said, 1999, p.6).

That state of liminality, standing at the border between being inside and outside one's own world, is the core of what Double Vision is for Said. What might be perceived as a contradiction, is the persisting condition for Palestinians, making it the most suitable position to take, when trying to study Palestinian lives and write about them. Their collaboration was also driven by political reasons, because at the time of writing the book in 1983, Edward Said, who was living and working in the United States, was not allowed to return to Palestine from which he was displaced with his family in 1951. As per Edward Said's recommendation, the UN commissioned Jean Mohr to travel to Palestine, given that his Swiss nationality allowed him to enter, to take photographs of Palestinians in Palestine and the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Upon his return, Said worked with Mohr to produce an interplay between the images and text, discussing themes of borders, migrations, displacement, diaspora and memory (Said, 1999). Double vision, in their book, was achieved through a hybrid format of text and image, where Said used text to reflect on his personal memories of living in Palestine and his and his family's experiences there in the past, before being displaced. Meanwhile, Jean Mohr shared the photographs he had taken from the different locations of Palestinians, in Palestine and in the Palestinian camps, to visually share different aspects of Palestinian's lives in the present (Kauffmann, 2012).

In my research, I present the partial and situated knowledge that I have gathered about Al Wehdat Camp and its camp inhabitants through a hybrid format, combining text and image, aiming to similarly achieve Double Vision through their interplay. The text is a combination of two things, the reflections and experiences of the camp inhabitants, collected through interviews and focus groups, in addition to my own field reflections through the 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork I have done in the camp between the years 2019-2023.

Another way of interpreting the notion of Double Vision in the book and for this research, is also related to position and positionality. Edward Said was an insider to many of the experiences of Palestinians, being a Palestinian himself, but was outside Palestine when he wrote the book. Jean Mohr, on the other hand, was an outsider to the experiences of Palestinians but was physically inside Palestine and accumulated knowledge about it from a closer distance. Through their collaboration, Double Vision was achieved by combining two unique perspectives that stem from each collaborator's position and positionality.

Reflecting that notion on myself and my research, I can say that while conducting this research, I, like Edward Said, was both an insider and an outsider to the experiences of the camp inhabitants, in terms of my own positionality and position in relation to the camp context. I felt as both an outsider and an insider, being an observer and a participant.

Among the experiences I had, I found myself relating to some of the experiences of the female camp inhabitants for example, which, to a male camp inhabitant, might be parts of an interior they cannot inhabit, which is the way Edward Said described his feelings about his mother's experience of displacement as a Palestinian woman: "Because I am separated from those experiences by time, by gender, by distance – they are, after experiences of an interior I cannot inhabit – I am reconfirmed in my outsider's role. This in turn leads me, defensively perhaps, to protect the integrity of exile by noting the compromises of life in the Palestinian interior." (Said, 1999, p.83-84).

Personally, I was aware that I too was an outsider to the experiences of the camp inhabitants, because I have never lived in the camp myself nor has my family. It was crucial for me to acknowledge the limitations of my position and not try to claim that the knowledge I have accumulated made me fully understand the lived experiences of the women with all the challenges they face.

On the other hand, I was aware that I was not entirely an outsider, because I was a woman myself, with a Palestinian mother and grandmother who have intergenerationally transferred parts of their experiences to me in a manner that played a role in shaping my identity. My grandparents have never lived in a camp but considered themselves as refugees nevertheless, because as my late grandfather would say, “We are refugees because we cannot return to Palestine, we will remain refugees until we return.”

Through these words, I learned so much about how one’s own self and ways of being are shaped and influenced by their position in the world, both physically and ontologically, and how their proximity to their home and homeland also influenced the way they related to themselves and others.

My mother, who is a second generation Palestinian refugee, also continued to transmit that connection with Palestine through her own version of the stories, her home-cooked Palestinian dishes, her love and celebration of traditional Palestinian embroidery, and through the photographs and maps of Palestine we had around every corner in our house. Because of that, this research has stemmed from a personal interest in unraveling notions of belonging, homeland, and memory. I grew up listening to their stories about Palestine and how much they had longed to return. I grew up around their stories, and using them, I built my own understanding of a land I have never visited, but felt I knew and longed for. For those reasons, I found myself standing at the threshold, not completely an outsider, nor completely an insider, but I identify as someone who has a foot on both sides of the line simultaneously, characterized by a doubling of position, a liminality, that produces a doubling of vision, where each side of the line needs to exist for the other to persist. “Where in Palestine are you from?” was a question that I was always asked at the beginning of every encounter in the camp. That question would come up so spontaneously, right after asking about my name, in a way that to me felt comforting, making me feel closer to the camp inhabitants and more connected to Palestine. This tendency, to want to pinpoint a Palestinian inside Palestine, was something Palestinian scholar, Ghada Karmi (1999), also reflected on:

“It took me years to realize that after 1948, establishing a person’s origin became for Palestinians a kind of mapping, a surrogate repopulation of Palestine in negation of the Nakba. It was their way of recreating the lost homeland, as if the families and the villages and the relations they had once known were all still there, waiting to be reclaimed.” (Karmi, 1999, p. 40).

When asked, I would answer with, “From Biddu, a village between Ramallah and Al Quds.” It is where my mother was from in Palestine, and where I am from, too.

In Jordan, it was more common for people to speak about their father’s origins and introduce themselves using their paternal family name which would also be used for identification in all official records. In that sense, I would be more typically considered as strictly Jordanian in Jordan, which is not a big surprise given how influenced the Jordanian State and society were by the patriarchal ideology in many aspects of civic life, a topic also discussed in the work of Sarah Al Kharouf and David Weir (2008).

That being said, identifying as only Jordanian and erasing the Palestinian part of my identity was something that contradicted my own sense of belonging and the strong connection that I have always felt with Palestine, through and because of my mother and her family.

When I started this research, I was in the camp in search of the Palestine that I have never visited or been in. Engaging with and talking to the camp inhabitants whose identity strongly evolved around the loss of Palestine (Farah, 1999; Ramadan, 2009; Suleiman, 2016) made me feel closer to Palestine in its own way. Moreover, identifying as only Jordanian contradicts my values as a feminist researcher, because I refuse to adhere to violent limitations set up by a patriarchal system.

Along those lines, it was remarkable for me to read about the experience of Palestinian anthropologist, Dina Zbeidy (2020), in Al Wehdat Camp, whose doctoral dissertation studied and had the title of, Marriage and displacement among Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Zbeidy reflected on her experience of conducting research in the camp, expressing how excited she was to be meeting Palestinians who were living outside of Palestine, which was an experience that she did not have before, having been born and raised in Palestine, on the other side of the border. To her surprise, she realized that she had unexpectedly felt more comfortable conducting her research with the Syrian refugees, who sought refuge in Jordan and in Al Wehdat Camp after the war started in Syria in 2011, than she did with the Palestinian refugees in the camp.

To explain why that happened, Zbeidy noted how during her encounters with the Palestinian refugees she realized how the Palestine that she knew was different from the Palestine that the Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat Camp described, because to her, Palestine was home, a space of everyday life, where her memories and experiences have taken place.

To the Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat Camp, Palestine was an idealistic place, a symbol of all what was lost, and for those reasons, the Palestinian refugees expected her, the Palestinian coming from the homeland, to represent the quintessential Palestinian; to behave in a certain way, to wear the Hijab and lead a certain lifestyle they approved of, producing tension and long discussions where Zbeidy had to explain her life and herself.

Syrian refugees, on the other hand, had fewer expectations of what it meant to be Palestinian, making their encounters more relaxed with less tension or judgment.

In that sense, if the question, "Where in Palestine are you from?" manages to connect Palestinians together and make them feel closer to Palestine and to each other, as I have previously mentioned and as Ghada Karmi (1999) and Dina Zbeidy (2020) have both noted, then I believe that that question needs to be followed up with, "Where in Palestine, are you now?" That second question would help paint a clearer image about the lived reality of each Palestinian in the present and highlight the potential similarities and differences between the lived and the imagined aspects of each one's life.

Historically, displacement has pushed Palestinians to move, uprooted from their villages and hometowns, producing drastically different experiences for Palestinians everywhere. Those differences are experienced among Palestinians inside Palestine themselves, between those living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Al Quds, or within the borders of historical Palestine, as Zbeidy (2020) notes in her reflections.

Combined, these experiences are also different from those who are living outside Palestine, whether in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon or elsewhere, whether in refugee camps or outside them. The same Palestine is known and experienced differently depending on where Palestinians are in the world.

From that, it could be understood how the political fragmentation of Palestine, through decades of colonization (which is what had initially produced the refugee camps and turned Palestinians into Palestinian refugees, as argued by Palestinian scholars, Nasser Abourahme (2019) and Elia Zureik (2003)) has also fragmented the Palestinian society and disconnected its members from one another, drawing lines that did not only isolate villages from one another, but also produced an abundance of unrecognizable life experiences and interiors that are uninhabitable to the Palestinians living outside them.

In Al Wehdat Camp, another point of similarity that made me relate to some of the camp inhabitants' lived experiences was the fact that I was also a resident of the city of Amman, where Al Wehdat Camp is located, which allowed me to relate to many experiences in a broader sense. I also speak Arabic, which made my communication with the camp inhabitants easier and helped me build bonds of trust with them because they did not perceive me as a foreigner. I also wore the hijab, which made it smoother for me to navigate the camp because the vast majority of the women there wore it. That was a realization I arrived at after visiting the camp with another Palestinian friend, who did not wear the hijab. We were surprised when the children started playfully following us, addressing her in English. "Where are you from? Where are you from?" They asked her, following us. "I am Palestinian, just like you, why are you speaking to me in English?" She asked, laughing.

That encounter revealed to us that for the children in the camp, to be like them, to be Palestinian, a woman had to wear the hijab, a point discussed by Dina Zbeidy (2020), because in their surroundings the vast majority of the Palestinian women did. Another factor that created that link between not wearing the hijab and speaking English was the large number of English speaking foreign humanitarian workers that worked in international organizations in Al Wehdat Camp and other camps in Jordan, whom the children often saw and interacted with.

Combined, these factors gave me a unique position that helped me produce this research, building bonds of trust with the camp inhabitants in a way that opened a number of doors for me in the camp, both in a metaphorical and literal sense. This helped to produce research from a threshold, one that looked at a number of realities simultaneously, through a doubling of vision of a space characterized by a spatio-temporal simultaneity.

1.3.3 Prepositions, Places and Distances

In the camp, I would typically be moving to get to a place or to understand the camp better, but when I stop that movement and pause, when I stand or sit down somewhere I assume a position in space, marking my presence in the location. I become present, in the present tense, in that place. Those spatial practices are bodily in nature, whether movement or standing or sitting, responding to my research framework that focuses on producing knowledge in the space between the three pillars: the body, movement, and the territory.

Because of that, throughout the different chapters I use a variety of different prepositions to give an indication of my position, comparing and contrasting between different prepositions and positions to reflect on the observations and the points that I was drawing from the field. More specifically, more emphasis will be put on the position of being on the inside and the outside; and also at the threshold (as a liminal position between both); and the position Palestinians take, feeling like they are simultaneously inside and outside their world, as argued by Edward Said (1999).

Prepositions also allow me to move across different scales in my research, rendering the same physical element that I am investigating, a street for example, as a number of things depending on where I stand in relation to it. In reference to the work of Kevin Lynch (1964) on imageability, the street could for example be a node, a path, an edge, a landmark, or a district depending on my position, my movement, and my perception of it.

Prepositions and the five elements that I derived from Lynch also help me move in scale between a number of spaces or territories by beginning my investigation at the scale of the home-land, Palestine, then moving to Amman as the home-city, to Al Wehdat Camp as the home-camp, all the way to the single residential unit, or Al Wehda as the home-home. Together, I have illustrated my argument in the sketch that I have drawn in Figure 1.2.

Between these different scales, I investigate the different architectural and urban elements as boundary-demarcating elements that work on disconnecting and connecting the different territories and spaces from one another, which together, play a role in the production and transformation of the transient territory of the camp. Those connections and disconnections, through the boundary-demarcating elements, play a role in producing the spatio-temporal simultaneity of the camp space, allowing the camp to exit not only in the present and in Amman, but also in the past and in Palestine.Those boundary-demarcating elements work on connecting the space of the camp with the city of Amman in a manner that blurs the boundary between both and allows activity and movement to flow in and out of the camp. At the same time, however, in other instances they work on disconnecting the space of the camp from the city in a manner that emphasizes the boundary which distinguishes the camp from the city, rendering it as a distinctive territory with its own social, political, economic and spatial dimensions.

To illustrate the boundary-demarcating elements that I will focus on in this research, I have produced the collage in Figure 1.3, which will be discussed in depth in the upcoming chapters.

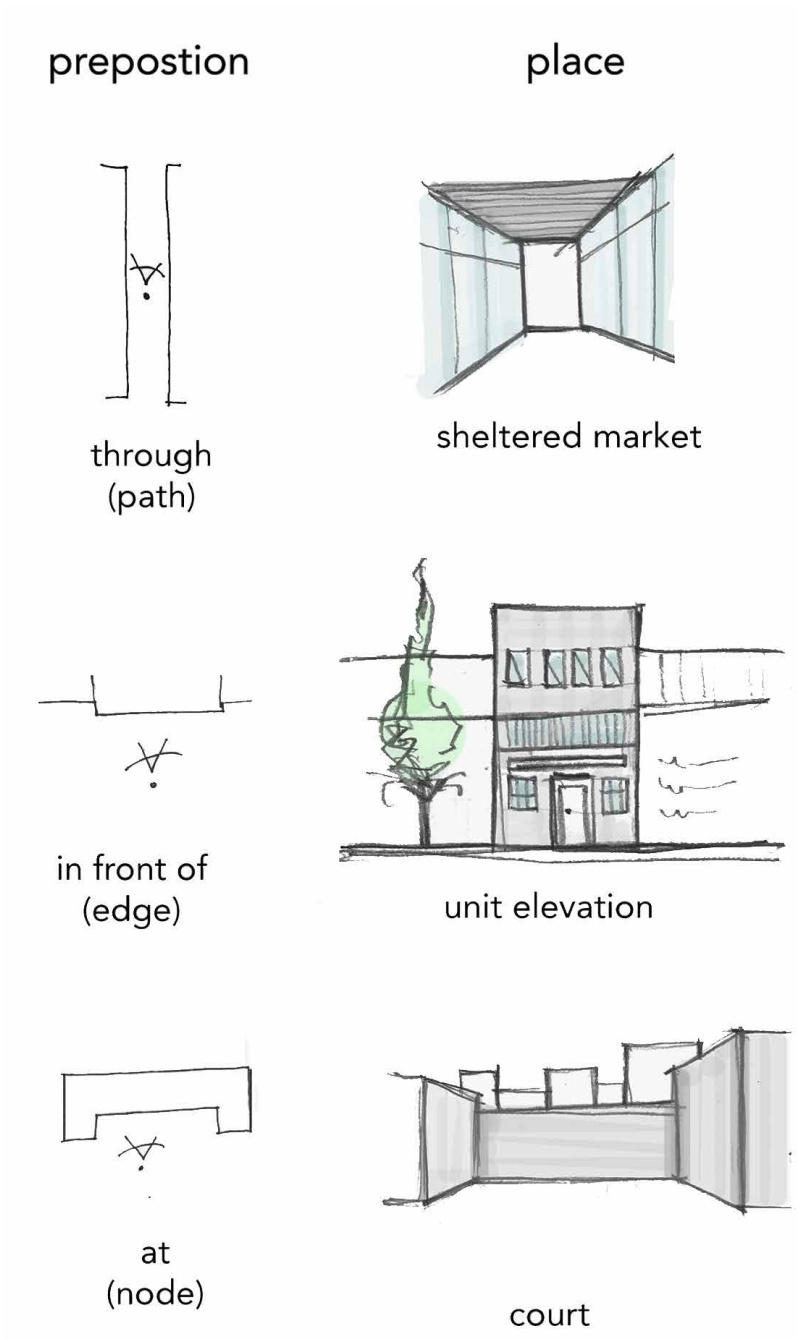
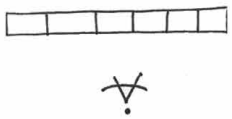
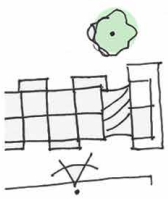
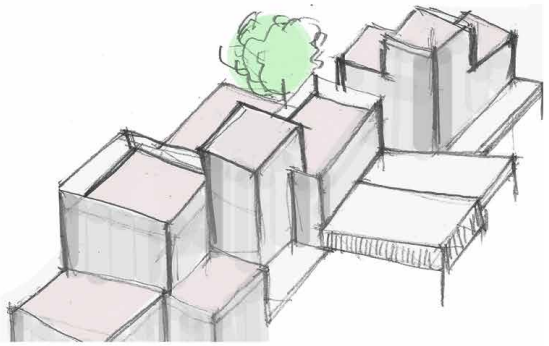
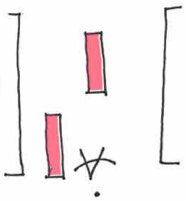
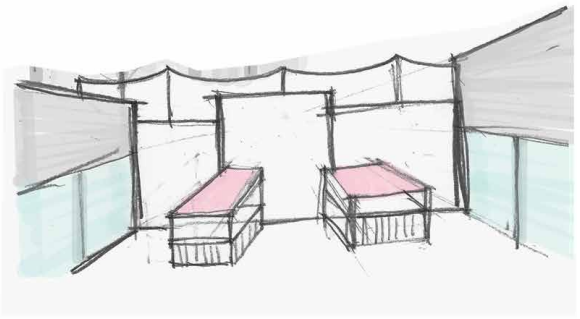


FIG. 1.2 Prepositions, places and distances to and from different architectural elements in Al Wehdat Camp.

TOC

prepostion	place
	
across from (edge/district)	streetscape
	
looking over (landmark/district)	rooftops
	
at/through (landmark/path)	open market

TOC



FIG. 1.3 The boundary demarcating elements that produce and shape the transient territory.

TOC



walls/domestic rooftops

terrain

paths

TOC

1.4 Movement: A Study of Paths and Distances

In this section I will look at the ways in which movement is studied in my research in relation to two dimensions. The first dimension is related to the way movement is conceptualized to be a producer of territory, allowing spaces to exist beyond their political and colonial borders and also beyond the institutional boundaries that distinguish them from their surrounding contexts. To do so, I will study movement along what I term, 'paths of displacement,' by tracing that movement across the landscape, both across time and space, to understand how that movement allowed the home-land, from which the Palestinian refugees have been displaced, to exist elsewhere. I will briefly introduce the paths of displacement in this chapter, before discussing them in depth in the following chapter.

The second dimension is related to the way movement is utilized in this study as a research method, conceptualizing my movement as a path of investigation, allowing me to introduce my research approach and the different methodological frameworks and tools. Doing so has enabled me to better understand Al Wehdat Camp and know it through my movement in its spaces and architecture. After introducing the path of investigation, I will move on to discuss my fieldwork and the different methodological and ethical considerations that have guided my path in Al Wehdat Camp during the five years of investigation

1.4.1 Paths of Displacement

A movement of bodies, along extending paths. Flows of humans, uprooted and displaced, walking into the unknown. That movement of bodies, marking paths on the ground, across the Palestinian landscapes, between destroyed and ethnically cleansed villages and hometowns.Where did all these people go? Did they ever stop moving?

Those paths extended across mountains, hills and rivers. Vehicles of memory, carrying with them fragments of a homeland they never returned to, with their villages folded inside them as maps they held onto for as long as they could. This was all they had. An entangled web of lines and threads, paths that were traveled and miles that were crossed, threads that were held at one end with a needle that is pinned in their village of origin, that kept rolling and unfolding with their bodies as they moved from one place to another. Villages, towns, camps, countries, skies, lands, geographies, generations, events, deaths, births, wars, marriages.

Unfolding, across time and space. A thread that is pinned in the village of origin, extending along all the points of arrival and departure that the flows of bodies have moved between, with each thread resembling a path of displacement that tells the story of every family and its journey that started in 1948 and continued to develop across different points and generations. If they hold that threat between their hands, if they walk back along its length, will they be able to return? Their movement will be interrupted by walls, fences, checkpoints, rivers, mountains, and guns. You no longer have anything here, take what remains of you and leave. These memories you carry are of a place that no longer exists, one that now only lives, in your heads.

That piece of text was my literary attempt to imagine displacement and to create a visual image of how that displacement looks like across the landscape, relating the movement of refugees to a number of geographical features and elements. That movement, along an extending path, embodies displacement, embodies Al Nakba, and emphasizes the bodily nature of displacement itself, being pushed from one location to another, being uprooted, and becoming a refugee.

In his novel, The Palestinian Diaspora - Tales of the Refugee Camp, esteemed Palestinian writer and poet, Walid Saif (2022), also reflected on these sentiments, using the character of the educated and well-articulated, Ali al-Sheikh Younis, to reflect on displacement, Al Nakba and becoming a refugee:

“Refugees? We didn’t see ourselves that way in those anxious, tumultuous times. Only later would the word leap from the dictionary to become our newly stamped identity, alongside terms like Al Nakba and the lost homeland. In those hours, we saw ourselves only as groups cut off from defending ourselves and our land, driven by siege, bombardment, threats, and bloody repression to temporarily flee danger zones, while awaiting the end of the heavy nightmare and the promised entry of Arab armies to restore life to its previous course. People would return with the keys to their homes they carried along with them, along with the scant belongings they left with, leaving behind most of their possessions with the promise of returning to them soon! The ultimate goal of displacement was not to reach beyond the borders of partition; those borders didn’t represent to us the dividing line between the dormant homeland and the land of exile. We didn’t mean the tent and the camp. Another time had to pass before we realized there were borders, and that we had ended up behind them in the land of wandering, pain, sorrow, and anger, leaving behind that precious part of the homeland and the lost paradise that would not fade from our sight except to the extent that it expanded and grew in our minds, dreams, and poetry.” (Saif, 2022, p.45-46).

Conceptualizing displacement as a movement along a path relates displacement to time, because that path also contains the decades that have passed since Al Nakba and the generations that have been born in Palestinian refugee camps all around the region, having their lives and identities shaped by an event that started before them and continued until their arrival, and probably, will continue beyond their departure.

The path also indicates the continuity of the events of Al Nakba, which Palestinian refugees still live in today, while also connecting the space of the camps to the space of Palestine, and every refugee to their village of origin.

Lastly, the paths of displacement also encompass the Palestinian narratives and how they have made sense of their displacement and what they intergenerationally passed on to their children and grandchildren over time. A path is a sequence of events across time, and that is exactly what a narrative is.

In the novel, Walid Saif (2022), writes about the narrative produced by the fragments of what the Palestinian refugees carried with them after they were displaced, and the different positions they had to take after Al Nakba:

"Language falls short of describing those mixed, turbulent emotions that our generation had to experience during those eventful and difficult days when the contours of Al Nakba were taking shape. There had to be a time before many of us realized the magnitude and boundaries of the disaster, before its features became defined and embodied within us and our witnessed reality...
before we coined the term 'Al Nakba' for it... Al Nakba of Palestine, realizing that we are its generation, its witnesses, and its victims, and that since those days, we have been tasked with the burden of memory, guarding it, and passing it on to future generations, defending our narrative, which refers to the past only to the extent that it enriches the current movement, safeguards identity, shapes dreams, harbors the future. All of this in the face of alternative misleading narratives that seek to distort the truth, erase memory, obliterate identity, undermine spirit, assassinate meanings, and exile the homeland from consciousness after exiling its people!
At that time, amidst the turmoil of interacting with the personal horrors left by those circumstances, astonishment prevailed... the astonishment of the whirlpool that swallows you into its dark depths, almost numbing your senses and erasing the evidence and signs along with it. It was a time of frantic scrambling between the public catastrophe and our personal shares of it, sometimes retreating to the personal to escape the terrifying public, and sometimes resorting to the general pain to endure our personal anguish." (Saif, 2022, p.39-40)
As such, a path is a line, and in my research that line encompasses movement, dislocation, time, generations, displacement, narratives and continuity.

1.4.2 Paths of Investigation: Taqato'at or the spatio-temporal Intersections

Overstepping the distance that separated me from the camp did not happen only once. I needed to keep repeating that process multiple times. I found myself constantly driven by the need to visit the camp to keep my research in check, using the field as the compass that guided my research development and arguments.

That distance seemed to decrease every time I visited the camp and talked to the camp's inhabitants. The research developed in the space between the framework's three pillars: the body, movement, and territory.

At the intersection of the three, I developed my research methodology and epistemology. What also developed at the intersection was my interdisciplinary approach that produced knowledge by using methods from, and in reference to the fields of architecture, anthropology, literature, and visual arts. I have used a number of methods from the field of architecture, namely sketching and mapping, to conduct a spatial investigation into the camp and its boundaries' relationship with the city, while also using a number of methods from the field of anthropology, namely interviews, focus groups and fieldwork, to better learn about the camp's inhabitants, their oral histories and ways of knowing the camp and its everyday life. I will also review a number of literary works produced about Al Wehdat Camp and Palestinian refugees, cross-referencing them with the findings of my other methods of investigation. Lastly, I will be using methods from the field of visual arts, namely collaging, to represent and also deconstruct some of the material and immaterial layers of the camp's architecture and its spatio-temporality.

I have developed my research methodology by conceptualizing my fieldwork as a series of spatio-temporal intersections I had with Al Wehdat Camp and its inhabitants in different places and at different times along the five years of fieldwork I have carried out between 2019 and 2023. The word Taqato'at is an Arabic word that literally translates to intersections, and in this research these intersections are between the different fields producing interdisciplinary research, while also happening on the ground as intersections of paths. In the camp, Taqato'at are the result of my own path intersecting with that of the different paths of the various camp inhabitants. They move in their everyday environments, each with a distinctive background and set of experiences, and I move in the camp as a researcher there to study the camp.

By using the Taqato'at, I am acknowledging the way the three pillars of my framework play in producing the knowledge I am accumulating about Al Wehdat Camp; with different inhabitants having physically and personally experienced life in the camp differently, producing different knowledge about the territory that is embodied, intimate and subjective. The intersections are spatio-temporal, because the encounters happened in a moment where our paths intersected not only spatially in Al Wehdat Camp, but also temporally, in the present, during the five years of conducting this research.

Had any of my intersections happened in a different time, or had my path intersected with different camp inhabitants with different lived experiences, then my findings and conclusions about the camp and its inhabitants would have been different than what I am presenting in this dissertation. In that sense, Taqato'at as a research methodology encompasses what has been discussed in this chapter about situated knowledge, embodied knowledge, the partial perspective, refuge landscape, double vision, position and positionality, distance and conducting research from a liminal position; from the threshold, between being an outsider and an insider to the lived experiences of the camp inhabitants. Those spatio-temporal intersections happened through and during my movement along both vertical and horizontal paths into the camp space as well as around it, next to it and through it, among other positions that I will be discussing in the next section and over the course of this dissertation.

1.4.2.1 The Vertical Research Path: The multiple scales of Home

I had started this research by viewing the camp through a bird's-eye view, viewing it as an abstract concept, a static idea that stood unchanged and untransformed within its context. Hovering above it from afar, from the sky, looking at it through an endless series of aerial photographs and maps, there was a huge distance that separated me from it in a manner that did not allow me to know it enough. In time, I began to slowly move closer to the ground, to allow my body to enter the third dimension, bringing my body into the frame of inquiry, before landing on the ground, like a bird that was landing "in caution," to quote Ibrahim Nasrallah (2009).

In that sense, I conceptualize that aspect of my research process as a vertical path that allows me to slowly descend from the sky to the ground, getting closer to more intimate aspects of life in the camp, seeing the camp with a higher level of detail with more heterogeneity and differences, aligning with the distinction made by John Brewer (2010) on refuge history writing. The vertical distance, both physical and experiential, decreased the further I advanced in my studies.

I felt myself lose a sense of romanticism with every visit to the camp. It was a gradual process, relational to time and my willingness to let go of that transcendent understanding of both the camp and its inhabitants. That vertical distance also shapes the shift in scale, reflecting an architectural way of understanding space, between the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home, between Al Wehdat Camp as a whole, and Al Wehda as a residential shelter.

My movement was not one-directional, because I kept zooming in and out as needed, shifting between studying a place from the street-level, to studying it from the roof, back to studying it from behind closed walls and so on.

That shift in scale is also reflected on the chapter topics, with some chapters studying the camp as a point of arrival from Palestine, another studying the camp as a territory within the city, while others are focused on studying the camp and its relationship with its neighborhoods and buildings, investigating them as a network of residential, commercial, and communal spaces that exist within the camp territory and its boundary

1.4.2.2 The Horizontal Research Path: Encounters with the Camp and the Inhabitants

I knew the camp by moving around it, and that movement is horizontal, producing my horizontal paths of investigation which over the course of this research allowed me to cross paths with a number of camp inhabitants that I am introducing through this research. Through that approach, I am focusing on the practice of movement, which includes my movement inside the camp as part of my research, inherently bodily and sensory, and the movement of the camp inhabitants inside their everyday spaces, whose paths I have crossed. Moreover, these intersections stress on the idea that this dissertation does not claim to be universal, nor representative of all of the camp or its inhabitants, allowing me to step away from a homogenizing and dominating way of studying the camp. These intersections are situated, related to location and time, personal and intersubjective, helping me develop this dissertation around the encounters I had with the specific camp inhabitants I interacted with, drawing knowledge from these fragmented, subjective life experiences and partial perspectives. At that distance, through my intersections with the camp inhabitants in the camp and in the present, I am getting to know more about the camp from a close proximity at an intimate scale, with some of the intersections being spontaneous and others being planned.

Moreover, I am not studying the entirety of the camp, but rather investigating a number of spaces where these intersections took place, or a number of spaces that were discussed during those intersections, using them as spatio-temporal markers that help reveal certain aspects about the camp's spatial production, history, and transformation.

More generally, with this research being focused on Al Wehdat Camp as a temporary space of refuge, these intersections that stress on the aspect of movement, serve a fitting approach to study displacement, being uprooted, and being forced to move from one place to another. Displacement, being uprooted from one's own territory and being forced to move elsewhere, is inherently bodily, with bodies moving along paths of displacement, from one territory to another.

In Figure 1.4 I illustrated my research method of vertical and horizontal and spatio-temporal intersections; the Taqato'at superimposed on the transient territory of the camp that is represented through a spatio-temporal simultaneity between the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home.

1.5 Visual Elements: Photographs, Sketches, Mappings, Collages and Serial Vision

In this research, I use a variety of visual tools to document the architecture of the camp and also understand the different layers that produce its spaces. All drawings were produced by combining paths, movement, edges, lines and boundaries in accordance with the research's pillars. This variety of tools, drawn from the fields of architecture and visual arts, helps me understand the processes that went into the production of the camp's architecture. Further, they also offer different representations of the camp's territory, instead of only relying on the institutional drawings that I argue are not representative of the camp's everyday life and the dynamic and transformative nature of the camp, particularly when conceptualizing it as a transient territory.

In the different chapters, I show several annotated Google Maps images that show the camp from above in order to understand its spatial relation with itself and the city. I also use my own photographs, taken from different positions around the camp space, from the ground and from above, to illustrate some of my arguments and findings. As such, all photographs that are shown in this dissertation are taken by me, unless indicated otherwise. I also use several archival photographs that show some layers of the camp's past and allow me to reflect on its transformation.

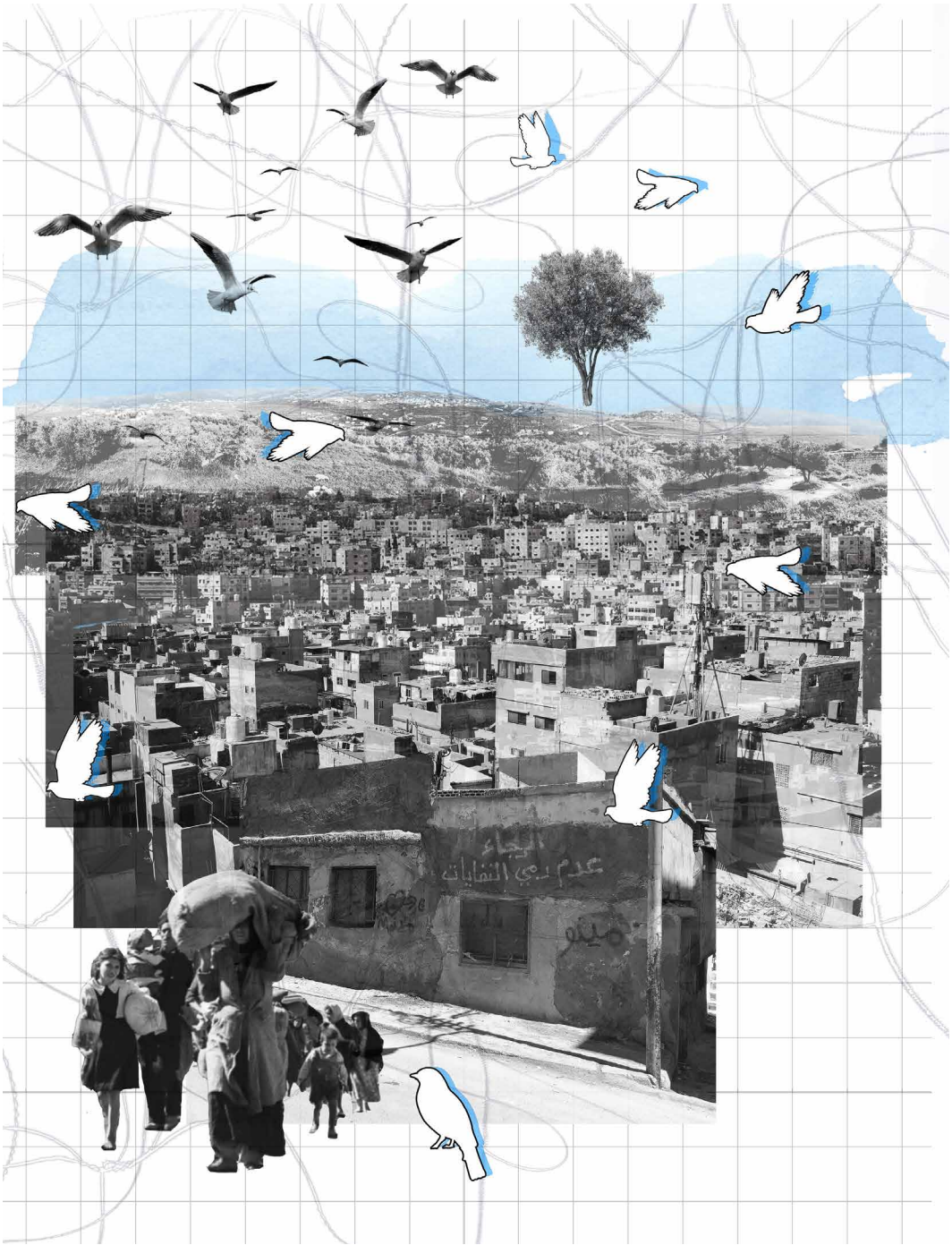


FIG. 1.4 Taqato'at, the vertical and horizontal distance, and the transient territory.

TOC

Mappings produced by the camp's inhabitants themselves during the interviews and focus groups are also presented. I use these with the aim of representing the inhabitant's way of knowing the camp and its boundaries. Other drawings, also produced by the camp's inhabitants, aimed to trace their families' paths of displacement and the link between the camp and their villages of origin in Palestine. I also use sketching to spatially document the camp's neighborhoods and buildings, with my reflections and observations included. I have also produced a variety of mappings that aim to highlight the spatial relationships between a number of the camp's amenities and illustrate some aspects related to the transformation in the camp's architecture, building typologies and building regulations.

Collages, on the other hand, are used to represent the simultaneity in the camp's spatio-temporality, showing it as a territory that exists through a superposition of places and territories that exist in one place simultaneously. Collages are also used to understand the camp's different material and immaterial layers which, in their overlapping, produce the camp's space. Further, they are used to combine a number of visual elements; including archival materials, sketches and photographs of the camp, overlaying the past with the present, the lived with the imagined, the material with the immaterial, the spoken with the sketched and text with image. Serial vision, another method that I use, is a photographic technique that aims to understand a place by moving around it, combining a series of photographs that are produced through movement along a designated path that flows, very much like time, across the place and its surroundings.

In different sections of this book, I have deliberately rotated images and changed their orientation to invite readers to look at them from different perspectives and engage with them on a more purposeful level. I also wanted the reader to conduct different bodily practices such as rotating the book in one's hands while reading the printed version, or to shift position to reach out to the mouse to rotate the screen while reading the digital version, as a nod to the research's pillars that correlate between the body and knowledge production.

1.6 The Focus Group Design: Observing Power Dynamics

Before conducting the focus group discussions, during my encounters with the camp inhabitants through the Taqato'at, I used interviews to ask inhabitants about their everyday lives in the camp; asking them to describe their daily walking routes in the camp, the neighborhoods they tended to avoid and the different spots they frequented. To some of the camp inhabitants, the answers to such questions were too simple and mundane, wondering why I was not interested in knowing more about more politically significant events, about Palestine, or about Al Nakba of 1948?

For those reasons, I decided to move the questions to a more collective setting and open up the space for more comprehensive discussions to take place, allowing inhabitants to engage in group discussions and think together, with me reassuring them that mundanity, the everydayness, was exactly what I was seeking.

As a method, I used the focus group setup to observe the interactions between the participants, consisting of arguments, points of conflict, and othering practices (Smithson, 2000). In particular, I was keen on observing the power dynamics between the inhabitants, taking note of factors such as age and gender, noting how they played a role in distributing power among inhabitants and the knowledge that was produced. By doing so, I was also learning more about the interplay of power relations in the larger camp context, because of the relevance of the micro dynamics to the macro dynamics, a conclusion drawn by Rachel Ayrton (2019) after utilizing focus group discussions in her research with the South Sudanese population in the UK. Additionally, focus group discussions as a method provided a beneficial opportunity to shift the power relations with the participants and handover some of the power that I had previously kept between my hands. In doing so, I would be avoiding exploiting the inhabitants and making the process of knowledge production less hierarchical and more in line with the aims of feminist methodologies (Munday, 2014; Wilkinson,1999).

In the summer of 2021, I conducted a total of three focus group sessions, each with 12 inhabitants. The first focus group was for male camp inhabitants above the age of 21. The second focus group was with female camp inhabitants above the age of 21. The third focus group discussion was with a mixture of young male and female inhabitants, aged between 12 and 20. The inhabitants in the three focus group sessions were sampled through Malek, my research assistant, who was a camp inhabitant that was quite knowledgeable about the place and the people.

I started working with Malek in my third year of PHD, relying on his help to sample camp inhabitants for my focus group discussions and also for some interviews, while simultaneously relying on the Taqato'at in the field. As I progressed in my studies, my research scope and points of inquiry became more focused and precise, requiring that I have more targeted discussions with a more targeted sample of camp inhabitants, when compared to the first two years, during which I solely relied on the Taqato'at to meet and engage with the camp inhabitants. I met Malek through one of the Taqato'at in the camp, and we agreed to work together because of his wide network of connections inside and around Al Wehdat Camp. He was a thirty something university graduate who had good experience in facilitating research activities for scholars in the field, both in and about Amman, and also Palestinian refugee camps including Al Wehdat Camp.

For the focus group discussions, I asked Malek to sample inhabitants with different social, economic, and political backgrounds, to be able to engage with and reflect on a variety of experiences and perspectives. My decision to plan the first two sessions as gender separated sessions was for two reasons: The first reason was because of the conservative nature of Al Wehdat Camp community, which did not always approve of gender mixing, so I separated genders to increase the probability of more inhabitants showing up to the sessions.

The second reason was more methodical in nature; I wanted to observe the differences in the lived experiences between male and female inhabitants, and for that reason, separating the two groups by gender allowed me to take note of these differences more explicitly. I also wanted to offer women a safe space to share their experiences without feeling they need to self-censor themselves or behave in a different way due to the presence of men.

In the third session which focused on the youth of the camp, I mixed the genders as advised by Malek, because the likelihood of younger camp inhabitants joining a mixed session was higher than the chances of the elderly joining a mixed session. In that third session, I wanted to observe the interplay of power dynamics between the two genders, taking the age group as the common factor this time.

Each session of the three was divided into three parts, running for two hours, with each taking one hour. I asked the same questions three times, asking the participants to respond verbally in the first part, then in writing in the second part, and in drawing in the third part. I was aware that different bodily practices might play a role in producing different answers and that group dynamics also played a role in what was being shared and said, which is why the first part was a verbal group discussion, the second part were written individual answers, and the third part was a collective mapping exercise. I kept the voice recorder running through the sessions, shifting between asking the questions and observing how the participants engaged with the questions and each other, changing my position around the group table and between being a participant and an observer.

In the upcoming section, I will reflect on some observations I have collected from the three focus group sessions, mainly the power dynamics between the participants. In the following chapters, I will be returning to the focus group discussions to discuss the different questions that I asked and the responses of the inhabitants, with the responses being used to build arguments in the different chapters.

1.6.1 The First Session: Eyes and Ears

In this section, I will be commenting on the power dynamics between the different participants during the first session with men from the camp and the different ways my own positionality reflected on the camp inhabitant's interactions with me. The point of this section is to illustrate my observations of the focus group dynamics and not to discuss the actual content or findings of the focus group discussions which will be discussed in the upcoming chapters.

Before starting the first session, I was approached by a man with a camera who introduced himself as the community center official photographer, who asked me whether it was alright for him to take my photos to document the session. I agreed. I felt it was only fair given how closely I was observing the participants. I wanted to flatten the hierarchy that placed me at the top of the pyramid, as the leader of the session and the expert who came to study the camp from abroad. During the session I could not help but notice how performative some of the inhabitants were being, whether it was through the tone of voice, the body language, and the answers given, particularly the 3 Makhateer from Al Wehdat Camp that were so keen on emphasizing their social status. In Arabic, Makhateer is the plural form of the word Mukhtar, which roughly translates to the Mayor. In Palestine, before Al Nakba of 1948, the Mukhtar was the social leader of the village, working as the social and political mediator

between the villagers and the Ottoman government that was in power at the time. In the camps, after Al Nakba of 1948, the Mukhtar became the mediator between the camp inhabitants and the Jordanian Government, representing the people and speaking on their behalf.

In the first part of that session, the Makhateer were taking the lead in answering the questions and were successful in monopolizing the conversation. They tried to tell me, in many ways, that the experience of living in the camp was rather positive and that despite the challenges the camp inhabitants were facing, the Jordanian Government was trying its best to improve the living conditions. In that room, the government was closely listening, in a manner that reminded me that there were not only 24 eyes of the 12 participants closely examining me, but also a huge number of ears that were registering everything that was being said.
It was remarkable to observe how the conversation was handed from one Mukhtar to another, with the remaining inhabitants fading into the background, listening and nodding. Occasionally, some inhabitants would comment on an issue or disagree, but that would directly cause the Makhateer to cut the person off and rephrase what was said to make sound less critical or negative in its tone. The Makhateer were acting like gatekeepers of the information. Towards the end of the first half of the session, I realized that the Makhateer were not the only government representatives present. A participant raised his hand and introduced himself as a police officer from the station, who also lived in the camp, there to share his experiences and reflections. As someone who has lived and studied in Amman, I was familiar with the different ways the government policed and controlled public expression, I understood that the officer was demarcating the space of the conversation, drawing a boundary around what was allowed and what was not, subtly telling me to be cautious with what we were discussing or criticizing. In other words, the officer introduced himself to send a warning to me, so I would remain careful not to say anything out of line or else I will have to face the consequences.

After the first part concluded, we took a short break during which the Makhateer and the police officer chose to leave without saying anything. It was quite remarkable. They left after they felt their job was completed. With the Makhateer gone, the discussion seemed to become more relaxed and spontaneous, with different inhabitants more candidly sharing their experiences and reflections.

As the session was wrapping up, a man approached me and asked me where I was from. “From Biddu, a village between Ramallah and Al Quds.” I said. “Yes, yes. I know it. Thank you for speaking with us today. We hope that we managed to be of help.”

1.6.2 The Second Session: Hands and Feet

In my second focus group session, also conducted in the summer of 2021, for female camp inhabitants aged 21 and above, I asked the same questions that I asked the male inhabitants in my first session. Before starting the session, an elderly female inhabitant asked me again whether she could take my photos. When I asked her why, she told me that she wanted to share photos from today's event on her social media account. I once again agreed. Everyone seemed to want to take photos of me, and as much as I understood the reason behind it, I could not help but feel uncomfortable.

"Are you the girl from Ramallah?" asked another elderly woman.
What do you mean?" I asked, confused.
"Are you the same girl from Ramallah who was here a few weeks ago and conducted the session with the male camp inhabitants?" She explained.
"Oh, yes. I am from Biddu, a village near Ramallah."
"My husband was also here, he attended the session and told me about you." She said with a smile.

During that session, a group of the older women assumed the position of the gatekeepers, sitting at the top of the power pyramid, parallel to the position assumed by the Makhateer.

The position of power that was previously assumed due to the Makhateers' governmental position was assumed this time due to the women's older age, exercising their control over the younger female inhabitants that were the ones most bothered by some issues in the camp. Even in that space that the female inhabitants have occupied away from male inhabitants and their dominance, there was once again a group that wanted to control the narrative, the perspective, and the overall image.

In those moments, I felt that a handful of hands were fighting over the metaphorical camera that I was using to frame the reality of living in the camp, trying to decide the angle from which I was filming. The older female inhabitants were trying to turn the camera away from the younger female inhabitants who were sharing their experiences with harassment and the unsafe neighborhoods, hoping to instead focus that camera and my attention on a much safer and polished reality they tried to paint.

In the men's session, the Makhateer jerked the camera away from any kind of criticism or negative experiences, fixing it on the government's narrative about a comfortable and relaxed life in the camp. During the male inhabitants' session, the

Makhateers' decision to leave the session halfway had actually worked in my favor because it opened up the space for the other men to speak more comfortably, with less restrictions and with less ears present.

During the female inhabitants' session, I used my position and authority as the session coordinator to fix the camera on the younger women. I stopped the session several times and asked the older female inhabitants to stop speaking over the younger female inhabitants, and to allow each inhabitant to share her experience freely without interruption or judgment.As an architect, I could not help but notice how the spatial descriptions of the camp varied drastically for the male and the female inhabitants, presenting the camp as a compact and crowded space for the females, bustling with street vendors, kiosks, shoppers and moving bodies and carts; while presenting it as an open field for the males, one that was more spatially connected with the rest of the city. After concluding that session, I was reminded of how different the experience of living and being in a place was in relation to the difference in gender, among other things. The camp was not different in that aspect from the rest of the city, but in the camp, things tended to be concentrated and amplified, with the high level of population density, in a way that made it feel like it exemplified the entirety of the city, within its area of 0,48 square kilometers.

1.6.3 The Third Session: The Camp's Youth.

In the third session, I sat down for a discussion with the camp's young men and women, observing the interplay of power dynamics between genders, while also taking note of the responses of the youth as the younger generation in the camp, considered the third or fourth generation of Palestinian refugees in the camp. This generation is one that had been born in the camp, to parents who were either born in the camp or moved to the camp, to grandparents that had been displaced from Palestine. The third and fourth generations, like the second generation, are ones that are mostly like generations that have never been in Palestine, but have formed a bond with it from a distance, constituting an imagined homeland that was built around different notions that had been passed down to them intergenerationally through oral history.

In that session, I was keen to know whether the younger generations still had that vital bond that connected them with Palestine, whether they still felt connected to that distant homeland. I asked them where their grandparents were displaced from, whether they knew their family histories.

Most of the respondents were able to share a brief history of their family's displacement from Palestine, naming their village of origin and the different locations their families had settled at before arriving at Al Wehdat Camp.

What was different in this session was a sense of belonging that the camp youth expressed towards Al Wehdat Camp itself, describing it as the place they have lived in their entire lives, where their memories and life experiences unfolded. That sense of belonging, according to the participants, did not contradict with the sense of belonging towards Palestine, but on the contrary, complemented it and ran in parallel to it.

Other participants expressed a sense of belonging to Jordan, saying that it was also a place where they lived all their lives, having shared many experiences with the inhabitants in the country in a manner that they felt created a mutual ground they related to.

Those sentiments resonated with the writings of Elena Fiddian-Qasmiye (2013), who studied plurality of the notion of "home" for the Sahrawi Refugee Youth who had been displaced from the Western Saharan home-land and were now residing in the Algerian-based home-camps. She found that those youth had developed a sense of belonging to those camps, considering them home-camps, while also having a sense of belonging towards their home-land, stressing the complementary nature of that plurality rather than it being contradictory (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2013).What I have also observed was a general relaxed atmosphere to the sessions, without any of the participants feeling the need to positively paint the camp or life in it, unlike the first two sessions where a certain level of performativity was present, with the participants sharing their life experiences as they were, with the good and the bad aspects.

However, there was a certain level of policing practiced by the male participants over the female participants, who sometimes spoke over the female participants or interrupted them when they shared stories they did not think were relevant. Once again, hands were reaching out to the camera, to control what it was/what I was documenting about the camp and life in it, and once again, I had to intervene, to stop those hands from interrupting the other stories, to allow different perspectives to be shared.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

There were a number of ethical considerations that I have worked with while producing this research, aiming to protect the camp inhabitants' identities and not put them at any potential risk. Firstly, I have changed the names of all the participants that I have engaged with while writing this dissertation, whether through the interviews or the focus group discussions, after making three exceptions.

The first exception was the family of Um Hasan, whose real name I kept, in addition to the name of her late husband, Abu Hasan, and her daughter Sameera, after receiving their consent. The reason that I kept their names was because their story was used for documentation purposes and historical knowledge production, and was central for this dissertation in a way that I found necessitated keeping their real names, to which they agreed.

The second exception is the late Um Fakhri who was a known figure in Al Wehdat Camp and whose name was formally given to a street in the camp, recorded in the Municipality of Amman.
The third exception is Ahmad Al Lidawi, whose name I also kept because he asked me to, wanting to preserve his story and name. As for the other inhabitants, their real names have been replaced with fake names.
The second ethical consideration was to not show the faces of any of the camp inhabitants in the photos that I am sharing in this dissertation, covering up faces that were showing in the photos that I found important to be included, with the exception of the photo of Ahmad Al Lidawi, who asked me to share his photo, and also the photo of the late of Abu Hasan, whose photo I have shared after receiving his family's consent.
The third ethical consideration was to have my reach facilitator sample the participants for the interviews and the focus groups when possible, without revealing their identities to me nor any unnecessary personal information about them in a manner that helped further protect their identity.
The fourth ethical consideration concerned consent, as I asked all participants of the focus groups and the interviews to sign consent forms before including their testimonies, reflections or drawings in the dissertation.
The fifth ethical consideration was to get all the needed paperwork and permits to be able to conduct the fieldwork in Al Wehdat Camp, whether those needed from my university TU Delft, or those required by the Jordanian State, and more specifically the Department of Palestinian Affairs, to keep my work legal and in line with the codes of conducting ethical research, both locally and internationally

1.8 Eyes, Everywhere: My own experience of moving in the camp

Through the focus group discussions, I started to know the camp through the inhabitants' different lived experiences, ones that produced different realities and everyday journeys in the same camp. As such, the body as a site of knowledge produced different and heterogeneous ways of knowing the camp.

I also learned a few things about the power relations that dominated some of the camp's spaces and spaces of knowledge exchange, among which gender and age were the most prominent for the buildup of this research in addition to the presence of the State as an eye and ear during the discussions.

In this part, I will reflect on my own experience of visiting the camp as a female researcher over the course of five years. In the focus group discussions, the camp's female inhabitants described the challenges of moving in the camp, how they avoided certain spots for their own safety, in fear of harassment. In my years of walking around the camp, I came to understand what the female inhabitants meant when they described their movement patterns in the camp. The remarkable thing was that, according to Malek, it was not likely for anyone to harass me in the camp because I was seen walking around with him. The inhabitants knew that they cannot bother me because I am an acquaintance of his, under his protection. I wanted to explain to him that this was not exactly the definition of a safe neighborhood, because I was still under the protection of a man, from other men, but I did not. He also added that this safety shield worked in other camps as well, he just needed to spread out the word that this new visitor, me, was someone he knew, and no one would dare bother me. It was like a social contract between camp communities. When I told him that I did not experience much harassment before having known him or before gaining the protection of his safety shield, he told me that it might be because I was easy to spot as an outsider and that my camera I was carrying around my neck gave me the appearance of a journalist or a state official or a social worker. No one wanted to get in trouble with someone of that status. With time, and after a number of visits. I realized that Malek was right.

The camp inhabitants knew that I was an outsider. I realized that when I noticed how closely observed I was when I walked around the camp, especially the deeper I went into the residential neighborhoods, away from the commercial streets. It made sense for an outsider to be shopping in one of the markets, but it was unusual for an outsider to be wandering in the residential neighborhoods, especially with a camera. There, eyes followed me everywhere. Stacked eyes, divided vertically along windows, and horizontally, along entrances and streets. Eyes in the balconies, eyes behind curtains, eyes in front of shops. I noticed how aware the camp inhabitants were of their surroundings, quickly noticing movement, activity, and outsiders from meters away. Just as I was observed during the focus groups, I was also closely observed on the streets, framed and inspected. The camera did play a role in attracting attention.

“What are you photographing? Take a photo of us while you are here!”
“Who are you? What are you doing?”
“Are you a reporter? Who do you work with? Why are you here?”
“Photograph me! Photograph me!”

These were some of the phrases that I got used to hearing every time I was in the camp. I also got used to kids following me around asking me to take photos of them, they would also call their siblings and friends to join for a group photo. I was amused by the way they would ask me to follow them to their houses, usually close to where they were playing, to take their photos in front of their homes. Among the things that I got to experience during my walks around the camp were the different sounds, smells, colors and textures that characterized the different neighborhoods of the camp. I enjoyed walking between residential alleys trying to guess what families were having for lunch, relying on the cooking smells that escaped small windows. Sound also traveled more easily in residential neighborhoods, with intimate family conversations easily heard on the streets. The compactness of the buildings almost dismantled the walls that separated the units from one another, turning some neighborhoods into what felt like one big space that different families unwillingly shared.

What lines separated the camp’s different parts from one another, and what lines separated the camp from the rest of the city? What lines connected the space of the home-camp to the space of the home-land, and what lines connected the space of the home-camp to the home-city?

That is what I will be trying to find out in the following chapters


TOC

2 Paths of Displacement

Knowing Al Blad, Leaving Al Blad

2.0 Arriving from Al Blad

I was born to a Jordanian father and a Palestinian mother. I grew up listening to the stories of Seedo Sameeh1 about Al Blad2. These stories constructed a sentimental home for my Seedo in exile, inside which he resided until his death six years ago. Sameeh was born in 1940 and died in 2018. He was 78 years old when he passed away in Amman, having never gotten the chance to return. During Al Nakba, Sameeh was a 8 years old boy who was ethnically cleansed with his family from their village of Salbeit, southwest of the city of Ramleh. Tayta Zahia, born in 1948, was only a few months old when her family escaped the brutal attacks on the same village of Salbeit. Both my grandparents' families then moved to the village of Biddu, northwest of Al Quds, which was another village their families used to also reside in, changing locations between summer and winter. Tayta is as old as Al Nakba, Seedo was even older. Life before Al Nakba in Palestine did happen, with everything the first generation of Palestinian Refugees remembers of Palestine. According to my Tayta, there was a moment during her family's flight from their village under heavy shooting that her family thought about leaving her between the cacti plants, unsure whether she as a newborn was going to survive the hardships they knew were awaiting them. None of us would have been here had they left her there.

1 Seedo is the Arabic word that I use to refer to my grandfather whose name is Sameeh, with Tayta the word used to refer to my grandmother whose name is Zahia.

2 Al Blad is the Arabic word that literally means the country but is used by Palestinians to refer to Palestine, as their home-land.

Seedo moved to Jordan from Biddu in 1958 when he was 18, training to become a mechanic in the Jordanian Air Force. Seedo and Tayta got married in 1962 in Biddu before moving to Jordan together, settling in various houses and locations around the country, including the neighborhoods of Marka and Al Mahata in Amman, before moving to the city of Mafraq, then moving to an area called Jabal Al Manara in Amman, where my Seedo passed away and where my Tayta currently resides. My mother was born in 1964 in the neighborhood of Marka in Amman, married in 1986 and moved to Saudi Arabia with my father in 1987. I am the second eldest daughter, born in Amman in 1989, during my family's summer vacation. I have never visited Palestine, I cannot enter the country nor visit that place that I have heard so many stories about, that imagined place that I feel that I belong to but know so little about.The colonial state of Israel does not allow me to enter, nor does it allow any of the Palestinians to return. My mother's extended family still resides in Biddu, her aunts, uncles and cousins. Tayta and Seedo were the only ones who moved to Jordan and have lived there since. When my mother was younger, she used to visit Palestine, the restrictions at the time were not as brutal as they are today, allowing her to visit her family occasionally, up until the first Intifada in 1987 when the rules changed and entry became almost impossible. The last time she visited was in 1983, when she was still a university student. She showed us pictures of her visits and shared with us stories of her experiences in Al Quds, Ramallah, and Biddu. I remember the one she showed us of her visit to Al Quds, standing in front of Dome of the Rock with her aunt, Asmahan. I also remember my Seedo's several photos in his military suit and how handsome he looked. In 2002, during the second Intifada, my Tayta's mother who was living in Biddu got really sick. My Tayta tried everything possible to get an entry visa that would allow her to travel to Palestine to say goodbye. After many failed attempts, she never got her visa and mourned her mother from across the border, not having been able to be with her family nor see her mother for one last time. I was too young then, but I do remember my Tayta crying and I remember her pain. These small stories are not exclusive to my family, they are part of the reality of every Palestinian family, whose members are scattered across borders and territories, unable to be together or be in their homeland because of the colonial state's violent policies and colonization of Palestine. Seedo passed away only a few months before I started my doctoral studies.

After his passing, I went out looking for Palestine, the Palestine that had been lost, the Palestine that I was still in search of. I started my investigation in the camp. It made sense to start there, considering how it is a point of arrival for the Palestinian Refugees coming from Palestine and how it was where displacement took shape and space. It Is where, by now, three generations of Palestinian refugees have been waiting for their return, for more than 75 years.



FIG. 2.1 My mother with her aunt Asmahan, in front of the Dome of the Rock, Al Quds, 1983



FIG. 2.2 My late Seedo Sameeh, in his Jordanian air force uniform, Amman, 1966

TOC

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I study a number of paths of displacement that the Palestinian refugees have taken to get from Palestine to Al Wehdat Camp. Studying the paths of displacement aims to emphasize the dynamic and transformative nature of Palestinian refugee camps, shaped by multiple waves of displacement that continue to reproduce the camp's territory over time and shift its boundary. This stands in great contradiction to the fact that formally, the boundary of Al Wehdat Camp has been unchanged since its establishment in 1955.

The arrival of Palestinian refugees over the years to Al Wehdat Camp, predominantly through two waves in 1948 and 1967, has shaped the camp spatially, economically, socially and politically, and stressed the camp's role as a temporary space of refuge after the settler colonization of Palestine, despite the camp's shift towards material permanence over the years. By tracing these paths of displacement, I aim to connect the history and space of Al Wehdat Camp (and all Palestinian refugee camps) to the history and space of Palestine, despite the colonial efforts to disconnect the two through the production of borders in Palestine and the imperial production of history that systematically attempts to erase the past to give legitimacy to the present.

2.2 How do Palestinian refugees know their past and land?

In response to my research's framework of the body, movement, and territory, I will begin this chapter by studying the different ways Palestinian refugees know the history of their territory, by either being in and knowing it personally through lived experiences or knowing about its history from a distance, through the intergenerational transfer of knowledge.

Firstly, I begin the discussion by studying the way Palestinian refugees know the land from which they have been uprooted in 1948 (the home-land), which they are now separated from by time and distance. Secondly, I also study the different ways Palestinian refugees know Al Wehdat Camp (the home-camp) as the territory they have inhabited for the past six decades, which is shaped and influenced by its socio-spatial relation with the city of Amman (the home-city), which is the territory that they are currently inhabiting and the only home that the younger generations have physically experienced and personally known..

2.2.1 Knowing the past: Heritage and History: Between Being and Knowing

E. Valentine Daniel (1996) distinguishes between heritage and history as two different modes of knowing the past. According to Daniel, the first orientation of knowing the past is heritage, which is an ontological orientation that produces knowledge about the past by being in the events in question, coming as the result of accumulating lived and embodied experiences in the place. Heritage, as an orientation towards the past, is neither linear nor sequential, representing the past through thematic grouping of different events, without a specific beginning or end, while also being open to the future. Because the past is known by being in it, heritage does not need validation or testing and is rather based on the experiences of the people who lived through them.

The second orientation of knowing the past is history, which is an epistemological orientation of knowing the past from a distance, without having been physically present in the events in question or during the time they happened in the place/territory. It is a way of knowing that depends on epistemological tools that document the events at a later stage, relying on evidence, facts and proofs. In history, the past is represented through a linear sequencing of events that go through rigorous processes of scientific testing and validation. Daniel considers history to be the western orientation of producing knowledge about the past, spread through imperial influences and restricted with parameters and limitations and underlying power relations that could exclude certain groups which are considered less capable of historical narration, e.g. indigenous populations, rural communities and women. In colonized contexts, heritage tends to be the orientation adopted by indigenous populations as a way of understanding their past and the events that have shaped it. That same past tends to be represented by the colonial powers through the orientation of history, linearly sequenced and subject to exclusion according to that colonial power's measures, narrative and colonial aspirations (Daniel, 1996).

Scholar, Rosemary Sayigh (2007), made use of these two notions in her chapter titled, Women's Nakba Stories: Between Being and Knowing, focusing on the exclusion of Palestinian women from the narration of the Palestinian national history within a broader exclusion of the Palestinian voices from historical production about Palestine. Through her anthropological research in Lebanon between 1989 and 1992, Sayigh documented the life stories of 18 female Palestinian refugees belonging to three different generations of Palestinian refugees in Shatila Camp, a Palestinian refugee camp in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

Sayigh was driven by an interest in understanding the different ways women transfer and share history, focusing on forms of knowledge that are typically considered marginal and less significant and aiming to include dimensions of the domestic life as much as the social, the personal as much as the public. Through her work in Shatila Camp, Sayigh found heritage to be the orientation adopted by the older, illiterate women in the camp. Taking the form of a ritual or a myth, the narrator would use the collective subject, "we," to thematically share her fragmented personal experiences. Al Nakba of 1948 was used as the starting point of her story; a notion that replaced the narrator's personal birth with Al Nakba, signifying a moment of rupture between the pre-exilic life in Palestine and the refugee life in the camps. On the other hand, history was found to be the orientation adopted by the younger and educated women in the camp, following a sequenced and chronological narration of events. The younger narrators used "I" to narrate their lived experiences, interweaving the personal with the national, the individual with the collective. As such, their narration shifted between being and knowing, usually beginning with the camp they were born in, while referencing Al Nakba as an inherited story told by their parents. The autonomy of the life stories of the younger women in the camp and the more individualistic sense of self, as opposed to a more collective sense of self and one's story among the older generations, points to a process of modernization of the younger women, as a result of education and employment (Sayigh, 2007).
In this research, by asking the camp inhabitants to center themselves and their lived experiences, I am inviting them to share knowledge about the past that is accumulated through an ontological position, putting the body and the personal experiences at the center of this research's buildup. At the same time, I aim to build upon the work of Rosemary Sayigh (2007), also focusing on what is otherwise considered marginal and less significant, including the domestic as much as the social, the personal as much as the public. By doing so, I am focusing on heritage as a way of knowing the past vis-a-vis history, as a way of challenging the institutional processes of knowledge production, whether in Jordan or the colonized Palestine, and the underlying power relations that control and dominate what gets produced about the camp and the events that have shaped its architecture.

2.2.2 Knowing Al Blad: Rootedness and Sense of Place: Knowing and Knowing About

In a similar manner, two models of knowing the land based on either an ontological or epistemological position were presented by the Chinese-American geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan (1980). In the first model, Tuan introduced the notion of knowing the land through being in it, which results in a sense of rootedness in the place, through an ontological position based on accumulated, lived experiences in that place. On the other hand, knowledge about the land is acquired through epistemological tools such as maps, archives and books that together produce a sense of place. In this model, land is known about from a distance, as part of a power structure that allows colonial powers to develop a sense of place that helps them know about the land that they want to control and dominate. Knowing the land, on the other hand, is the model through which indigenous populations have intergenerationally developed a sense of rootedness in their lands, through their intergenerational accumulation of lived experiences in its landscapes.

Those two models were reflected on by Julia Peteet (2011) in the context of Palestine as a way of distinguishing between Palestinians' way of knowing their land and the early Jewish Settlers' way of knowing about the land before Al Nakba of 1948. Before being uprooted, Palestinians knew the land of Palestine through their accumulated, lived experiences of being in it and living off of it from a close proximity, transferring knowledge intergenerationally and growing a sense of rootedness in the place. Because large portions of Palestinians before Al Nakba belonged to rural communities that had a personal relationship with the land, working on cultivating the land and growing its crops around the seasons and throughout the year, that sense of rootedness manifested in many aspects of their everyday lives. On the other hand, Jewish Settlers knew about the land, from afar, before arriving in Palestine before and during Al Nakba. Through the epistemological tools that were introduced by the Zionist movement, such as maps, books, drawings, posters, written descriptions, Palestine was represented as the Holy Land, which developed a sense of place about Palestine that is heavily shaped by religious symbolism used to best serve the Zionist project and justify its aims of colonizing Palestine, from Al Nakba until the present day (Peteet, 2011).

If I were to make use of these two models of knowing the past and the two models of knowing the land to understand how the Palestinian refugees living in camps outside Palestine know their past (specifically Al Nakba) and their home-land, the question of generation becomes central to the discussion.

In his work on Palestinian refugee camps, Palestinian scholar, Khaldun Bshara (2012), emphasizes that generation is a very important factor that needs to be centered when studying the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and memories. The first generation is the only generation to have physically experienced life in Al Blad (Palestine), and to have developed a sense of attachment to a land they have lived in and known first hand, while the younger generations were the ones that constructed a sense of attachment with what could be described as a "virtual" or "imagined" home-land, built around oral narratives and personal tokens of remembering, passed down from one generation to another. To discuss the question of generation, it is worth pointing out that a number of scholars have proposed different ways of categorizing Palestinian refugees into generations, either in relation to the year they were born, the main national events that have shaped their lives, or their sequence within their families in relation to the first generation who experienced Al Nakba. The classification I will be using in this research is derived from the work of two scholars, Loren D. Lybarger (2005) and Sophie Richter-Devroe (2012), summarized in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1 Classification of Palestinian Refugees into three Generations, which I have developed in reference to the work of both scholars Loren D. Lybarger (2005) and Sophie Richter-Devroe (2012)

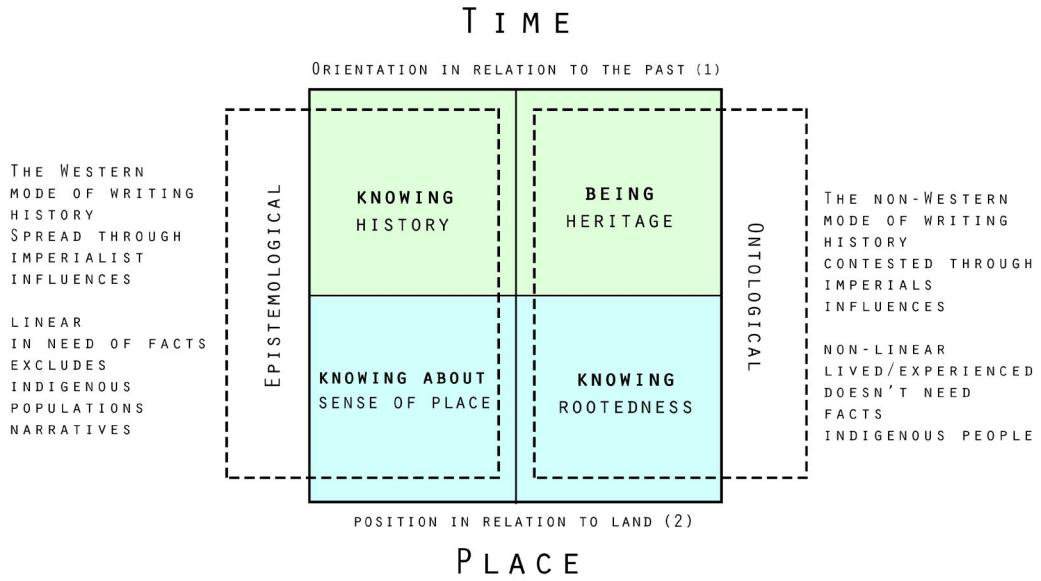
Title	Description	Historical Events	Decades
First generation (Nakba Generation)	The first generation of refugees born in Palestine before Al Nakba of 1948, who have physically experienced life in Palestine before experiencing displacement to other locations inside Palestine or to neighboring host countries and founded refugee camps.	– Al Nakba of 1948 – Displacement from Palestinian villages and cities.	the 1940's and 1950's
Second generation (Revolution Generation)	The second generation of refugees who were born in refugee camps to first generation refugee parents who were born in Palestine. They have likely never experienced life in Palestine.	– Establishment Of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) – Resistance with PLO.	1960's 1970's 1980's
Third generation (Oslo Generation)	The third generation of refugees who were born in the refugee camp, to parents who were also refugees, and grandparents who were refugees but have been born in Palestine. They have likely never experienced life in Palestine.	– Oslo accords	1990's 2000's

As per what has been discussed, the first generation of Palestinian refugees were Palestinians before becoming Palestinian refugees, referencing the work of Jamaican scholar, Stuart Hall (2015), on cultural identities in diaspora as matters of becoming as well as being. They are generally the only generation to have experienced Al Nakba and are the only generation who has known the land by being in it. What was produced as a result, is knowledge through an ontological position, through being in the past and being in the land, producing heritage and a sense of rootedness in the land.

For the generations that were born in the Palestinian refugee camps in the seven decades after Al Nakba, both it and Palestine were known through the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, specifically oral history, without the younger generations having personally experienced living in Palestine or having lived through Al Nakba.

The younger generations have also known about Palestine and about Al Nakba through numerous epistemological tools such as history books, archives and photographs. This has allowed them to develop a sense of place from a distance, creating an orientation towards the past that leans more towards being history rather than their elders' orientation of heritage. As a result, what gets produced for the younger generations of Palestinian refugees is a hybrid model of knowing the home-land, ranging between knowing the land and knowing about the land, and also a hybrid model of knowing the past, between being and knowing, between heritage and history. As for the Palestinian refugees' knowledge of Al Wehdat Camp (home-camp), it is a knowledge that is produced through accumulated, lived experiences for all the generations, with the refugees having personally and physically experienced living it. As per Tuan's model, that knowledge of a land produces a sense of rootedness, but in the case of the Palestinian refugees which have been uprooted from their homes and homeland after Al Nakba, the model needs further investigation and questioning.

In an attempt to synthesize the writings of both E. Valentine Daniel (1996) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1980), I illustrated both models in Figure 2.3, representing the two orientations towards the past (time) in the upper half of the diagram, and the two positions in relation to the land (place) in the bottom half. The right half of the diagram are the two ontological modes of knowing, and on the left half of the diagram are the two epistemological modes of knowing.



(1) E Valentine Daniel (1996)
(2) Yi-Fu Tuan (1980)

FIG. 2.3 Modes of knowing the past and the land, prepared by the author, illustrating the work of E. Valentine Daniel (1996) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1980).

To summarize the points discussed above, I have produced the diagram in Figure 2.4, illustrating the different ways different generations of Palestinian refugees know Palestine and the construction of Palestine as an imagined home-land in exile.

TOC

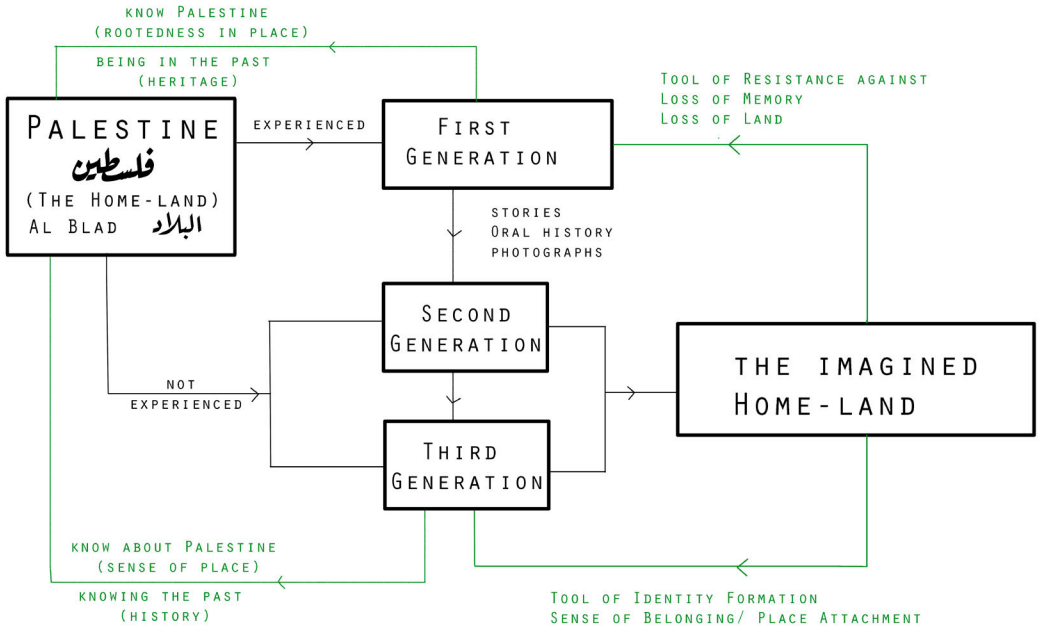


FIG. 2.4 Knowing Al Blad between a Rootedness in Place and a Sense of Place: The different ways generations of Palestinian refugees know Palestine.

According to Nina Gren (2002), the production of the Palestinian camp space comes as the result of the overlapping of three significant places and time intervals for the Palestinian Refugees: the lost villages of Palestine prior to Al Nakba (whether remembered by the first generation or imagined for the younger generations) which exist in the past; the current camp space as lived and experienced in the present day; and the imagined and reclaimed villages after the anticipated return in the future. By recreating the social structures of the pre-exilic villages in their present refugee camps, the Palestinian refugees are superimposing the three places and time periods, allowing the camp to exist in the past, the present and the future, there and here and there.

TOC

Another useful concept that becomes relevant at this point in this discussion is the concept of postmemory, which was developed by Marianne Hirsch (2012) to describe the intergenerational transfer of trauma between the older generations (who experienced the trauma) and the younger generations (who have not), turning that trauma to a postmemory for generations whose lives, identities and worldviews have been shaped by their parents' memories and experiences of a significant traumatic experience.

Hirsch (2012) describes the children and the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors as generations of postmemory, having inherited memories of that traumatic experience from their parents and grandparents without having physically experienced them

As for Palestinian refugees, Palestinian scholars, Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu Lughod (2007), argue in their edited book, Nakba, 1948, and the Claims of Memory, that memories of Al Nakba of 1948 have become postmemories for three generations of Palestinian refugees in exile. Simultaneously, given that the younger generations are still living in the aftermath of Al Nakba trauma, being displaced in refugee camps, subjected to violence by the Israeli army in the camps inside Palestine, and experiencing restrictions on mobility and civil rights in many of the host countries, Al Nakba is still lived and experienced in the present day. Therefore, memories for the generations born after 1948 are twofold: memories and inherited postmemories that are passed down intergenerationally.Now that the different modes of knowing the past have been discussed, the question is, what past events are relevant to build up this research? Does understanding Al Wehdat Camp begin with the moment it was established in 1955? Or do the events that have shaped and resulted in its establishment begin before that? At what moment is time punctured?

For this research, the past begins with Al Nakba of 1948.

2.3 The ongoing Nakba: a discontinuity in time and place

Between 1947-1949, during the events of Al Nakba the Zionist movement ethnically cleansed 800 000 Palestinians from their villages and hometowns in Palestine to establish the State of Israel, which constitutes half of the population of Palestine at the time, accompanied by the destruction of more than 531 Palestinian villages, according to Israeli historian, Illan Pappe (2007), in his book, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine. After Al Nakba of 1948, the newly found colonial state of Israel gained control over 77% of the territory of Palestine, with the remaining 23% of the land divided between what became the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the former being annexed by Jordan and the latter administered by Egypt (Salahi, 2019).

In his book, All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948, Palestinian historian, Walid Al Khalidi (1992), estimates that because of Al Nakba, 280 000 Palestinian refugees were displaced to the West Bank, 190 000 Palestinian refugees to the Gaza Strip, 75 000 Palestinian refugees to Syria, 100 000 Palestinian refugees to Lebanon, 7 000 Palestinian refugees to Egypt, 4000 Palestinian refugees to Iraq, and 70 000 Palestinian refugees to Jordan. Once they arrived in Jordan, the Palestinian refugees settled in five camps between the years 1949 and 1950. Two of these camps were set up in urban areas, which were Zarqa Camp built in 1949 in Zarqa, and Irbid Camp in 1950 in Irbid. The remaining three camps were set up in rural areas in Sukhna, Shuna and Karama. Of the Palestinian refugees registered with the Red Cross on humanitarian grounds in Jordan at the time, the percentage that had settled in these five camps was 19% (Ababsa, M. and Kohlmayer, 2013). Out of these five camps, two camps were considered official camps established by UNRWA, The United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East, which were Zarqa Camp and Irbid Camp. In 1952 and 1955, two new camps were set up in urban areas, specifically in the capital of Amman, with Jabal Al Hussein Camp established in 1952, and Al Wehdat Camp established in 1955. Al Wehdat Camp was the fourth official Palestinian refugee camp built in Jordan, and the second camp built in the capital of Amman. The four official camps that were established after 1948 constituted the first phase of building Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. The second phase of building camps commenced after Al Naksa of 1967, after which UNRWA built six new emergency camps in Jordan (UNRWA, 2023).

Al Naksa is an Arabic word that translates to, The Setback, used to describe the events that took place during the Six Day War in 1967, when the colonial state of Israel occupied both the West Bank and Gaza strip, in addition to the Golan Heights in Syria and Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, expanding its territory and capturing an area four times the size of what it had captured in 1948 (Salahi, 2019).

Historically, the question of Palestinian refugees has been ambiguously addressed without any practical resolution for the three generations of Palestinian refugees that have been living in UNRWA's 58 camps for the past seven decades across Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

With their "Right to Return," affirmed in UNRWA's resolution 194 (III)[3], continually contested and the notions of their identity and belonging always threatened by the Israeli settler colonial state that not only claimed their lands but also their cultural heritage, arts, cuisine and music; Palestinian refugees are left with little tools and practices with which they can resist and counter those processes that challenge their existence and appropriate their culture.

With the infamous, "A land without a people for a people without a land," slogan that is considered the most widely cited slogan in the literature of Zionism used to give legitimacy to their colonization of Palestine — describing its lands as completely uninhabited and devoid of any people and culture (Khalidi, 2010) — Palestinians find their very own existence challenged. That notion is stretched even further for the Palestinian refugees in camps who continue to live in exile; existing in what were supposed to be temporary emergency shelters established in a transitory phase until the political crisis was resolved.

In the light of the recent political developments with reference to Trump's "Peace Plan" and the future of Palestine, the question of Palestinian refugees has been further contested and challenged. According to the 181 page document titled Peace to Prosperity that is promoted as, "A Vision to improve the lives of Palestinian and Israeli People," the three options Palestinian refugees were given are: resettlement in their current country of residence, relocation to a new country from the Islamic League, or the return to what is described the new Palestine that will be established once the peace talks reach a point of agreement.

---

3 The United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution 194 (III), resolving that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible." (UNRWA, 2023).

None of the options address the notion of “return” to the original villages and towns for the five million displaced Palestinian refugees.

2.3.1 The imperial production of history in Palestine.

The Palestinian refugee camp is a condition of dislocation, in its space and temporality, from the space and time of Palestine (Ramadan, 2012).

Despite the drastic level of architectural, morphological, demographic, and socio-economic transformation of the camps since their establishment and since Al Nakba of 1948, camps continue to exist as camps that were built because of Al Nakba. The change of their physical setting and the passing of time does not change that, because, “Camps remain camps so long as the events that produced them remain historically open.” (Abourahme, 2019, p.10).

In Palestine, the conquering of the land was paralleled by a process of conquering the production of history, silencing Palestinian voices and erasing the Palestinian side of the story, rewriting history through an imperial production of history, systematically designed to legitimize the claim to the land while denying Palestinians the right to write their own national history. The physical erasure of Palestinian villages’ structures and physical settings was paralleled by a process of narrative erasure and memory contestation through mechanisms of imperial control and domination. This narrative erasure aimed to reinvent the historical reality of the Palestinian people and their remembered presence in a manner that sought to legitimize the Zionist claim to the Palestinian land and omit the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people from the narrative history (Said 1999, 2000).

The late Mureed Barghouti, in his novel, I was born there, I was born here, more poetically illustrated Said’s argument by writing:
“The cruelest degree of exile is invisibility, being forbidden to tell one’s story for oneself. We, the Palestinian people, are narrated by our enemies, in keeping with their presence and our absence. They label us as it suits them. The weaker party in any conflict is allowed to scream, allowed to complain, allowed to weep, but never allowed to tell his own story. The conflict over the land becomes the conflict over the story and little by little the weak discovers that his enemy will not allow himself to be wronged [. . .] In this sense, the entire Palestinian people is exiled through the absence of its story.” (Barghouti, 2011, p.17).

Attempting to disconnect the present reality of the Palestinian refugee camps from Al Nakba, and attempting to understand them in isolation from the events that produced them and isolate the Palestinian refugees from the whole of Palestine and their villages of origin and land, is a perpetuation of an imperial historical production through erasure.

Jewish scholar, Ariella Azoulay (2019), wrote in depth about the production of imperial history and its strategy of eliminating the past and its atrocities to give legitimacy to the present. Imperial history deals with the past as something that is gone and cannot be redeemed, reversed or changed.

As a way of contesting that, Azoulay introduces the notion of potential history. Potential history seeks to question the hegemonic and imperialist discourses of history and intervene in the realities those discourses produce, building her arguments while using the Israeli imperial production of history as an example. The settler colonial state of Israel views history as confined to the past, perceived as irreversible, unchangeable and detached from the present, as if what had been done is done and cannot be undone. In that sense, the past is an imperial invention. Potential history, as a counter movement, seeks to liberate history from its confinement to the past; "to release the past from its pastness" by proposing different ways through which the imperialist structures and discourses could be undone in the present, to be able to produce an alternate reality.

For this research, how can I counter the production of imperial history production about Palestinian refugee camps?

My method of doing that is to trace the paths of displacement that have spanned distances and decades and lead the Palestinian refugees to Al Wehdat Camp, where a folding of time and space allowed the camp to exist in the past and the present, here and there, between the home-land, the home-camp and the home-city. By tracing these paths of displacement that start in the villages of origin and move across the territories until they reach Al Wehdat Camp, naming the villages and dates and locating them within the Palestinian landscape, the aim is to repopulate the geography and history of Palestine with the Palestinian narratives of displacement. This challenges the fabrication of imperial history and production of borders and connects the space of the camp to the space of Palestine, understanding the camp as part of Palestine's history and Palestine's future. To illustrate that method, I have produced the collage in Figure 2.5 capturing the simultaneity of the camp's spatio-temporality, emphasizing that this is the lens through which the production and transformation of the camp's space and boundaries will be understood in this research.



FIG. 2.5 A Folding of Time and Space: Palestine and Al Wehdat Camp between Al Nakba and Today.

TOC

This is not to render Al Wehdat Camp as the final point of arrival, nor the only one, but study the camp as a point at which thousands of displacement trajectories have intersected. Thousands of paths have been crossed and traveled by thousands of Palestinian families from all across Palestine before settling in the camp, for what was supposed to be a temporary stay. For some families, that stay was shorter than others, as they continued to move across different locations beyond the camp, while for others, arriving to the camp in the late 1950's and early 1960's signaled a moment of arrival that extended over more than six decades. For others, life started in the camp, having been born and raised in Al Wehdat Camp, with generations of Palestinian refugees not having known any other home since.

2.4 Paths of Displacement: Multiple Points Across Time and Space

Through studying paths of displacement and tracing the different stops refugees moved between, the idea is to show that Palestinian displacement did not happen between a point of departure and a point of arrival, nor was it one directional from point A to point B, between the village of origin and the home-camp, but was rather a much more complex process, continuing to take different shapes and forms, open ended towards the future, until the Palestinian refugees' return to Palestine.

After Al Nakba and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian villages and towns, displacement paths have lead Palestinian refugees in different directions, which created heterogenous life experiences and stories for different families, with displacement being a process that was spread out through space and time, continuing to unravel between both Palestine and Jordan, in a manner that continues to connect both territories through the movement of people across their lands and borders. These paths did not only span over miles and territories but also spanned over years and decades, with the refugees alternating between moving and settling. The discourse on Palestinian refugees usually centers the discussions around two important dates that have witnessed the two largest waves of displacement: Al Nakba of 1948 and Al Naksa of 1967.

Through tracing the paths of displacement, what I aim to also emphasize is that Palestinian refugees have also been moving before, after and between these two dates, out of cities and villages to other cities and villages, to camps and out of camps and in many other directions.

It is also important to highlight the fact that the date on which the Palestinian refugees have entered Jordan and the part of Palestine they have arrived from, played a role in determining whether they received the Jordanian citizenship or not, which in time, influenced their political, social and economic status of the Palestinian refugees at a later stage. Generally, the Palestinian refugees who have entered Jordan after Al Nakba of 1948 or were residing in what later became known as the West Bank have been granted the Jordanian citizenship, while those who have entered Jordan after 1967, primarily from Gaza, were not granted the Jordanian Citizenship and remained as Stateless Palestinian refugees with limited access to civil rights in Jordan (Al Husseini, 2010).

The quality of life Palestinian refugees in Jordan was highly influenced by whether they had the Jordanian citizen or not, because being granted the Jordanian citizenship granted them access to governmental education, healthcare and more jobs in the market, among other aspects, which have together played a role in shaping their economic and social status in time. This point will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Lastly, by studying the movement of the refugees along paths of displacement, I also aim is to emphasize the bodily nature of displacement, through studying movement as a bodily practice that connects different territories with one another, and the different traces that practice of movement has on the body itself, and the knowledge of the landscape that it accumulates on the way. In the same way, tracing the different points along the path of displacement, as Palestinians moved between different points in the landscape, I aim to highlight the manner through which they gradually became refugees, identifying as such on a personal level, in line with the different legal, political and social factors that also contributed to that.

That idea of *becoming,* as a gradual process related to movement and time, was echoed in the words of Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani who reflected on his family's displacement during Al Nakba from Yaffa which he referred to as *The Land of Sad Oranges* because it had been known for its delicious oranges. In his story, which also carries the name, *The Land of Sad Oranges*, Kanafani reflects on his experience as a teenage boy, as he moved with his family from Yaffa to Akka, then to Ras Al-Naqoura in Lebanon, before settling in Saida also in Lebanon.

On that process of displacement Kanafani writes,
" In Ras Al-Naqoura our vehicle stood beside many similar vehicles [. . .] Your mother was still silently gazing at the oranges, and all the orange trees your father had left behind to the Jews glowed in his eyes… As if all those clean trees which he had bought one by one were mirrored in his face. And in his eyes tears, which he could not help hiding in front of the officer at the police station, were shining. When we reached Saida in the afternoon, we *became* refugees." (Kanafani, 2015, p.10).

That piece of text manages to capture the notions and arguments I have built in this section about the body, movement, and the territory, and how they are at the core of what displacement is, through a detailed historical narration from close proximity, interweaving the personal with the national, the micro with the macro, the lived reality with the political and the symbolic.

To Ghassan Kanafani, who was from Yaffa, the oranges symbolized all what had been lost, all what his family left behind. Along those lines he writes:
"Only then did oranges seem to me something dear, that each of these big, clean fruits was something to be cherished. Your father alighted from beside the driver, took an orange, gazed at it silently, then began to weep like a helpless child." (Kanafani, 2015, p.10).

2.5 Ten Paths of Displacement: From Al Blad to Al Wehdat Camp

In this chapter, I share a total of 10 displacement paths that have led to, or crossed over Al Wehdat Camp, studying the relation between the body, movement and territory, specifically for the way the movement connects the home-land to the home-camp and the home-city. Each displacement path was given a number from 1-10, in the order they appear in this chapter, while also being identified by the names of the villages and the camps that the displaced family had moved between. The emphasis on the village names also aims to document the names of the villages before their destruction during Al Nakba, engaging in a process of deliberate remembering and documentation as a way of countering the Israeli production of knowledge about Palestine and its history.

For Path 1, I conducted semi-structured interviews with an elderly woman from the camp, Um Hasan[4], and her daughter, Sameera, whose paths I have intersected with using my Taqato'at as my method of spatio-temporal intersections. The life story of Um Hasan and Sameera, and their reflections on the late family patriarch Abu Hasan, will take the first half of this chapter, having chosen to share a fully detailed description of the family's displacement from Palestine for the great value their story holds in reference to my research and its aims. During my interview with the family members, I recorded their oral narratives and later shared them in this dissertation in two formats.

First, I share the story in the form of written text, then I share a collage that I had produced that traces the family's path of displacement on a map of Palestine and Jordan. This is done to situate that story in place and emphasize the bodily nature of displacement and the way I argue territories are produced: through movement of bodies beyond political borders.

In the second half of the chapter, Path 2, I cite fragments from the novel of Ibrahim Nasrallah, Birds of Caution, specifically those that document his family's displacement from their village of origin in Palestine across different locations inside Palestine, before arriving in Al Wehdat Camp. I then share a collage of that family's path of displacement. Lastly, for Paths 3 to 10, I share the hand drawings of a number of camp inhabitants that were produced during the focus group discussions, tracing their families' paths of displacement, from Palestine to Al Wehdat Camp across a number of time periods across different villages and camps.
To conclude this chapter, I will share a compilation of the ten displacement paths traced on a map of Palestine and Jordan, from the village of origin to the camp, before sharing images of the current state of the villages of origin in the present day using aerial photography. This is presented as a way of bringing the discussion to the present and offering a decolonial way of reading the landscape, one that stems from the Palestinian refugees' ways of knowing their landscape and their home-land vis-a-vis the colonial reading of the landscape through Israeli names of towns and settlements which have been erected on the ruins of the ethnically cleansed villages that Palestinian refugees have been displaced from during Al Nakba.

It is important to note that all 10 villages of origin, which will be discussed in the next section, have been destroyed during Al Nakba, with only a few of their physical traces still existing today in their locations.

4 Um Hasan translates to the Mother of Hasan and Abu Hasan translates to Abu Hasan. In some Arab countries, parents are referred to using their eldest son's name, which in this family, was called Hasan.

After Al Nakba, the settler colonial state of Israel had built new Israeli settlements on top of these village's sites, or left them as vacant or forested lands, after completely leveling them to the ground. In that sense, those villages had only survived in the minds of those who left them, the first generation of Palestinian refugees who had known and experienced life in them before displacement, who had carried images and memories of them. For that, when Palestinian refugees speak of their return, it could be considered a paradox that their imagined return is to a reality that no longer exists, but to a new one that is yet-to-be discovered.

2.5.1 Path 1: Um Hasan: Bait 'Affa - Iraq Suwaydan - Al-Faluja - Beit Lahia - Remal Neighborhood- Nuseirat Camp- Shuja'iyya neighborhood- Al Wehdat Camp.

I was brought to the house of Um Hasan by Sarah, who was a volunteer at the Women's Center in the camp. She told me that Um Hasan knew the history of the camp and was someone that could really help me. After meeting Sarah in the Women's Center, we walked to Um Hasan's house, moving along Sumaya Street, before Sarah announced our arrival. The front yard of the house looked so green, lined up with many planters and shaded by a huge grape vine that sprang in all directions. Sarah knocked on the door and another woman, around Sarah's age, opened the door.

She warmly greeted us, introducing herself as Sameera, Um Hasan's daughter, welcoming us inside. Once we entered, I realized that the house existed below the street level, connected with the street with an internal stair which we climbed down, landing in what looked like the living room. Looking around, I found myself struggling to make sense of the amount of things that were in that room:



FIG. 2.6 The inside of Um Hasan's home, rich with plants and decorations.

plants, artifacts, paintings, furniture, photo frames, more plants, posters, flowers, pots, vases, carpets; on the floor, on the walls, on the furniture, on the ceiling. The place was heavily occupied with so many things, looking more like a museum than a home, or perhaps a memorial or a shrine.

Sameera led us to a small room adjacent to the living room. Inside, an elderly woman lay on a small bed in the corner which I gathered was Um Hasan. She greeted us with a nod, and after I introduced myself, we began the interview. I sat on a couch next to her. "Can you please begin by telling me your story?" I said. She nodded and started talking:

"We left in 1948, it was the first day of Ramadan. People were going to start fasting that day. My mother was preparing the meal of Suhoor[5] after midnight so we could eat before beginning our fasting, when the shooting started. Our house was next to a storage well. Haganah gangs [6]entered the village, where members of the Egyptian army and Palestinian fighters were taking base. Among the Palestinian fighters were my brothers. The Haganah gangs started to distribute pamphlets, asking people to leave. We left our house and spent the night sleeping in the open fields.
People of our village hadn't harvested the crops yet, I remember that, which allowed us to hide between them. Some people had slept in the fields, others chose to stay in their houses. My family was among those who spent that night in the fields, but then decided to return to our house the next morning. The Egyptian Army stopped the Haganah and kicked them out. After that, we spent three months in our village, long enough for the people to harvest all their crops, mainly wheat and barley. Haganah gangs soon returned, distributing the pamphlets. We had a storage well next to the house, we used it to store crops and goods. My brothers used the well to store all the wheat we had collected. We left the house at night. We went to Iraq Suwaydan, which neighbored my village Beit 'Affa, with only cactus plants separating them from one another. In Iraq Suwaydan, fires were everywhere. The village had fallen. We didn't know where to go, what will we do now? We headed to Al-Faluja. Many villages were destroyed, their inhabitants were all fleeing towards Al-Faluja. It hadn't fallen yet and was under the protection of the Egyptian army. In Al-Faluja, the shooting did not stop, Israeli planes flew over our heads launching missiles and shooting directly at us.

People were frightened, running in all directions, so scared that they pushed over the Egyptian army's fence to enter the village. During those events, I got injured, my brother was martyred, my other brother was injured, and so was my uncle. Four people from the same family were injured. My brother died, may his soul rest in peace, nothing remained.

After entering Al-Faluja, I saw our neighbor and her daughter on the ground, they were killed. We walked. We had a camel with us. This man came and took the camel from me. I was all alone. None of my family members were with me. We were dispersed everywhere. Where will I go? I didn't have anyone with me. No brother, no mother and no family. I didn't know anyone. Where will I go? The man that took the camel from me tied it next to his house.

---

5 Suhoor is the meal eaten before sunrise in Ramadan, the last meal before the fasting day starts at dawn.

6 Haganah is a Hebrew word that means "The Defense" or "The Defense Force," having operated as a Jewish paramilitary group within the British Mandate of Palestine from 1920 to 1948. It subsequently evolved into the foundational element of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

The camel wanted to bite him and didn't feel that it knew this man. I left the man and the camel and the house and walked outside. I was met by a woman that recognized me, she was from our village Beit 'Affa. She asked me, where are you? I told her I am here and there is our camel in that house. She said, go get the camel. So I did. I took back the camel and we headed to her aunt's house. Her aunt was married and was living in Al-Faluja. Where was I supposed to go? I had no one. I stayed there until my injured brother found me. In Al-Faluja, there were only elderly women, waiting in their homes for the return of their sons. Here we are, their sons didn't return, nor did the land return to its owners.My brother and mother came to Al-Faluja and we headed towards the city of Gaza with a group of people. On the way, my family and I were separated from the group and got lost. There was an old man walking, navigating the land with the help of the stars. We followed him. We arrived at a village known as Barbara. There people head to the water well to drink. There were roosters clucking and donkeys braying. The village was inhabited."There were only elderly women. We spent the night there, only to be attacked by thieves. Armed men approached us, we thought they were Israeli. They took all my mother's gold, left her with nothing. We didn't know what to do. We were later met by a Bedouin man who had three camels. He volunteered to help us find our way to Gaza city. We spent the night in Barbara and the following day as well. There were Jews all around, no one could leave in fear of getting shot. We set out to leave the house the next day, but then the shooting started again, the Jewish soldiers were back, we returned to the house and hid. The house we were hiding in looked decent. The painting of the walls was good; its owners had fled from it and left their things behind. The house looked like it had just been abandoned.
There was a bookcase, books, Qurans, they used to read all those books. We left the house after sunset. Where did we go? We were heading to Gaza City. We were met by a man with a donkey.

He was heading towards Al Blad[7]. We were going in opposite directions. He warned us about walking in the wheat fields, because there were Jewish soldiers hiding in there, shooting people. Scared and frightened, we ran until we crossed that area. We continued to walk, my brothers left us after that. It was just me and my mother and my injured uncle, whose wife was also with us, heavily pregnant, 7 months in. She found it very hard to walk. The route was long. We were all tired. Where will we go? We crossed the dangerous areas, and continued to walk. My mother then said that we were getting closer. She knew Al Blad[8] and knew the land, we didn't know it very well, we were still young. She announced that we have arrived in Beit Lahia.

7 Here, Um Hasan was using the word Al Blad, the country, to refer to the area surrounding her home-village.

8 Here, Um Hasan was using the word Al Blad, the country, to refer to Palestine as a whole.

In Beit Lahia, we were met by a man who asked our guide (the Bedouin man), where are you taking the women, Hussein? I still remember his name until now. Hussein answered, I am helping them find their way. The man asked him to leave; it was inappropriate for a Bedouin man to guide women. The new man took over. The man took us to his house. Next to the house was a huge warehouse, in the middle of open fields of sand. There was a door that connected the house to the warehouse. If I remember correctly, food and aid were distributed to people inside. In his house, the man asked his wife to serve us lunch. The wife was embarrassed, telling him that the meal wasn't good enough. It was Bissara[9]. The man insisted, telling her that we had been traveling for a long time. We gathered around the food and rested, spending the night. We couldn't walk anymore, our feet were hurting. It was my mother and I in the man's house. My brothers had left and each was dispersed in a different direction. No one knew where the other was. We then arrived in Gaza city. They handed us aid and relief, a ration card, in addition to a tent. We took the tent and stayed in the Remal Neighborhood. We later decided to leave and built a house in an open field in front of my uncle's house out of Burlap[10] bags, like the houses gypsies built. We were refugees, where were we supposed to go? The family was divided between living in the gypsy house and the tent. We later were asked to return the tents, so we did. They gave us a unit in Nuseirat Camp. It was one room. Everyone was given one room. Our family was big, how were we supposed to fit into that? So they gave us another unit. We stayed in Nuseirat Camp, before moving again to Gaza.

"In 1967, the Jewish Army invaded Gaza, they occupied the city. My husband had enrolled as a soldier in the Egyptian Army. He left. The men left, we stayed. My husband then contacted me. He left for Jordan, then to Syria, then to Lebanon, then to Egypt where he met with his group. He asked his brother to take us to the airport to go to Egypt. His brother refused, so we went to Jordan instead. We arrived at Al Wehdat Camp, where we had been living for 50 years now."

Something about Um Hasan's effortless narration gave me the impression that she has done this before, the way she spontaneously moved between events, sharing very specific details and names of places and people.

9 Bissara is a humble soup prepared out of broad beans and onions.

10 Burlap, alternatively recognized as Hessian, refers to a woven material crafted from natural plant fibers, commonly derived from the outer layer of the jute plant or the leaves of sisal. Burlap was used widely among Palestinian refugees given that they received aid from Humanitarian organizations, mainly wheat, rice and sugar, in big Burlap bags which they reused in different ways after.

In reference to the work of Rosemary Sayigh (2007) conducted in Shatila Camp about the ways women transfer history, discussed in the beginning of the chapter, I found Um Hasan's narration to align with Sayigh's findings, leaning more towards being heritage than history, as per the distinction made by E. Valentine Daniel (1996) in relation to the two models of knowing the past, with events grouped together according to theme rather than a linear and sequential narration.

Um Hasan also started her story with Al Nakba, like the elderly women in Sayigh's work, not her personal birthdate or personal life events before 1948, using the collective, "we," which included her and her family, to thematically share her fragmented personal experience of being uprooted from Beit 'Affa, her home-village, and then moving between Iraq Suwaydan, Al-Faluja, Beit Lahia, and Gaza. In Gaza, Um Hasan and her family moved between the Remal Neighborhood and Nuseirat Camp. It was in Gaza that Um Hasan's refugeehood became a reality, which she explicitly expressed by saying, "We were refugees, where were we supposed to go?" Additionally, she and her family were officially registered as refugees, which she expressed by saying, "They handed us aid and relief, a ration card, in addition to a tent." That refugeehood was also materially manifested in the form of the different shelter types she and her family stayed in, ranging between a tent, a makeshift shelter and then later a unit in Nuseirat Camp, before moving to Al Wehdat Camp, where she had been living for the past 50 years. After she finished sharing her story, Um Hasan turned to me and asked, "Where in Al Blad are you from, my daughter?" I replied, "My father is from Jordan, from Ajloun, north of the country. My mother is from Palestine, from a village called Biddu between Ramallah and Al Quds."Listening to my response, Um Hasan gave me a long and hard look, slightly frowning, before she turned her head to the other side, refusing to continue talking. A long moment of silence stretched between us, conversely making it feel like the room was closing in on us. Have I offended her? Sensing her mother's discomfort, Sameera stepped in and told me she will take over the conversation from there. I turned to her, asking her to tell me about her life and upbringing

2.5.1.1 Sameera: Um Hasan's Daughter.

"I was born in Shuja'iyya neighborhood in Gaza in 1963. We have lived in this house in Al Wehdat Camp house for 45 years. Before that we moved between a number of houses around the camp. In the beginning, we lived in a house close to Rashad Alley, close to Madaba Street, living in a house that belonged to the Al Hadeed family. Then we moved to the center of the camp, a house in Lidawi Street. Then another house that was behind this current one, then we finally moved to this one.

The first house was a very simple house with one floor, one room; there was a Berry tree in the middle of the house. It was very simple. The floor was bare, with no tiling."We used to sleep on mattresses on the floor, and also eat in the same room. This area, where our house is now, was vacant. Those lands were planted with wheat and barley. People would harvest them. This particular point, where the house is built, falls outside the legislative boundaries of the camp; it is officially a part of Al Naharyieh Neighborhood. If you cross Sumaya Street, the other side is the official camp. We have been living here for 45 years, this house is privately owned, and we have been renting it all this time. Given that my family came from Gaza in 1968, after Al Naksa of 1967, I don't have a national ID number and I am not considered a Jordanian Citizen. Because of that, I don't get to own a house, I don't get to own a car, I can't work in the governmental sector. I have a temporary passport. Overall, I would say that a huge percentage of the original inhabitants have left Al Wehdat Camp. Whenever people could afford to move out, they would move out. People have moved to Tayba, Kherbeh, Prince Hasan Neighborhood and other areas around the camp. Some stayed because they couldn't afford to move out, while others stayed because to them, Al Wehdat reminded them of Palestine. We belong to the second group. We will never leave. We will stay here until we return to Palestine. That is the only way we could leave. We do not want to be resettled! Even if they gave us heaven, we don't want heaven as a substitute to Palestine! We want Palestine, and no other homeland. Throw us at Shar'ia[11], and we will be very thankful, we would not ask for more."

There was a long pause that extended after that, the room heavy with strong emotions.

In her narration, Sameera leaned more towards adopting the approach of history in the sharing of her story, also aligning with the findings of Rosemary Sayigh (2007) in Shatila Camp where history tended to be the approach adopted by younger and literate women of the second and third generations of female Palestinian refugees, as opposed to heritage being the approach adopted by older and illiterate women in the camp, which was also the case with her mother, Um Hasan.

11 Another name for the Jordan River which stands at the border between Jordan and Palestine.

Unlike her mother, Sameera started her story with her date and place of birth, telling the majority of her story using "I," also interweaving the personal with the national, referencing Al Naksa and how it caused her family to be displaced again, shifting between a position of being in the past, through her own lived experiences, and knowing the past, through her education and years of work as a teacher in UNRWA schools. Sameera also had a higher level of autonomy with her life story and more individualistic sense of self, as opposed to a more collective sense of self that was heavily attached to the family in Um Hasan's narration, which according to Sayigh (2007) reflected a process of modernization of the younger women as a result of their education and employment.

In her narration, Sameera drew a strong link between the home-camp and the home-land, repeatedly saying that her family will not leave Al Wehdat Camp except if they would be returning to Palestine. That symbolic link between the two territories, describing the home-camp as a terminal for waiting until return, frames the space of the camp as if it exists in isolation from the rest of the city and Jordan, and frames time in the camp as if it is also suspended from the present, folded between the past and the future. That framing aligns with my reading of the spatio-temporal simultaneity of the camp space and the material and immaterial ways it continues to be connected to the space of Palestine and the history of Palestinian displacement.

I studied the room around us, noticing the picture of a young man in a military suit, one that Um Hasan had kept looking at while talking, as if she was using those exchanges with the picture as a form of reassurance and also a source of strength. The man was so strongly present in the room with us, sentimentally occupying a good space of the conversation. I asked about him. Sameera told me it was her late father, Abu Hasan, before beginning to share his story.

2.5.1.2 Abu Hasan: Um Hasan's late Husband and Sameera's father

"When we came with my mother to Jordan in 1968, my father had arrived here before us, sometime around the end of 1967. My father was known, he had a high rank (Shaweesh) in Ahmad Shuqairi Army. While we were still in Gaza, the events of 1967 erupted, my father's comrades asked him to leave and come join them. He left Gaza walking; he walked to Hebron and from Hebron to Jordan. It took them two months to walk that distance. Along the way, they were met with Shar'ia, which they crossed by swimming before they arrived in Jordan."

"After Black September concluded with signing an agreement with the Jordanian Government, the Fedayeen[12] were pushed to leave Jordan. The Fedayeen were chased to Jerash where they were executed in the forests. My father, being among those who had survived the execution, was among the group that was deported to Syria, where the Baath regime was in power. From Syria, he moved with his comrades to Lebanon, where the Palestinian Fedayeen reorganized and re-established themselves; they were not allowed to return to Jordan, except for very short and urgent visits. After 1970, my father visited us again two or three times. In 1980, on the 17th of October of 1980, during Eid Al Adha, they announced an Israeli invasion of the south of Lebanon, particularly Shuqaif Castle, in the area of Jarma. As a result, it had been announced that a huge number of Palestinian Fedayeen had been martyred. My father fell. He was martyred and so was his friend. We continued to live in the camp after my father passed away and my mother raised 8 children all on her own."In that instance, I started to understand why Um Hasan felt the need to step out of the conversation when she learned that my father was Jordanian. To her, she had suffered a lot because of the Jordanian State and all what it had inflicted on her husband. Not that I condoned conflating the people with the State, but at that moment, I felt sympathy for that old woman sitting in front of me and all that she had been through.

Another long pause stretched between us, I felt overwhelmed by all that was being said. I also understood the uniqueness of my position, standing there at the threshold, for being both Jordanian and also Palestinian, which made me feel that I belonged to and identified with the people of the camp and also the people of the city, existing simultaneously as a person who is shaped by the political and social lines of both lands. After a few long minutes, Sarah, who had barely said anything during that whole time, left the room only to return with a dish of Carob, putting it in front of me. "These are from Nablus, a friend of mine brought them from her last visit. Go ahead, try them." I had never tried them before and was not sure how to even eat them, but I felt the need to try them given how they had traveled all the way from Palestine. I chewed on the skin to be met with a remarkable taste, a mixture of sweetness and tanginess.
"Where in Palestine is your mother from?" Um Hasan asked, deciding to look at me again.

"From a village called Biddu between Al Quds and Ramallah." I answered carefully. Um Hasan nodded and did not say anything.

12 Fedayeen refers to the Palestinian Guerrilla Fighters who fought with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

As we wrapped up, two hours later, I thanked both Sameera and Um Hasan for their time. Um Hasan nodded and said, “It’s okay. Humans are more influenced by their mothers. Your mother is Palestinian. That’s alright.”

I was not sure what was alright, but I felt that she had accepted me, and that somehow gave me a sense of relief, especially because of how keen I became on telling her story. With the frontlines of war occupied heavily by men, it was the women who stayed back and were left with the burden of building homes for their families despite all the challenges and hardships that they had to endure. Palestinian national history books might never mention women like Um Hasan, nor Sameera, but that does not make their stories any less significant or any less worthy of telling.

After visiting Um Hasan, I prepared what I call a drawing of Um Hasan’s path of displacement; tracing her path of movement from the moment of her uprooting from Beit ‘Affa in 1948 and her journey through Iraq, Suweidan, Faluja, Barbara, Beit Lahyia, to Gaza and Nuseirat Camp where she settled with her family until 1967. The path continued after that as Um Hasan, a married woman with children, moved with her family to Jordan, crossing the Jordan river, and settling in Al Wehdat Camp.

I have traced Um Hasan’s path of displacement using the collage shown in Figure 2.7. The idea behind this mapping was to spatially trace Um Hasan’s path of displacement, reflecting her life story that she had shared with a remarkable level of detail, while also situating the villages and cities she had mentioned on the map of Palestine as an act of countering the colonial production of knowledge that has today given those villages and cities Hebrew names. By doing so, I am centering the lived experience of one of the Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat as a source of knowledge, one that produced a knowledge about the land by being in the past, personally experiencing the events of Al Nakba through the body, while also knowing the land by bodily navigating it; an ontological position that produces rootedness in Palestine, still preserved and remembered almost 80 years later. That knowledge of the past, and what it produces of heritage, alongside that knowledge about the land, and what it produces of sense of rootedness in place, is passed down intergenerationally through oral history that constitutes a major source of knowledge for the younger generations of Palestinian refugees, one that allowed them to know their land, fro

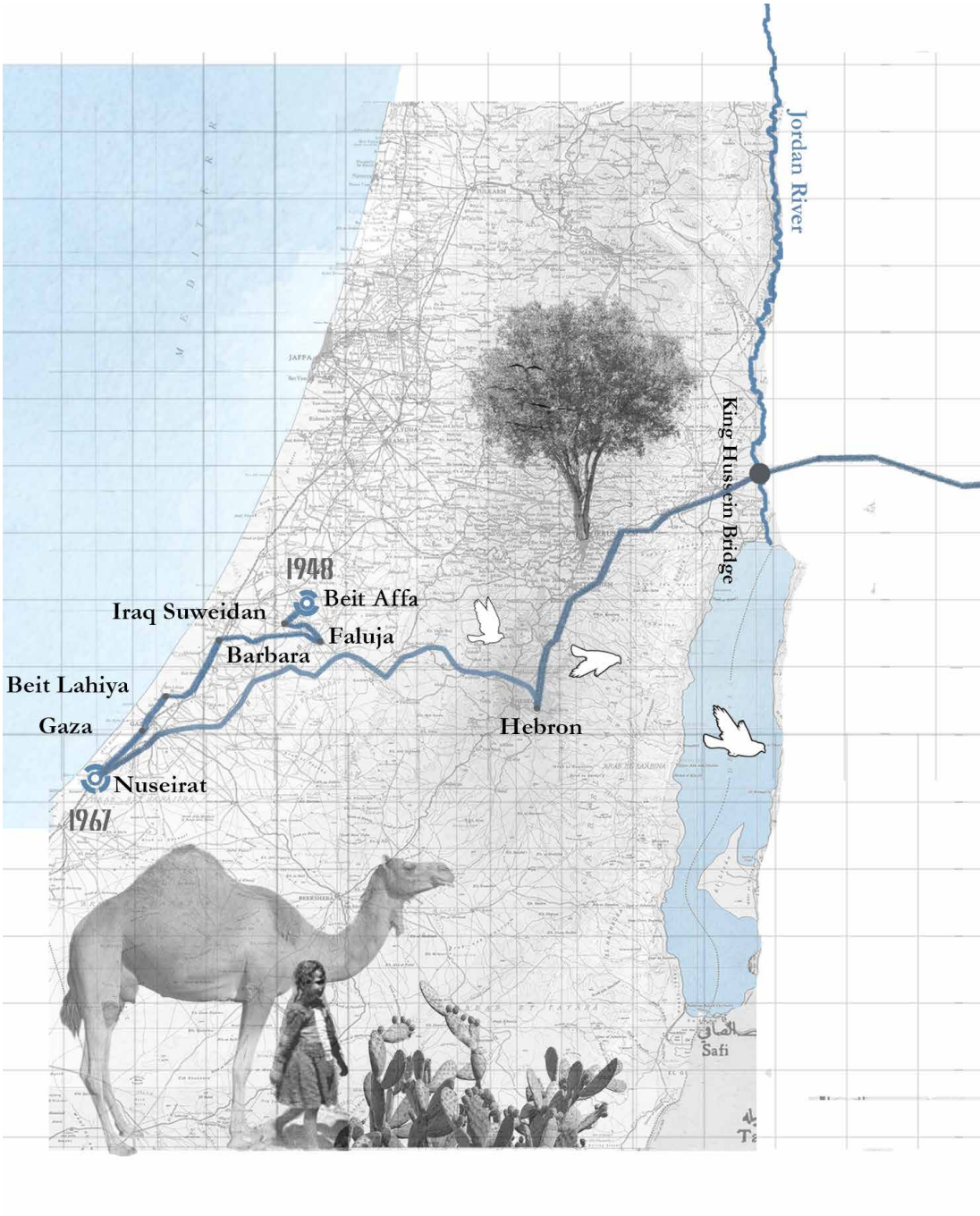


FIG. 2.7 Path 1: Um Hasan's Path of Displacement from Beit 'Affa to Wehdat Camp.

TOC


Tabaqat Fahl
(Pella)
عجلون
'Ajlun
Qal'at er Rabad
Jarash
(Gerasa)
جرش
المفرق
Mafraq
ام الجمال
Um el Jimal
R. Zarqa
الزرقاء
Zarqa
قصر الحلابات
Qasr el Hallabat
السلط
SALT
عمان
AMMAN
(Philadelphia)
Amman
تل عمرين
Tell Nimrin
Allenby Bridge
Hisban
(Heshbon)
حسبان
الموقر
El Muwaqqar
قصر عمرة
Qasr 'Amra
جبل نبا
Mount Nebo
قصر المشتى
Qasr el Mushatta
قصر الخرانه
Qasr el Kharana
مادبا
Madaba
زرقا ماعين
Zarqa-Ma'in
(Hot Springs)
قلعة الضبعه
Qal'at ed Dab'a
المكاور
Muka
ديبان
Dhiban
(Dibon)
W. el Mujib
قصر الطوبه
Qasr et Tuba
القطرانه
Qatrana
الكرك
KARAK
موتا
Mauta
ذات راس
Dhat Ras
قلعة الحسا
Magnetic Variation 1941 Apr. 1°15' E. of Grid North
100

TOC

In the collage shown in Figure 2.7, produced through a superimposition of a variety of elements on an archival map[13] of Palestine during the British Mandate, I was also keen on using archival photos of Palestinians being displaced during Al Nakba, using them as one of the collage's layers as a way of bringing in a visual element to the mapping, while also emphasizing the practice of movement as a producer of territory and knowledge, as if the moving bodies are walking inside the map. Additionally, I have included a small part of Um Hasan's story as written text, combining image and text to tell the story, without both necessarily discussing the same exact ideas, but rather, creating tension and interplay between both, in line with the work of Edward Said and his notion of Double Vision, introduced as part of this research's methodology in **Chapter 1**.

2.5.2 Path 2: Ibrahim Nasrallah: Bureij - Gaza -Hebron- Dheisheh - Amman - Al Wehdat Camp

In this section, I cite parts of Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel, Birds of Caution, specifically sections in which the author described his family's uprooting from their village in Palestine and the path of displacement they took afterwards, echoing the feelings of fear and estrangement they felt while also giving spatial descriptions of the geography of Al Blad.

The quotations are shared in the order they appear in the book, which is not a linear sequencing of events, nor do they respond to the order of the cities/towns the family stopped along their path of displacement. Given how a thematic narration of events, not a linear sequencing of events, is what constitutes heritage, as per E. Valentine Daniel (1996), which appears to be the approach adopted by Nasrallah, I keep the quotations in the order they were written in.

"The situation started to improve, people were given tents they could slip into and sleep inside, without anyone seeing them, ending that pinching sense of loss in the wilderness of the harsh winter that had occupied the sky of Dheisheh Camp. Tiredness had completely destroyed them, after a long journey on foot, from their village to Gaza to Hebron, to where they now were. Al Hijra was not any less crushing than the grinding of a huge grindstone." (Nasrallah, 2009, p.28).

13 The map that was used as a base for this drawing is one that belongs to a large collection of 1940s survey maps from the British Mandate of Palestine, which I have acquired through the *Palestine Open Maps* platform, accessed through their website: https://palopenmaps.org.

In this first quote, Nasrallah reflects on his family's displacement from their village Bureij in the subdistrict of Al Quds, walking to Gaza and then Hebron before settling in Dheisheh Camp, which was established in 1949 in the periphery of Bethlehem. In that quote, tents, as a shelter, exemplify the building block of every camp, protecting refugees against the winter and the harsh conditions.

What is also highlighted is the practice of movement, the mention of the feet, reflecting the bodily nature of displacement, which was an exhausting process crushing their bodies like the grinding of grindstone. The mention of the word grindstone itself, reflects the peasantry lifestyle of Palestinian refugees before Al Nakba. What is also worth mentioning is that at the time of Al Nakba, Palestinian refugees used to refer to their uprooting as the big immigration, or Al Hijra in Arabic, not having yet learned words like uprooting, dispossession or ethnic cleansing, which later became more recognized terms to describe what happened in 1948, especially in the lexicon of the younger and educated generations.

"The first winter could not be forgotten. It was like the world was experiencing winter for the first time. Concrete boxes spread across huge distances, hard to be seen or even imaged. The game of repetition shaped the little rooms. In the narrow spaces, the muddy grounds would exhaust feet for a long time, before allowing anyone to cross them. The land was bare, except for those few trees around Al Ashrafiya Hospital."(Nasrallah, 2009, p. 80)

In this second quotation, Nasrallah reflects on the first winter in Al Wehdat Camp, after he and his family had settled in the concrete shelters of Al Wehdat. The repeated mention of winter in Nasrallah's narration highlights that as one of the biggest challenges facing refugees in camps. What is also mentioned is the muddiness of the camp's alleys, which made movement harder and more challenging in winter. Additionally, describing the land as bare, as opposed to the heavily populated character of the areas surrounding the camp today, highlights the fact that the camp was among the first settlements to be built in that area in southeast Amman, which is also something mentioned to me during the interviews with the camp inhabitants.

Referring to Al Ashrafiya Hospital, formally known as Al Bashir hospital, which is a huge governmental hospital north of Al Wehdat Camp, further reaffirms it as a landmark to the camp inhabitants. This is a practice common still today, given its colossal scale and the fact that it was one of the few buildings surrounding the camp at the time of its establishment in 1955, with the hospital having been established in 1954.

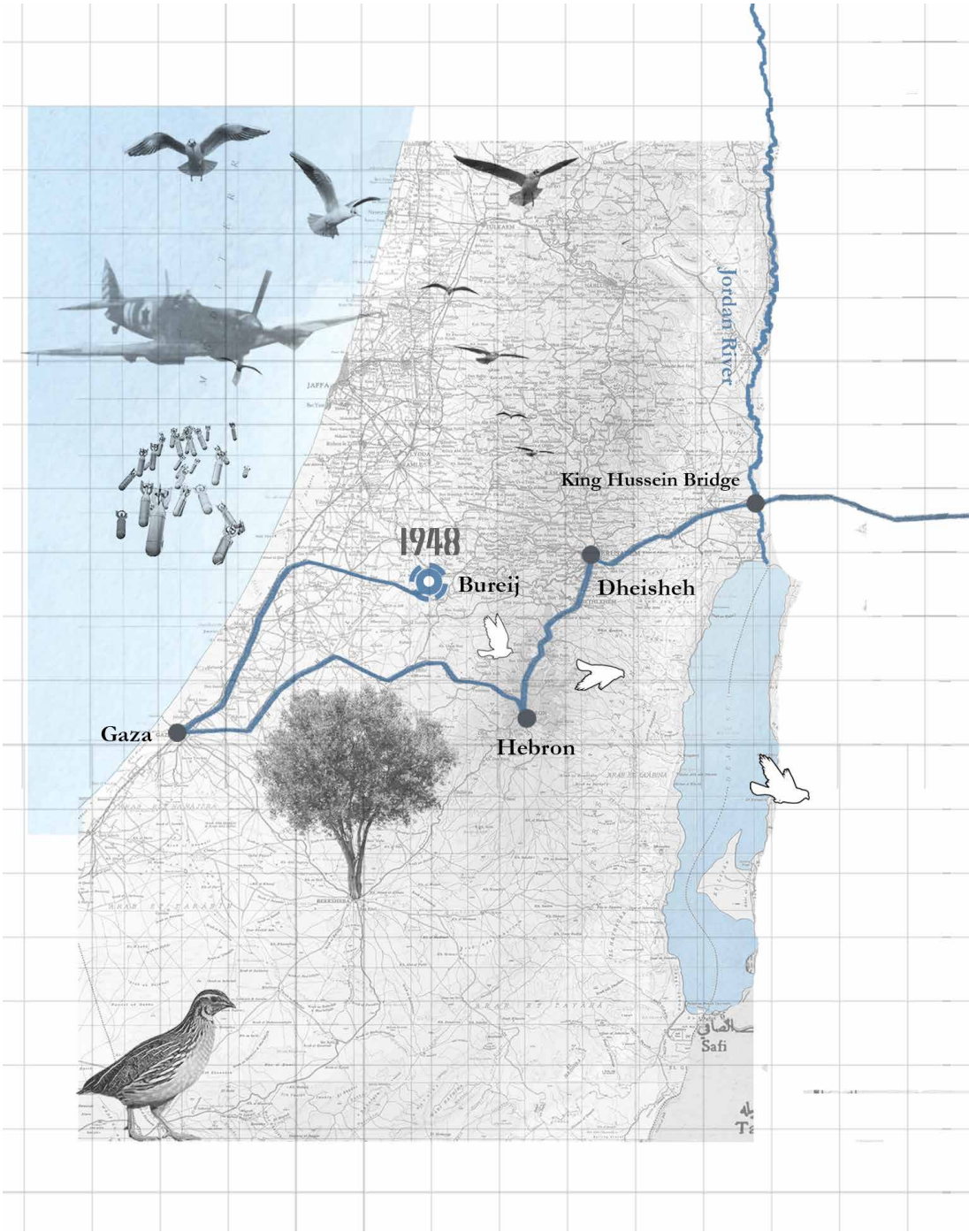


FIG. 2.8 Path 2: Ibrahim Nasrallah family's Path of Displacement from Bruiej to Al Wehdat Camp.

TOC


Tabaqat Fahl
(Pella)
عجلون
Ajlun
Jarash
(Gerasa)
جرش
Qal'at
er Rabad
المفرق
Mafraq
ام الجمال
Um el Jimal
Zarqa
الزرقاء
قصر الحلابات
Qasr el Hallabat
السلط
SALT
عمّان
AMMAN
(Philadelphia)
Amman
تل عمرين
Tell Nimrin
Allenby
Bridge
Hisban
(Heshbon)
حسبان
الموقر
El Muwaqqar
قصر عمرة
Qasr 'Amra
جبل نبا
Mount
Nebo
قصر المشتى
Qasr el Mushatta
قصر الخرانه
Qasr el Kharana
مادبا
Madaba
زرقا ماعين
Zarqa-Ma'in
(Hot Springs)
قلعة الضبعه
Qal'at ed Dab'a
الكاور
Muka
ذيبان
Dhiban
(Dibon)
قصر الطوبن
Qasr et Tuba
القطرانه
Qatrana
الكرك
KARAK
موتا
Mauta
ذات راس
Dhat Ras
قلعة الحسا
INTER

TOC

"His mother told the tale that he knew too well: we used to walk, followed by jet planes, dropping explosive barrels, burning trees and disrupting the shores, along which we walked, it would soon straighten, and we would still walk along its length. From the north to Gaza, we crossed the land walking in 1948. We were immigrants, and quails were also immigrants. They used to crash into our bodies, and we would capture them with our hands, exhausted birds that have crossed the entire sea, that we would soon eat. The immigrant ate the immigrant, to survive and make it to Gaza, before we moved to Hebron. This time, there were not any birds in the sky." (Nasrallah, 2009, p. 289).

Once again, the practice of walking is highlighted as part of the movement away from home to the unknown, towards becoming a refugee. The violence of the attacks on the Palestinians is also mentioned to reveal an even harsher experience than those described in other accounts. His description also draws an image of the geography of the land and its different elements.

Nasrallah concludes by creating a parallel between birds and Palestinian refugees in which both are considered immigrants, with the birds' flight and movement from one place to another. Ultimately, he states that the more powerful immigrant eats the other, also emphasizing the power dynamics that render some as more powerful than others between the immigrant groups themselves. As I have done with the story of Um Hasan, I have produced a mapping of Ibrahim Nasrallah's path of displacement, as narrated in his book, shown in Figure 2.8. Using my method of archival collaging I produced the following mapping, placing emphasis on the theme of birds, which Nasrallah has done in his book, drawing similarities between the two groups of immigrants: the Palestinians and the birds.

2.5.3 Path 3 - Path 10: The Focus group mappings.

During the three focus group discussions I have conducted in Al Wehdat Camp, I asked the participants to map their families' paths of displacement. Given how the participants belonged to the second, third and fourth generations, these displacement paths were intergenerationally transferred and not physically experienced. In this section I will share a collection of these paths as drawn by the participants themselves, with a total of 8 displacement paths, shown between the Figures 2.9 and 2.16.

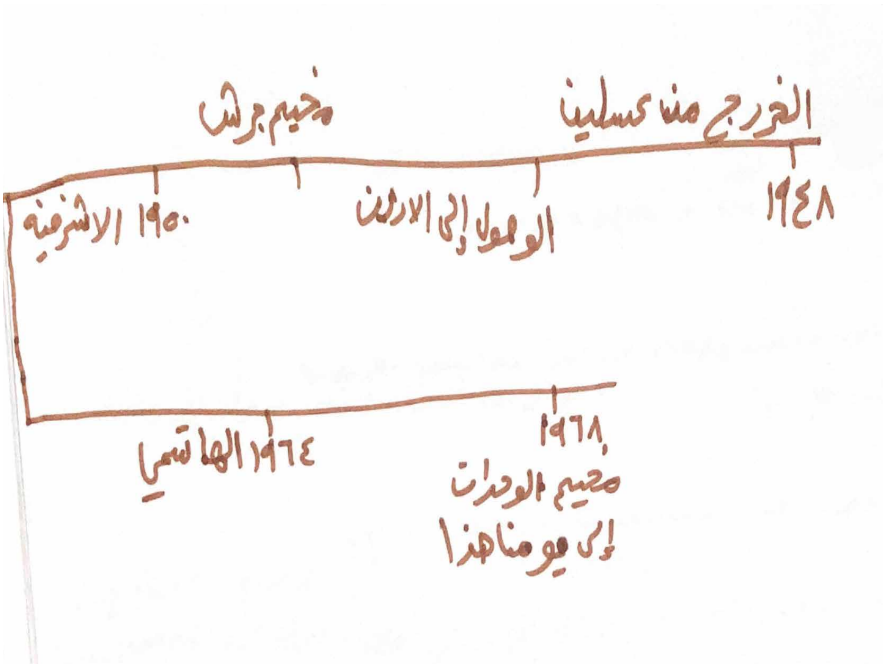


FIG. 2.9 Path 3: From Islin to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Islin sketched this path of displacement in Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This participant's family, as per the drawing, was displaced from the village of Islin located 21 kilometers west of Al Quds in 1948, before arriving in Jordan. There, they settled in Jerash Camp, located in the periphery of Jerash city north of Amman, before moving to the neighborhood of Al Ashrafieh in Amman in 1950, then the neighborhood of Al Hashmi in 1964, also in Amman, before settling in Al Wehdat Camp in 1968, where they have been living since. It is important to note that Jerash Camp was only established in 1967, which indicates an error in its sequence along the path by the participant.

What's worth mentioning about this path of displacement is that this family had settled in two different camps in Jordan during two different intervals, while also moving between a number of neighborhoods in Amman, highlighting the repeated nature of their departure and arrival and complexity of their displacement journey with all the hardships that frequency of movement must entail.

TOC

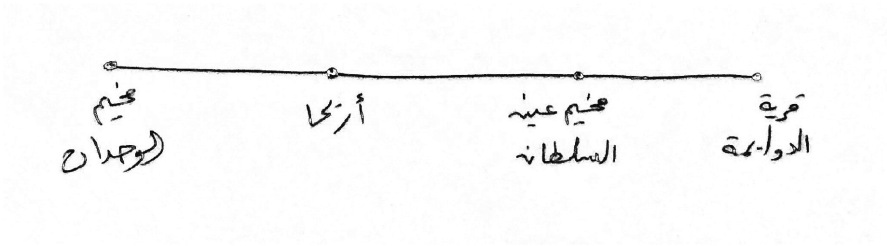


FIG. 2.10 Path 4: From Ed Dawayima to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Ed Dawayima sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family had been displaced from Ed Dawayima village, a subdistrict of the city of Hebron, in 1948. Ed Dawayima village had witnessed a bloody massacre during Al Nakba, resulting in the killing of many of the original village inhabitants. From there, the family moved to Ein Al Sultan Camp in Jericho, before moving to Al Wehdat Camp where they have been living since. Like the previous family, they have settled in two different camps in their lifetime. Visually, unlike the previous path, this path was drawn as a straight line, while the prior one had a more complex L-shape.

TOC

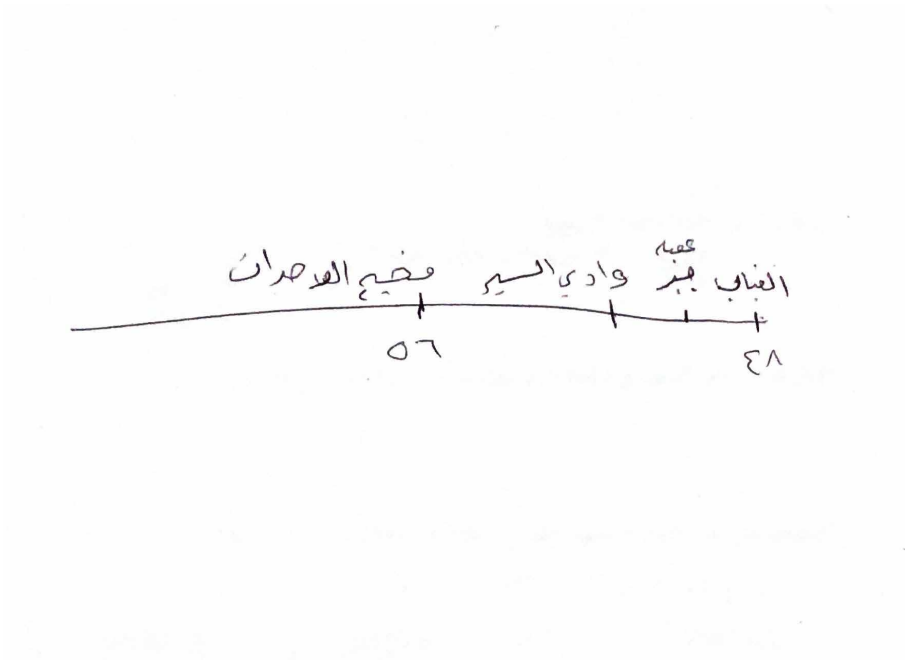


FIG. 2.11 Path 5: From El Qubab to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from El Qubab sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family was displaced from the village of Al Qubab in 1948, which was in the Ramle Subdistrict. After that, they settled in Aqbat Jabr Camp, before moving to Jordan, specifically the area of Wadi Al Seer, and then settling in the camp in 1956. This family had also settled in two camps, one in Palestine and the other in Jordan.

TOC

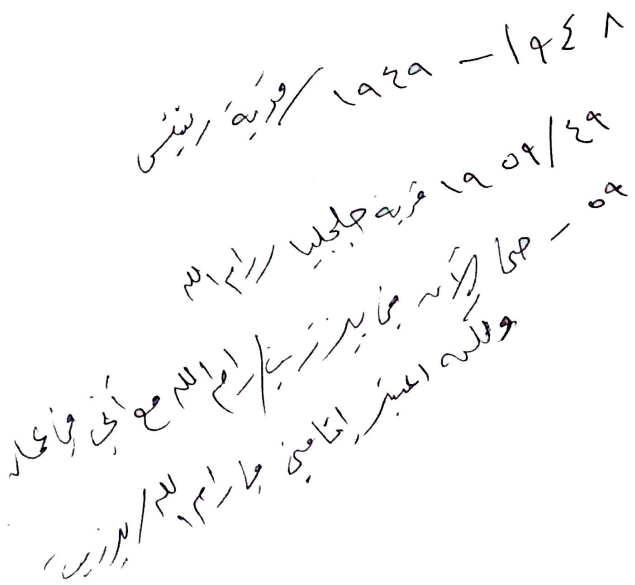


FIG. 2.12 Path 6: From Beit Nabala to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Beit Nabala sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family had been displaced from the village of Beit Nabala, which like the previously mentioned village of Al Qubab, was also in the Ramle Subdistrict. Between the years 1948 and 1949, the family resided in the village of Rantis, before moving to the village of Jiljilyya in the subdistrict of Ramallah, where they resided between 1949 and 1959. From there, they moved to the village of Birzeit, where they have been residing since. In the drawing, the participant mentions that he currently resides in Al Wehdat Camp but considers his main residence to be in Birzeit. This was quite unusual, highlighting the fact that this participant had the needed papers to be able to travel between Palestine and Jordan. Unlike the previous paths, this one was not represented as a line but rather as a group of bullet points, with a specific listing of dates.

TOC

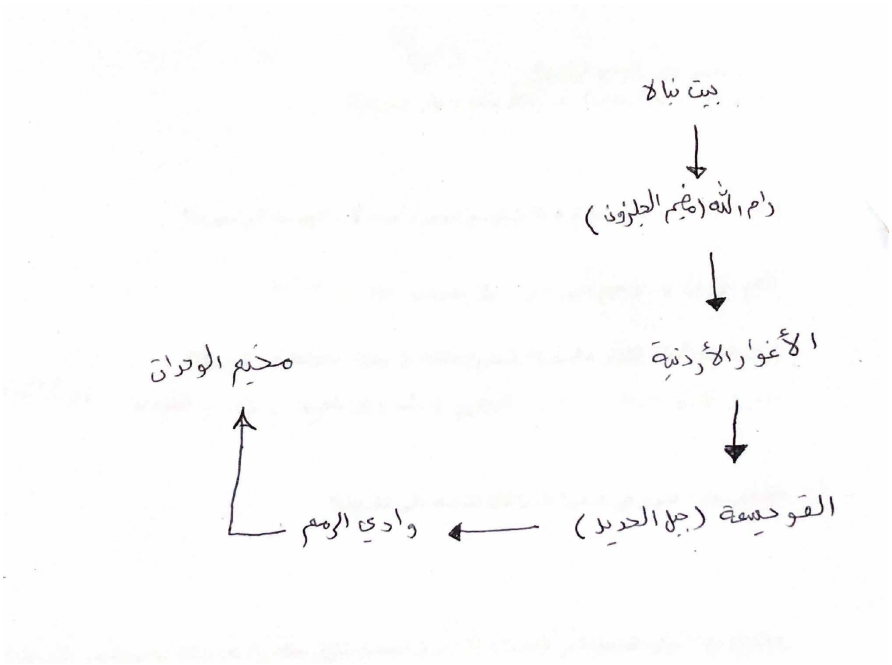


FIG. 2.13 Path 7: From Beit Nabala to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Beit Dajan sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family was also displaced from the village of Beit Nabala in 1948, also in the Ramle Subdistrict, just like the family whose story was shared in Path 6. From there they moved to Al Jalazone Camp in the city of Ramallah, before moving to the area of Al Aghwar in Jordan, then to the area of Queismeh, specifically Jabal Al Hadid, which is in close proximity to Al Wehdat Camp. From there, they moved to the area of Wadi Al Remam, then to Al Wehdat Camp. Visually, this family displacement path also had a unique L-shape, annotated with arrows that signify movement from one place to another. This family had also settled in two camps, one in Palestine and one in Jordan.

TOC

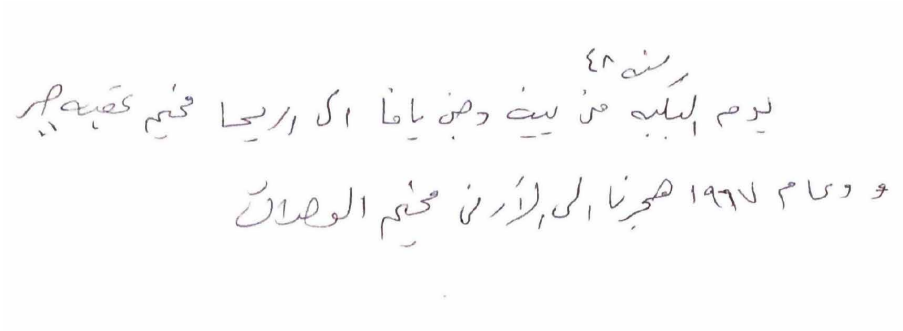


FIG. 2.14 Path 8: From Beit Dajan to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Simsum sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family was displaced from the village of Beit Dajan, in the subdistrict of Yaffa in 1948, moving to Aqbat Jabr Camp in Jericho and staying there until the 1967 war broke out during Al Naksa. Aqbat Jabr was the most densely populated camp in the West bank before the hostilities of 1967, during which the Israeli army attacked the camp and caused a second wave of displacement for thousands of Palestinian refugees who mainly moved to Jordan, which was also the case for this family, who moved to Al Wehdat Camp in 1967. This is yet another example of a Palestinian refugee family who had resided in two camps in their lifetime. This participant shared a written description and did not use any visual elements to trace the family's path of displacement.

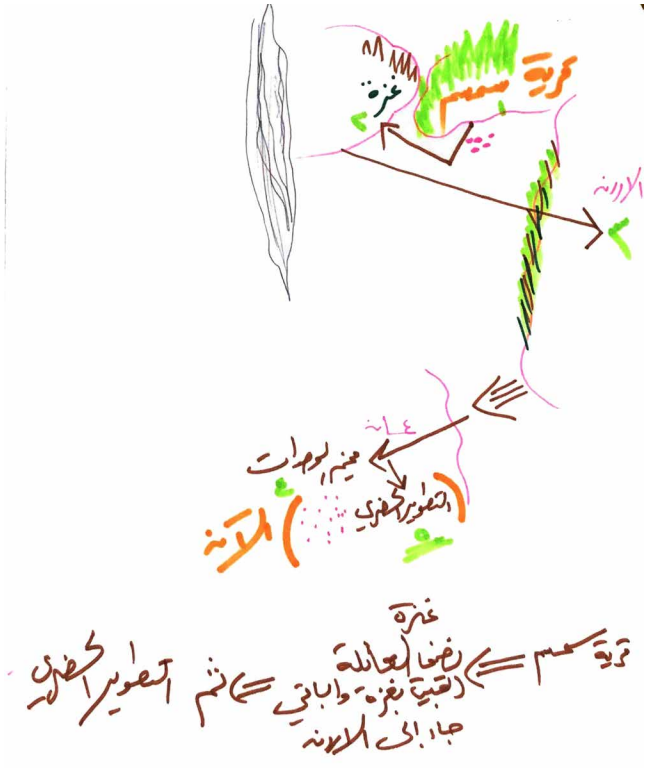


FIG. 2.15 Path 9: From Simsim village to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Simsum sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family was displaced from Simsim village in 1948, located 15 kilometers northeast of Gaza, after which they settled in the city of Gaza. The participant wrote a comment stating that half of her extended family stayed in Gaza after Al Naksa of 1967, while the other half moved to Jordan. Her family was among those who moved to Jordan, where they settled in Al Wehdat Camp, specifically in an area known as Al Tatweer Al Hadari, which will be discussed in a later chapter. Compared to the other paths, this path was more visually complex, containing a number of visual elements that depict the landscape, including the trees and the Jordan river between Palestine and Jordan..

TOC

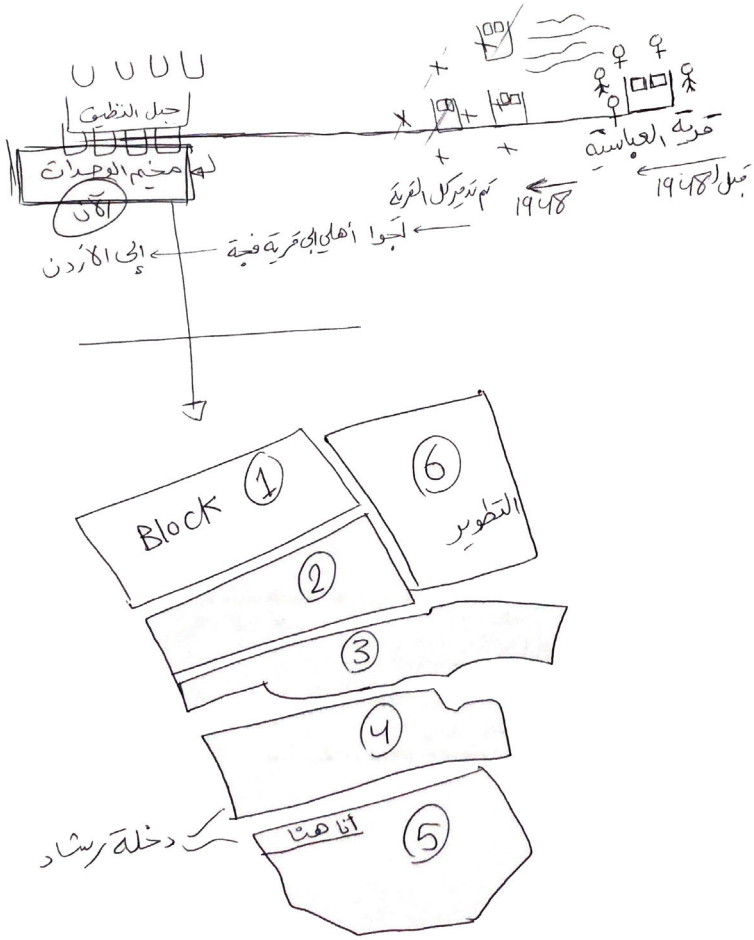


FIG. 2.16 Path 10: From Al-'Abbasiyya to Al Wehdat camp. (source: Participant from Al-'Abbasiyya sketched this path of displacement during Focus Group, Amman, July, 2021)

This family had been displaced from Al-'Abbasiyya village, which used to be located 13 kilometers east of Yaffa. The participant noted that the village was destroyed during Al Nakba, leading her family to move to the village of Al Fajja, before later moving to Jordan and settling in Al Wehdat Camp. Once again, this participant had produced a visually complex drawing with several elements. Remarkably, she drew a map of Al Wehdat Camp from above, reflecting an advanced knowledge of the camp and a level of architectural knowledge as well.

TOC

In summary, many of the participant families have resided in two camps in their lifetime. Additionally, a number of families who had settled in Al Wehdat Camp had been displaced from the area of Al Ramleh and Yaffa, roughly considered as the center of Palestine, which was something mentioned by the participants during the discussions. The Palestinian refugees who were displaced from the Northern villages of Palestine had primarily sought refuge in Lebanon, due to geographical proximity. Moreover, the Palestinian refugees who settled in Al Wehdat Camp have either arrived after Al Nakba of 1948 or as part of a second wave of displacement in 1967.

Visually, the participants had chosen different ways to trace their family's path of displacement, either using a straight line, an L-shaped line, a group of sentences, or a more complex kind of mapping like the last two examples. Some paths did have names and dates, while others had names only, reflecting varying degrees of knowledge of the family history and attention to detail. Using the same collaging method, I produced the following mapping that traces the displacement paths mentioned in this section (Paths 1 to 10), shown in Figure 2.17, while citing a quotation from one of the camp inhabitants I had interviewed in another setting that mentions some of the home-villages of the camp inhabitants:

"We are from Safryieh, around Yaffa. The people in the camp come from different villages, such as Beit Dajan, Beit Nabala, Sarafand, Yazour, Salameh, Tal Al Tourmos, and Al Saqyieh. Most are located in the outskirts of Yaffa."

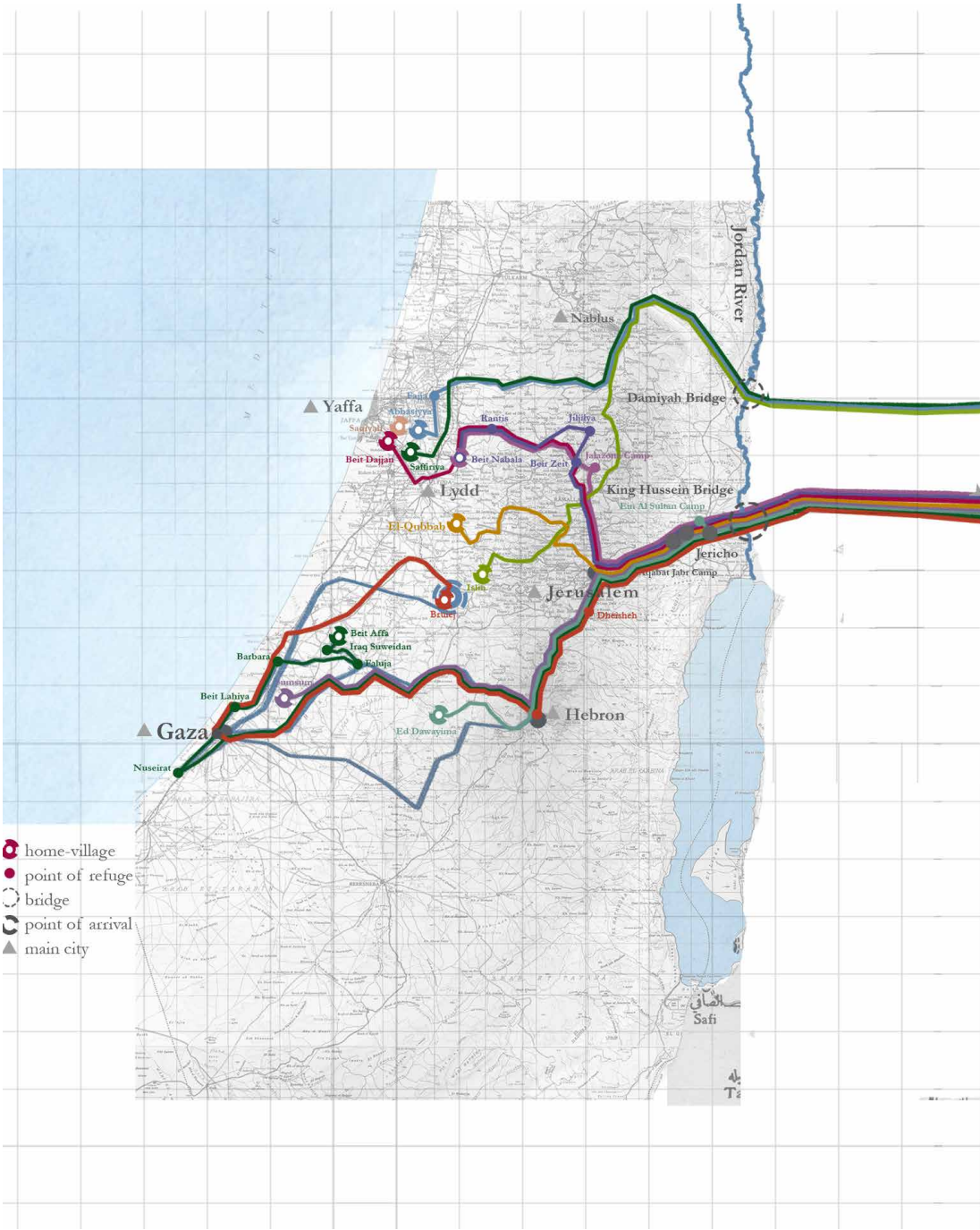
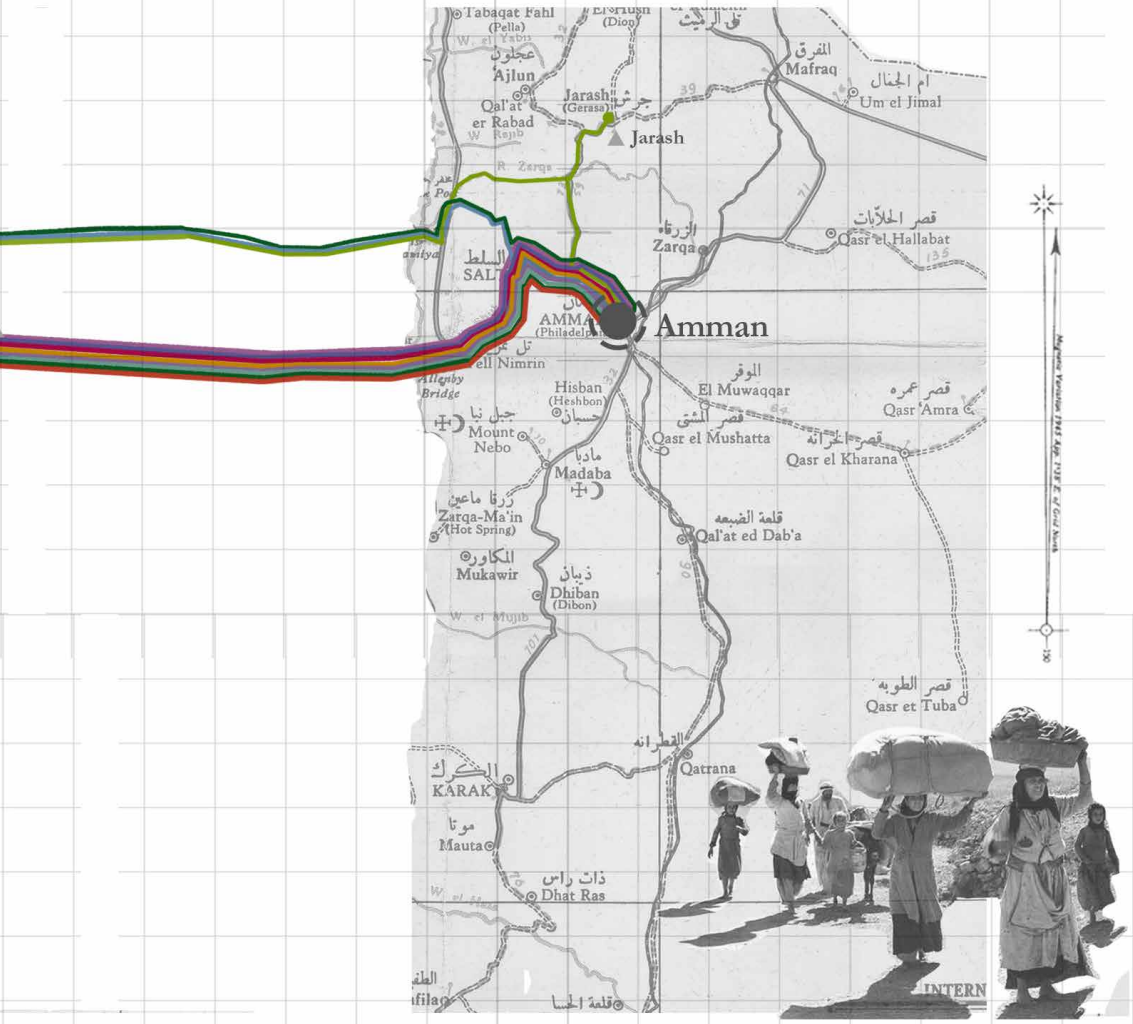


FIG. 2.17 10 Displacement Paths from the home-villages in Palestine to Amman after Al Nakba of 1948.

TOC


Tabaqat Fahl
(Pella)
Ajlun
Jarash
(Gerasa)
Jarash
Mafraq
Um el Jimal
Qal'at
er Rabad
Zarqa
Qasr el Hallabat
SALT
AMMAN
(Philadelphia)
Amman
Hisban
(Heshbon)
El Muwaqqar
Qasr 'Amra
Mount
Nebo
Qasr el Mushatta
Qasr el Kharana
Madaba
Zarqa-Ma'in
(Hot Spring)
Qal'at ed Dab'a
Mukawir
Dhiban
(Dibon)
Qasr et Tuba
Qatrana
KARAK
Mauta
Dhat Ras
INTERN

TOC

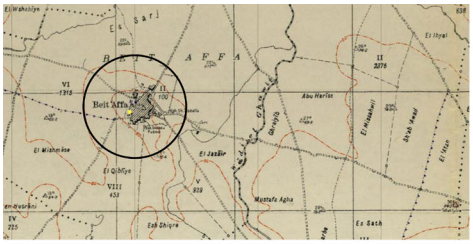
Using the same website of Palestine Open Maps[14], I gathered more information on the 10 home-villages mentioned in this chapter by showing the maps of the villages before Al Nakba in 1948 and the date on which they were ethnically cleansed; juxtaposing them with their reality today to show whether they are currently left vacant after total destruction, or if an Israeli settlement was built on top of their lands. The names of the settlements that have been built on top of the ethnically cleansed villages were obtained from the website of the nonprofit Israeli organization Zochrot[15]. I compiled all the information in Figure 2.18, showing Paths (1-4), and in Figure 2.19, showing Paths (5-10).

To conclude this chapter, it would be important to stress the heterogeneity of the lived experience of each Palestinian refugee family in the camp, instead of thinking of them as one homogeneous body. By tracing the different paths of displacement of these different families, I aimed to also emphasize the different ways Al Nakba had shaped each path differently, driving Palestinian refugees in different directions and creating different life stories for each person. The Palestinian refugees interviewed did all arrive at Al Wehdat Camp, but they did not all come from the same place nor did they take the same path to get there. Each path of displacement was shaped by a number of social, economic, and political factors that determined where each family settled and in what direction they went. Other influences were also circumstantial, depending on what was happening on the ground at the time.

It is important to note that Palestinians in Palestine were also a heterogeneous group before Al Nakba, on a social, political and economic level, and these differences were also transferred and manifested in different ways in the Palestinian refugee camps after Al Nakba. To give one small example, one could study the traditional Palestinian women's dress, which is known as the Palestinian thobe.

14 Palestine Open maps https://palopenmaps.org

15 Zochrot https://www.zochrot.org



Path 1: Beit Affa (Ethnically Cleansed 15 October 1948)



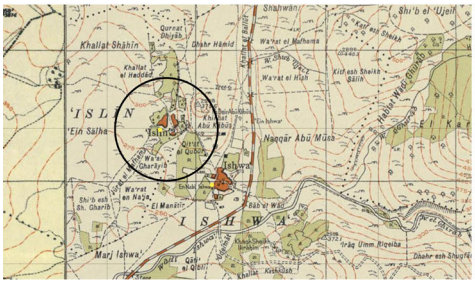
Today: Vacant Agricultural Land



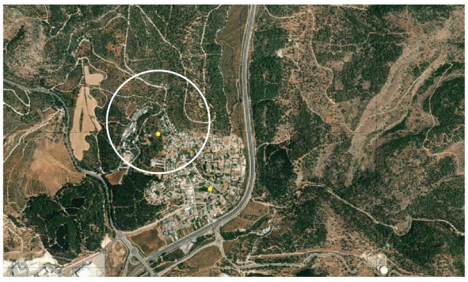
Path 2: Bureij (Ethnically Cleansed 01 October 1948)



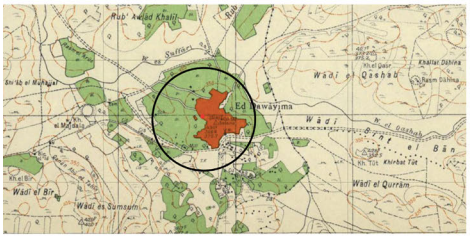
Today: Settlements built on top of the village is Sedot Mikha



Path 3: Islin (Ethnically Cleansed 18 July 1948)



Today: Settlements built on top of the village is Eshtaol



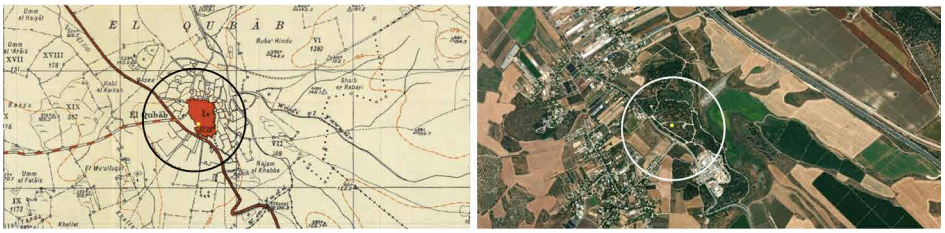
Path 4: Ed Dawayima (Ethnically Cleansed 29 October 1948)



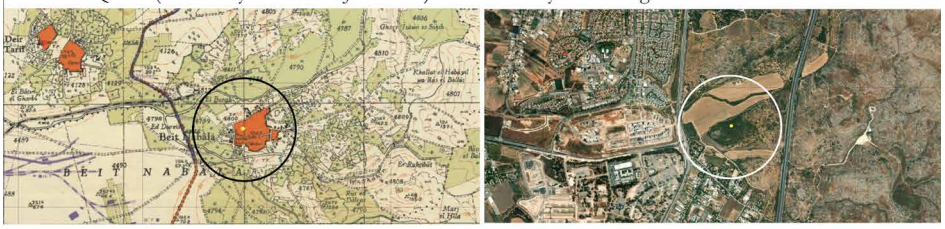
Today Vacant Land

FIG. 2.18 Home-villages of Paths (1-4), before Al Nakba and in the present.

TOC



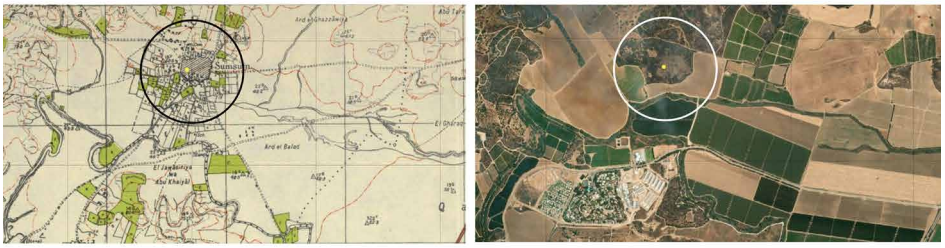
Path 5: El Qubab (Ethnically Cleansed 6 June 1948) Today: Vacant Agricultural Land



Path 6 +7: Beit Nabala (Ethnically Cleansed 12 July 1948) Today: Vacant Agricultural Land



Path 8: Beit Dajan (Ethnically Cleansed 14 May 1948) Today: Settlements built on top of the village are Beit Nehemia, Kfar Truman



Path 9: Sumsum (Ethnically Cleansed 13 May 1948) Today: Vacant Agricultural Land



Path 10 : Al-'Abbasiyya (Ethnically Cleansed 10 July 1948) Today: Settlements built on top of the village

FIG. 2.19 Home-villages of Paths (5-10), before Al Nakba and in the present.

TOC

In her book, Threads of Identity: preserving Palestinian costume and heritage, Palestinian Art Historian Widad Kawar (2011) writes how in Palestine, different villages and towns had their own significant designs, motifs and colors for the Palestinian thobe, which women meticulously stitched by hand and wore with pride. When looking at any Palestinian thobe design, an expert could know what village or town that piece of clothing belonged to. This alone is one example of how villages and towns in Palestine were highly autonomous before Al Nakba, as thoroughly discussed in the doctoral dissertation of Palestinian architect and scholar, Suad A'Amiry (1987).

In the Palestinian refugee camps, women from different villages and towns from all across Palestine got to meet, and through that, got the opportunity to exchange knowledge among themselves, which was less likely to happen in Palestine before Al Nakba. Together, that allowed the exchange of embroidery patterns and techniques, which came together in a new collective thobe, that was later known as, "the new thobe," gradually shifting the significance of Palestinian embroidery from being a local art that reflected the differences between Palestinian towns and villages through the differences of embroidery patterns and motifs, to a symbol that represented the collective Palestinian identity and heritage that was produced in exile.

Similarly, the different displacement paths that Palestinian refugees took from their villages of origin in Palestine, representing lines that spread along the landscape, came together in the camp that was gradually produced as a web of interwoven lines and threads; threads that represented heterogeneous identities, narratives, generations, and displacement paths. In the camp, those threads were stitched together in time, represented in the space of the camp through the spatial practices of the camp's inhabitants, very much like the new thobe, signifying a new collective identity that was developed after Al Nakba.Another new type of the Palestinian thobe is the "Al Intifada thobe" that appeared in the late 1980's after the first Intifada, rich with patterns of guns, maps, and political slogans in a manner that rendered it as a political symbol which represented Palestinian women's resistance against occupation. Al Intifada thobe also spatially documented historical incidents of the female participation in the armed resistance during the First Intifada, which is a less widespread narrative of Palestinian resistance than those of males, as discussed by Rosemary Sayigh (2007). In that sense, Palestinian embroidery created networks of solidarity for the women in Palestinian camps, with the exchange of craft and skill creating a mutual "creative space" for women.

Along these lines, the question of (where in Palestine are you from?) does not only construct a space of belonging for Palestinians, but it acknowledges the differences that have existed and continue to exist between Palestinians themselves. That question takes Palestinians back in time, temporarily reversing the process of displacement, by pinpointing people to a location on the map, to life before Al Nakba, to what could have been, before the systematic colonial destruction of the Palestinian architecture and society. As such, the differences that existed in the Palestinian society pre-Al Nakba were also transferred to the Palestinian refugee camps after Al Nakba. Despite Al Nakba being a collective experience that created a mutual ground which all Palestinians identified with — the loss of Palestine becoming a vital part of their identity formation, as argued by Ramadan (2012) — it did not entirely eliminate other factors that existed before Al Nakba and continued to manifest in the camps. In the different parts of this dissertation, these manifestations will be further discussed and reflected on.

To conclude this chapter, I share the words of renowned poet, Mahmoud Darwish (1984), from his book, Victims of a Map, who in his poem, *The Earth is Closing on us*, describes the journey of displacement for Palestinians during Al Nakba using a number of metaphors that align with what I have discussed in this chapter.

The Earth is closing on us

The Earth is closing on us

pushing us through the last passage

and we tear off our limbs to pass through.

The Earth is squeezing us.

I wish we were its wheat

so we could die and live again.

I wish the Earth was our mother

so she'd be kind to us.

I wish we were pictures on the rocks

for our dreams to carry as mirrors.

We saw the faces of those who will throw

our children out of the window of this last space.

Our star will hang up mirrors.

Where should we go after the last frontiers ?

Where should the birds fly after the last sky ?

Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air ?

We will write our names with scarlet steam.

We will cut off the hand of the song to be finished by our flesh.

We will die here, here in the last passage.

Here and here our blood will plant its olive tree.



TOC

3 Al Wehdat Camp Boundaries

Where is the camp?

3.0 The alley

On a hot summer day in 2022, I stood on the roof of a four story residential building overlooking Sumaya Street, watching the cars go by and enjoying a new angle of the neighborhood. I have driven along Sumaya Street several times over the past years, and also navigated it on foot on numerous occasions, but until that day, I have not seen it from that far up.

More cars drove by, turning around the curvature of the street that looked quite dramatic from up there. I had just wrapped up a two hour interview with a family from the camp that had taken place on the roof of their building, having talked with the two sons and the mother. They had offered me tea and biscuits, which I gladly helped myself to. All that talking sure makes one hungry. With the help of my research facilitator Malek, we planned this interview to talk to the family about their life in the camp, and after we were done, I slowly approached the ledge and looked around.

The younger son, Karam, approached me and started talking. “Sumaya Street was widened in 2012 to resolve the issue of the heavy traffic in the area and to help reduce congestion. Because of that, 100 houses were demolished. You can see some of the demolished houses along the street, some of them are still there, they did not properly clear out the ruins, they just needed to make the street wider, and the rest was not important.” He explained. “I heard several stories about it.” I replied, after writing down what he was saying.

“Can you see that narrow alley over there, next to the building with the red sign?” Asked Karam, eager to share more of his detailed knowledge about the camp, glad to see that I was taking note of what he was saying in my sketchbook.
“Yes, what about it?” I asked.
“You would be surprised to know that that alley separates the houses that are in the formal camp from the houses that are not. Houses left of the alley are Wakaleh, houses right of the alley are Qawasheen.”

“What do you mean?” I asked, unsure what he was referring to.
“Houses located left of the alley were built and are owned by the Wakaleh16, the UNRWA, not the inhabitants themselves. They are not owned by the families but are part of the formal camp boundary. The ones right of the alley were built at a later stage and are owned by the families, documented through the Qawasheen17. Those are located outside the formal boundary of the camp and are owned the same way any other building is owned in the city.”
“How do you know this, who has Qawasheen and who does not?” I asked, surprised.
“These families have been our neighbors for years, we know each other and know these kinds of things, who is Qawasheen and who is Wakaleh.” He answered.

When I looked at the buildings that he was referring to, I realized that there was no way to tell whether they were Qawasheen or Wakaleh by their exterior, with hardly any differences in the architecture of the two buildings, except for the difference in the number of floors. They looked very similar, despite being separated by a formal line that situated one inside the boundaries of the formal camp, and the other, outside of it.

Intrigued to know how accurate the information Karam was sharing is, I walked to the alley and took a picture of it, using geotagging to locate the alley on Google Maps. I then overlaid the image from Google Maps on top of the official camp map that indicated the formal boundary, the one I had obtained from the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA), to know whether that alley did, in fact, separate the formal camp from the rest of the city, the Wakaleh from the Qawasheen.

16 Wakaleh is an Arabic word that translates to the agency, used in the camp to refer to UNRWA.

17 Qawasheen is an Arabic word that refers to the official papers that officially document the ownership of land in governmental records.

After cross referencing the information, I realized that Karam was right. That alley stood at the edge of the formal camp.
I was impressed by the accuracy of the information, and the way he used the aspect of ownership to distinguish the formal territory of the camp from the rest of the city.

From there, I began my process of studying the formal boundary of the camp, represented and referred to in this dissertation as the redline. I wanted to know what the redline meant and how it manifested in the built environment and in the everyday lives of the camp inhabitants. I also wanted to know whether the redline was the reference through which the camp inhabitants demarcated their own camp territory, or whether there were other boundaries and demarcation methods they used in their everyday lives..



FIG. 3.1 The alley that separates Qawasheen from Wakaleh

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I conduct a spatial investigation into the home-camp's spatial and social relationship with the city of Amman, trying to understand the boundary that stands between them. Despite the unchanged legal status of the camp as a temporary space of refuge since its establishment on rented land in 1955, the flows of movement and activities of the camp inhabitants have blurred the lines that distinguish the camp from the city. Today, the formal boundary of the camp, which I refer to as the redline remains unchanged, but there are other boundary-demarcating elements in the everyday life of the camp inhabitants that could help better explain the home-camp's relationship with the home-city. Those elements work on simultaneously connecting the space of the camp to the city, while also disconnecting it from it in other instances through a dynamic and transforming socio-spatial relationship.

In the previous chapter, I studied the relationship between the home-land and the home-camp. In this chapter, I shift the scale of the investigation to study the home-camp's relationship with the home-city as its immediate setting, notwithstanding the fact that the nature of that relationship also influences the home-camp's relationship with the home-land, given how it is shaped by the levels of spatial, social, economic, and political integration of the camp and the inhabitants within their current context. Through the different discussions in this chapter, those different relations between the three territories will be discussed from the perspective of the camp inhabitants themselves, who share their own ways of knowing the camp boundary and relating their camp to their city and themselves..

3.2 The ambivalent condition of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan

Before beginning to study the redline and the formal boundary of Al Wehdat Camp, I begin my argument by saying that the most remarkable aspect that distinguishes Palestinian refugees in Jordan from Palestinian refugees elsewhere is an ambivalence in their legal status — which has also produced an ambivalence of control over the Palestinian refugee camps in the country, as discussed by Jalal Al Husseini (2010) and Lucas Oesch (2017) — given how a huge number of Palestinian refugees in Jordan hold the Jordanian Nationality alongside their UNRWA Identification cards, rendering them as not only internationally recognized refugees, but also as Jordanian citizens.

Historically, the legal status of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan was determined by two factors: the Palestinian refugees' place of origin and the year they entered Jordan. After Al Nakba of 1948, the newly founded Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan annexed the West Bank, while Egypt annexed the Gaza Strip. After that, Jordan conferred citizenship to the majority of Palestinians living under its rule, whether in Jordan or the West Bank, under the 1954 Nationality Law, while Egypt chose to respond to the Arab League's Palestinian Refugees' Policy which demanded preserving Palestinian Refugees' (right to return) by keeping them stateless, and therefore did not confer the Egyptian citizenship to Palestinian refugees in the Gaza strip, despite the territory being under its rule (Al Husseini, 2010).
Politically, it had been argued that the rhetoric behind the Jordanian Government's policy of integrating the Palestinian refugees into the Jordanian demographic fabric was to further legitimize its annexation of the West Bank and further emphasize its control over its territories (Abu-Odeh and Delvoie, 2000). As a result, the Palestinian Refugees that arrived in Jordan in the years after 1948, primarily from the West Bank, were considered Jordanian nationals and theoretically enjoyed equal civil rights with their fellow Jordanians. In opposition to this, were the Palestinian refugees who entered Jordan in 1967, primarily from the Gaza strip, who remained in a state of legal and social exclusion, limited by temporary travel documents and highly dependent on UNRWA as their sole aid provider. The legal situation of both populations in Jordan has not changed since, resulting in a condition of socio-economic discrimination for Gazan-Palestinian refugees, who continue to suffer from deteriorating living conditions until the present day, given that they are not allowed to work, seek health care or education in the public sector.

The living conditions of Gazans in Jordan resembles that of the Palestinian refugees living in Syria and Lebanon, given that both countries have also responded to the recommendations of the Arab League of 1949 and kept all Palestinian refugees who have entered their lands stateless, compromising their right to live a decent life in favor of the longevity of their "right to return" (Al Husseini and Bocco, 2009).

In Jordan, the number of registered Palestinian refugees currently exceeds two million, constituting 40% of the five million officially registered with UNRWA in the agency's fields of operation, which include Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, and The Gaza Strip. Inside the camps, 370 000 registered refugees reside today, which constitutes 18% of the Palestinian Refugee population in the country. The remaining 82% have moved outside the camp to live in the country's major cities, including the capital of Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid (UNRWA, 2023).
The percentage of Palestinian refugees exceeds 20% of the country's total population, which has been estimated by the Jordanian Department of Statistics to approximate a little over ten million people in 2018 (Jordanian Department of Statistics, 2018).

In terms of control, that ambivalence of legal status also created an ambivalence in governance over Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, putting them under a model of hybrid control of both the Jordanian State and UNRWA over the Palestinian refugee camps' decades of existence, until the present day. However, the roles assumed by UNRWA in the Palestinian camps in Jordan have gradually decreased with time, with more roles and control assumed by the Jordanian State, represented by the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) (Dpa.gov.jo, 2019). That ambivalence produced Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan as spaces of "multiple ambiguities and subjectivities," where a number of complex spatial dynamics have rendered the camp as a "zone of indistinction" that is simultaneously included and excluded from the city. Despite their material integration, Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan retain an "ambiguous character" as "permanent temporary" urban spaces (Achilli and Oesch, 2016; Oesch, 2017).

In the country, Palestinian refugee camps were established over two phases; the first phase came in response to Al Nakba in 1948 with four official camps, and the second phase was in response to Al Naksa of 1967 with six official camps known as emergency camps. In total, the number of the official Palestinian camps under the UNRWA and the DPA administration in Jordan is 10, with the infrastructure that includes 171 schools with 121,368 students, 25 primary health centers, 10 community centers and 14 women's program centers (UNRWA, 2023). In Table 3.1, I listed the 10 official camps in chronological order with more details about their planning and their inhabitants.

During the first phase, Al Wehdat Camp was the fourth official camp to be established in Jordan, and the second official camp in Amman, after Zarqa Camp in 1949 in the governante of Zarqa east of Amman, Irbid Camp in 1950 in governante of Irbid city north of Amman, and Jabal Al Hussein Camp built in Amman in 1952. Officially, Al Wehdat Camp is known as Amman New Camp, being the new camp in Amman at the time, following Jabal Al Hussein Camp which was established three years prior.

TABLE 3.1 The 10 official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, prepared from information obtained from UNRWA.

Title	Sequence	Name	Unofficial Name	Established	Location	Number of Registered Refugees	Area in Km2	Features
Phase 1 : In response to Al Nakba of 1948	1	Zarqa		1949	Zarqa	20 000	0.18	Oldest Camp
	2	Irbid		1950	Ibrid	28 000	0.24	
	3	Jabal Al Hussein		1952	Amman	32 000	0.42	
	4	Amman New Camp	Al Wehdat Camp	1955	Amman	57 000	0.48	Highest population density
Phase 2 : In response to Al Naksa of 1967 (Emergency Camps)	5	Souf		1967	Jerash	19 000	0.5	
	6	Baqa'a		1968	Amman	119 000	1.42	Largest area/ biggest population
	7	Talbieh		1968	Amman	8 000	0.13	
	8	Husun	Azmi Al Mufti Camp	1968	Irbid	25 000	0.77	
	9	Jerash	Gaza Camp	1968	Jerash	29 000	0.75	
	10	Heteen	Marka Camp	1968	Zarqa	53 000	0.92	

In Figure 3.2, I have also created a chronological listing of the 10 official Palestinian refugee camps, showing each camp's Google image.

Notably, an aerial examination of the camps reveals a stark difference in the level of spatial integration between those constructed in the first phase and those in the second phase. The camps established after Al Nakba demonstrate a higher degree of integration with their surrounding environments compared to those built later, following Al Naksa. Several factors could arguably contribute to this contrast.

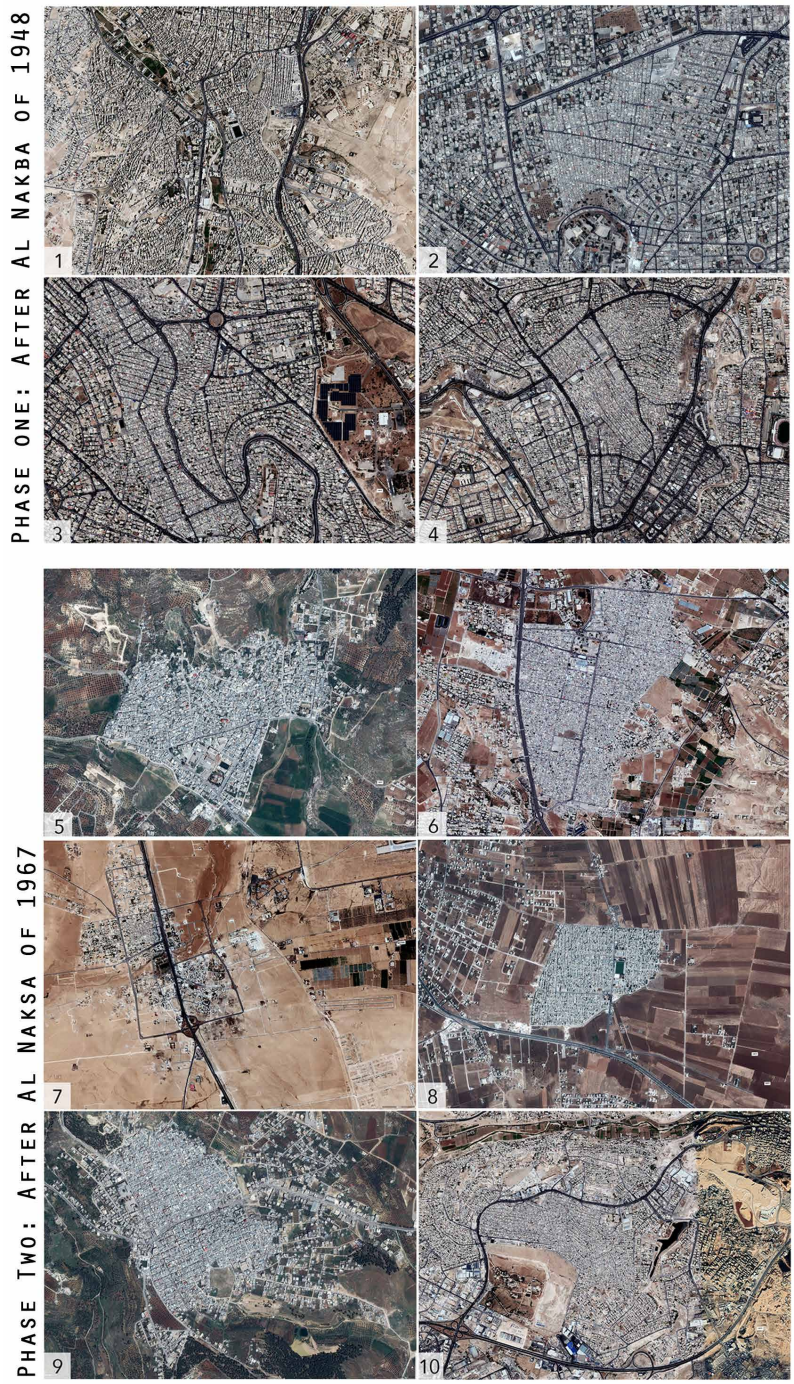


FIG. 3.2 Google images of the 10 official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, in chronological order.

TOC

Firstly, the camps in the first phase were situated in more central areas of major cities like Amman and Irbid, whereas those in the second phase were located on the outskirts, in the suburbs of cities such as Amman, Irbid, and Jerash. Secondly, the earlier camps are older, resulting in a denser population in their vicinity over time. Thirdly, the decision to place the camps in peripheral areas during the second phase could have been politically motivated, aiming to exert greater spatial control over them based on lessons learned from the first phase.

On the other hand, another line of argumentation could suggest that the decision to establish camps outside urban centers in the second phase may have been due to the already established population in these cities, nearly 30 years after Jordan's independence in 1946. This was unlike the situation during the first phase, where the influx of Palestinian refugees after Al Nakba in 1948 significantly impacted the demographic landscape of Jordanian cities, populating the new urban centers through an influx of what was estimated to be 70,000 Palestinian refugees, entering a country whose population at the time did not exceed 400,000 nationals (Ababsa and Kohlmayer, 2013).

When it comes to control and management, the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) was founded as the governmental entity that is responsible for supervising all the issues related to Palestinian refugees and Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, also supervising the work programs of UNRWA inside camps, acting on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The DPA is responsible for representing Palestinian refugees in Jordan in any international forum, while building partnerships with international donors. Inside Al Wehdat Camp, the DPA is the legislative and executive entity, acting as the legislature of the building regulations and the executive authority in shelter construction and infrastructure planning and upgrading (Dpa.gov.jo, 2019).

In the Palestinian refugee camps, UNRWA was responsible for relief operations, providing food rations, clothes, blankets and domestic items. UNRWA was also responsible for healthcare, education, and social services. However as the state of Palestinian refugees remained unresolved, UNRWA shifted its scope of services from relief to empowerment, by introducing social welfare, protection and micro-finance, while keeping education and healthcare, and stopping the distribution of food rations in 1978 (UNRWA, 2023). In Jordan, the DPA and UNRWA only operate and administrate Palestinian refugee camps, not carrying out operations elsewhere.

In the case of Al Wehdat Camp, the DPA and UNRWA administrate the area that falls within the formal boundary, the redline, and the presence of their field offices in the camp reflects the humanitarian status of Al Wehdat Camp that still persists until the present day. A more elaborate discussion of UNRWA in Al Wehdat Camp will follow in **Chapter 5**.

According to scholar Lucas Oesch (2017), as the result of the interplay of three forms of power, namely sovereignty, discipline, and government; Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan have been ambiguously included into the territory of Jordan while simultaneously retaining their exclusion as temporary and humanitarian spaces.

As such, camp inhabitants have been recast as not only aided and dependent subjects but also as productive and independent subjects. Palestinian refugee camps, which were set up in Jordan as a temporary space of refuge until things were resolved, transformed into being the norm for the Palestinian refugees living in them. Driven by geo-political motives and socio-economic considerations, the ambivalence or the ambiguity in the practice of power, aimed to both include and exclude camps simultaneously. The principle of excluding camps and their inhabitants was one that politically responded to the inhabitants' aspirations who linked the survival of their camps to the survival of their Right to Return.

That principle also responded to the aspirations of Jordanian nationalists who ideologically opposed the full integration of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, while economically increasing the chances of receiving international funds to support the process of hosting the Palestinian Refugees. At the same time, Oesch (2017) argues that the Jordanian State understood that camps and their inhabitants also needed to be ideologically included and spatially integrated into the city to avoid the political implications of the inhabitants fostering high levels of autonomy as the result of their marginalization. That spatial integration was something that the camp inhabitants themselves also desired, after gradually embracing the idea that better living conditions in the camps did not contradict with their return aspirations and political revolutionary ideologies.

Along those lines and through this chapter I ask, how does that hybridity in control influence Al Wehdat Camp's relationship with the city? How does that ambivalence influence the camp's social, spatial, economic and political relationship with the surrounding context and Amman? Does that ambivalence play a role in producing other forms of demarcation of the camp's territory, beyond the redline that represents the formal camp boundary that has not changed since the camp's establishment in 1955?

3.2.1 The invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan

Building up on his work, in a more recent publication, Lucas Oesch (2020) focused his research on the urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps, arguing that the existing literature highlights two urban planning paradigms. In the first paradigm, camps are considered "urban assemblages'' that consist of the inhabitants' everyday practices and improvised tactics. In the second paradigm, camps are considered to be spaces that are shaped by disjointed State-planning policies.
Through his work, Oesch introduces a third paradigm of coherent institutional urbanism, taking the form of "an improvised dispositif" whose main objective is to render the very urban planning of the camp invisible.

Oesch argues that invisibility is rather crucial when dealing with Palestinian refugee camps, given that their temporariness is pivotal for preserving the camps' political ideologies, humanitarian struggles and transient condition, given that any visible development projects will be rejected and seen as a process of "resettlement". This is a notion strongly opposed by the camp inhabitants, who desired small improvements in their built environments but not developments that were too drastic up to the point that they became permanent. Through that improvised dispositif, a rather heterogeneous ensemble of State and non-State institutions took part in the invisible urban development of Jabal Al Hussein Camp in Amman (the case study of Oesch's paper (2020)) with an unconventional urban planning process under the name of "improvement". Once again, adopting a more visible and conventional planning process would have been viewed as one that would completely dismiss the camp's status as an "exceptional space" that needed to be kept under special management with special terms. Despite the fact that a number of State institutions were involved in the urban development projects in the camp, such as a number of ministries and the Greater Amman Municipality, the projects were officially conducted through the Department of Palestinian Refugees (DPA) — under its supervision in a manner that would conceal the level of involvement of the conventional planning entities and render the process as rather "improvised"— seeking to improve the camp on humanitarian grounds rather than political ones.

According to Oesch (2020), the improvised dispositif de-facto accelerated the camp's material homogenization with the surrounding neighborhoods, and was in fact, servicing Jabal Al Hussein Camp through the same networks of infrastructure that were servicing the rest of Amman, in a manner that he argues has accelerated its spatial integration with Amman, despite what the planning process was theoretically claiming it was not doing.

In the light of what has been discussed, I build on Oesch's work to investigate the invisible urban planning of Al Wehdat Camp, which has been subtly and gradually transforming the space of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, leading them towards material permanence and urbanization while attempting to retain their political and symbolic impermanence. I will particularly use this chapter to create a comparison between the formal and the informal boundary of the camp, and the different ways the camp has transformed in the spillover between both, influenced by the ambivalent legal condition of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

I will refer to the formal boundary as the redline, representing the institutional boundary drawn by the Jordanian State in coordination with UNRWA, drawn in 1955 through a top-down planning approach that demarcated the formal boundary of the camp which has not changed since. I will refer to the informal boundary of the camp as the greenline, representing the camp inhabitants' understanding of their camp territory, acquired through their embodied ways of knowing their camp and its territory vis-a-vis the city of Amman and the rest of the country.



FIG. 3.3 Kids playing in a residential alley in Al Wehdat camp.

3.3 Where is the boundary? Where is everything else?

In the early phases of my research, while studying the aerial images of Al Wehdat Camp, I found myself unable to trace its boundary or distinguish its territory from the rest of the city, as shown in Figure 3.4.
Later on, when I visited the camp, I was also unable to know where the camp began and where the city ended, or where the camp ended and the city began. I moved around the different streets and neighborhoods, knowing that I was in Al Wehdat Camp because people told me I was, but I was not sure how to formally demarcate its territory. I climbed on a roof of a tall building, and looked at the camp from above, with its setting nested into the city, and noticed how seamlessly the space of both flowed into each other, as shown in Figure 3.5, which made tracing the redline even harder.

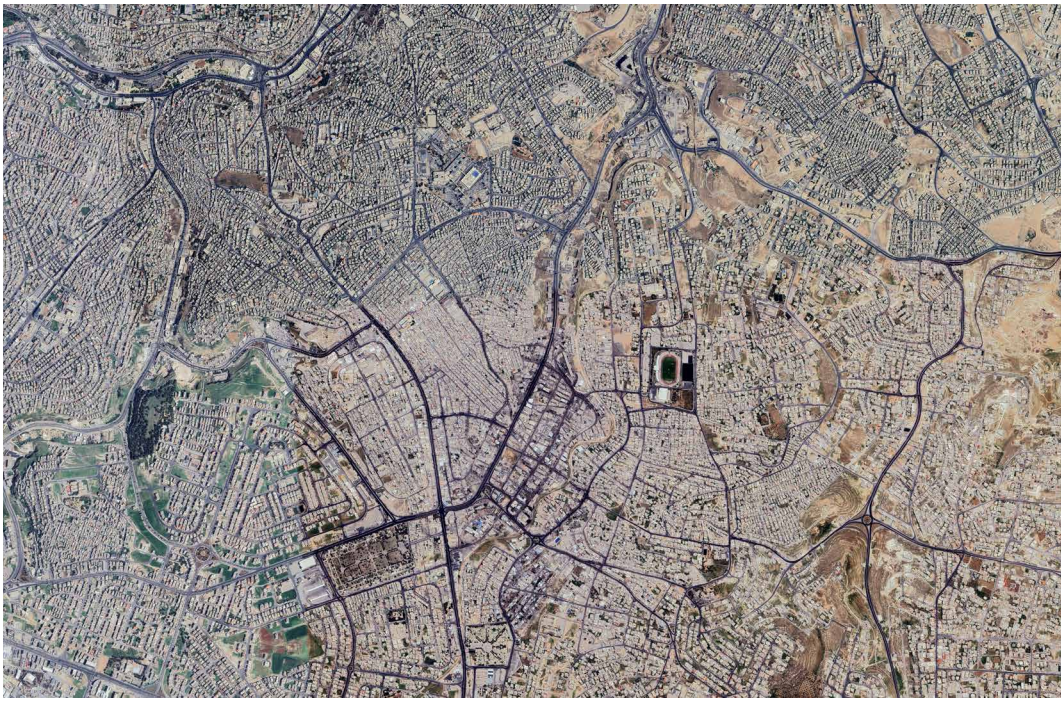


FIG. 3.4 Al Wehdat Camp nested into the surrounding context in southeast Amman as shown on Google Maps.

In the field, I kept asking myself, what distinguishes the camp from the rest of the city, spatially, legally, socially and politically?

Wanting to investigate those issues more deeply, I visited a number of institutional offices to obtain documents that would help me trace the formal boundary of the camp or the redline that was first traced in 1955 on rented land to build a Palestinian refugee camp.



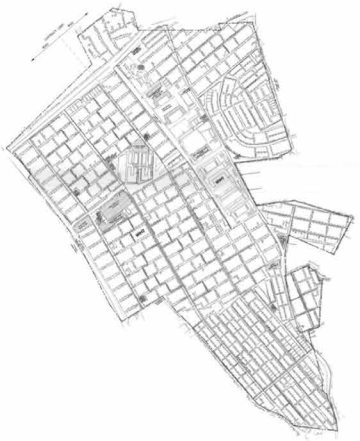
FIG. 3.5 The camp from above, nested into the city of Amman.

In the four official maps that I obtained after visiting the UNRWA office and the DPA office, the camp almost looked unrecognizable. In the aerial images and in the field, the camp was hard to distinguish from the city. In the official documents, the city was gone, and the camp was highly decontextualized, represented as a territory that was very clearly demarcated with a boundary, while being completely detached from its context as if it exists in a void, as shown in a number of examples compiled in Figure 3.6.

There was the boundary, but where was everything else?



DPA office
Head of Engineering Department in Wehdat Camp



Housing and Urban Development Cooperation Documents



DPA office
Head of Engineering Department in



UNRWA
Camp Director Office

FIG. 3.6 Institutional drawings representing Al Wehdat Camp, collected from several UNRWA and DPA offices.

TOC

What produced the boundary shown in the official drawings? What social, legal, political, spatial and economic manifestations did that boundary have in the everyday life of its inhabitants? Was that formal boundary recognized by the camp inhabitants themselves? How was that formal boundary demarcated? Was it the only one demarcating the camp? Were there lines other than the redline? What boundary-demarcating elements exist in the everyday spaces of the camp inhabitants?

3.3.1 Boundary Demarcating Elements

Territories are distinguished by the boundaries that demarcate them either architecturally, geographically, legally, politically, economically or religiously. Those boundaries are traced with the help of boundary-demarcating elements that are either imposed by decision makers or people who want to mark their territory and claim it as their own.

Boundary-demarcating elements are usually visible and easily recognized, such as a wall, a fence, a wire, a sign, or a checkpoint. Understanding and becoming aware of those boundaries is a relatively direct process, with these elements easily seen, touched, smelled, or even heard, in a manner that makes them part of the lived experience of the people who interact with them by either crossing, moving around or along these elements. Those elements are even more recognized by the people whose movement is restricted by their presence. On the other hand, a boundary could also be demarcated using invisible lines, drawn on maps and papers that are produced and used by decision makers, planners and architects as formal and legal lines that define territories and jurisdiction on an institutional level. Invisible demarcation lines do not have material or physical manifestations in the everyday reality of the people who interact with them, becoming harder to recognize and trace in reality. They could even be unknown to the people that navigate and move around them, especially if people's movement is not restricted or obstructed by their presence.

Decision makers demarcate boundaries, using both visible and invisible lines, through top-down approaches, or by what Michel de Certeau (2011) in his book, The Practice Of Everyday Life, calls strategies, making use of technical tools such as maps, drawings, and technological systems to plan, organize and control the environment, shaping the territories that people live in and interact with. Boundaries have multiple manifestations related to movement, ownership, land-use and activity, among other things that shape and influence the everyday life of the people.

The way people interact, engage, challenge or respond to these boundaries and strategies, fall under what Michel de Certeau (2011) terms tactics that are bottom-up approaches and practices that also play a role in shaping and transforming the environment. Unlike strategies, tactics are more responsive to the physical environment and come as a result of it, there to respond to the top down strategies or to challenge them and subvert their control.

3.4 The Redline: The formal boundary

3.4.1 Inside the UNRWA Office

On the walls of the UNRWA field office in Al Wehdat Camp, the first thing that I noticed during my visit in the summer of 2019 were the several maps that were hanging on the walls, seen in Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8, which I have recognized as maps of Al Wehdat Camp.

What struck me the most about the solid-and-void map shown in Figure 3.7 was that it did not respond to the typical orientation of all the other maps I had seen before, which were usually oriented towards the North. Instead, this map was orientated towards the south. The map looked rather old, printed on a paper and then later annotated and colored by hand. I stepped closer and examined the handwritten notes, which turned out to be the names of the main streets in the camp, including Sumaya Street, Al Madares Street, and Al Bareed Street, among other streets.

The notes also included the name of the main landmarks in the camp, including Al Wehdat Sports Club, the Vegetable Market, the Police Station, and the UNRWA complex. Divided by a narrow street, the UNRWA complex was divided into two parts, consisting of a number of schools and a number of administrative offices. Colored in blue, the northern part of the UNRWA complex housed the boys' schools and the camp director's office, where we were having the interview. In pink, the southern part of the complex housed the girls' school and the relief office.

Remarkably, the map did not show the camp's formal boundary, representing the camp territory instead as part of the city. On the top left corner, the words Al Wehdat Camp were also handwritten, next to a hand drawn Palestinian flag.

I looked closer, to notice some more details on the map. A number of the DPA offices were indicated and colored in red with circles around them, Al Wehdat Sports Club was labeled in Arabic, with a small drawing of a soccer ball next to it, and so was Al Ashrafieh Police Station with a small drawing of the royal crown next to it as well. Was the crown supposed to indicate that it was a governmental building?

Next to that map, a more typical map was hanging, oriented towards the north, shown in Figure 3.8, with the formal boundary of the camp cut out and overlaid against a blurred out and illegible map of the city. Again, the names of some streets and landmarks were later handwritten on the map, with the UNRWA complex demarcated using an additional sheet of blue paper that was later overlaid on the map. At the bottom, a map legend indicated that the UNRWA compound was colored in blue, with the shelters colored in white. On this more official map, Al Wehdat Camp is referred to using its official name, Amman New Camp, with two smaller maps indicating its location in Jordan, on a national scale, and its location in southern Amman, on the scale of the city.

In one representation, the initial map entirely in Arabic, depicting the camp within the city fabric and referred to by its informal name, "Al Wehdat Camp," conveys a local viewpoint. Notably, the presence of the Palestinian flag alongside the camp's name suggested a connection between the everyday life of its inhabitants and the homeland. This departure from UNRWA's typical neutrality underscored a perspective rooted in the camp's community. Conversely, the subsequent map, printed more recently, referred to the camp by its official name, "Amman New Camp," in English, and adopted a more institutional tone. It portrayed the camp as distinct from the city, emphasizing neutrality and omitting any reference to Palestine. This perspective aligned with UNRWA's role as a humanitarian agency that manages the camp and provides services to Palestinian refugees, reflecting an international viewpoint.

When I asked the UNRWA camp director about the two maps in his office, he confirmed my speculations, explaining that the second map traced the camp's formal boundary, which demarcated UNRWA's field of operations on an institutional and managerial level. On the other hand, the first map, shown in Figure 3.7, was an older map that had been hanging in the office for some time, before he started that job, used to indicate the location of the camp's main landmarks, amenities and streets, used for wayfinding.



FIG. 3.7 A solid and void map of Al Wehdat Camp Map hanging in UNRWA's camp director's office.

TOC

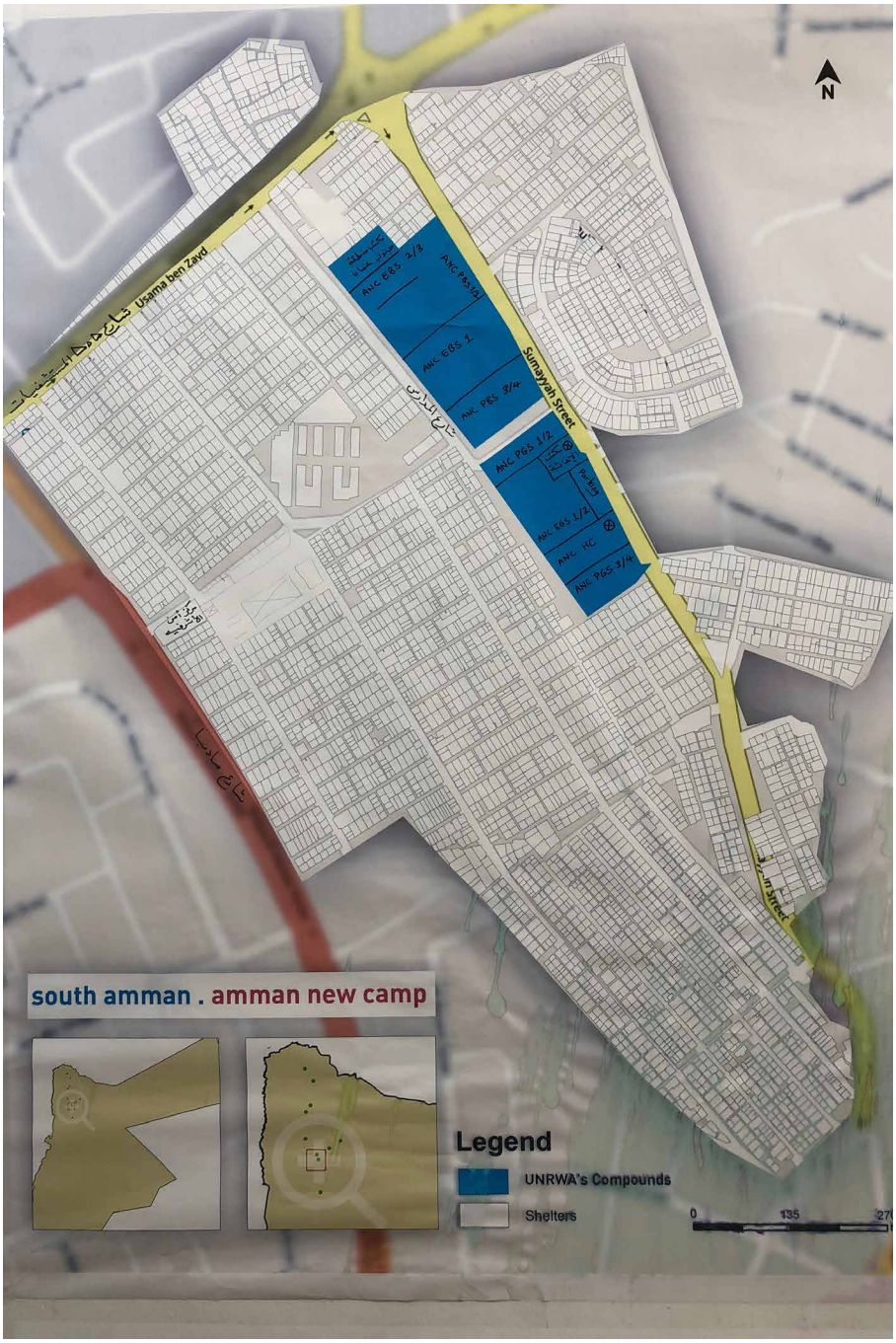


FIG. 3.8 An official UNRWA map showing Amman New Camp, existing in isolation from the city.

TOC

“Why did the camp territory look like that? What guided the process of drawing the formal camp boundary as shown in the first map?” I asked.

To answer, the director gave me a general overview of the camp’s history. In 1955, when the decision was made by Jordanian Government in coordination with UNRWA to build Al Wehdat Camp, the decision of where to locate the new camp in Amman relied on two factors: finding a location that was relatively flat to make construction and circulation easier; and finding a location where a vast area of land was owned by the same owner to make the logistical process of renting the land easier. The selection process resulted in choosing the current location because it met the criteria, with the land being quite flat and easily inhabitable, while also being entirely owned by Al Hadid family, from which the land was rented for 99 years. As for the outline of the camp territory, it was produced in relation to the land parcelization of the area, following the boundaries of the land that was owned by Al Hadid family. In other words, the land plots owned by the family were chosen, and the outer boundary came as a result of their outline, which had already been determined by the parcelization regulations and history of that area. In that sense, the land plots that were excluded from the camp demarcation, creating the irregular shape of the camp, were probably not owned by Al Hadid family.

With a total area of 0.48 square kilometers that had not officially changed since the camp’s establishment, the camp was built in two phases, with 1400 shelters constructed in the first phase in 1955 and 1260 shelters constructed in 1957 during the second phase, amounting to 2660 shelters in total. The spatial layout of the camp was organized around a grid-system of intersecting streets and alleys, between which residential blocks were designed. The camp’s building typology consisted of modular concrete shelters and not tents, which distinguished Al Wehdat Camp from the 9 other official Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan that started off with tents and gradually shifted to concrete shelters with time.

Inside the formal boundary camp and within the territory that is demarcated by the redline, the Palestinian refugees do not own the units, but were only granted the right to temporarily use them, under what is legally known as, “the right to use.” This is owing to the fact that the camp was initially established as a temporary space for humanitarian relief and also because the land on which the camp was built was never acquired by the Jordanian State, but is still being rented within the 99-year timeframe.

Almost seven decades later, without a resolution to Palestinian refugee political phenomenon, the ownership framework remains unchanged inside the formal boundary of the camp, for the land and the units.

The units are now inhabited by second, third and fourth generations of Palestinian refugees; the descendants of the first generation of Palestinian refugees whose names continue to be on the official UNRWA registration papers for these units, with extended families continuing to use the units but not own them. Those units are what Karam referred to as Wakaleh in the opening of the chapter, still managed by UNRWA within the formal boundary of the camp until today, as opposed to Qawasheen, which were residences officially owned by the families residing in them, documented formally through the Qawasheen, hence their name. A more thorough discussion of the residential units and their transformation over time will follow in **Chapter 6**.

Moreover, from an administrative perspective, the formal boundary, or the redline, demarcates UNRWA's field of operations and also that of DPA, rendering it a territory that is distinguished for its model of governance and management when compared to the rest of the city, where the more typical State institutions such as the Municipality of Amman, the Ministry of Planning, among others, are operating. According to the UNRWA camp director, as the official international entity responsible for aiding Palestinian refugees, only needing to coordinate with the DPA for specific issues, the agency ran its operations in the camp with a high level of autonomy despite the gradual decrease in its role. By saying that, I felt that the director wanted to assure me that UNRWA was still important and did not, in terms of control and management, get completely absorbed by the Jordanian State despite the change in the nature of its operations and level of control over time.

In theory, the UNRWA and the DPA do not operate outside the redline, and the other more conventional State planning institutions do not directly operate within it, but as the work of Lucas Oesch (2020) on the invisible urban planning of Jabal Al Hussein Camp has shown, things are not that clear cut for Palestinian refugee camps, and the redline that separates the camp from Amman and its past and present, is not that rigid nor fixed.

3.4.2 Inside the DPA Office

After visiting the UNRWA office, I knew that I had to listen to the other side of the story, if there was one, by visiting the DPA. The DPA had a number of field offices in the camp, and after doing some research, I visited the Engineering Office that was responsible for monitoring building regulations and issuing permits for new construction. I used the interview that I had with the head of the engineering office in 2019 to ask about the camp's architecture and transformation.

I also asked him about the camp's history and early years.In that interview, the head of the engineering office confirmed what the UNRWA Director told me about the rented land and the camp's formal boundary, explaining that to build the camp, the Jordanian Government rented 490 donums[18] of private land in the area of Al Yarmouk to build the camp. At the time, a number of the land plots surrounding that area were already inhabited, and were therefore not rented, resulting in what appears as an irregular outline of the camp. When I asked him whether he had any maps or drawings of the camp, he told me that he did, before dramatically opening a curtain that was behind his desk. Up to that point, I thought that it was covering a window, but at that moment, I realized that it was there to cover a map that was pinned to the wall. There was no window behind that curtain. He explained, "I have been working with a number of employees on digitizing this map and creating a datasheet about the residential units in the camp. It is still a work in progress and that is why I am hiding it. If you look closely, you will see each Wehda's number, it is the official number that we use in the DPA to identify that unit. Unlike the other maps, on this one, you do not see the residential block outline, but you see the actual outline for each Wehda. It is highly detailed and quite precise. This is delicate information and I wanted to develop a digital system that will help us better manage operations within the DPA."

I stepped closer to examine the map, it was rather impressive with all the details it contained. After asking for his permission, I took a picture of the map, showing it in Figure 3.9 after blurring the numbers on the units to protect the privacy of the camp inhabitants residing in them. The map did look like a work in progress, with the way it was printed, colored, and plastered in a hurry to the wall. The formal boundary of the camp was colored in yellow, with a boundary identical to the one I had seen on the UNRWA map earlier. Sumaya Street was colored in red, with its curved end more prominent once colored like that. What was kept out of that territory, the neighboring plots that were kept in white, looked like they were chipped out of the bigger piece, while the protruding parts that were colored in yellow, looked like extended limbs or additions to that bigger whole.

To me, the fixed and rigid formal boundary of the past six decades seemed arbitrary in the present, especially once superimposed on the reality of the camp as it exists today. This is something I studied after superimposing the redline, as per the official documents, on a Google maps image shown in Figure 3.10.

18 Donum is a measure of area used in areas that were previously under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, with one donum equivalent to 1,000 square meters.

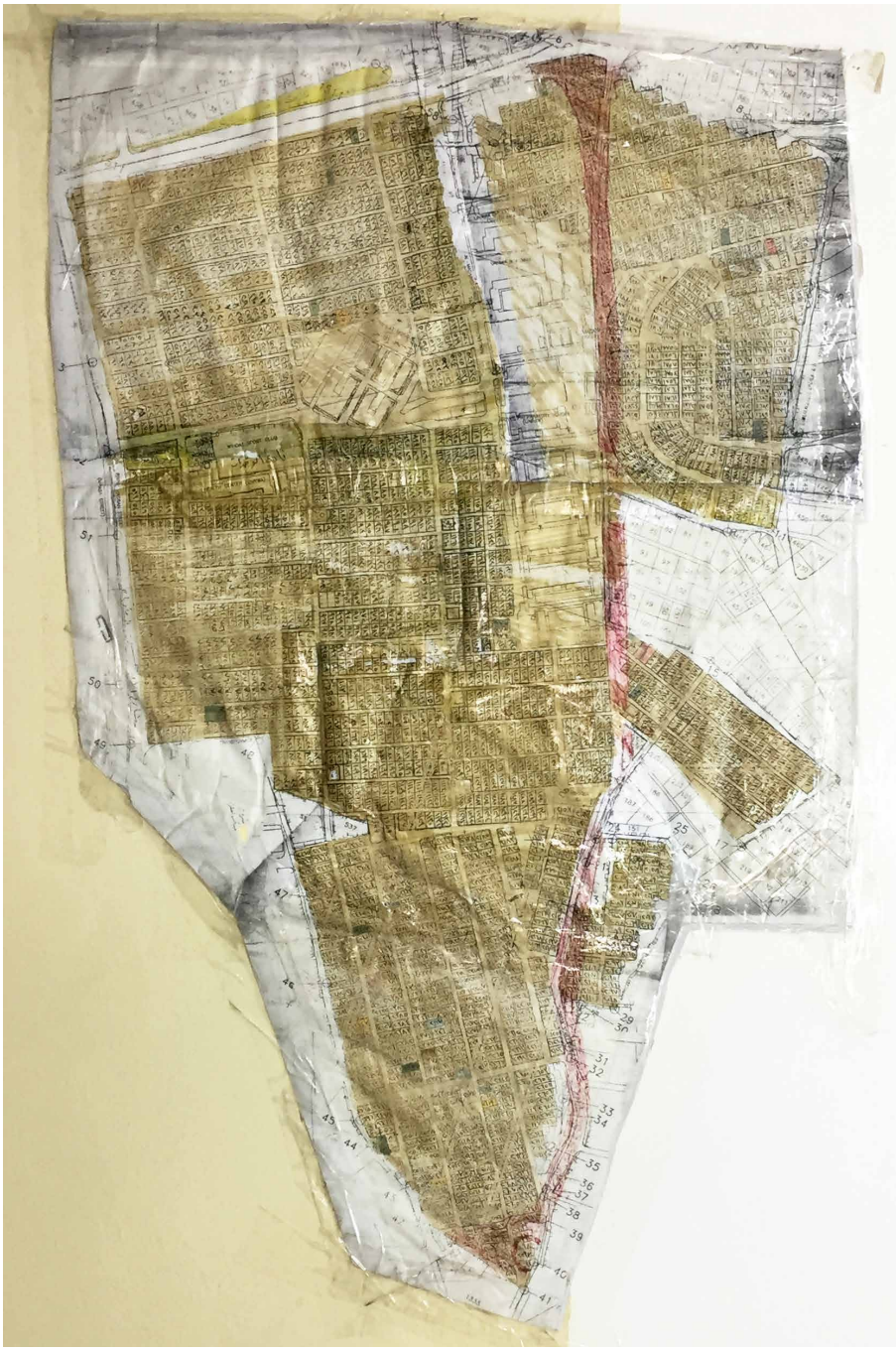


FIG. 3.9 The Map found hanging on the wall in the DPA office in Al Wehdat Camp, hidden behind the curtain. (I have blurred the image to conceal the unit numbers that were indicated on the map)

TOC

I noticed the tension between the redline and the context, looking very top-down, and encapsulating what Michel de Certeau explained about the strategies and their unresponsiveness to the existing environment. I particularly noticed how the redline stood in tension with the existing streets that surrounded the camp: Al Badiya Street from the north, Madaba Street from the west, Sumaya Street in the middle, and Al Yarmouk Street from the east.

The formal demarcation did not entirely take the existing streets into consideration, having been drawn directly in response to the existing land parcelization at the time, as explained by the UNRWA camp director.

In part, the western edge of the camp did respond to the edge of Madaba Street, and the northern edge of the camp did in part also run along Al Badiya Street, with the exception of the small addition north of the street, in a manner that indicated that one might have influenced the other at some point. I also understood that the city of Amman has drastically changed over the past six decades, and that was also the case for that area, so what appeared now in the Google maps image was not the reality of the built environment back in 1955. That redline might have not been that superimposed back when it was first drawn, especially given the relatively young age of the city at the time and the relatively unpopulated nature of that area, with the camp being considered the largest built settlement of Al Yarmouk area southeast of Amman at the time. In other words, the camp was built when there were hardly any buildings around, and its formal territory that is demarcated by a line that looks arbitrary now, might have not looked that way back in 1955 given how it was built in what was a relatively vacant area.

I was also aware of the fact that in reality, that invisible line, the redline, was hardly traceable, without any material manifestations on the ground..

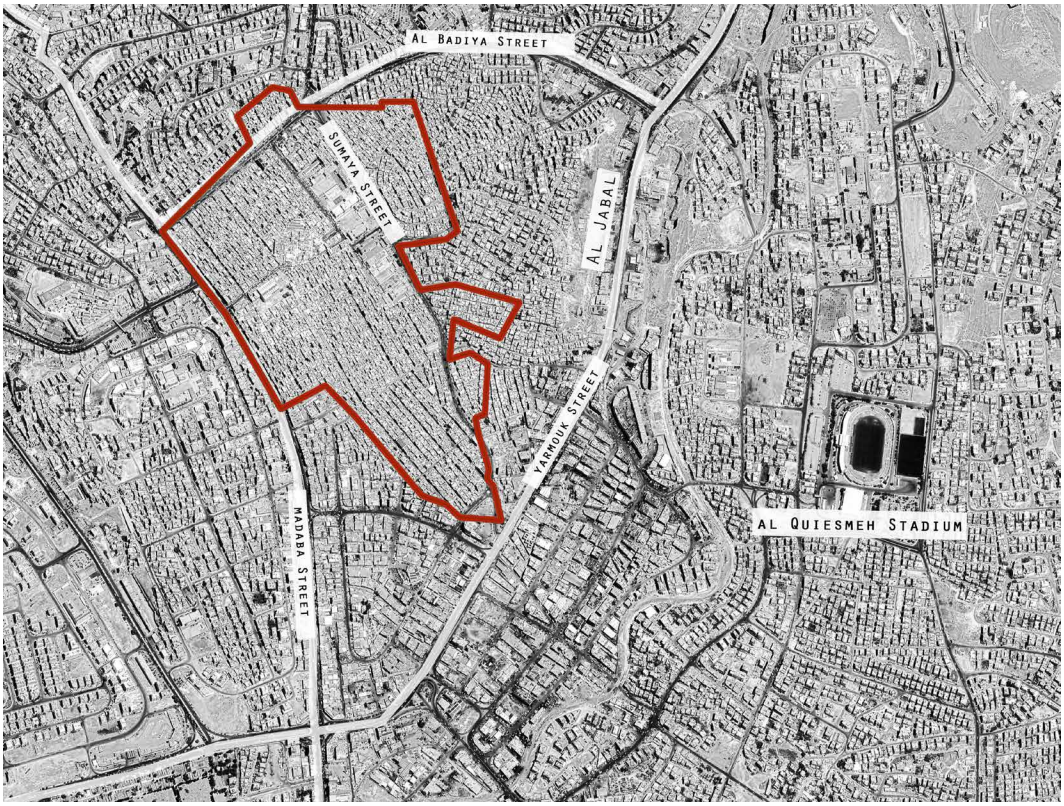


FIG. 3.10 The redline superimposed on a Google Maps image.

Inside that redline, however, land was rented and each Wehda (units) was not owned but temporarily used. Further, within the redline, UNRWA and the DPA operated as part of a hybrid model of control and management that was specific to official Palestinian refugee camps in the city.

Together, these two factors had material and tangible implications on the lives of the camp inhabitants residing within that territory. The continued presence of the redline in Amman, demarcating the formal boundary of Al Wehdat Camp, also encapsulated the continued presence of the camp as a territory that was founded in response to Al Nakba of 1948 and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian villages and towns that created the Palestinian refugee phenomena. For that reason, it holds a deep symbolic value and also a political character as a distinguished territory in the city of Amman, characterized with a doubling in space that allows the camp to exist beyond its present, temporally and spatially.

TOC

3.5 The Greenline: The informal boundary

After studying the redline and its implications and manifestations in the built environment, I was interested in knowing whether the camp's inhabitants' understanding of their territory was identical to that of the official institutions, and whether it was demarcated with the same formal boundary discussed in the previous section. As explained in the first two chapters, with reference to my research framework, I wanted to learn about the camp through its inhabitants and their personal and embodied ways of knowing, acquired through the heterogeneous everyday lived experiences in Al Wehdat Camp, from a close distance, with all the contradictions and complexities these ways of knowing encompass.

"Where, to you, is Al Wehdat Camp?" was the question that guided this investigation. By situating each camp inhabitant in the middle of that inquiry, I opened up the space of investigation to multiple answers, stepping away from the idea that there is one answer, one boundary, or one location. I was also interested in the power dynamic that would guide that investigation, and for these reasons, as explained also in **Chapter 1**, I turned to the focus group discussions, which I found was a method that would help open up the space for discussion, while allowing me to also observe the moments of tension and disagreement between the participants.

During the summer of 2021, I conducted 3 focus group discussions of 12 participants each in the community center building of Al Wehdat Camp with the help of my research facilitator, Malek. As introduced in the first chapter, each focus group session was divided over three sections. In the first section, we had a group discussion with all 12 participants during which I asked the question, "Where is this camp?" asking participants to verbally share their reflections about the camp territory so as to understand how they traced its boundary in part of a group discussion. In the second section, I asked participants to individually write down their answers to that same question on a survey I had distributed, responding to that question among other questions that will be discussed in the following chapters, allowing participants more space for individual reflection. In the third section, I grouped participants into groups of 4, before giving each of the 3 groups a basic map of the camp, seen in Figure 3.11, asking them to map the boundary of the camp on the map itself, in reference to the discussions and surveys completed in the first two sections.



FIG. 3.11 The general map of Al Wehdat Camp that I prepared and distributed to the focus group participants.

TOC

It is important to note that upon asking the question, where is the camp, I gave the participants the chance to first answer verbally, then in written format, before sharing the map with them, in a manner that minimized my intervention in their answer, and gave them the freedom to openly respond before limiting them with the physical elements in the map that I distributed. The labels on the map during the focus group were all in Arabic, but in Figure 3.11 I have translated the labels to make them more accessible to readers from a non-Arabic speaking audience.

After reviewing the findings of the focus groups' discussions to understand how the camp inhabitants demarcated the boundary of their camp, which I refer to as the greenline, I arrived at a number of conclusions that I will use this section to discuss. I will share written and verbal remarks by the participants, in addition to a number of the annotated maps they collectively worked on.
Generally speaking, I noticed how the participants used existing physical markers in the built environment as points of reference, using them as boundary-demarcating elements, as opposed to the invisible redline that the institution used to demarcate the camp boundary. Those physical markers included the existing streets, nodes and landmarks. Those findings aligned with the work of Kevin Lynch (1960) on mental maps and the five elements that to him construct the image of the city: Path - Edge - Node - Landmark - District. Streets and allies were the most prominent feature the participants used, which Streets and alleys were the most prominent feature the participants used, which Lynch referred to as paths, describing the camp as the territory that falls within those streets, surrounded by those edges from three sides. My conclusion about streets being prominent boundary-demarcating elements for the camp inhabitants were deduced from remarks such as:

"The camp has the shape of a trapezoid, or a heart, surrounded by Al Badiya Street from the north, Al Yarmouk Street from the east, Madaba Street from the west, and Rashad Alley from the south."

"The camp falls in the area from Sumaya Street to Madaba Street."

"The area between Al Yarmouk Street and Al Nadi Street."

Traffic lights and roundabouts were also frequently used as physical elements to trace the camp's boundary, which Lynch refers to as nodes, mixed up with streets and landmarks, described as points that bound the camp from the outside, acting as edges to the camp territory. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

"The camp falls in the area between Yarmouk Street, Middle East circle and Rashad Alley."

“The boundaries of the camp begin from the traffic lights of Al Badiya Street until Madaba Street.”

“The camp falls in the area between Al Badiya Traffic light all the way to Al Kayyali alley, with the same distance from Sumaya Street downwards.”

“Al Badiya Traffic light towards Sumaya Street traffic lights. In the south, towards Al Janoobi Mosque and Al Yarmouk Street. In the west, the Middle East circle.”

In other responses, the camp was described as a sum of smaller parts, with participants listing a combination of landmarks, nodes and paths that together constitute the territory of the camp as a whole. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

“The camp is in the area between Al Badiya Street and Al Yarmouk Street, including also the police station, the vegetable market, the UNRWA schools, Sumaya Street, and the East Wehdat area.”

“The area that begins with the police station, through the vegetable market, the UNRWA schools, Sumaya Street, and East Wehdat. It ends at the bottom of Sumaya Street and Rashad alley.”

“The total area of the camp is 480 donums, including the Hospitals Street, Al Yarmouk Street, and Al Badiya Street.”

“Al Nadi Street, Al Madares Street, the Hospitals Street, Lidawi Street, Sumaya Street, Ahel Al Nusra Street, Al Dawayemh Neighborhood.”

To another group of participants, the camp fell in the area between other neighborhoods or districts, distinguishing its territory by naming the neighborhoods around it, which as districts became edges along the camp’s boundary. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

“Al Wehdat Camp is Surrounded by Al Ashyrafieh from the north, Al Quiesmeh from the east, and the Middle East circle in the south.”

“We are neighbored by Al Quisemeh from the East, and Al Ashrafieyh from the North”.



FIG. 3.12 Examples of the maps that show the camp boundary as annotated by the focus group participants, also showing the elements that were used to demarcate that boundary.

TOC

The participants marked those elements on the maps that I distributed to them, with samples shown in Figure 3.12. I wanted to gain a better understanding of these elements in relation to the existing context of the camp, so I annotated them on a Google Maps image, categorized respectively as: District, Node, Path, Landmark and Edge, shown in Figure 3.13.

After studying the elements and comparing the different answers from the discussions, I concluded that to the majority of the participants, the camp boundary is the one I traced in green in Figure 3.13, which is what I will be referring to as the greenline or the informal boundary of the camp in this dissertation.

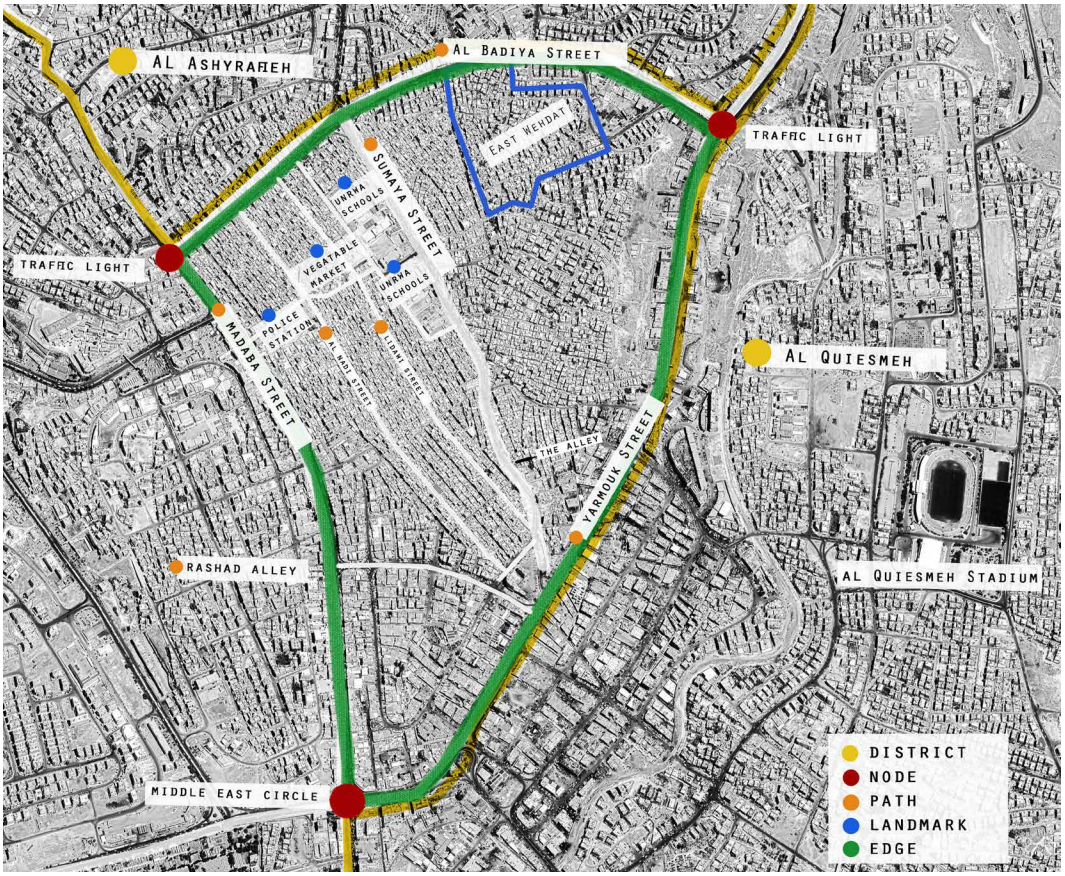


FIG. 3.13 A superimposition of the elements highlighted in the focus group discussions on a Google Maps image to show the boundary of the camp as understood by the participants.

TOC

To compare the greenline to the previously discussed redline, I superimposed both on a Google Earth Image, seen in Figure 3.14.

The first thing that I noticed was how the greenline demarcated a territory that was larger in area than that demarcated by the redline, making it appear as if the camp territory, to the camp inhabitants, has grown in time, expanding beyond the formal territory that was first demarcated by the redline in 1955. I have in fact asked participants during the focus group discussions whether they believed that the camp boundary changed in time, and whether they believe that the camp has grown in size. The answers confirmed it:

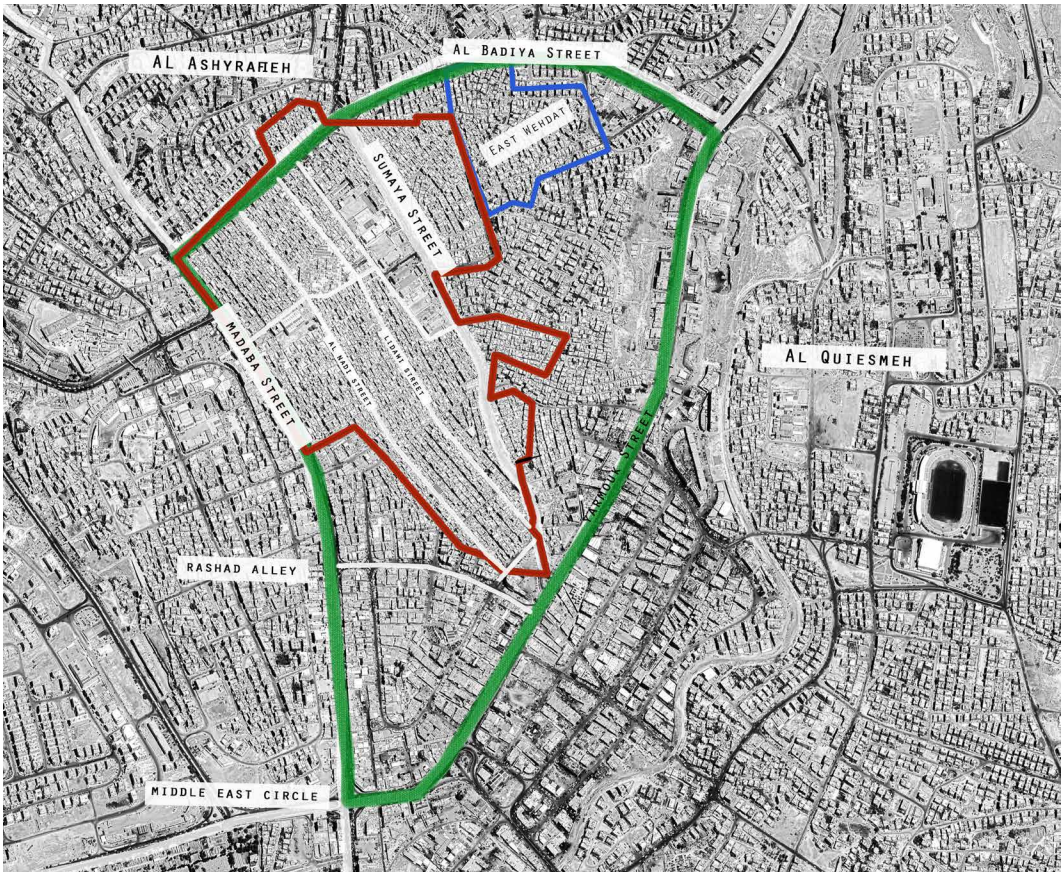


FIG. 3.14 A comparison between the redline and the greenline, representing the formal and the informal boundaries respectively.

TOC

“The boundaries of the camp changed in time, with new areas included in its territory.”
“The camp grew in time, with the widening of the streets.”
“Yes, the camp grew in time and the number of the camp inhabitants increased.”
“The camp grew in time, with several streets included to its territory.”
“Yes, some neighborhoods grew at the expense of others.”
“In the beginning, the camp consisted of one street only, but with time, it grew dramatically.”

Once again, I noticed how the streets were used as boundary-demarcating elements, viewing their addition, and their widening as processes that affected the camp boundary. A number of the responses spoke about the widening of Sumaya Street and how that was viewed as a process that affected the camp boundary. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

“The boundaries of the camp changed with the widening of Sumaya Street. The camp also grew with the increase of the number of inhabitants and the vertical expansion.”
“Land does not change nor transform, the only change was the widening of Sumaya Street and the vertical expansion.”

The participants also spoke about the natural growth in the camp population and how that also affected the camp boundary and caused it to expand. Because of that, new neighborhoods were built and included in the camp boundary, with a number of participants citing the East Wehdat neighborhood as an example. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

“The camp changed in time, with the demolitions in Sumaya Street and the addition of the area of East Wehdat and the widening of the streets.”
“The camp grew with the addition of East Wehdat.”

What was remarkable to me was how to some participants, the camp growth and the expansion of the camp boundary was the result of the camp’s vertical expansion, with the addition of new floors to the residential units. That was a conclusion I deduced from remarks such as:

“The neighborhoods did not change but expanded vertically, and the boundaries of the camp grew in time.”
“The camp grew, with neighborhoods turning into buildings with several floors.”
“The number of the camp inhabitants increased drastically, Sumaya Street was widened, and the buildings grew vertically, from a single floor with temporary metallic roofs (Zinco) to tall buildings with three floors.”

What was said about the vertical expansion signified how flat maps are and how invisible the third dimension was on these maps that I have been surveying and studying so far. From an institutional perspective, the camp was represented two-dimensionally, in a manner that did not put the same amount of emphasis on the third dimension, nor discuss or show heights and elevations.For those reasons, I knew that I had to go to the field and look more closely at the way the change in levels, whether the building heights or the change in topography, played a role in demarcating the camp territory. I also knew that I needed to visit East Wehdat and learn more about its growth and history, as an example of a neighborhood that was later added to the camp territory due to population growth and the camp overspills. Additionally, I knew that I had to look more closely at the streets and how they shaped the camp's relationship with the city, continually mentioned as the boundary-demarcating element by the focus group participants.

Altogether, the streets, the terrain, and East Wehdat are aspects that, related to movement and flows of activity, played a role in expanding the camp boundary beyond the formal redline and shaped the camp's relationship with the city, whether through connecting or disconnecting the camp to/from the city. That line of argumentation aligned with my research framework, and emphasized how the movement of bodies played a role in producing and reproducing territories and played a role in demarcating their boundary. A thorough discussion of the streets, levels, flows of activity, population overspills, and East Wehdat will follow in the next chapter based on the field visits I conducted after the focus groups. These field visits were done to further look into these elements as boundary-demarcating elements by studying them from the field.

3.6 The less obvious ways of distinguishing between the formal and the informal boundary of Al Wehdat Camp

In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the less obvious ways through which the participants in the focus group demarcated the boundary of their camp, ways that are not as material and visible, but are also ways of knowing that the participants use to distinguish the territory of the camp from the rest of the city.

During the focus group, while the majority of the camp inhabitants that were present understood the camp territory as shown in Figure 3.13, there were a number of inhabitants that were more critically aware of the existence of two camp territories: the formal boundary of the camp and the informal boundary, which grew around the overspills of the camp population, which included but were not limited to East Wehdat. Through the discussions, I understood that there were a number of ways through which the inhabitants distinguished between the formal and informal camp boundaries, or what was also referred to as the old and the new camp, with the overspills described as the new camp, given how they were built at a later stage. In that sense, the formal boundary of the camp demarcated the old camp. The new camp, on the other hand, was the area that existed outside the formal boundary of the camp, within the informal boundary of the camp. In other words, the new camp is the territory that exists between the redline and the greenline, as shown in Figure 3.15.

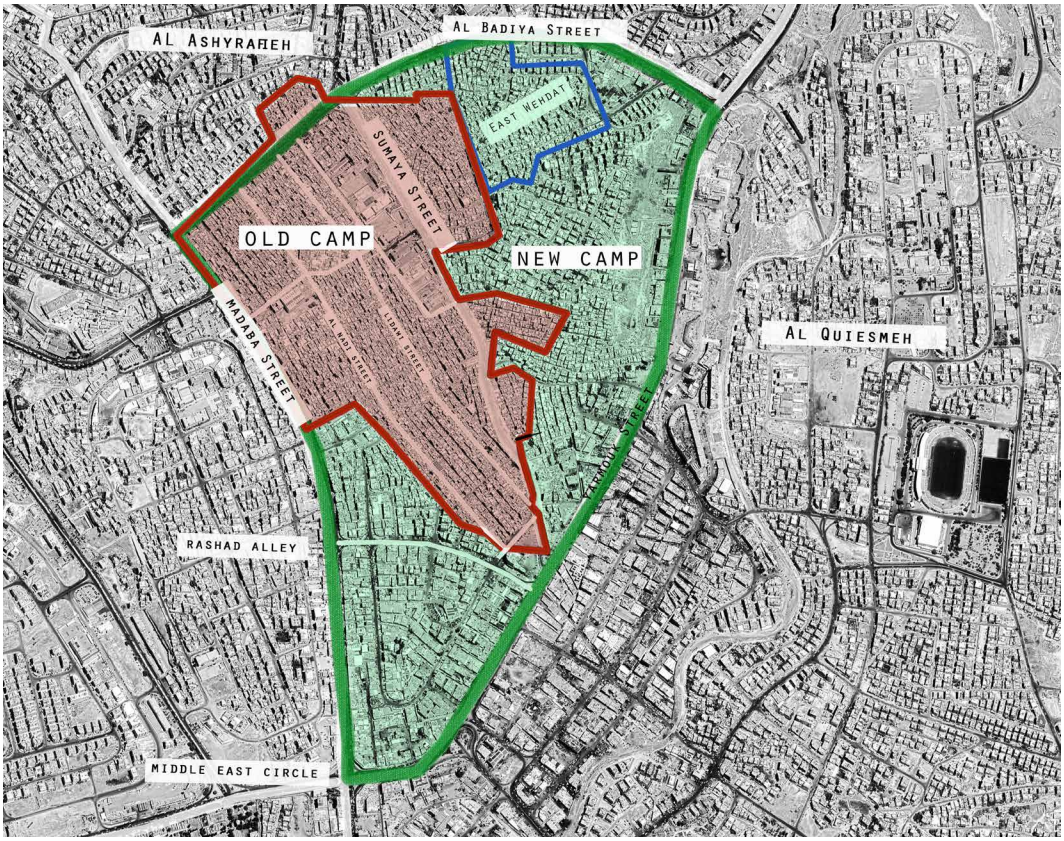


FIG. 3.15 The old and the new camp as described by the camp inhabitants.

TOC

The first way through which the participants distinguished between the old and new camp depended on the house numbers, because the units within the old camp units were not numbered, while the buildings in the new camp, whether in East Wehdat or otherwise, followed a municipal numbering system with the numbers visible on the front elevations. Some of the public stairs and alleyways within the new camp were also named, with visible name signs hanging on their walls.

Another distinguishing factor that inhabitants mentioned was the color of the uniform of the official waste collectors. That color reflected the entity the waste collector worked for, and consequently, whether that specific point the collector was working at was in the old or new camp. According to the participants, if the collector was wearing a bright blue uniform, then that indicated that he worked for UNRWA, whose field of operations was strictly limited to the old camp, within the redline, revealing that the neighborhood that the collector was working in was indeed within the old camp.If the waste collector was wearing a bright green uniform, then this indicated that he was a municipality worker, which meant that the neighborhood he was working in was in the new camp, being serviced by the Greater Amman Municipality, as yet another neighborhood in the city of Amman.

Another factor that was mentioned during the discussions was more administrative in nature, related to the university scholarships offered by the Royal Hashemite Court to Palestinian refugees in camps in Jordan. Those scholarships were limited to Palestinian refugees that were officially registered with UNRWA and were actively residing in the formal boundaries of each camp, including Al Wehdat Camp, at the time of application to the scholarship. When applying, the home address of the applicant is filled, and only students residing within the formal boundaries of each camp are considered for the scholarship by the Royal Hashemite Court committee. Having understood the way the system works, a number of students told me during the focus groups that they have found a way around that condition, by moving into their relatives' houses inside the formal boundary of the camp during their last year of school, and listing that address as their home address when applying to the scholarship. Despite the fact that the scholarship required students to reside for at least ten years in the formal boundary of the camp before becoming eligible for the scholarship, while also having UNRWA identification cards, and completing at least part of their school studies in UNRWA schools, the inspection process was not that closely monitored when it came to applicant's home address. As such, I was told that students have managed to get away with that temporary change of address and get awarded the Royal Hashemite Court scholarships as residents of the formal boundary of Al Wehdat Camp over the years, despite living outside the formal boundary of the camp.

Lastly, in reference to the conversation that I had with Karam in the opening of this chapter on the roof of their house in Sumaya Street, one of the terms that was used to distinguish between the formal and the informal boundaries of Al Wehdat Camp, or the old and new camp, was the term, Qawasheen, an Arabic word for the official documents that legally document land ownership in the governmental records. In the new camp, families had Qawasheen that officially documented their ownership of the land and the property, or were actually renting the residence from their owners. In the old camp, families had papers that documented their right to use the units, but not own them, usually documented under the name of the first family patriarch who got assigned the unit by UNRWA in 1955. As such, the distinction was made using phrases centered on whether or not the family had Qawasheen or not. If the family had Qawasheen, that meant that the family is living in the new camp. If the family didn't have Qawasheen, that meant that the family was living in the old camp, in a unit managed by the Wakaleh or the URWA. Through the discussions, it became apparent how different considerations gave financial advantages to the families living in the old camp, when compared to the families living in the new one, given how it was still officially considered a temporary space of refuge whose inhabitants were in need of financial assistance.

The first factor were the scholarships that were strictly limited to the inhabitants of the old camp. The second factor was related to ownership, given how the inhabitants of the old camp were still living rent-free in their shelters, if they were the unit's original inhabitants, as per the right-to-use framework that granted them permission to inhabit these units upon the camp's establishment by the Wakaleh. On the other hand, families residing in the new camp were in fact either paying rent to inhabit these buildings, or had actually bought them and currently hold their Qawasheen. That being said, some of the original unit inhabitants in the old camp have actually illegally sold their units or rented them to other families, as part of a black market that had emerged over the years, through unofficial papers managed by private lawyers that are not documented in any governmental records but are informally used among the camp community to regulate the process of buying, selling and renting units within the old camp. Other families have sold their units in the old camp to merchants who paid big sums of money to own these units and turn them into shops within the thriving Wehdat Market, which was an attractive deal to many camp inhabitants in the old camp who sold their units and moved out.

From above, it becomes clear how different considerations produce different living conditions for the Palestinian refugee families who are living in the old and the new camp, in a manner that plays a role in producing distinguished territories bound by two lines: the redline and the greenline.

At the same time, I noticed in the focus group discussions how the line that separated the old camp from the new camp sometimes dissolved, with the camp inhabitants referring to the entire territory as Al Wehdat Camp, which was the entire area bound by the unifying greenline that separated and distinguished the camp from the rest of the city. This larger area was seen then as a significant territory with its own political identity. From there, it could be interpreted that both the redline and the greenline are not fixed in the minds of the participants, but are ones that keep shifting in response to the topic of the conversation and the manifestations of each line economically, politically and socially. Additionally, the differences between the old camp and the new camp only became apparent when these two territories were put in comparison with each other, and seemed to dissolve when the conversation put the territory of the camp as a whole in comparison with the city of Amman. Together, the different ways the camp inhabitants understood their environment and demarcated their territory in their minds, constructed out of the knowledge they have accumulated from their everyday life, gave me insight into different ways of knowing the camp and its boundaries. Their reflections helped me understand how a line that was drawn on a map by a decision maker manifested in their everyday environments. I also learned how they relied on that same environment for physical elements and markers that they used to territorialize their camp and draw lines that shaped their different, everyday spaces. Based mostly on their lived experiences and engagements with the different ownership frameworks, flows of displacement, urban infrastructure and waves of displacement, the camp inhabitants built a variety of mental maps demarcating their camp territory.

To conclude this chapter, I argue that the temporality of the camp when viewed from an ownership, administrative, and symbolic perspective stands in great tension with the more permanent status of the camp when viewed from a more material and physical perspective, given how much the camp has transformed in the past six decades. Today, the architecture of the camp with its building typology, materials and morphology is hardly any different from that of the surrounding context, which was something I was reminded of whenever I looked at the camp from above, from another one of its roofs, like in a later day of that summer of 2022. Demarcating boundary lines, whether red or green, are drawn on the ground or in the minds of the people, but they do not always shape the vertical dimension of the camp or its architecture, which when looked at from the roof shown in Figure 3.16, seems highly integrated into the city. It seemed like the further I moved up and the further I moved away from the material reality of everyday life, the fewer boundaries there were. Compared to land, the sky had no borders. Movement was also less obstructed, with an endless number of paths that allowed bodies to travel distances without requiring any papers or legal documents. *Is that why birds inhabited the sky and is that why refugees spoke about birds so fondly?*



FIG. 3.16 The camp as seen from one of its roofs, against the backdrop of the city.

TOC



TOC


TOC

4 The Terrain, the Overspills, the Streets, and the Markets

4.0 Al Jabal

"How can I reach Al Jabal?"

"Keep walking down this path and then turn left. You will find it right around the corner."

So Al Jabal was a real place. I had my doubts, not sure whether anyone knew Al Jabal other than Ali. In Arabic, the word Al Jabal translates to, the mountain, but after my discussion with Ali, I understood that he and his friends used it to refer to the cliff of the mountain where they hung out as teenagers, east of Al Wehdat Camp. For those reasons, and while telling this particular story, I will use Al Jabal the way Ali used it, to refer to the cliff rather than the whole mountain. When referring to the whole mountain, I will be using the word mountain, to help distinguish between the two.

Remarkably, the entire Al Wehdat Camp sat on the plateau of that mountain, but it almost sounded like the mountain was more recognized by its cliff, as if the camp inhabitants themselves did not know they were inhabiting a mountain, but knew they neighbored a cliff. Al Jabal overlooked Al Yarmouk Street, which flowed at the foot of the mountain like a river, bustling with traffic and activity, serving as an arterial street that connected different neighborhoods in the area of southeast Amman.

On the opposite side of that mountain was another mountain that carried the name of Al Quisemeh, another neighborhood in that area that was most famously known for Al Quisemeh Stadium, where local soccer teams competed nationally. Ali and his friends used to gather at Al Jabal, to enjoy the bright lights of Al Quisemeh Stadium, which despite being positioned on the opposite mountain, had strong floodlights and loud sounds that would travel across, bridging the distance between the two mountains. Because of the lack of open spaces in the camp, which was highly compact and heavily populated, Al Jabal with what it offered of openness, despite its steep inclination, presented the camp youth with a breathing space at a safe distance from the eyes of their families and neighbors and outside their radius of surveillance.

According to Ali, when Sumaya Street was widened, tens of houses were demolished in the process. Once the demolition was completed, tractors moved the rubble and dumped them at Al Jabal. Once again, that spot was chosen for the lack of other alternative open spaces. At the time, Ali and his friends extracted what they could from between the rubble; metal bars, copper wires and steel parts, and sold them for a handful of coins to construction shops. Ali also mentioned how the widening of Sumaya Street fragmented the fabric of the camp, dividing it into two parts: the neighborhoods east of Sumaya Street and the neighborhoods west of it.Up until then, I have never been to that part of the camp, having never navigated the area east of Sumaya Street, because I had focused my research on the area that was formally recognized as Al Wehdat Camp in the official documents, located west of the street, or what I had previously described as the old camp in the previous chapter.

Walking out of the old camp, I would typically find Sumaya Street in front of me and it somehow made me think that this was the camp's edge, that what existed beyond it was no longer my field of study; that it was no longer the camp, but was rather the city. After the focus group discussions and learning about the greenline, I decided to head east, to visit the new camp.



FIG. 4.1 Sumaya Street as an edge where the camp ends.



FIG. 4.2 Al Jabal, a cliff that connects the camp with the city

TOC

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have studied the production of both the redline and the greenline, the formal and the informal boundaries of Al Wehdat Camp, with the former being demarcated as an invisible line on a map, and the latter being demarcated in relation to a number of physical markers and considerations, shown again in Figure 4.3.

In this chapter, I will continue the discussion on the greenline and step closer to the ground, trying to understand both the production and the manifestation of the informal boundary in the everyday life of the camp inhabitants. More specifically, I will be studying three dimensions that have played a role in the production of the greenline that have been introduced in the previous chapter, which are: the terrain and the camp's relation with the city, the camp growth and population overspills, and the streets, markets and the flows of activity.

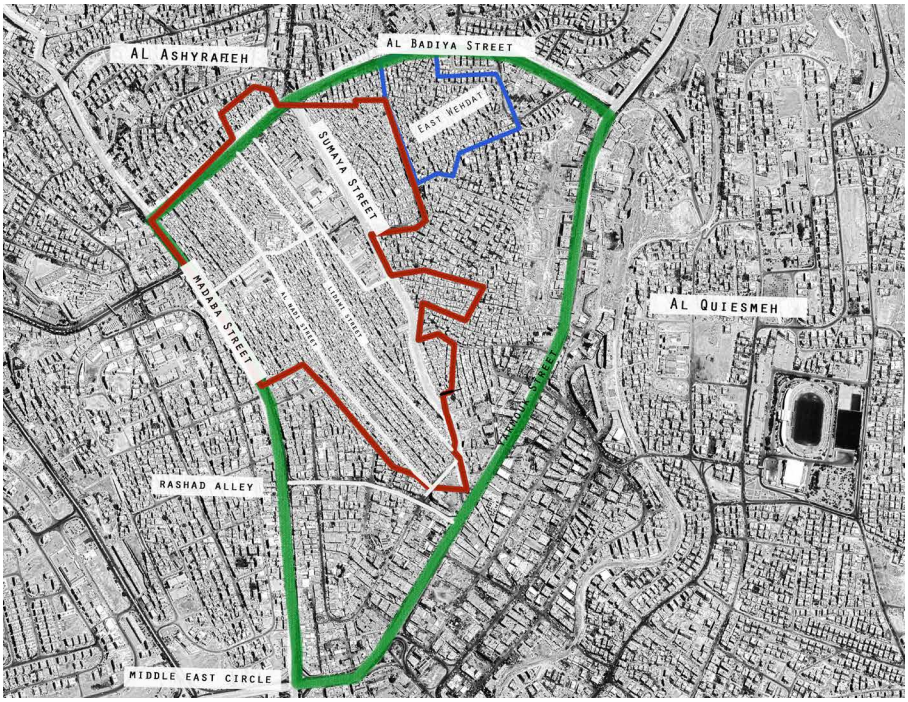


FIG. 4.3 The redline and the greenline.

TOC

4.2 The Greenline: A Dynamic and Transformative boundary

After relying on the focus groups and my field observations to learn more about the way the camp inhabitants understood the territory of their camp and its relation with the city, I will conduct a more thorough study of the three dimensions I have mentioned to better understand their manifestations from a closer and more intimate distance, relying on my framework of body-movement-territory to arrive to answer to my question, which is: Where is the camp? Moreover, I will be also looking at the way the boundary-demarcating elements have not only influenced the camp's relation with the city, but also the way these elements have influenced the camp's relation with itself and its different neighborhoods.

I will focus on the way the boundary-demarcating elements have influenced the spread of the market and the gradual change of the camp's activities, in addition to the gendering of the camp's spaces and the levels of safety around the camp's neighborhoods.

Unlike what the redline and the institutional maps suggest, the territory that is demarcated with the greenline is dynamic, heterogeneous and is characterized with a multiplicity of activities and lived experiences, continually transforming and changing over time. Moreover, the greenline itself is not static but rather dynamic in the sense that it is not fixed in place and does not rigidly isolate the camp from the city. Instead, it is a boundary that shifts, transforms and moves with the flows of bodies and paths of activity, opening up the camp entirely to the city in certain instances and connecting its fabric with that of Amman, while also disconnecting the camp from the city in other instances by explicitly demarcating the camp as a distinguished territory with its own social, economic, and political dimensions; one that is significant for the vital connection it still has with Palestine, the home-land.

By studying the three dimensions (the terrain and the camp's relation with the city, the camp growth and population overspills, the streets and the flows of activity) I will also study the influence they have on connecting and disconnecting the camp from the city, in relation to the greenline itself and the flows of bodies and activity coming into and out of the camp.

4.2.1 The Terrain and the camp's relationship with the city.

From above, the land looks flat at first glance, regardless of the existing terrain and the change in contour. The maps that I discussed in the previous chapter do not show the topography either, representing the camp as if it were flat. This does not capture the reality of the everyday life in the camp, especially when it comes to the body and movement. On the ground, the topography of the land is experienced in the body, in the joints and in the muscles as one moves around a site with a steep topography, recognizing the added pressure of climbing up or down a steep hill. On some maps, there are of course contour lines that represent the topography, but how easy is it to recognize their meaning in the lives of the people who move around them? What do they interrupt, when do they speed up and when do they slow down?

In my interview with the UNRWA camp director, discussed in the previous chapter, he explained to me how finding a land with a relatively flat topography was one of the criteria that the Jordanian Government relied on when choosing the location of Al Wehdat Camp to make the process of building, managing and moving around the camp easier for both the institutions managing the camp and its inhabitants. The flatter topography made the camp more accessible and easier to navigate, both on foot and with vehicles. In my field visits to the camp, I realized that he was right, because inside the formal boundary of the camp, inside the redline, west of Sumaya Street, the topography was relatively flat, making the flows of movement and activity run smoothly around the camp's different neighborhoods.

On the other hand, things were different in the area east of Sumaya Street, which fell inside the greenline, the new camp. The first time I visited that area I noticed how the slope changed around the different neighborhoods and streets, going up and down, creating a variety of experiences as I moved around. Among the aspects that were shaped by the terrain were movement, activity, and visibility, which together played a role in influencing the camp's relation with the city. In this section, I will discuss a number of spots where that change in terrain and its manifestations were most notable. Doing so will allow me to discuss the manifestations in a more detailed manner from a closer distance and will present these spots as examples of the way they shape the everyday life of the camp inhabitants, without claiming I studied the entirety of the territory or investigated all the spots and learned about all the stories.

The manner through which I have arrived at these spots were through my spatio-temporal intersections with the camp inhabitants, beginning with Ali whose stories about Al Jabal and other spots have begun this investigation into the terrain, the camp, and the city.

4.2.1.1 Visual Connections: Al Jabal as a lookout to Al Quisemeh Stadium and the city

After my conversation with Ali, I knew I needed to visit Al Jabal, so I parked my car and walked across Sumaya Street to the other side, making my way to the area east of the street, having previously spent the majority of my time west of it, in the territory that was demarcated by the redline. Crossing Sumaya Street, both a line on the map and also an edge of the old camp, I was reminded of Kevin Lynch's (1960) mental maps and the five elements that, to him, construct the image of the city: Path – Edge – Node – Landmark – District.

To me, Sumaya Street acted as an edge to the camp, demarcating the camp territory and distinguishing it from the rest of the city. For Ali and other camp inhabitants, the camp extended beyond that and Sumaya Street was a path that ran in the center of the camp. When widened, this street divided the whole of the camp into two areas, east and west of the street, or what he also referred to as the old camp and new camp. The eastern part is considered new, having developed as a result of the population overspills from the old camp into the surrounding land plots. Because of that, despite the fact that Al Jabal was outside the formal boundary, to Ali, as someone who was born and raised in Al Wehdat Camp, Al Jabal was part of his life in the camp; a territory that was not demarcated by invisible institutional lines that distinguished the camp from the rest of the city, but was rather shaped by his lived experiences, memories, and patterns of activity between the camp and Al Jabal.

Al Jabal, which to Ali was a node at which he and his friends gathered, became a landmark that I was now in search of on the day of my visit. I used Ali's description to get there. East of Sumaya Street, the terrain was more dramatic and challenging to navigate. I felt the presence of the mountain increase as I approached Al Jabal. I walked through narrow alleys and steep streets until Google Maps signaled my arrival.

"How can I reach Al Jabal?" I asked an old lady sitting in front of her house. "Keep walking down this path and then turn left. You will find it right around the corner"

I went down a few steps, turned around a sharp corner and there it was, Al Jabal in its full glory.

The world seemed to open up.

Uninterrupted by the compact neighborhoods, the narrow streets and the electricity cables that had up to that point swallowed up the sky, my line of vision was finally unleashed, like a bird that had escaped the cage. I observed that bird, as it shot into the blueness of the sky, along my line of vision, crossing the valley and reaching the opposite mountain, captured in Figure 4.4.



FIG. 4.4 Jabal Al Quisemeh as seen from Al Jabal, also showing Al Quisemeh Stadium.

From where I was standing, I was finally able to see and hear Amman, no longer isolated from the surrounding context by the camp's buildings that seemed to lock the area on itself, like a concrete fort. It was an interesting moment, standing there at the edge, where the camp and the city met each other and where I was able to situate myself and the camp within the larger context of Amman. Ali was right, Al Jabal was perfectly positioned opposite to the Stadium. Despite the fact that it was daytime, I imagined the thrill of standing across the floodlights, watching the soccer games from here, as Al Wehdat Sports Club played against its opponents and nationally represented the camp and its inhabitants. I remembered that one camp inhabitant had once told me, "The entire camp would shake whenever Al Wehdat Club scored in Al Quisemeh Stadium. All of the camp would turn into an open arena, cheering for the club.

Al Wehdat Camp did not only represent us, it represented Palestinian refugees everywhere."

The boundary of the camp territory seemed to expand the more I tried to trace it, stretching more and more to include more parts of the city into the definition of the camp's territory.

First was the formal boundary, then the informal boundary, then was Al Jabal, and now the stadium. Did the Stadium not also stretch the boundary of the camp all the way to the area of Al Quisemeh, given how integral those games were to the camp inhabitants and the symbolic role Al Wehdat Camp played on a national scale? The events that took place in October of 2022 further affirmed my argument, when the Jordan Football Association decided to move the soccer game between Al Wehdat Sports Club and its national rivalry Al-Faisaly Soccer Club, scheduled to take place in Al Quisemeh Stadium, or what is officially known as King Abdullah II Stadium, to Al-Hasan Stadium in the city of Irbid, almost 100 kilometers away from its intended location. In the official released statement, officials explained that this relocation was better for everyone's safety, having decided to move the game to a more neutral field to prevent potential clashes between the clubs' fans, after a series of heated events prior to that decision (Al Ghad, 2022). In that sense, I was reassured that governmental officials, not only fans, also saw Al Quisemeh Stadium as part of Al Wehdat Camp, or at least, as part of its territory, or an unneutral location.

I looked again at the valley that flowed in the space between the two mountains, observing the way Al Yarmouk Street ran along the valley and the way cars heavily occupied its space. The valley was known as Wadi Al Remam, explicitly demarcating the edge of the new camp through the way it created a strong moment of topographical disconnection along the city's terrain. Wadi Al Remam, as shown in Figure 4.5, disconnected the tissue of the camp from the city and strictly stopped the natural growth of its neighborhoods, but what about the noises, the lights, and the lines of vision that still managed to travel in between and across the valley?

It was mentioned in many conversations with the camp inhabitants that a good number of them have moved to the area of Al Quisemeh over the years, seeking to improve their living conditions, to live in safer and less crowded neighborhoods and in bigger and better ventilated houses — while staying in close proximity to Al Wehdat Camp, close to their families and friends and the everyday life they were accustomed to



FIG. 4.5 Wadi Al Remam and the busy Al Yarmouk Street as seen from Al Jabal.

In that sense, it was not only sound and light that was traveling from Al Quisemeh to Al Wehdat Camp, but also people who were moving in the opposite direction as part of the social sprawl that further blurred the boundary between the camp, Al Jabal, Al Quisemeh and the city. To better illustrate the spatial relations mentioned above, I drew the section that is shown in Figure 4.6, relying on my field visits, photographs, observations and the topographical maps of that area.

After having visited Al Jabal and observed Al Quisemeh Stadium and reflected on the camp's edge from there, I decided that I had to switch positions and stand on the opposite mountain, and observe Al Jabal from across, from the area of Al Quiesmeh. I returned to my car, opened Google Maps, and dropped a pin at a location directly opposite to Al Jabal. I returned to where I had parked my car in Sumaya Street and entered the eastern part of the camp, the one that I had just discovered on foot, with my car this time. The streets were remarkably narrow and were even harder to navigate with the car. After hitting a few dead-ends, I slowly began to drive down the cliff, making my way to Al Yarmouk Street.

At the traffic light, I quickly took a picture of the camp, as seen from the bottom of the valley, from Al Yarmouk Street, observing the way the camp looked from that point of view, and the clarity with which I got to observe Al Jabal, clearly appearing as the cliff it is on the right of the street, as seen in Figure 4.7.

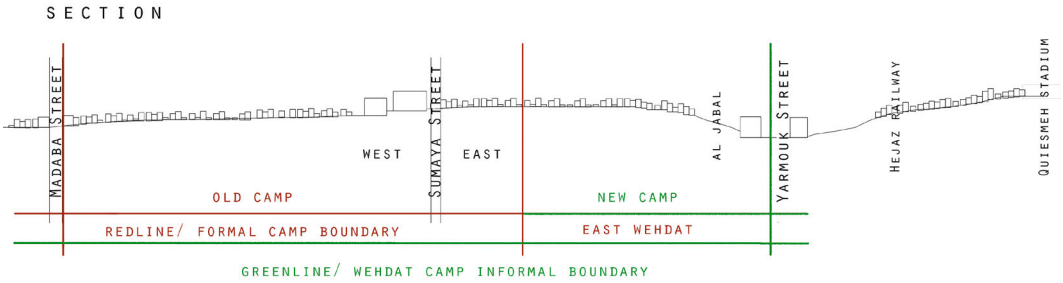


FIG. 4.6 A section through the formal and the informal boundaries of the camp, showing the terrain, Al Jabal, Al Yarmouk Street and Al Quiesmeh Stadium.

Taking a left turn from there, I reached the other side of the street and slowly began my ascent along the slope of Al Quisemeh, carefully driving up until I reached the location that I had marked on Google Maps. I parked my car and looked across, to find Al Jabal and Al Wehdat Camp, looking like they were coming out of the mountain, as seen in Figure 4.8.

TOC



FIG. 4.7 Al Jabal on the right side and Al Wehdat Camp as seen from Al Yarmouk Street.



FIG. 4.8 Al Wehdat Camp and Al Jabal as seen from Al Quisemeh.

TOC

Up until that moment, I had not been able to get a proper view of the camp because of the high level of density of that area, making it impossible to trace the camp's edge. Al Wehdat Camp was nested into the fabric of the city in a way that made it hard to see it as a distinguished territory, as a Palestinian refugee camp, as Al Wehdat Camp. Standing there, I was able to see it properly for the first time, with the huge distance between us allowing me a more comprehensive view of the camp as a whole.

Up until then, I felt that I had only seen it in parts, in fragments, standing too close to it to be able to see it as a whole. Looking at the camp from across, I was reminded of a quote by Ibrahim Nasrallah (2009) in his novel, who wrote about this exact location and said, "There, to the east, in the area that spread between the last room of the camp and the railway, extending over Wadi Al Remam and the stone quarries, over there, was where they discovered themselves." (Nasrallah, 2009, p.78)

I remembered that quote because I realized that over there, was where I saw the camp for the first time, even though in the quote, Ibrahim Nasrallah was referring to his adolescent years and the experience of growing up in Al Wehdat. For both of us, the area that spread between the last room of the camp and the railway presented a moment of deep reflection and new-found realizations.

Seeing the edge of the camp helped me see the camp as a whole, knowing through its edge that there was where it began, and also where it ended, depending on how you looked at it.

Wanting to reflect on my own experience of visiting the camp and observing its different edges , I drew a mental map of what I had seen, heard, and interacted with, attempting to understand the camp's territory and its spatial relation with the city, as seen in Figure 4.9.

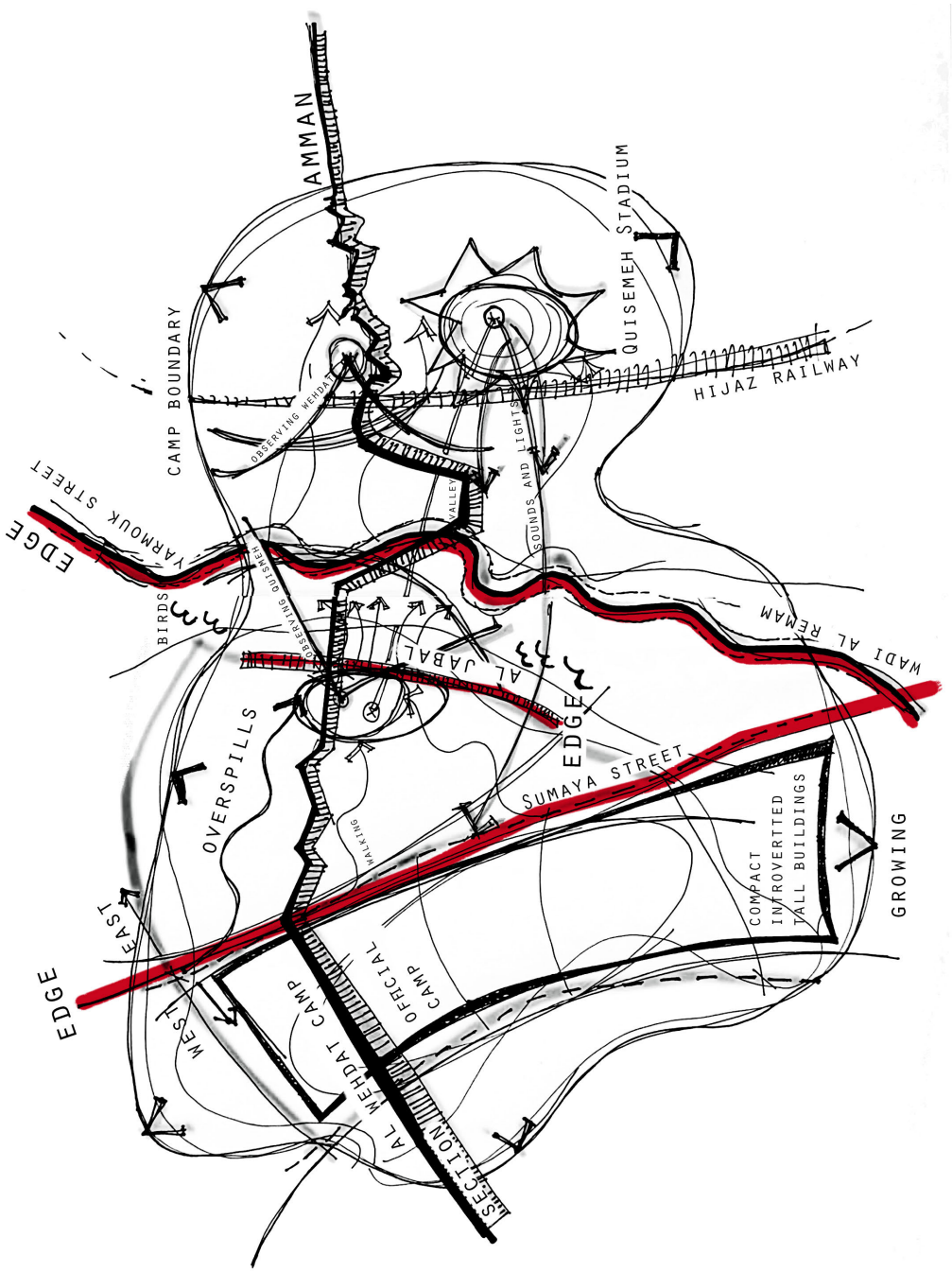


FIG. 4.9 My mental map of Al Wehdat Camp and its edges.

TOC

4.2.1.2 Physical Disconnections: Al Jabal as a body standing between the camp and the city

First, I used Al Jabal to situate the camp within and in relation to the city by framing it as a lookout that connects the camp with Amman through the endless networks of views and the presence of Al Quiesmeh Stadium on the opposite side. Through that framing, I studied Al Jabal as a surface, as a two dimensional layer that people moved along, climbing up and down its slope. Secondly, I aim to study Al Jabal as a physical body that worked on disconnecting the camp from the city, by interrupting the continuity of the camp activities and the flow of movement on the ground. As such, I will be studying Al Jabal as a volume, with a skin and an inside, and this is why I am using the word body to describe it, in line with my research framework as well. The reason that I would be referring to Al Jabal which is essentially a geographical element of the landscape as a body, is for the way that word represents it as a 3 dimensional volume, with a mass and a volume.

Despite the fact that a portion of the camp inhabitants have moved to Al Quiesmeh over the years, as previously discussed, it was not a direct growth of the camp fabric into the surrounding areas, nor was it a process of direct overspills, but was rather a more complex extension of the camp population into the rest of the city. I argue that this is a process of urban sprawl that would have continued more organically, with a higher intensity and speed, had it not been for the presence of Al Jabal and its steep cliff that disconnected the camp from the city. There was no more land for the camp to keep growing on, due to the valley and the interrupted terrain.

On my second visit to Al Jabal, I was reminded of how remarkable the view was. Instead of focusing my vision on the opposite mountain, the way I did last time, I tried to stay focused on looking downward and engage with the cliff's volume and slope. My line of vision this time was not a bird that flew across, but rather one that slowly walked down the hill, on foot, with the view seen in Figure 4.10.



FIG. 4.10 Al Jabal, a body that disconnects the camp from the city.

Realizing that I wouldn't be able to access the paved path in front of me because of the rubble, I changed direction and continued down the footpath that was produced through the movement of people down the slope. It was remarkable to think how people have turned their everyday paths of movement into a tangible trail across Al Jabal's skin. On my way down, I stopped to look at a couch that was left along the path, poetically representing a pause along a trail of movement. Someone must have enjoyed sitting in that spot, seen in Figure 4.11.

The city of Amman began to appear in front of me in a more distant background, with the movement of the path clearly visible against the body of Al Jabal, seen in Figure 4.12.



FIG. 4.11 A pause, a stop, along a path of movement.



FIG. 4.12 The camp in the foreground, and the city in the background.



FIG. 4.13 The descend concludes in Al Yarmouk Street.

The closer I moved towards Al Yarmouk Street, the louder the noise got, with the bustling of the cars, people and activity, shown in Figure 4.13. I concluded my descent in Al Yarmouk Street, after having reached the foot of Al Jabal, to where the land was flat again.

Al Yarmouk Street was an active and busy commercial street in the area of east Amman, lined up with a variety of shops and warehouses. In the part where I was walking, a number of huge warehouses were lined up in huge plots that were cut out of the cliff, like the plot shown in Figure 4.14 that constituted a parking lot, with a makeshift mosque in the middle of it. The sharp cut was quite dramatic, revealing layers of the cliff's body that revealed the passing of time and the different natural and man-made processes that Al Jabal has gone through.



FIG. 4.14 A sharp cut through Al Jabal's body reveals its different layers and the passing of time.

At the bottom, I walked in Al Yarmouk Street, looking up every now and then at the camp, which at that point was above me. The camp actually sits on a mountain. It was quite remarkable to think about how much my perception of the camp and its relation to the city was influenced by where I was standing in relation to it. Next to it, inside it, over it, and this time, I was under it.

The huge vertical distance between Al Yarmouk Street and the camp at the top made it easy to forget that the camp was there sometimes, with the cliff of the mountain appearing like a huge wall that one would walk along, which was a feature that was not unique to that area but was quite common around Amman's different slopes and hills, with the topography of the city producing that kind of disconnection between areas on different levels.

The camp was at the top, while heavy flows of activity and people moved in the valley, in what felt like two parallel realities. There was the camp, and then there was the city, with the huge vertical distance between the camp and Al Yarmouk Street, clearly shown in Figure 4.15.



FIG. 4.15 The camp at the top, and the city at the bottom.

4.2.1.3 Tal'et Al Amaneh and the Valley: Climbing up to the camp

In Arabic, the word Tal'et means ascent or rise, usually used to refer to a sloped street. Because Amman is a hilly city built along the slopes of seven mountains, it is quite common to refer to locations using the word Tal'et, after linking it with a specific landmark such as a building, saying things like Tal'et Al Madraseh for example, which literally translates to the ascent of the school, used to refer to the sloped street next to a school in a given area, as a tool of wayfinding.

The opposite of the word Tal'et is the word Nazlet, which means descent, also used to refer to sloped streets. I cannot say why some sloped streets are considered ascents and others descents, when each street could actually be both, depending on the direction of movement, but it could arguably have to do with the direction of the heavier flow of traffic, whether that street is usually approached from the bottom or the top, making it known as a Tal'et or a Nazlet for the people living in that area.

In Al Wehdat Camp, Tal'et Al Amaneh, translating to the ascent of the municipality, kept coming up in my conversations with some of the camp inhabitants due to the presence of one of the Amman municipality's buildings along that street, rendering that spot as one that was relatively known for the camp inhabitants. Its significance was for a number of reasons. In one conversation with a young man from the camp, he shared with me stories about Tal'et Al Amaneh: "I can argue that Tal'et Al Amaneh has played a role in shaping the character of many of the camp's youth. You can write that down in your research." Said Fadi, laughing. "When I was a student, the taxi drivers that I rode with did not agree to drive up Tal'et Al Amaneh during the winter, because of how steep that slope was and how challenging it was for their cars to navigate that slippery slope. They would drop me off at the foot of the street and I had to walk up in the freezing cold to get to my house. That is the kind of experience that stays imprinted in your memory and in your body."

The act of walking up that street during winter, with all the hardships that came with it, was one example of the camp inhabitants' relationship with the camp's slopes and how they presented themselves in their memories and everyday experiences as part of the many hardships they were confronted with while living in the camp. Tal'et Al Amaneh was also described as an entry point to Al Wehdat Camp for people arriving from Al Badiya Street, north of the camp, and also from Al Yarmouk Street, discussed in the previous section, with the latter acting as an arterial street connecting several areas in that part of the city with each other. I used the descriptions of the inhabitants to locate Tal'et Al Amaneh on a Google Maps image, shown in Figure 4.16, colored in blue. In the same image, I also showed the greenline and the redline, to help relate the discussion to the two boundaries, in addition to Al Amaneh (Municipality) building, located at the lower end of the street. Tal'et Al Amaneh was located close to the corner where Al Badiya Street met Al Yarmouk Street, with their intersection known as Al Thalatheen Traffic Light (The 30 Traffic Light).

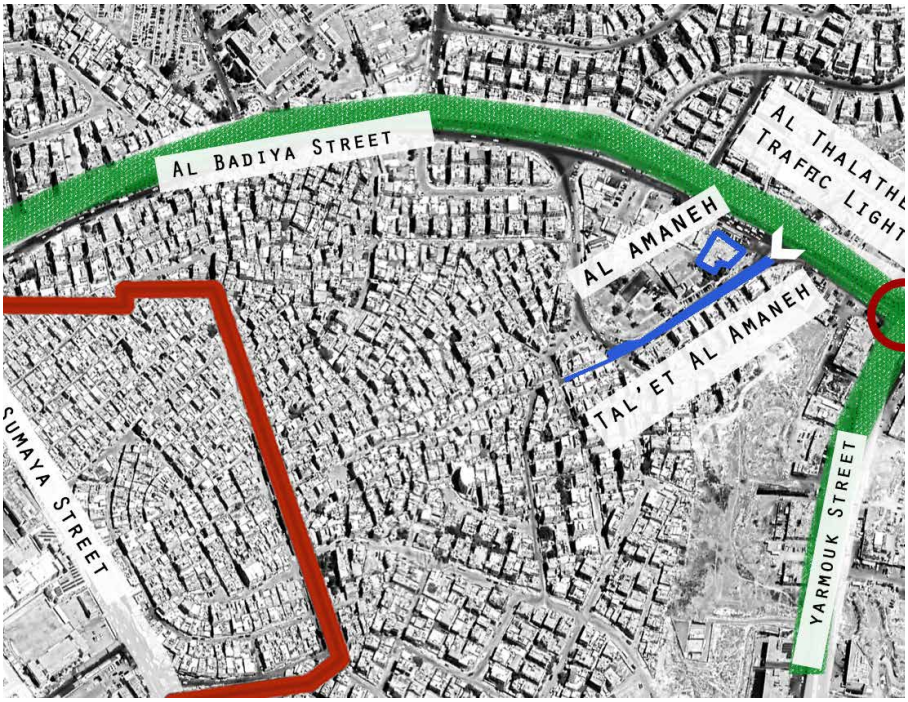


FIG. 4.16 The location of Tal'et Al Amaneh in relation to the main streets and the camp boundaries.

The camp has a number of entry points, allowing traffic to flow into its different neighborhoods from the three streets that surround it (these are Al Baydia Street from the north, Al Yarmouk Street from the east, and Madaba Street from the west) without any restrictions or control.

Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan did not have governmental checkpoints or security gates around them, unlike the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon for example that are controlled by checkpoints and sometimes concrete walls that control movement around, into and out of them (Martin, 2015). Because of the lack of physical markers around Al Wehdat Camp and the other Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, it was hard to trace the boundary of the camp in the everyday life of the camp inhabitants. Nevertheless, there were more subtle practices of surveillance around the camp's edges, and sometimes around Tal'et Al Amaneh, creating an unofficial and subtle separation between the camp and the city.

TOC

In a conversation with another young man from the camp, he explained to me how late at night, undercover police cops would park around that spot to stop and search cars coming into the camp from that side. He recalled being stopped and searched a number of times as he drove home at night, having his car checked for drugs and other things.

The reason for choosing that spot in particular according to the young man was because of its close proximity to a dangerous neighborhood in the camp, where a variety of illegal activities took place. Given how Tal'et Al Amaneh was one of the prominent entry points along the northern edge of the camp, surveillance was high and constant in that area to monitor any illegal activities about to take place in the camp, potentially in some dangerous neighborhoods in the new camp. "There is an area around here that is very dangerous." Said Hussam, pointing at a spot in the new camp, "In that area you can find drug dealers, prostitutes, and even hitmen." He said, with a lower voice. I was not sure how accurate that information was, but I was advised not to walk alone in the new camp late at night because its steep slope created a network of hidden pockets that were not easily accessible and were under the control of certain gangs not very welcoming of outsiders.

The entry points to the camp were several along the three main streets, allowing entry to the camp's neighborhoods through a network of secondary streets. In the old camp, vehicular accessibility was limited, with a large number of the streets being pedestrian only, responding to the initial camp's rectilinear layout that was designed as a temporary space of shelter for Palestinian refugees. In the new camp, the layout of the neighborhoods was more irregular and complex, shaped by the topography and the different waves of construction of the different areas. Some streets were wide enough for cars, while many were not, with a lot of dead-ends, especially around the area that is known as East Wehdat that will be discussed in depth in the following section.

Vehicular accessibility through Tal'et Al Amaneh was high, via an asphalted street with two lanes. Halfway up the street, an intersection sat on a relatively flatter segment of the slope. According to a number of the camp inhabitants, that intersection was a common meeting spot for the camp's youth, mixing with street vendors, children on bikes, and a variety of camp inhabitants; all of whom frequented that spot which in turn acted like a semi-public space in that neighborhood. The flow of cars slowed down in the evening, leaving the intersection relatively empty, opening up the space for people to occupy the space.



FIG. 4.17 Entering Al Wehdat Camp through Tal'et Al Amaneh.

After the discussions with the camp inhabitants, spending time studying the camp from above using aerial images, I once again moved closer to the ground to visit Tal'et Al Amaneh myself. On the day of that visit, I arrived at the camp through Al Yarmouk Street, deciding to enter the camp from the bottom, climbing up the mountain through Tal'et Al Amaneh.

I drove my car up the street, leaving the city behind me as I entered the camp. Once again, it was not an entry that was so pronounced, I was particularly aware of it because of my research, but had it been under different circumstances, I do not think that I would have paid that much attention to the process of entering, captured in Figure 4.17.

The intersection was relatively empty, given the early time of the day and the fact that children were in school and adults were in their jobs, with several cars chaotically parked around it and demarcating its boundary, as shown in Figure 4.18.



FIG. 4.18 Semi public space along Tal'et Al Amaneh.

After that visit, I was reminded how life continues to flow in the camps, as cars enter and leave, people come, go and stay, and it is through those flows of movement, through a variety of entry points and along numerous paths of activity, that the camp continues to stay connected with the rest of the city. Despite the challenges of the steep slopes and the way topography splits activities on numerous levels across the city's space, disconnecting mountains from valleys, it is the flow of people that manages to reconnect territories and dismantle boundaries, no matter how subtle or how pronounced they are.

To the camp inhabitants, many of these boundaries were not even known, especially because neither their flows of movement nor their paths of activity were obstructed by any of them, given how boundaries become more recognized when they interrupt the flows of everyday life.

4.3 Settling and Resettling in and around the camp

4.3.1 The case of East Wehdat: The camp's growth in time due to continued displacement and population overspills.

I will use this section to discuss the camp's growth overtime, guided by continuous waves of arrival to the camp, in addition to the overspill of the Palestinian refugees from the camp into the surrounding context. After conducting the focus group discussions and interviews with the camp inhabitants, I understood that the inhabitants understood the areas bound by the greenline to also be part of the camp because they grew around groups of Palestinian refugees that either moved there due to the old camp's overcrowding, or came to the camp at a later stage.

In other words, the presence of the Palestinian refugees is what made those parts part of Al Wehdat Camp too. Historically, Palestinian refugees continued to arrive at Jordan and Al Wehdat Camp in the years following Al Nakba, through numerous waves of displacement in the long decades that followed, with the largest second wave taking place after Al Naksa of 1967. A brief historical overview of Al Nakba and Al Naksa was discussed in **Chapter 2**.

After Al Naksa, six emergency camps were built by UNRWA and the Jordanian State located in several locations across the country, with the largest camp erected at the periphery of the capital, known as Baqa'a Camp, as discussed in the **Chapter 3**.

However, not everyone settled in the newly built camps, because a number of the Palestinian refugees chose to reside in some of the camps that had already existed before their arrival, for several reasons. In my interviews with some of the camp inhabitants, they explained to me how some of their relatives who fled to Amman after 1967 sought refuge in Al Wehdat Camp to be with their families who were already residing there in the years before. Settling around the camp was also an opportunity to be closer to UNRWA, to gain access to its humanitarian services such as aid and relief, healthcare, and education, given how the Palestinian refugees who have registered with UNRWA after entering Jordan in 1967 became eligible for those humanitarian services.

Others flocked to Al Wehdat Camp for its central location, preferring to settle in the center of Amman, and not its periphery, given how all new camps were located in the outskirts of the urban centers. Settling in the urban camps like those in Amman or the city of Al Zarqa for example, meant better access to jobs and opportunities for the Palestinian refugees. It also meant that the refugees would be closer to the centers of activity and members of their extended families.

In Al Wehdat Camp, the streets began lining up with UNRWA tents, as well as the school playgrounds and some of the open spaces in the camp. Some of the newcomers, as some inhabitants referred to them, erected their tents in the small yards surrounding their relatives' residential units, producing a rather symbolic parallel between the two types of shelters, between the temporary and the permanent, in a manner that folded time and resurrected the events of the first arrival in 1948. At the same time, a portion of the Palestinian refugees began settling in the vacant lands around Al Wehdat Camp (mainly east of the old camp) in makeshift structures which the inhabitants referred to as, Khashabiyat, which translates to, wooden structures. Among the areas that began emerging around that time, the area of Al Tatweer Al Hadari, which translates to, Urban Development, was the one most mentioned by the inhabitants during the interviews. That area, which I also learned is officially known as East Wehdat, grew exceptionally and developed east of the camp, as its name suggests.

The reason why I chose the area of East Wehdat as an example of the newly added neighborhoods east of the camp is because it provides an excellent example of the invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Additionally, it was an urban development project with a defined name, boundaries and masterplan, which together open up many points of discussion that relate to the themes of this dissertation.

To learn more about the emergence and development of East Wehdat, I sat down with Jamal Al Daly, a social worker and researcher that had worked with UNRWA before becoming a part of the team that worked on developing the area of East Wehdat.

According to Al Daly, after 1967, the Palestinian refugees who have settled east of Al Wehdat Camp stayed living in makeshift shelters for around 10 years, squatting on privately owned land with no access to electricity or hydraulic services.

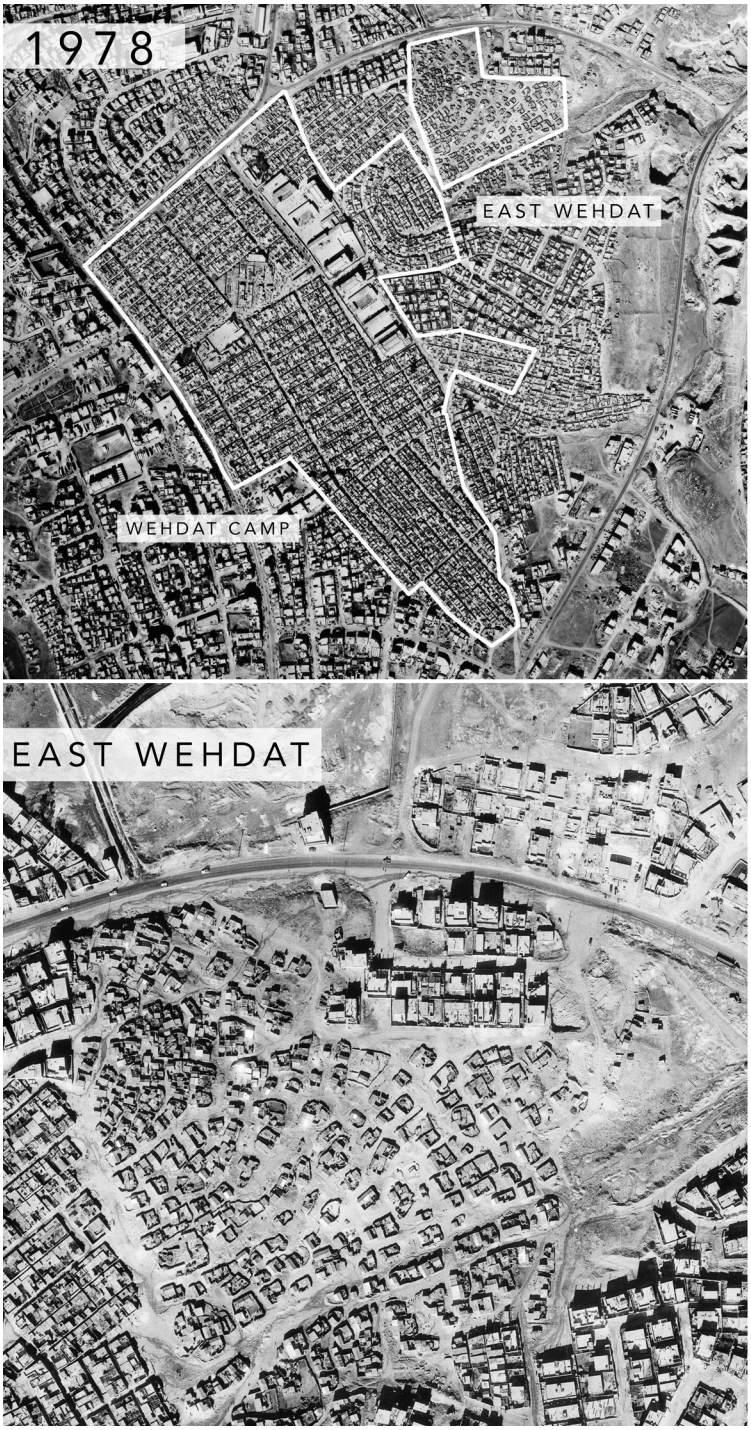


FIG. 4.19 The area of East Wehdat growing next to the old camp in 1978 before the development project began. I added the annotations and the zoomed in image on the right next to the original archival photo on the left. (Source: the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center, Amman, Jordan, 2019).

TOC

With time, the physical condition of that area began to deteriorate to an extent that persuaded the government to take action in early 1978; namely, an urban development project in the area, one that carried the name of East Wehdat. In Figure 4.19, I share an archival aerial photo I had acquired from the Royal Jordanian Geographical Center, marking the area of East Wehdat on the photo with a white line, next to the old camp, a few years before East Wehdat was developed, when it was still a squatter area.

That project came as part of a larger program conducted by the governmental entity, Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDC), which aimed to upgrade several squatter areas in Amman, giving East Wehdat its informal name which is Al Tatweer Al Hadari, which is a direct translation of the corporation's name in Arabic.

Al Daly shared with me two archival photos whose copyrights belonged to Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) shown in Figure 4.20 and Figure 4.21

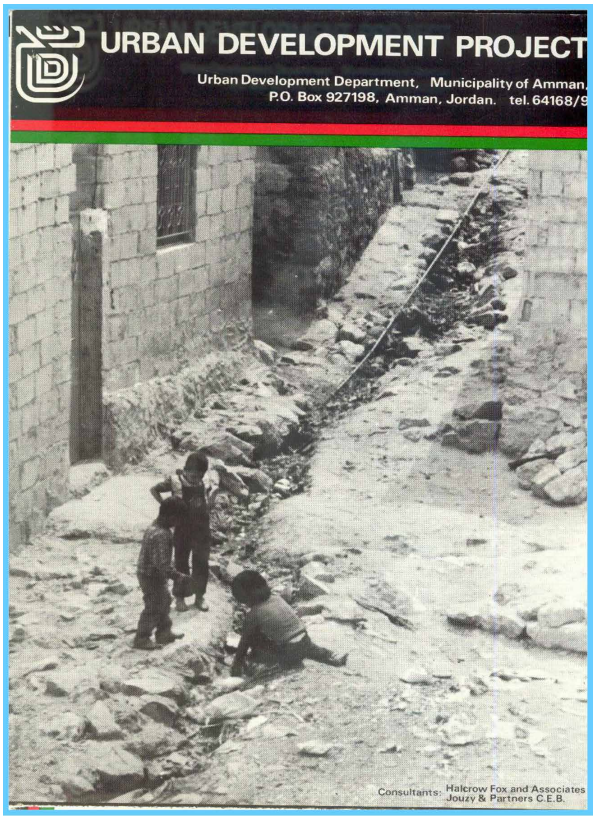


FIG. 4.20 Archival Photo of East Wehdat Urban Development project. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC).



FIG. 4.21 The area of East Wehdat after the development project was completed. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC).

In Figure 4.20, the area of East Wehdat is shown before development began, showing three children examining an unpaved street with exposed waterways and a deteriorated neighborhood condition. The project is shown after completion in Figure 4.21, having been remarkably improved and developed.

The HUDC produced the master plan for East Wehdat, shown in Figure 4.22, through a participatory planning approach that engaged the shelter inhabitants in the planning and the construction processes of the project. The layout of East Wehdat adopted that of the existing makeshift neighborhood, which would explain the irregular distribution of the plots, in addition to the irregular shape being influenced by the area's topography.

The master plan was produced after months of thorough social surveys through the HUDC and close deliberations with the inhabitants, part of which Al Daly was active in. The masterplan became the blueprint for the next phase of construction, which was also completed with the help of the inhabitants.



FIG. 4.22 East Wehdat Master plan. (Source: Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC).

According to Al Daly, what was remarkable about East Wehdat was that it allowed the Palestinian refugees to own the newly built units, through a State-subsidized scheme that divided the price over installments of 30 years. This was done in collaboration with the Housing & Urban Development Corporation Bank. To be able to realize that scheme, the Jordanian State bought the land from the private owners and resold it to the Palestinian refugees through the long subsidized loans.

In 1992, East Wehdat won the international Aga Khan award for architecture for the ways the Housing & Urban Development Corporation had — through its planning and execution of the project and its managerial and economic strategies — produced a built environment that empowered the local community and responded to its social and cultural needs, as per the words of the jury members mentioned in the Aga Khan award website.

When I visited East Wehdat to see that highly-praised project myself, I was surprised by how deteriorated the physical condition of the neighborhood was, it was not what I had expected at all. Compact, chaotic and poorly managed, the physical condition of the area was a mess.

For those reasons, I was not surprised to learn that today, the inhabitants were not as pleased with the project as the award committee were with it 30 years ago. At the time of starting the project, the planning committee aimed to limit vehicular accessibility and plan a neighborhood that prioritized community engagement over accessibility, as seen in Figure 4.23.



FIG. 4.23 The deteriorated state of the East Wehdat and narrow pathways.

In reality, the tight web of narrow alleys and restricted accessibility in many parts of the neighborhood have produced an isolated urban environment that cannot always be accessed by car, restricting the entry of ambulances, police cars, and even fire trucks when needed. Because of that, the inhabitants of the neighborhood whom I had interviewed expressed strong feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with the project, sharing stories about fire trucks that were unable to put out fires in the neighborhood, sick people who were pushed on wheeled stretchers for long distances to be transported to ambulances, and exhausted inhabitants pushing newly bought furniture for hours to get them to their homes. Moreover, the closed network of streets in some parts rendered some streets as highly unsafe, because of the ways these streets were hidden from cars and were easy to hide in, turning them in certain instances to dangerous alleys with a variety of illegal activities.

Falling outside the formal boundary of the camp, this area was under the management of Amman Municipality and not UNRWA, and in it, buildings were owned and numbered, and streets had names and labels. More generally, the area was poorly maintained, as seen in Figure 4.24.



FIG. 4.24 A chaotic staircase in East Wehdat.

In terms of the topography, as previously discussed in this chapter, the area east of Sumaya Street, which included East Wehdat, was rather steep. This further contributed to the limited accessibility of the area, given how some streets were connected with sets of stairs and were hard to navigate and challenging to transport things along. The complex 3-dimensional setup of the area, with the constant change in levels, also contributed to the levels of safety, with visibility limited around some corners and dead-ends. I had not expected to receive that feedback when I visited East Wehdat and was on the contrary expecting to see a successful example of an urban development project in Amman. The frustration did not only end there, but also touched upon the issue of the bank installments that the inhabitants were still paying.

According to two old men that I interviewed who were inhabitants of East Wehdat, the prices of the units at the time of their purchase was remarkably high, especially when compared with the market prices, exponentially increasing in the years that followed due to bank interests. Both men told me that they felt taken advantage of, through a government scheme that marketed itself as empowering and community led, but turned out to be a big disappointment.

Walking down one of the streets, I stopped to take a photo of wall graffiti. Suddenly, the group of youth that were standing in the corner started running in the opposite direction. I did not understand what was happening, until one of the guys approached Malek, my research assistant, and asked him who we were and what we were doing there. The guy took Malek aside and started talking to him in a lower voice. After a few minutes, Malek asked me to delete the photo because what had appeared to be a stand for selling sweets was actually a stand for selling drugs, and for those reasons, the guy wanted the photo gone because it put him at risk. The entire situation was extremely surreal, I thought to myself as I deleted the photo. I left the camp that day with a heavy feeling of dread.

How big is the distance between what we design as architects on paper and the lived reality of the people who end up living in those spaces?

In the case of East Wehdat, the distance was remarkably huge.

After visiting East Wehdat, I kept thinking about how the Palestinian refugees who have squatted on the land east of the old camp (part of the area that was later referred to as the new camp), were eventually allowed to own their units, regardless of how fair some of the inhabitants thought the deals they signed with the HUDC were. Inside the old camp, seven decades later, the units are still under temporary use, strictly adhering to *the right to use* framework.

Inside the new camp, which is the topic of this chapter, East Wehdat could be described as a resettlement project, given the permanent nature of not only the concrete buildings but also the framework that organized the relationship between the State, the Palestinian refugees, and the HUDC and its bank. East Wehdat could also be considered an example of the invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps, a notion introduced by Lucas Oesch (2000) and discussed in depth in the previous chapter.



FIG. 4.25 A narrow and poorly maintained alley in East Wehdat.

As a way of carefully avoiding any urban development projects that could be described as efforts of resettlement (for all the political and public backlash such projects would trigger), the Jordanian Government adopted a set of urban planning strategies that had to remain invisible and under the management of governmental entities whose role was to remain ambiguous when developing the infrastructure of Palestinian refugee camps in the country, under the title of improvement and not development.

East Wehdat is clearly a strong example of that, approached as part of a larger State led project that aimed to improve the living conditions in several squatter areas across the city, without explicitly contextualizing the area of East Wehdat as one that initially emerged as an informal extension of Al Wehdat Camp. Separated from the old camp with only a few streets, East Wehdat was considered part of Al Wehdat Camp by the camp inhabitants, therefore included in the greenline, because it grew around groups of Palestinian refugees who arrived in 1967, regardless of the difference in ownership that was known to everyone. The question of whether a family owned their unit or not was central to the camp inhabitants, as discussed in **Chapter 3**, classifying the units as either Wakaleh or Qawasheen.

The units in East Wehdat were Qawasheen indeed, and that had to be pointed out by the inhabitants in our conversations, but regardless of that, those units were still part of the camp because the people who were residing in them had also come from Palestine.

4.3.2 Wadi Al Seer Camp: Arriving at the camp from Elsewhere

"We came to Al Wehdat Camp from Wadi Al Seer Camp. It was a makeshift camp with temporary structures. Do you know Prince Mohammad Street? Do you know the intersection with the traffic light and the road that goes up to Jabal Al Weibdeh, a few meters from Samir Al Rifa'i school? That is exactly where Wadi Al Seer Camp was located, in the area adjacent to that intersection; with the shelters built on the small hill along the road that went up to Jabal Al Weibdeh." Said Nassim, during our interview. Nassim is a second generation Palestinian refugee whose family was uprooted from Saqiya in 1948, which is a village that was also ethnically cleansed during Al Nakba, located 8,5 kilometers east of Yafa. Nassim was born in 1959 in Al Wehdat Camp, two years after his family had settled there, having moved from Wadi Al Seer Camp. Wadi Al Seer Camp, which I learned from Nassim, was a makeshift camp in Amman and another point where the refugees have settled for a number of years before the establishment of the official camps. Remembering his family's stories that were told to him, Nassim shared how they had moved from Wadi Al Seer Camp, located around 4,8 kilometers away, to Al Wehdat Camp. His family did not move all at once but over two phases, either on foot or by riding in a carriage pulled by a donkey with their stuff, going up a steep slope known as Tlo' Al Musadar (Al Musdar Slope) which connected Wadi Al Seer Camp, formerly located in the valley in Amman's downtown, with Al Wehdat Camp.

To study the site of what used to be Wadi Al Seer Camp, I visited the site after my interview with Nassim, using his description to get there. I knew that area, I drove by it occasionally. I was surprised to learn that Wadi Al Seer Camp had once existed there. Today, that area has been transformed, with a portion of the hill adjacent to Prince Mohammad Street flattened and turned into a park known as Samir Al Rifa'i public park. Inside the park, that was a portion that was turned into a skatepark known as 7 hills skatepark. Nothing about that site had indicated that it was once a Palestinian refugee camp. What traces was I expecting to have seen there to know that?

On the day of my visit, I parked my car at the top of the hill and began my visit by observing the site from above. The site was relatively hilly, planted with huge trees scattered across the site.



FIG. 4.26 The site of what used to be Wadi Al Seer camp as seen from the top



FIG. 4.27 The huge mural opposite to the site depicting an elderly Palestinian woman waiting

On the opposite side, I noticed a huge mural that appeared to be looking over the site. The mural depicted an old woman wearing a traditional Palestinian thobe, the rich embroidery on the chest and sleeves intricately illustrated, with her hands resting in her lap, as if she was sitting there, waiting. I thought of the people who had sought refuge on that mountain, who had similarly spent their time waiting. Wasn't a refugee camp ultimately a big waiting terminal? What a coincidence, to have this mural painted here. Was this the trace that I was looking for?

As I continued to walk, a few meters down, on that fence that separated the upper street from the park at the bottom, two other works of graffiti stopped me. A lot more spontaneous than the mural, with two sentences sprayed in a hurry. The one on the left said "All of Palestine" and the one on the right said: "Resist Resist Resist".

At that moment, different layers of time, space, and graffiti overlapped in that site and made me perceive it as a distinctively Palestinian space, despite the fact that it was not a Palestinian refugee camp, not anymore. What about the memory of the place? The concept of Les Lieux de Mémoire or Sites of Memory developed by French historian, Pierre Nora (1996), also came to mind. Was this what I was experiencing?

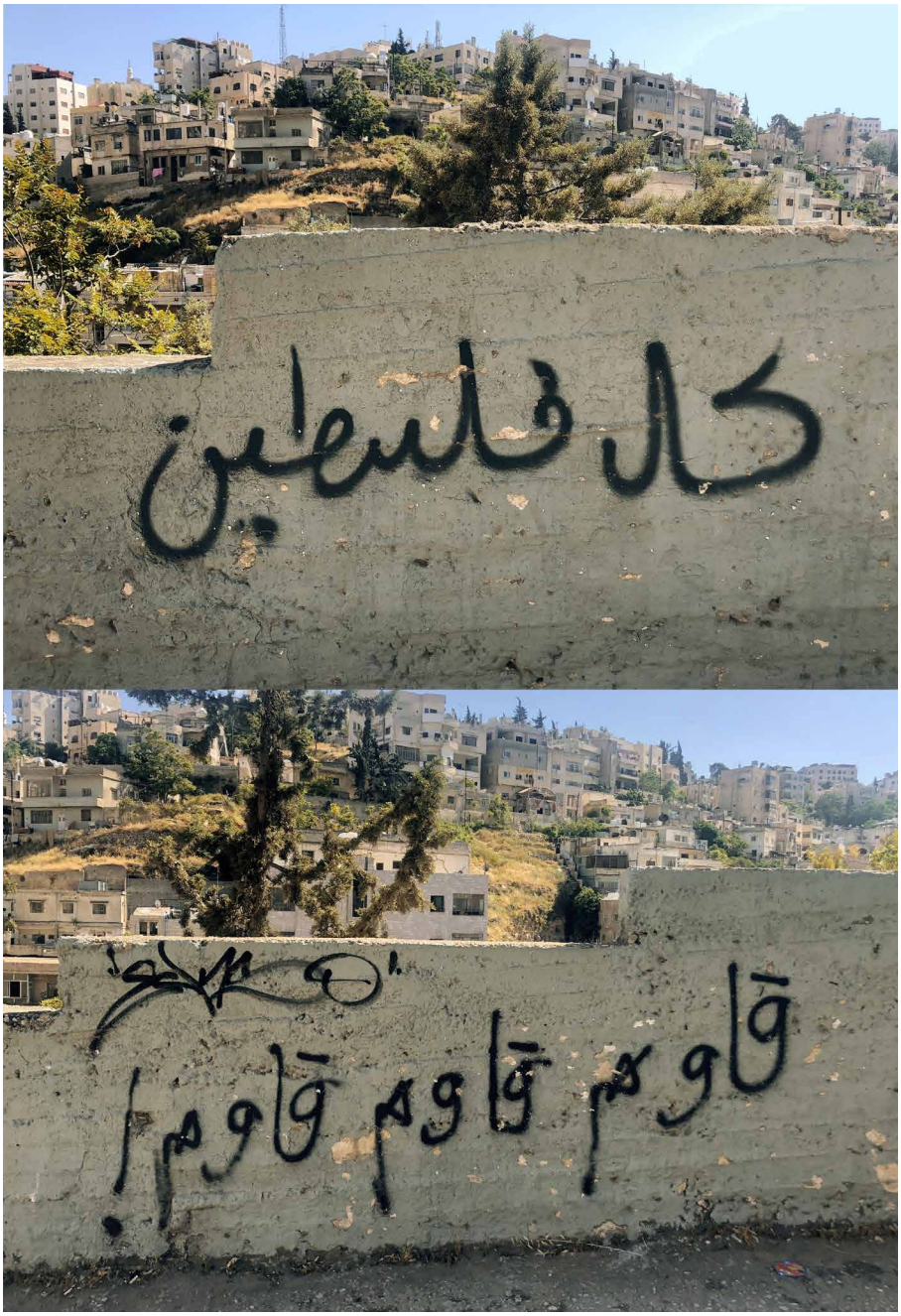


FIG. 4.28 Two graffiti writings opposite to the site with the words “Resist Resist Resist” and “All of Palestine”.



FIG. 4.29 Panoramic view of the skatepark as seen from above

I decided to continue walking and looked over the fence as I slowly approached the bottom of the hill, realizing that I was able at that point to see the skatepark.

The area was bustling with activity, some youngsters were skating while others sat around in various corners around the park. The site looked almost flat, with the bottom half of the hill flattened. I also noticed how the opposite mountain was visible from that point, with the typical Ammani, box-shaped, stone houses looking like they were climbing up that hill. I took a panoramic photo, trying to capture as much as I could of the site

I walked around the edge of the park, past the intersection with the traffic light Nassim had described, took a right turn and walked a few meters along Prince Mohammad Street before I reached the entrance of the park, marked with a huge sign that read: “Samir Al Rifai Park.”

I stepped inside, with huge hesitation. I felt that I was trespassing, especially because I felt that the youngsters hanging out inside knew each other well and were going to quickly spot me as an outsider. The space felt very territorial. I followed the paved path into the inside of the park, looked around, and took a few photos.

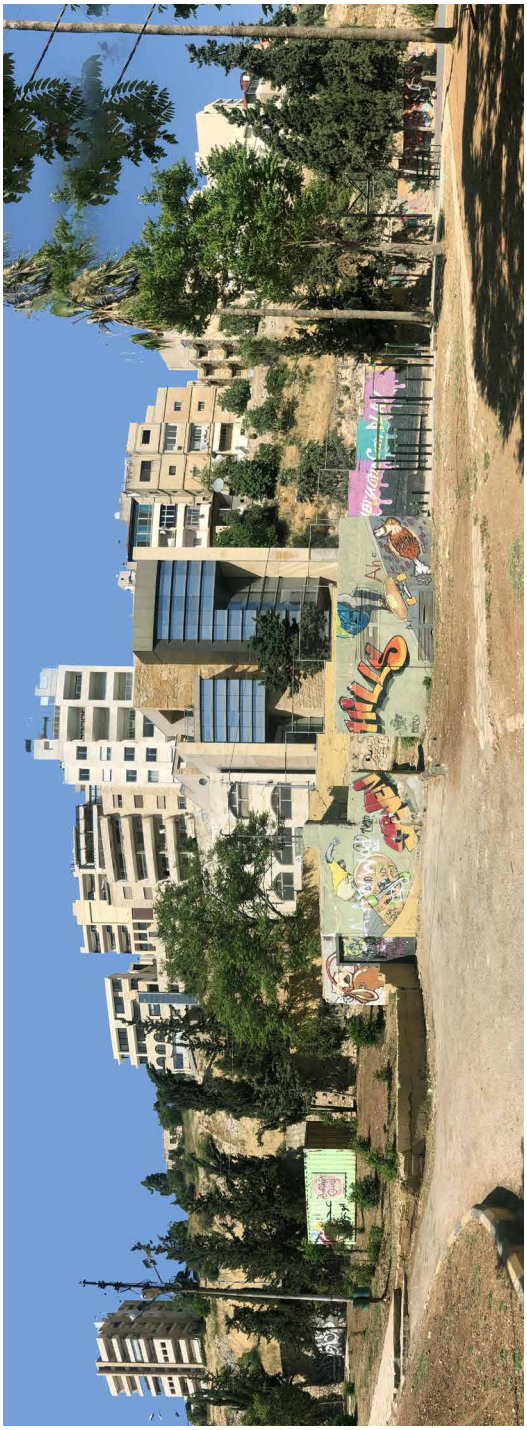


FIG. 4.30 The Skatepark in the foreground, with the neighborhood of Jabal Al Weibdeh in the background.

TOC

In addition to the skatepark there was also a basketball court, seating areas and calisthenics bars, with a number of color graffiti works in the backdrop of the park. I was not sure what I was expecting to find when I came here, the presence of Palestine was no longer as strong as it was at the top of the hill. Was it because at the top, it was summoned through the graffiti that was painted on the walls, or was it because inside the park, the new set of activities were now occupying the space, imposing themselves on the site, with colors, sounds and textures?

After the visit, to bring the site memories back to the present, I put some pictures I took from the skatepark alongside some archival photos I found of Wadi Al Seer Camp, shown at the bottom of Figure 4.31. In that same collection, I also traced the path that Nassim's family must have taken while moving from Wadi Al Seer to Al Wehdat Camp in red, while also indicating the site's current location within its context, along Prince Mohammad Street.

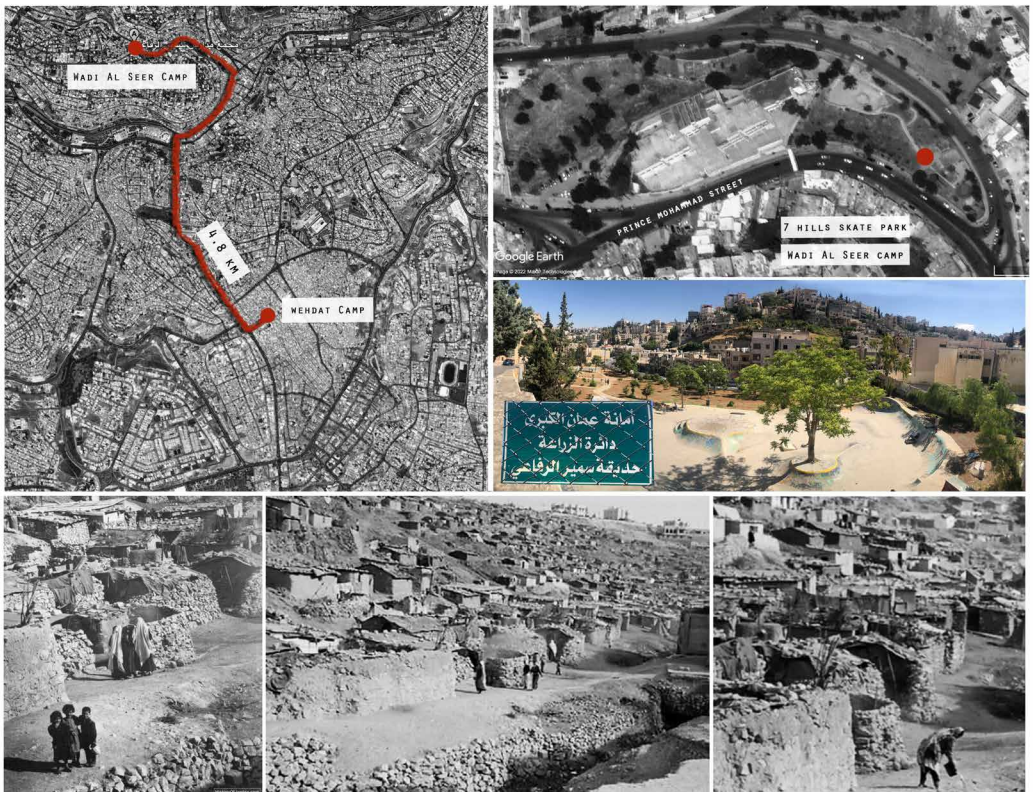


FIG. 4.31 Wadi Al Seer Camp in the past, turned today into a skatepark. (Source: Images at the top are from Google Maps with my annotations. Bottom three archival images are from the UNRWA archive).

TOC

What was remarkable in the archival photos were the structures of the shelters that the Palestinian refugees had built back then in Wadi Al Seer Camp, constructed out of what looked like local stones along the site's steep hill. That shelter typology looked rather different from the ones the Palestinian refugees have later inhabited within Al Wehdat Camp, which were rectilinear in shape and followed an iron grid laid out on a relatively flat land. The setup of the makeshift camp looked more organic and more vernacular, especially for the ways the shelters followed the slope of the hill, while the setup of Al Wehdat Camp in its earliest days looked more rigid and mass produced, very similar to many other emergency shelters that are constructed by humanitarian agencies as a response to crises and wars. Learning about Nassim's lived experience helped me better understand the spatial relation that Al Wehdat Camp has with the city of Amman, extending beyond the camp's formal boundary that officially remains unchanged. A network of spatial relations had grown in time to connect the camp's territory with other locations in Amman, such as Wadi Al Seer Camp, in spite of the rigidity of the formal boundary. Wadi Al Seer Camp was a point of arrival from Palestine after Al Nakba of 1948, before in turn becoming a point of departure from which a number of refugee families have moved again, arriving in Al Wehdat Camp.

4.4 The streets, the markets, and the flows of activity and movement

In the last part of this chapter, I will move the discussion to the streets and the markets, in the literal sense, so as to investigate them as boundary-demarcating elements that have played a role in shaping the camp's relationship with the city through the flows of activity and movement. Moreover, I will look at the streets as spines of commercial activity, along which the market has spread, gradually transforming the camp from a space of refuge to a space of commerce. I will also look at the way the streets have played a role in the gendering of the camp spaces, creating different lived experiences for the men and the women in the camp.
During the focus groups, I noticed how the streets were the most prominent physical marker that the inhabitants have used to trace the informal boundary of the camp.

The informal boundary of the camp falls in the heart-shaped territory, as explained to me in the focus group discussions, bordered by three streets: Al Badiya Street from the north, Madaba Street from the west, and Al Yarmouk Street from the east. Using the streets as boundary demarcation elements made sense because they were the most obvious and the easiest to trace, especially given the high level of activity along these particular streets and their big width that played a role in explicitly defining the territory within them as a compact residential island with limited vehicle accessibility at the intersection of three main streets. It is important to note how within the formal boundary of the camp, within the redline, the majority of the streets were pedestrian only, with the exception of a few vehicular streets, such as Sumaya Street that ran from the north of the camp to the south. Because of this, the urban environment lacked obvious physical markers that would help the inhabitants trace the boundary of their camp when I asked them about it.

In other words, the arbitrary formal boundary was hard to recognize for the camp inhabitants, especially in the parts where that boundary cut through narrow streets and ran along the perimeters of residential neighborhoods with no vehicle activity or roads. While walking in the overspills of the new camp, I used Google Maps to pinpoint the street that separated the old camp from East Wehdat, shown in Figure 4.32, before going to visit it, to see whether anything remarkable happened there or whether one could notice a difference in the urban setting. As shown in Figure 4.32, the urban setting did not offer any distinctive features that demarcated either of the two territories, nor did it distinguish the old camp from East Wehdat.

It was because I studied the maps and deliberately attempted to understand how the different territories and boundaries of the camp were demarcated and produced that I projected this knowledge and information into the space of the camp. This came in addition to other factors and ways the camp inhabitants differentiated between the formal and the informal boundaries of the camp.



FIG. 4.32 The street that separates the old camp from East Wehdat.

4.4.1 The Street Hierarchy: the Main and Secondary, the Center Stage and its Backstage

These three main streets that bound the camp, shown in Figure 4.1 at the beginning of the chapter, act as the camp's interface with the surrounding context, having transformed in time to vital commercial corridors in southeast Amman. With the growing volume of shoppers they were attracting, these streets were influenced by the growing commercial activity in the camp itself while also influencing the spread of the market to the surrounding neighborhoods. Two of the three main streets do not officially carry those names, but I have been referring to them using the unofficial names that the camp inhabitants use in their everyday language. I am using the unofficial names as part of my research approach that aims to be as close as I can get to the everyday life of the inhabitants.

Madaba Street, located west of the camp, is officially known as Prince Hasan Street, while Al Badiya Street is officially known as Osama Bin Zayed Street. I was told that Al Badiya Street was given its name due to the presence of what used to be Al Badiya Police Building, a division of the official State Police, at the intersection between that street and Madaba Street. Al Badiya no longer operates from that old building, but the street name remains. Among the three, Al Yarmouk Street was the only one known as such in the official records.

None of the streets inside the formal boundary of the camp had official names, but they were all streets that were known through their unofficial names given by the inhabitants, also named after a building or a landmark. The most known shopping corridor in Al Wehdat Camp is Al Nadi Street, which gained its name from the presence of *Al Nadi*, which translates to, *the club,* referring to Al Wehdat Sports Club located close by. Al Nadi Street is a sheltered commercial street with a variety of shops and stores, shown in Figure 4.33.

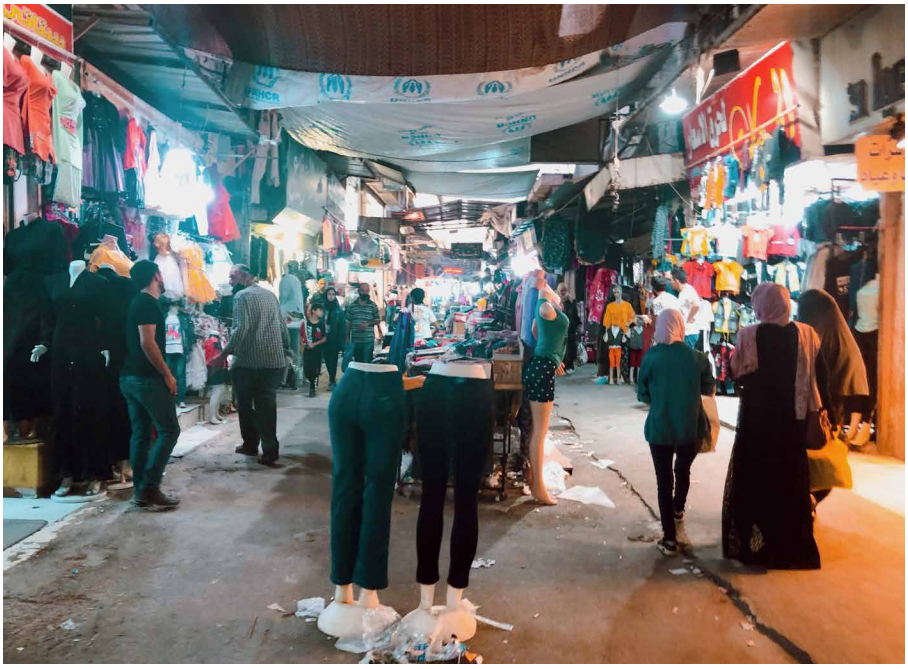


FIG. 4.33 Al Nadi Street at night,, bustling with activity, people and items.

Another well-known commercial street is *Al Madares* Street, which translates to *The School's* Street, named after the 12 UNRWA schools that exist along that street inside the UNRWA complex.

There is also *Al Maghfar* Street, *The Police Station Street*, named after Al Ashrafieh Police Station at the intersection with Madaba Street, shown in Figure 4.34. *Al Baleh* Street, which translates to *The Thrift Market* Street, was named after the thrift market in the middle of it. On the other hand, Lidawi Street, another main shopping street in the camp, is named after the city of Al Lidd in Palestine, named after a distant location, thousands of meters away.

I heard different stories explaining the name. In one story, a camp inhabitant told it was because the majority of the Palestinian refugees who first resided in that street have originally been displaced from the city of Al Lidd. In another story, I was told it was because the first person to have opened a shop along what later became a vital commercial street, was from the city of Al Lidd.

In both stories, Palestine was brought into the camp through that street's name, keeping the memory of the home-land present in exile.



FIG. 4.34 Al Maghfar Street bustling with shoppers, kiosks, street vendors and shops.

The number of shops increased exponentially along these streets throughout the years, with Al Wehdat Market becoming an attractive shopping destination for the inhabitants of Southeast Amman, for its central location, competitive prices, and variety of items. The shops in Al Wehdat Market sold almost everything, from clothes and furniture, produce, wedding dresses, shoes, dairy products, meat, second hand items, books, gold, jewelry, lingerie, gifts, perfumes, car parts, electrical appliances, kitchen utensils, construction materials, mattresses, fabrics, plants, paints, to pets and animals. Trying to understand the spatial distribution of the market, I decided to study Al Maghfar from above by climbing to the top of a commercial building and taking the photos shown in Figure 4.35. I wanted to better understand the relationship between the moving and the fixed parts of the street, while also studying the different layers that vertically overlapped to produce the space of the street.



FIG. 4.35 Al Maghfar Street as seen from the top.

At the center of the street, flows of moving shoppers were walking in both directions, occasionally stopping to look at items and interact with vendors. The flows of shoppers were occasionally interrupted by the moving metal carts, pulled by the young boys. Next was a long line of street vendors shouting out to the shoppers, aligned on both sides of the streets, displaying their items on wooden tables, inside carts and on makeshift structures.

Behind the street vendors were the street pavements, slightly raised above the street level, working as a buffer zone between the activity on the street level, and the activity inside the shops. Simultaneously, a wide range of activities were taking place on the pavements themselves; from shop vendors standing in front of their shops to flows of shoppers entering and leaving them, with piles of garbage occasionally interrupting movement and bodies of mannequins displaying clothes and items in between. Because of the many layers that separated the shop fronts from the shoppers moving along the street, shops seemed to extend their signs both horizontally and vertically to attract shoppers' attention, using signs with brighter colors and adding an abundance of decorations in an attempt to stand out within that overly-crowded commercial setting.

In the field, I conceptualized the commercial streets as the central stage on which daily performances were conducted, orchestrated by the different layers and elements I have described: moving, overlapping, interrupting, and maneuvering around one another, as first introduced in the introduction of **Chapter 1**. I conceptualized the streets as such after moving deeper into the camp, to the adjacent residential neighborhoods where noise, activity, crowdedness, colors and density of people dramatically dropped. The further I moved from the central stage, towards what I can describe as the backstage, the quieter the environment got. The backstage in this instance were the streets parallel to the commercial streets, with the majority of the units in them being used as storage spaces for the shops and kiosks on the commercial streets. In the backstage, movement was limited, with the exception of shop owners storing or bringing out items from the storage spaces. Walking further down, I started to enter the residential neighborhoods of the camp, which I identified by the planters in front of the houses, kids playing in the streets, the elderly sitting in front of their houses, and people hanging laundry lines.

To capture that movement from the central stage to the backstage, I used serial vision, taking photographs as I walked from Al Maghfar Street deeper into one of the residential neighborhoods, capturing the dramatic decline in the number of people, colors, moving carts, interruptions and activity on the streets. That series of photographs can be seen in Figure 4.36, numbered from 1 to 16.

There, in the middle of the residential neighborhood, I was reminded that Al Wehdat Camp was not only a market, but also a place where people lived and have been living for more than six decades since the camp's establishment in 1955, long before the market was established.

It was easy for that fact to be forgotten amidst that chaos.

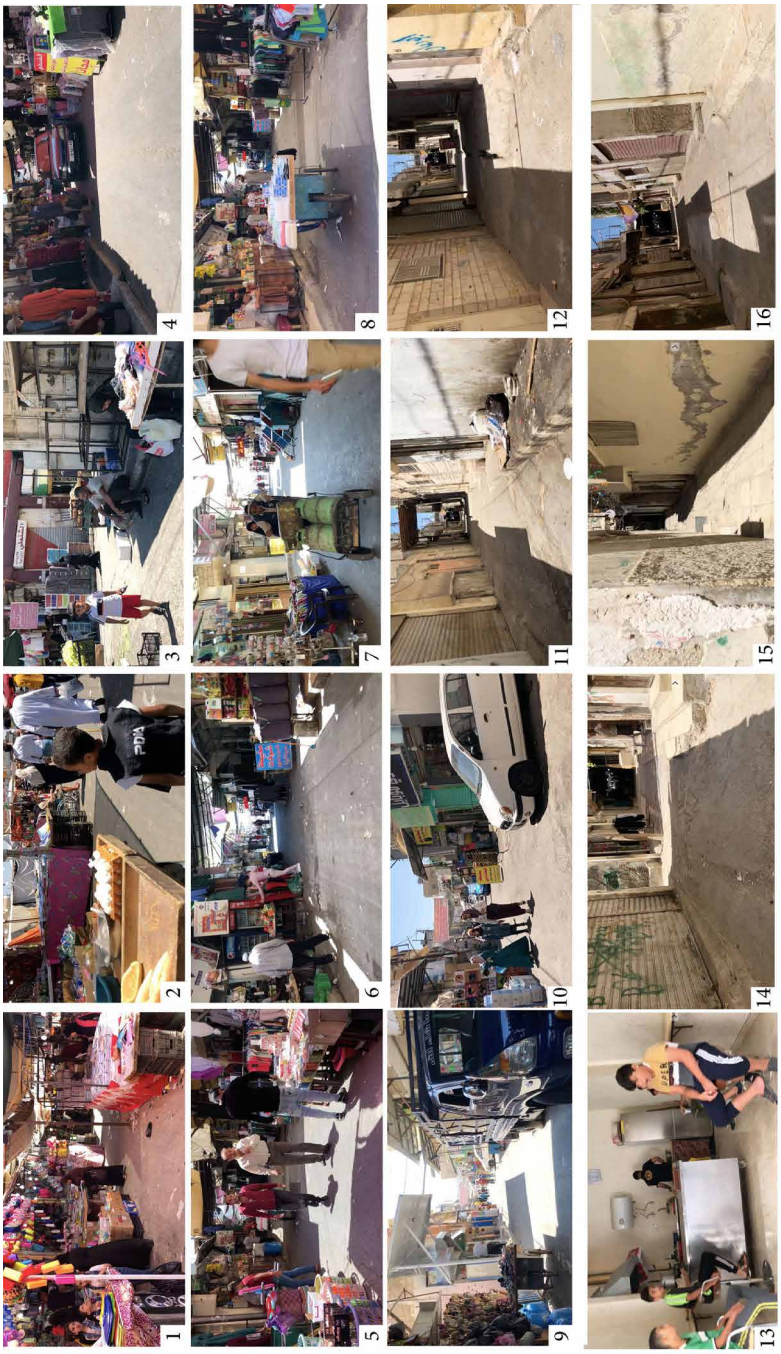


FIG. 4.36 Serial Vision: A sequence of photographs capturing movement from the center stage to the backstage.

TOC

4.4.2 Sumaya Street and the spatial fragmentation of the camp

In Al Wehdat Camp, Sumaya Street was an important street which was continually mentioned in my interviews with the camp inhabitants, especially for its history and its role in connecting and disconnecting the camp from the space of the city. In the first part of this chapter, I discussed the way I used to see Sumaya Street as an edge of the camp, for the way it ran along the eastern boundary of the formal camp, before my perception changed, after my interviews with the camp inhabitants. I began to consider what existed east of Sumaya Street to also be part of Al Wehdat Camp, realizing that the inhabitants' definition of the camp boundary was larger. Within that boundary, Sumaya Street ran across the center of the camp, at the heart of the territory demarcated by the greenline that I have extensively been discussing in this chapter.

In the light of that, along these demarcations, I was able to understand why the camp inhabitants were critical of the urban intervention that the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) undertook in 2002, widening Sumaya Street in a manner that, as the camp inhabitants felt, fragmented the camp space and created a disconnection in its social and spatial fabric. Sumaya Street was previously a narrow, local street with two lanes that was widened in 2002 to become a main vehicular street with two lanes in each direction. To be able to complete that project, GAM demolished 100 housing units after negotiations with their owners and after settling the disputes with monetary compensations that allowed their owners to settle elsewhere.

In my interview with the UNRWA camp director, he explained to me that the main objective of widening Sumaya Street was to improve vehicular accessibility, given the compactness of the camp fabric and the limited accessibility within the formal camp boundary. Before the intervention, the camp acted as an isolated urban island which no cars were able to penetrate. This increased the vehicular pressure on the surrounding streets, primarily Madaba Street, which extended along the camp's western edge. After the intervention, vehicle accessibility improved drastically along Sumaya Street and the surrounding areas were better connected.
According to the camp director, the total number of the units within the formal camp was 2820 units before the demolition, dropping to 2720 units after the demolition of 100 units, not having changed since. The director discussed the widening of the street from a technical perspective, not discussing the political motives that the inhabitants believed drove the project, nor the underlying meanings of the demolitions. In the interviews and the focus groups, many camp inhabitants saw the project as an attempt to fragment the camp space into smaller and more manageable districts, instead of having to manage the camp as one larger whole that was more challenging to keep under control.

In an interview with Sameera, the second generation Palestinian refugee who lived with her mother Um Hasan, in Sumaya Street, first introduced in **Chapter 2**, she told me that when negotiations first began with the street inhabitants, the general sentiment was that whoever agreed to sell their unit was a traitor. To her, the space of the camp was an extension to the space of Palestine, where the Palestinian refugees were to stay and wait until their return. Letting go of one's unit, meant that they were letting go of their right to return, having agreed to live outside the camp, out in the city, with everyone else. She told me that her family did not agree to move and decided to stay, when many of their neighbors agreed to sell and had their units demolished. She expressed those sentiments by saying, "If you walk along Sumaya Street today, you can find half demolished units. The municipality demolished half of those units to widen the street, and left the second half abandoned along the street. Some of these abandoned halves were later turned into small shops that sell coffee, while others stayed stranded there, like coincidental symbolic ruins that testify to what had happened 20 years ago."

I knew what Sameera was talking about, I had walked past those ruins a number of times and wondered what their story was, like the one I have photographed and shown in Figure 4.37.

Other camp inhabitants agreed with the points raised by Sameera, viewing the project as an attempt to empty the camp from its inhabitants, driven by a political desire to fragment the camp space and dismantle the refugees' right to return. Others viewed the project as an attempt to make the space more manageable, turned into smaller parts that could be better accessed and entered in case of any demonstrations or clashes.

The spatial fragmentation that they described was very architectural, discussed by a number of scholars in relation to Palestinian refugee camps. While studying Al Wehdat Camp, Luigi Achilli (2015) reflected on the State's mechanisms of spatial control over the camp, citing the widening of Sumaya Street as an example, one that allowed the State to send in its army tanks in case of any clashes and unrest. The State also worked on enlarging the building of the police station at the beginning of Al Maghfar Street to increase its dominance over the camp and protect the officers against potential uprisings and unrest. In her investigation of Palestinian camps both in Lebanon and Jordan, architect, Samar Maqusi (2017), described such projects as attempts to resize the camps' scale to make them more manageable, citing Sumaya Street as an example, comparing it to a more violent intervention in the Nahr Al Bared Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon, which witnessed the total destruction of the camp in 2007.



FIG. 4.37 A half demolished unit in Sumaya Street.

During the focus group sessions, introduced in **Chapter 3**, a number of the camp inhabitants waited until the Makhateer left the room to tell me that they also believed that the widening of Sumaya Street was an act of spatial fragmentation.
While the Makhateer were in the room, they explained to me that the project was conducted purely for technical reasons, to improve accessibility and ventilation for the inhabitants along the street, assuring me that those whose units were demolished were generously compensated. After they were gone, a number of the inhabitants said that it did in fact disconnect the space of the camp, because the heavy presence of the cars obstructed the flow of movement and activity across the two sides, disconnecting neighborhoods east of the street from those west of it.
It was also mentioned that the State had plans to widen other streets in the camp, but that those plans were never executed for the lack of public funding.

As such, Sumaya Street also presents an example of the invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, a concept previously discussed in this chapter.

As such, Sumaya Street also presents an example of the invisible urban planning of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, a concept previously discussed in this chapter.
Planned and executed by traditional governmental urban planning entities, the

widening of the street overlooked the fact that these urban interventions were taking place within what was officially recognized as a refugee camp and humanitarian space of shelter, solely managed by UNRWA and the DPA as the two entities responsible for legislating and executing the operations within its boundary. The widening of Sumaya Street worked on integrating the camp into the rest of the city and developing it as such, explicitly driven by spatial integration and resettlement aspirations, as described by the inhabitants, by spatially disconnecting some parts of the camp from one another and simultaneously connecting the same parts with the rest of the city.



FIG. 4.38 Sumaya Street and the flows of cars disconnecting the camp fabric.

4.4.3 The Markets and Flows of Activity as Connectors with the city

When visiting the camp for the first time, a new visitor would think that the camp is a market, a space of commerce rather than a space of refuge. What one is first met with are open street markets bustling with shops, kiosks and street vendors, so busy with commercial activity.

Was the transformation of the camp space from a space of temporary shelter to a space of commerce planned or unplanned?



FIG. 4.39 Standing in the middle of a busy commercial street in the camp.

Through this chapter, I was not able to arrive at a conclusive answer, but was able to discuss all the different factors that guided and produced that transformation, ranging from the change in building regulations, the invisible urban planning, the historical events, and the population overspill to some inhabitants' move to neighboring areas. The markets seemed to swallow the residential buildings with the continuous influx of shoppers, bursts of color and layering of sounds and noise. In the beginning, I found it hard to trace the features of the built environment in the middle of that high level of human activity, as seen in Figure 4.39

Commercial activity dominated the spaces of the camp and the general character of its neighborhoods, especially if one follows the flows of bodies that predominantly move along the commercial corridors and travel along their length. When in the camp for the purpose of shopping, shoppers do not need to move beyond the markets nor do they walk in the residential neighborhoods.
This is because the commercial streets are directly linked with the three streets that border the camp from the outside, demarcating the camp's edges in a manner that allowed the entry of shoppers from the outside of the camp, into it and out of it again, without the need to move deeper into the camp or walk through the residential neighborhoods.

In Al Wehdat Camp, the word, 'market,' is a general term that encompasses a wide variety of components, which includes the shops, the street vendors, the kiosks, the carts and the shoppers.

For those reasons, Al Wehdat Market itself is not fixed in space, because in addition to the shops that are situated inside the buildings, the streets are bustling with the kiosks, street vendors and carts that are in constant motion. Their numbers were not fixed, nor were their locations or density, which together played a role in the market's continuous expansion and occupation of the camp's space. In time, more residential units were being turned into shops, with the spread of the market increasing the demand on the shops. Inhabitants were offered attractive compensations for their units by merchants who were driven by the prospects of the camp as an attractive market. To map these spatial relations, I produced the section shown in Figure 4.40, cutting through the central stage of the market and the backstage, showing the different elements that constitute Al Wehdat Market, which include the commercial centers, the storage spaces, the kiosks and street vendors, the carts, and the actual streets where commercial activity flows around the kiosks and carts, in and out of the shops.

Historically, the market was not that big, with commercial activity only permitted on a wide scale in the camp in the early 1980's. Prior to that, Al Wehdat Camp was predominantly residential, with a small vegetable market and a limited number of shops catering to the inhabitants' basic needs. In an interview with the Director of Al Wehdat Camp Services Committee, a division of the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA), he shared with me the history of the market.

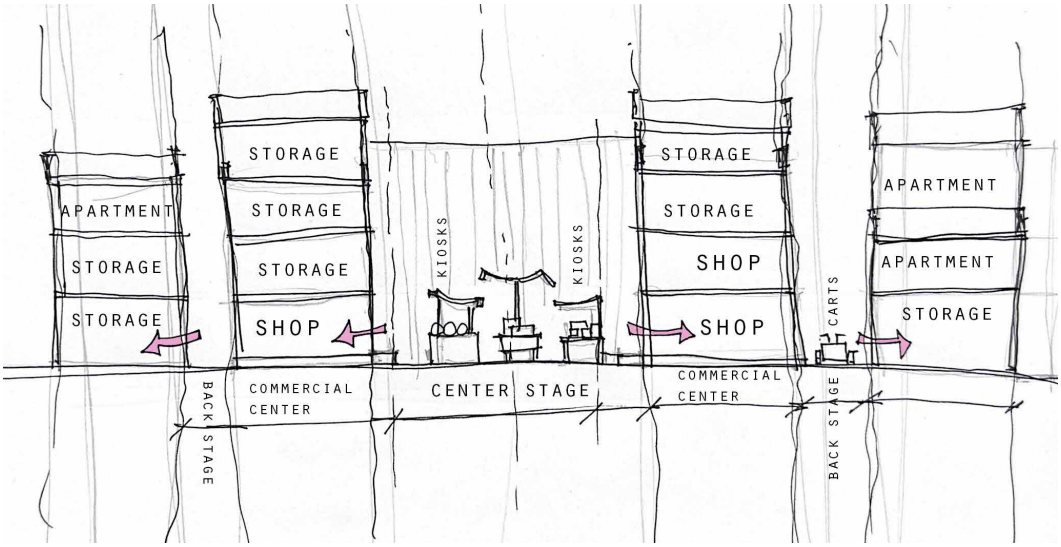


FIG. 4.40 A generic section through Al Wehdat Market, showing the market's different divisions and elements.

In 1983, commercial activity was officially permitted in the camp, providing camp inhabitants with an opportunity to improve their living conditions and become less reliant on aid, with the increased rates of poverty and unemployment. The general rule permitted camp inhabitants to use 50% of their units for commercial purposes. In 1983, when that rule was first legislated, units consisted of a single floor, half of which could be turned into a small shop, with the inhabitants living in the second half. In 1997, after the DPA permitted the addition of an extra floor above the original unit to solve the issue of overcrowding, camp inhabitants were allowed to turn the entire ground floor to a shop, while residing above, on the first floor. In 2012, after permitting the addition of two extra floors above the original unit, making the total number of floors for each unit four, camp inhabitants were allowed to use the first two floors for commercial activity while residing in the top two.

Inside the camp, the decision of whether to turn a unit into a shop was influenced by its proximity to the main streets and its distance from the flows of people and activity. The classification of streets inside the camp between main and secondary depended on three factors: a street's proximity to the streets outside the camp, whether that street had an institutional building in it and the actual width of the street itself, because the wider it was the higher the activity in it.

More shops were opened in close proximity to the streets that were considered more primary within that hierarchy, usually with more landmarks and more width and more flows of people and activity.

In an interview with the head of Al Wehdat Camp Merchants Committee in 2019, he estimated the number of shops in Al Wehdat Market to be around 2000 shops, catering to the needs of a population much larger than that of the camp inhabitants themselves, one that encompasses shoppers from all of Amman, with the camp inhabitants constituting only 5% of the total number of shoppers. Given how the commercial streets were directly linked with the three main streets that demarcated the camp's exterior edge, activity flowed heavily into and out of the camp throughout the day, connecting the space of the camp with that of the city through an influx of shoppers, merchants and products. With limited vehicle accessibility, flows of shoppers moved into, out of, and around the camp, relying on the exterior streets to get to the public transport lines, or to get to their cars parked outside the camp. This is why I usually parked my car in Sumaya Street whenever I visited the camp, given how it was one of the streets with car parking spaces potentially available. I was not always lucky. I struggled to find a place to park my car on many occasions. That network of people and vehicles along the camp's edges further blurred the boundary between the camp and the city and connected flows of activity and movement with the neighboring streets and areas. A network of paid parking lots emerged along the camp's edges in time, seizing the opportunity to offer space for shoppers to park their cars across the camp's edges, for the lack of parking spaces inside the camp.

Due to the limited vehicle accessibility into the camp, another phenomena that emerged was the network of the small metallic carts that young boys used to transport items into and out of the camp. *"Cart! Cart! Cart!"* was a call that I heard frequently during my field visits, as young boys persuaded shoppers to hire a cart from them. I interviewed two of the young boys to better understand their operations.

The two young boys explained to me that the process was pretty straightforward: the carts, such as those photographed in Figure 4.41, were owned by a number of merchants in the camp who would lease them to the young boys at daily rates. It was an attractive opportunity for boys between the ages of 10-20 to generate income for themselves and their families. The boys would offer their services to shop owners and shoppers, using the carts to transport items across the narrow streets that could otherwise not be navigated by cars. The boys helped merchants bring their items into their shops, unloaded from the big trucks in the main streets into the carts to transport products into shops inside the camp.



FIG. 4.41 Carts used for transportation inside the camp.

The boys would also help shoppers transport their purchases from inside the camp to their cars (typically parked in the main streets), or to the nearest taxi or bus. Each merchant had his own storage point for his carts, usually located in a rented unit inside the camp or along the camp's periphery.

The boys did not have designated paths nor did they move along fixed routes, they just worked on taking the shortest and least crowded paths to get from one point to another, in the shortest time possible. Having moved often across the camp, they knew the shops, the streets, and most of the spots really well, which helped them move around quickly. The boys also had a good understanding of the patterns of activity during the day, such that they also knew where *not* to go, not to get stuck between crowds. Everything seemed to be moving in the camp, with the level of activity remarkably high. Everything was in motion, except for the architecture, which acted as a stage for everything else to take place.

4.4.4 The Merchants and the Domination over the camp space

The emerging economic ecosystem introduced merchants as new, informal decision makers in the camp, playing a role in the camp's economic viability and taking control over the camp space. The merchants operated through networks of shops, street vendors, kiosks, and carts.

With the spread of the market throughout the years, having a shop inside Al Wehdat Camp became an attractive opportunity for merchants. The great revenues these shops generated gradually began attracting several merchants from outside the camp to Al Wehdat Market, buying and renting shops from the camp inhabitants. Per regulations, camp inhabitants were allowed to turn their units into shops, but not rent or sell them to other people. Because of the high demand on the shops, what emerged was a black market of selling and renting units, documented through unofficial papers and lawyers that oversaw the exchange without officially registering the papers, as discussed before. According to a DPA official and the Head of Al Wehdat Camp Merchants Committee that I have interviewed, officials were fully aware of what was happening but no one wanted to do anything to stop it, so it has continued for decades.

According to a shop owner that I interviewed, the DPA was quite lenient in dealing with the merchants, giving them the space to practice their control over the camp space, which exceeded the perimeters of their shops to include the entire space of the market, which in time gave the merchants more power and influence. More shops were bought and more shops were rented, supported by small networks whose operations ran in parallel to the commercial activity in the shops. In that same interview with the shop owners, he explained to me the different branches of that network. The first branch consisted of the street vendors, or owners of Bastat, who operated under the control of one of the big merchants, spread out in the camp and occupying every vacant spot available, on the pavements and camp roads, as seen in Figure 4.42.

Basta is an Arabic word that is quite popular in the camp, with the plural form being Bastat, referring to a piece of fabric or cardboard that is spread on the floor to showcase items but can loosely refer to any movable stand to sell items. To be able to set up a cart, a kiosk, or basta, the street vendor had to pay a fee to the merchant in exchange for their spot in the camp space. For that fee, the vendor is allowed to occupy that spot and it becomes reserved for him, with the fee varying according to the spot's location and size.



FIG. 4.42 Al Bastat occupying the space in Al Maghfar Street.

If a new street vendor wanted to join the market, they had to go through the proper channels to secure a spot, after paying the correct fee. Not adhering to these rules was dangerous, the shop owner told me, because occupying another vendor's spot, or attempting to set up a basta without paying the fee will cause that vendor harm because he will soon be attacked for violating the rules.

The second branch of the network were the garbage collectors, also operating under the control of the merchants, distributing the garbage between themselves according to the rules, arriving at the camp at night or in the early morning to collect the market's waste which is to be left at a designated spot according to the territorial distribution of the space. The third branch, which the shop owner introduced in a lower voice, were the drugs and the weapons. Some of the street vendors used their Bastat and kiosks to sell drugs and weapons to interested customers, using specific rules and codes very discreetly so as not to attract attention.
Formally, Bastat were illegal in the camp because of the fact that they did not have official work permits and the way they swallowed up the public space and obstructed movement, but that did not stop Bastat owners from setting up their items every day, regardless of the regulations.

I was told in several interviews that the merchants had good connections with the police officers in Al Ashrafieh Police Station that neighbored the camp, and for that reason, the Bastat kept spreading and occupied every meter available of the camp's space, especially around the main streets like Al Nadi Street and Al Maghfar Street.

If a police patrol were to enter the camp for any reason, the merchants would be informed and their networks of street vendors would pack up their stands and store them away for the day, or until the patrol was gone. In my interviews with the camp inhabitants, they would always complain about the Bastat, for the way they interrupted movement and spread illegal activities. The inhabitants also complained about them because they also spread harassment, making the experience of navigating the market uncomfortable for many of the women.

In my interviews with some of the shop owners, ones that did not operate in coordination with the Bastat, they also complained about them, because of the way those Bastat owners chased shoppers away by deeming the market unsafe, taking up a lot of space and making entry to their shops harder. The shop owners also complained about how some of the Bastat owners actually stole business from them, for their ridiculously cheaper prices and ability to sell their items on the streets, not having to pay rent for their shops or having to worry about properly running their business. Some shop owners also told me that the spread of the Bastat has drastically decreased the number of shoppers in the past few years, with Al Wehdat Market becoming very chaotic, cluttered, hard to navigate, and unsafe. That was also because of the deteriorating physical condition of the streets and buildings, without proper maintenance or cleaning.

The question of whether a business owner, shop owner or a basta owner was an inhabitant from the camp or was an outsider that came to the camp for business, was also an aspect that increased the tension between different entities. The business owners from the camp believed the camp belonged to them and they had the right to run their business there, having inhabited the space for a long time and being the ones more deserving of generating revenues out of its market, viewing the outsiders as a threat to their survival and prosperity. The ones that came from outside the camp believed that they had the right to be there, because they had the money to invest and this is how business was usually run.

That kind of territorial tension is a manifestation of the boundary that exists between the camp and the city, with the camp inhabitants seeing the camp territory as one that belonged to them, despite the camp's high level of socio-spatial integration with the surrounding context that blurred the boundary between them.

Where was the camp in that instance? Was it a physical space that had clear boundaries, or was it a lived interior, a lived experience, one only those who have inhabited know? Was it an accumulation of experiences and memories, hardships and challenges, that had been collectively experienced and survived, only recognized by those who were part of them?

Does that not transcend the camp beyond its physical location, beyond material parameters, to become an intangible reality carried inside the bodies of those who have lived through them, regardless of how far they move away from the camp? Does that not produce the space of the camp as a transient territory that transcended the material parameters of the physical world, turning it into an idea, a concept, a symbol?

4.4.5 The Fountain Market: Flows of Bodies, Memories and Water

Walking along Al Nadi Street, I saw a sign that read, "The Fountain Market." I walked into a small courtyard and saw a water fountain at its center. That accidental discovery opened up a door into the camp's past, one that looked through time, taking me all the way back to Palestine and the home-land. After asking around, I learned from the shop owners inside the fountain market that the fountain, seen in Figure 4.43, was built on top of what used to be one of the public UNRWA hydraulic nodes in the camp. According to the camp director, when the camp was first built, the units did not have bathrooms nor drinking water, not having yet been connected to the hydraulic infrastructure.

In the beginning, inhabitants relied on water trucks to get drinking water, before UNRWA built hydraulic public nodes, distributed between the residential neighborhoods. Inside each plot, water came out of public faucets that the camp inhabitants used to fill up their buckets and tins to take back to their units. Bathrooms, on the other hand, were divided on opposite sides of each plot, divided by gender. These plots were predominantly occupied by women, who would line up to get water for their families, with each family given a number of designated slots around the week, in an attempt to control the process of water distribution between the families residing around each plot.



FIG. 4.43 The fountain in the fountain market, a reminder of the camp's earlier days.

In Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel *Birds of Caution,* he describes women attempting to get water:

"Many petitions were signed before women were able to get water from the public faucets that were built for each neighborhood, after a lot of blood spilt between the women who fought to get water from the trucks. Women used to roll in mud, spilling their water on the ground, which caused the fights to escalate, every time their magical eyes managed to see through the truck's tank to realize that the amount of water that remained was not enough for everyone. It was a survival fight that caused hair to be ripped and headscarves to be stained, every time the water tank came. After the water faucets were built in the plots, the number of fights dropped, so did the amount of swearing. The women and girls seemed to calm down."(Nasrallah, 2009; p.33).

It was stories like this that managed to strip away any sense of romanticism about the olden days of the camp, revealing an unapologetically harsh side of everyday life in the camp. In another incident, Nasrallah describes an attempt by his mother to get water for their family:

"Aisha carried her tin and left. She heard that the water truck would not come to their neighborhood that day, so she left the baby with his sister and left. She pushed her frail body into the crowd, worried that the water left at home would not be enough until the next morning. A strong arm reached out and pulled Aisha from her hair, she found herself tossed outside the battlefield straight into the mud. She rose up like an angry cat, out to get the woman who pushed her, causing them to both fall on the ground. Aisha, is that you? Asked the woman. They recognized one another and hugged, each crying for the other and each crying for herself."
(Nasrallah, 2009; p. 110).

In my interviews with the older women from the camp, they clearly recalled the days of lining up for water in the water plots while also recalling the trips they had to take back home while carrying the heavy water tins with them, sometimes carrying them over their heads. The women would head to the plots in groups to help each other out, taking with them any kind of container they could find to fill with water. Those plots were usually occupied with women, because the task of getting water was usually left to the women of the family, with the men out working. That did not mean that men were not allowed into these plots, it was just that during the day, men usually had no business being there which left the space primarily used by women. That was something that I found quite remarkable, given how limited the presence of women was in the public spaces of the camp today, and even though the experience of being in the water plots was not always comfortable or friendly. This revealed to me that women were out in public more often in the past.

Using the descriptions from the women during the interviews, I drew a diagram that aimed to capture the process of getting water in the earlier days, combining it with archival photos of Palestinian women getting water in the camps from the UNRWA archive, seen in Figure 4.44. I also added parts of my interviews with the women in the camp as they remembered the earlier days.

In Figure 4.45, I created a collage using an archival photo showing a line of women carrying water in the older days of the camp, superimposed on a recent photo of the camp that I have taken myself. This work aimed to excavate the memory of the women and water in the camp, folding time and space and using this practice to reveal a deeper and hidden layer from the camp's past, by bringing it into the present. In the collage, I also aimed to reveal the relationship between the body and movement; emphasizing the bodily nature of the practice of getting water and the movement that came with it as the women carried the heavy water tins over their heads and moved around the camp to get to their homes.

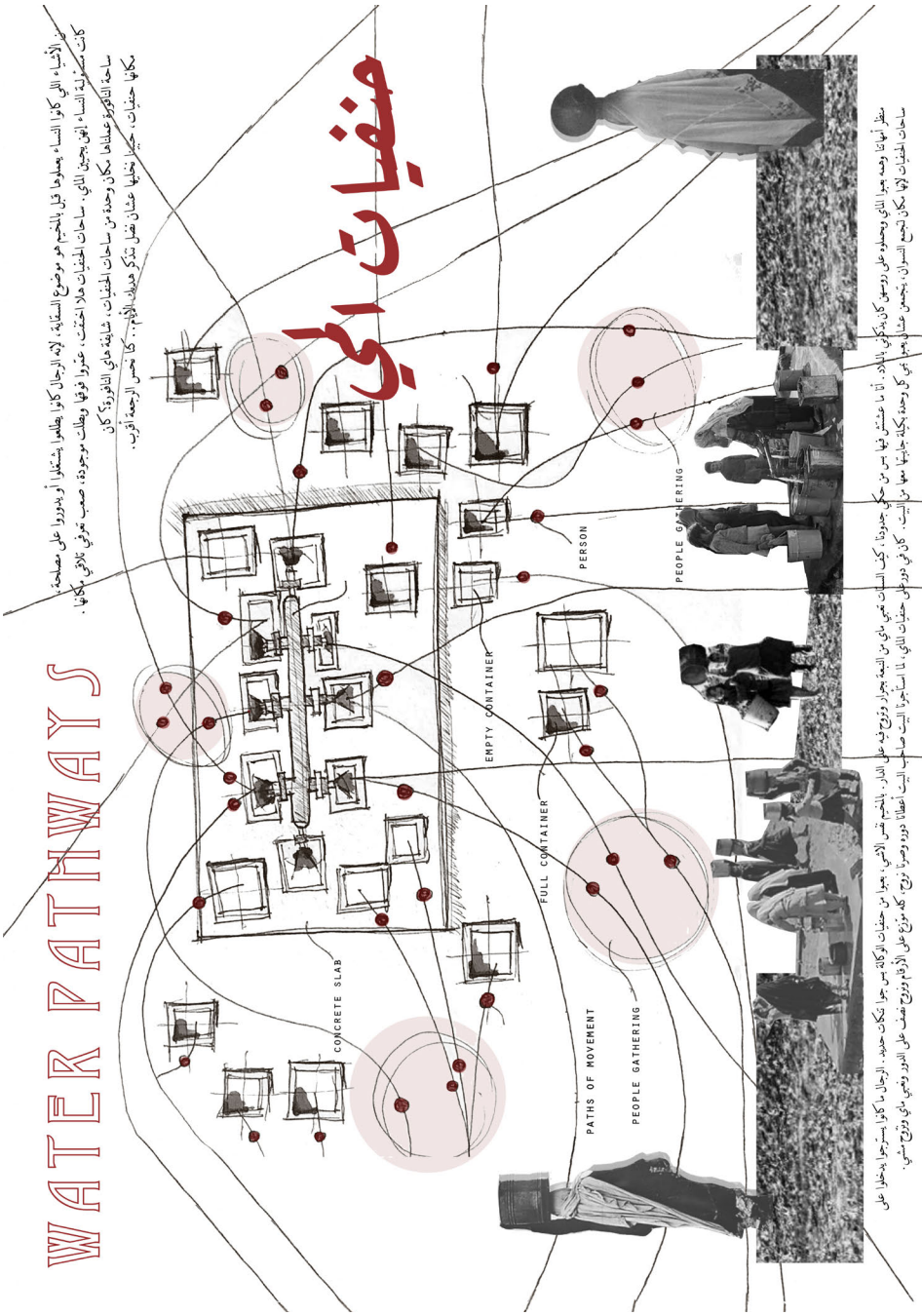


FIG. 4.44 Women in search of water in the water plots in the camp.

TOC

That movement demarcated their paths across the spaces of the camp, as a part of their daily practice, producing a space that was explicitly occupied by women.

The practice of women lining up to get water was apparently reminiscent of even older days for some of the camp inhabitants, who told me that it reminded them of Palestine, when women used to line up to get water from the closest water stream, filling their jars with water and returning home with the jars on their heads. In one interview, an elderly camp inhabitant told me, “Seeing my wife bring in water in a tin over her head reminded me of my mother, when she used to bring in water with a clay jar she carried across the village to our home in Palestine before Al Nakba.”When I interviewed one of the shop owners and asked them about the fountain, he told me the exact same thing, that the sight of his mother getting water from the water plots was reminiscent of Palestine, despite him being born in the camp and not having been in Palestine all his life.
Nevertheless, that practice reminded him of the stories he heard from his parents about life in Palestine, stories that every Palestinian refugee dearly held on to. For those reasons, the shop owners decided to build the fountain, collecting money out of their own pockets, on top of what used to be the UNRWA drinking faucets, to remember the earlier days of the camp and keep the memory of a practice, which in its own way, reproduced one layer of life in Palestine, in the space of the camp.

Through that practice, a double folding of time and space happened, folding the present space of the camp on the older space of the camp, before folding both on the space of Palestine, which was what I attempted to capture in the collage I created, shown in Figure 4.46. In the foreground, I showed an archival photo of the women out to get water from the UNRWA archive, superimposed on a recent picture I took of Al Wehdat Camp, with both superimposed on a picture of mountains in Palestine, folding the practice, the women, the movement, and the water onto the home-land, despite the long stretch of kilometers and years between both.

In the past, women used to be out in public more often, out to get water, taking part in public life, but when reflecting on the present, I noticed that women were outside less often, less present on the streets, having moved inside, into domestic spaces, behind walls. Reflecting on the stories of the women and the fountains, I realized that this was a discovery that had accidentally happened, accidentally revealing a layer of the camp’s history. To learn about that phase of the camp’s past, I had to do some digging around, with those details buried under layers of events, history, activities, people, and Bastat, which is a notion I managed to capture in Figure 4.47, when I took a picture of the fountain market from above



FIG. 4.45 A collage showing women out to get water for their families in the past, in the present.



TOC

Through that practice, a double folding of time and space happened, folding the present space of the camp on the older space of the camp, before folding both on the space of Palestine, which was what I attempted to capture in the collage I created, shown in Figure 4.46.

In the foreground, I showed an archival photo of the women out to get water from the UNRWA archive, superimposed on a recent picture I took of Al Wehdat Camp, with both superimposed on a picture of mountains in Palestine, folding the practice, the women, the movement, and the water onto the home-land, despite the long stretch of kilometers and years between both. In the past, women used to be out in public more often, out to get water, taking part in public life, but when reflecting on the present, I noticed that women were outside less often, less present on the streets, having moved inside, into domestic spaces, behind walls.

Reflecting on the stories of the women and the fountains, I realized that this was a discovery that had accidentally happened, accidentally revealing a layer of the camp's history. To learn about that phase of the camp's past, I had to do some digging around, with those details buried under layers of events, history, activities, people, and Bastat, which is a notion I managed to capture in Figure 4.47, when I took a picture of the fountain market from above.

Just like everything in the camp, chaos made it harder to see things for what they really are, and what they really were. It took a number of visits and attempts, viewing the thing from the ground, from above, from a close distance and from afar, talking to inhabitants, officials, visiting the archive, walking on foot, taking photos and creating collages to arrive to conclusions; all as a way of deconstructing the many layers that have overlapped together to produce the space of the camp as it exists today.
After visiting the fountain market, I became intrigued about the other water plots and what happened to them in the present day. To know where they were, I knew that I had to study the camp's maps to try to locate them from above, given how cluttered the camp spaces were on the ground and how challenging it was for me to demarcate them within that chaotic context. The water plots were located within the boundary of the formal camp, within the redline, because they were built by UNRWA in the early years following the camp's establishment as part of its relief services to the Palestinian refugees.

After studying the map of the camp in its current state which I received from the DPA, I noticed the small squares between the residential neighborhoods which were almost evenly distributed between the camp's different parts, as shown in Figure 4.48.

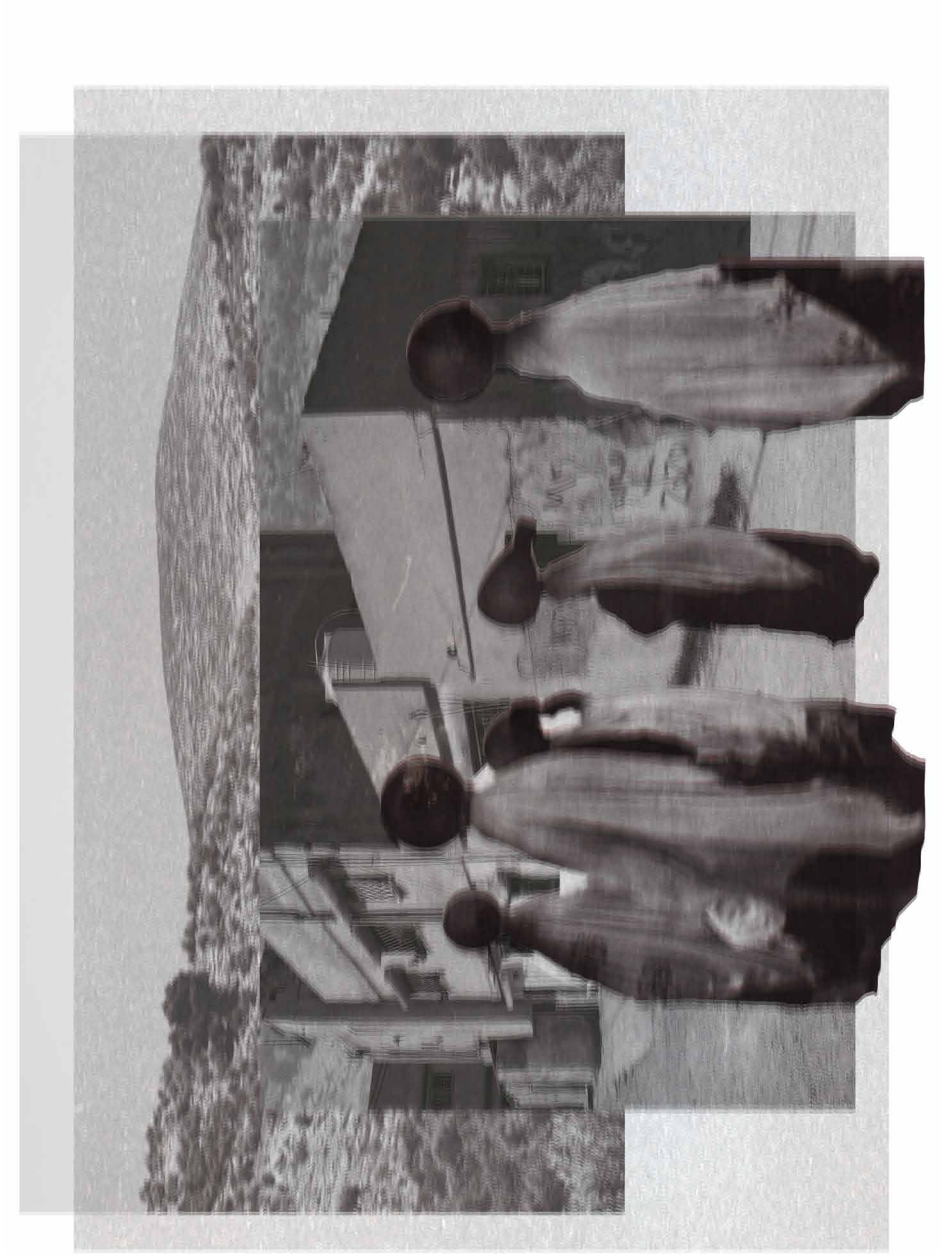


FIG. 4.46 A double folding of time and space, the space of the camp in the past onto the space of the camp in the present, both folded on the space of Palestine, as shown in the background.



FIG. 4.47 The fountain market from the top, taking the place of what used to be a water plot.

In those small squares, the water faucets used to be located. One of those squares is where the Fountain Market is currently located, in the square along Al Nadi Street, where I began this investigation. To verify this conclusion, I asked the Head of Engineering Department, a division of the DPA, who confirmed it in amusement, after I showed him the map with the blue squares. "You are right, this is where the water plots used to be. They no longer exist, they have been built over, you can go and see for yourself. On top of each plot now stands a new building that we have issued a permit for. Actually, this DPA building that we are in was built on top of a water plot."

Without hesitation, I grabbed the map and began walking around the camp, tracking my movement along the streets. The Head of Engineering Department was right, the DPA office was located on top of a blue square, in Al Bareed Street, neighboring another blue square where the Al Bareed Office, or the Post Office, was located. After that, the process became similar to a game.

I would use the map to get to another blue square and then take note of what new building was built on top of which blue square. I compiled my findings and produced a map containing all the new buildings, each marked in its location, shown in Figure 4.49. The new buildings were divided between commercial buildings, DPA offices, mosques, the Zakka committee (social welfare committee) and al Bareed office.

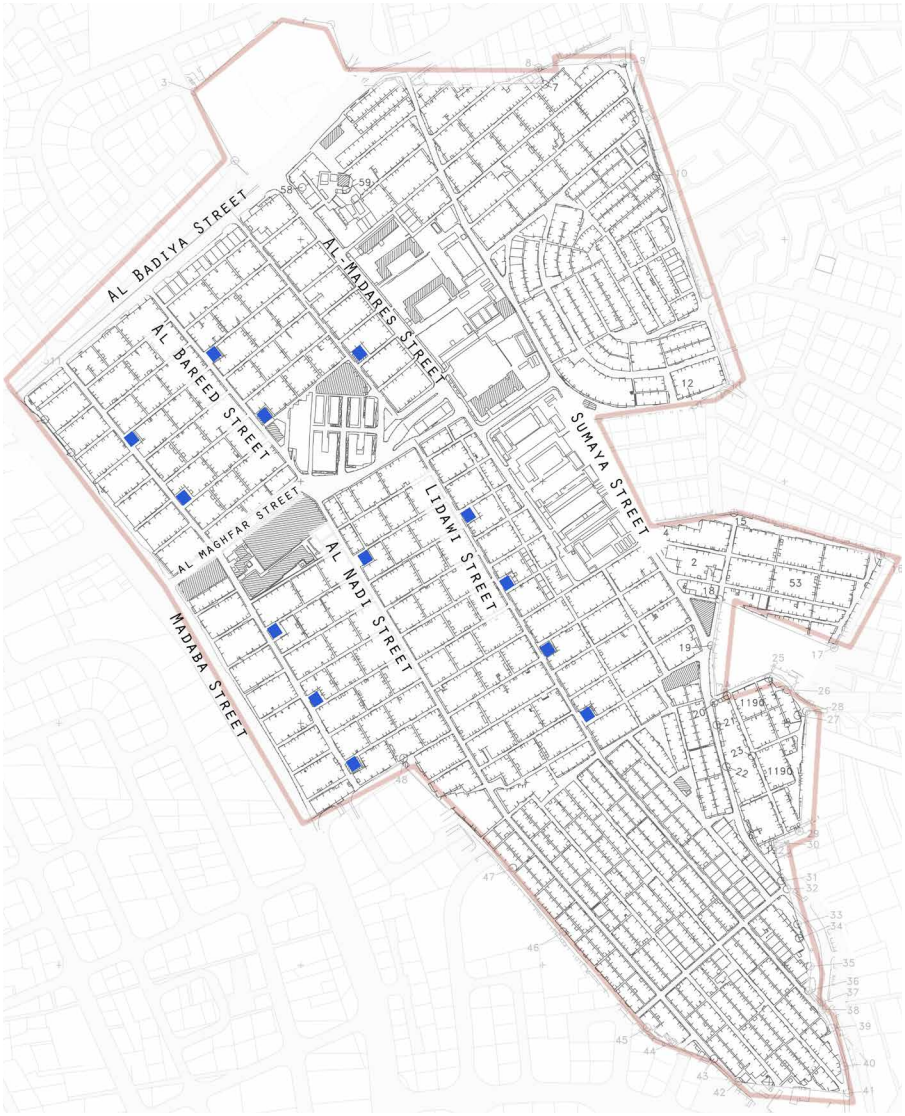


FIG. 4.48 Locating the water plots on the map of the camp, with the plots colored in blue, showing their location in relation to the main streets of the camp and the redline.

TOC



FIG. 4.49 A mapping of the new buildings that were erected on top of the blue squares in Al Wehdat camp.

TOC

The number of commercial buildings indicated on the map, in addition to the other commercial buildings that continue to be built, coupled by the continuous spread of the market and the Bastat owners, further affirms the camp's larger transformation towards commercial use. As explained by the Head of Engineering Department, the DPA was the one responsible for issuing the permits for the new buildings, which indicated that they took part in the camp's transformation and controlled the change in the plots' use over the years.

In a later conversation with a shop owner, he explained to me that some members of the DPA actually benefited from the plots' distribution, distributing them among entities they had connections with, in a notion that suggested that the DPA was also in contact with the merchants' networks and operations. This was not very surprising given their direct involvement in the control and the management of the camp as the official State legislators and executors in all of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. The process of identifying the newly erected buildings, locating them within the camp context, and excavating the deeper history of the water plots directly aligned with my research approach.

I understood the camp as an overlapping of events, memories and spatial practices that need to be excavated for the camp's present to be better understood, specifically its relationship with the city and its relationship with its different neighborhoods. Simultaneously, through that approach, I argue that the camp can only be understood when situated within the larger history of Palestine. By doing so, the camp space is connected to that of Palestine because of the folding of time and space that produces its space as it exists today, one that was produced through flows of displaced bodies that have continued to arrive since Al Nakba of 1948 until today.

Along these lines, when moving around the camp space and studying the streets and markets, I realized that Lidawi Street was not the only thing in the camp whose name commemorated Palestine, because Palestine was also remembered through many other practices, including the names of a wide variety of shops. In my visits, I noticed how shops took names of cities, like Al Quds, Nablus, Al Khalil, Yaffa, and Bethlehem. Other shops had names of smaller villages such as Imwas, Beit Nabala, Beit Sourik, Beit Iksa, and Al Walajeh. In other instances, shops had names such as Al Awdeh which translates to, The Return, or Al Tahrir which translates to, the Liberation, encapsulating notions that were central to their owners. Another shopping center had the name of Souq Al Dafatyan, which translates to, the Market of the Two Banks, referring to both Palestine and Jordan which are the two banks of the Jordan river.

4.4.6 The Gendering of Spaces in the Streets and Markets of Al Wehdat Camp

In the camp, I noticed that whenever women were out in public, they were usually on the move. Except for the occasional elderly women sitting at the steps in front of their houses, women were usually moving, either walking to get from one place or another, out doing errands, or moving around the market. With time, after a number of interviews with women in the camp and after a number of ethnographic visits to the camp's streets and markets, I started to associate movement with the feeling of safety. From my observations, I began to think that women were moving when they felt unsafe, women stayed when they found safety. The speed and duration of each activity also gave an indication of the level of safety. What that means is that women moved faster when they felt the level of danger was higher, women moved slower when they felt the level of danger was lower. Women stayed longer when they felt safer, women stayed shorter when they felt more at risk.

Shilpa Phadke (2013) echoes similar sentiments, contending that loitering (being present in public spaces without a specific purpose) has the potential to transform public spaces and, by extension, cities, into more inclusive, diverse and enjoyable environments. Loitering in that sense is what I refer to as the act of staying in one place, not moving, which comes as a reflection of a feeling of safety, testifying to a place's qualities. To increase women's accessibility to public places, Phadke argues in favor of allowing everyone in, even those who could be perceived as 'Unfriendly Bodies,' or figures of a certain status or background that are typically perceived as unfriendly, to give different people the opportunity to co-inhabit these spaces and to take risks. Instead of asking women to avoid being out on the streets to avoid the risks, more focus should be put on women's right to public spaces and ways to make public spaces more accessible for everyone, to become more accessible to women.

In Al Wehdat Camp, what areas did the women quickly move along, what areas did they avoid altogether in fear of male violence, and what spots felt safe enough for them to stop at, stay, and even loiter? What produced that fear in the women, and how did it relate to the wider patriarchal system?

Pumla Dineo Gqola (2022) argues that female fear is manufactured as part of the patriarchal system, with the aim of controlling and policing women's behavior, movement, and every aspect of women's lives. To make women afraid, the hands operating the 'female fear factory' rely on visible and recognizable cues that are performed regularly in the public space, communicating that one group or person has the power, while the other does not, seeking to weaponize fear to determine what is acceptable and what is not, where is allowed to go and where is not.

Fear in that sense is used to prevent women from engaging in certain behaviors and going to certain places, in the fear of their reputation, stigmatization, verbal and physical harassment, or any other consequences of their actions and behaviors. The theorization of fear through that lens will be used to understand the logic behind some spaces being perceived as unsafe on an immaterial level, while also inspecting the physical qualities of a space, whether on the street or behind a wall, to understand the material factors that manufactured those feelings of unsafety.
In an attempt to know where women were afraid to go, and map the unsafe areas in the camp, I conducted two focus groups in the summer of 2022, in the Women's Center in the camp, with the center's director present, helping me oversee the sessions while also participating in the discussions. In each session, eight women from different age groups were present, sampled through the center's director from the different classes that the center offered to the female camp inhabitants.
During each session, I asked a set of questions as a part of a group discussion among the participants. The questions were centered around the issue of safety and space and the factors that contributed to the women's feelings of danger in the camp's different parts and neighborhoods.

For example, "Where did you go/ where did you not go, and why?"

Framing the questions as such helped me link the practice of movement, of going somewhere, of accessing a space, with the dimension of safety or unsafety, and use the issue of inaccessibility as an indication of its unsafety and presence of potential risks. I also wanted to situate these feelings of unsafety in space and relate them to the camp's built environment, so I prepared a basic map that contained some of the camp's main nodes, landmarks and streets, and distributed it between the participants during the sessions, asking them to reflect their thoughts and perceptions on the map.My approach sought to facilitate the mapping of what Gill Valentine (1989) describes as, "The geography of women's fear." This concept explores how women's perceptions of public space, along with their decisions regarding routes and destinations, are influenced by their fear of male violence and its repercussions. These considerations often result in the adoption of coping mechanisms that helped women navigate their daily environments, relying on the mental maps they had developed of their environments that helped them avoid potentially dangerous locations during dangerous times of the day. That investigation enabled Valentine to conclude that women's restricted use of public space reflected the spatial manifestation of the patriarchal structures.
.

4.4.6.1 The Unsafe Spots in Al Wehdat Camp

In Figure 4.50, I show a sample of six maps from the focus groups, highlighting the spaces the women perceived as unsafe. I then identified the most recurring spots on the participants' maps and gave them numbers from 1 to 6, writing them down as a legend next to the maps, also seen in the same figure. For the participants, the vegetable market was among the public spaces that the women chose to avoid, because over there, they would be at risk of verbal and physical harassment. The vegetable market was a small square shaped lot, covered with a network of makeshift shading elements, lined up with rows of tables that showcased produce. In its physical setup, the vegetable market resembled a maze, with narrow pathways crammed up with shoppers, vendors, and metallic carts that were used to transport items, shown in Figure 4.51.

The physical setting of the space made women vulnerable to harassment because of the way people were tightly pushed together, along narrow pathways and because of the high volume of people in that small space. Together, these factors made it easy for a harasser to get away with his actions, due to the high levels of noise that swallowed verbal harassment or verbal responses from the women, in addition to the possibility of slipping into the crowd to escape punishment or confrontation when needed.

Stigmatization, which is a tactic that is used to manufacture female fear, also played a role in rendering the vegetable market as unsafe, as explained by a young woman during the focus group discussions: "My husband told me not to go to the vegetable market because women had no business being there. He would go there after work and get me whatever I needed. This is how things have been since we got married." Going to the vegetable market was not acceptable for younger women but more tolerated the older the women got, which was something an elderly woman explained to me during the discussions:

"I do not face any issues when I go to the vegetable market. I go there almost every day, but that's because I am an elderly woman."

— "What about your daughters, do you allow them to accompany you?" I asked her.

"Of course not, my daughters stay at home. They would not go there. Why would they? I get all that we need." She answered, surprised.

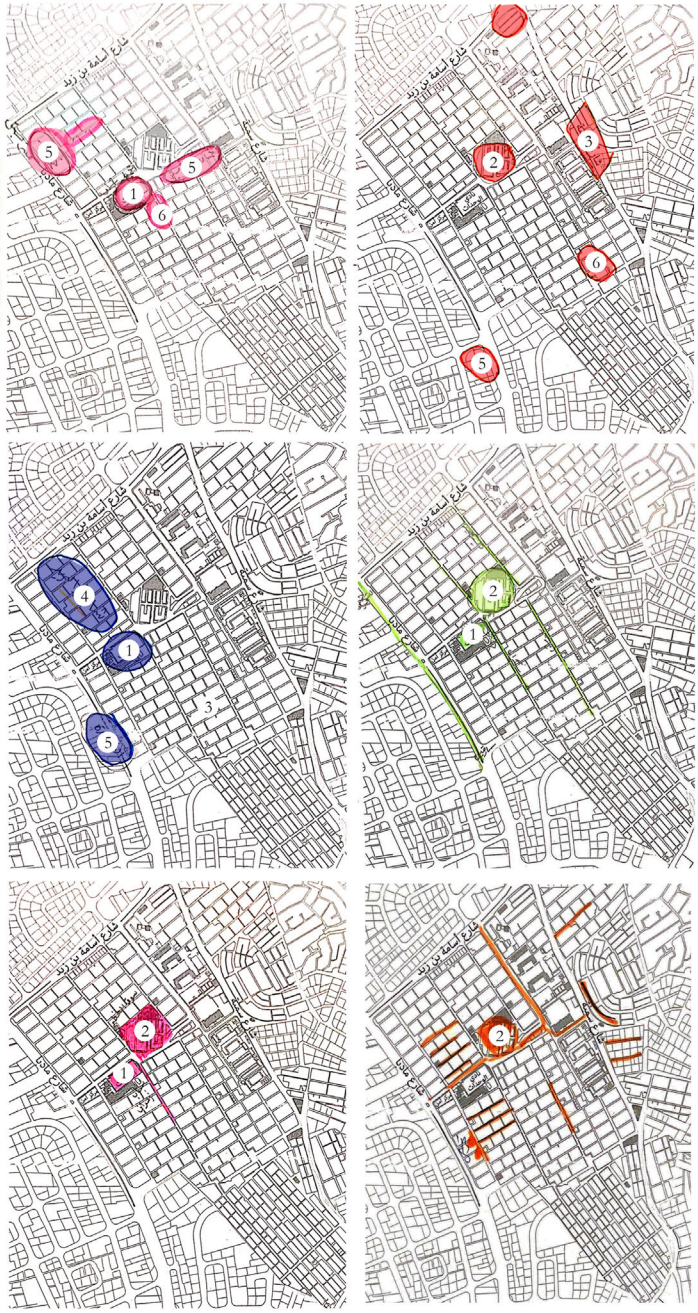


FIG. 4.50 Where is the danger? Six Maps from the Focus Group.
(Source: This a selection of maps that were annotated by the participants in the focus group session)..

TOC



FIG. 4.51 The vegetable market in Al Wehdat Camp.

The rules of conduct were communicated in the market and the women understood them and acted accordingly. Elderly women helped the fear factory sustain its operations by practicing policing over the younger women, through familial ties and stigmatization, instead of interrupting its patterns. When I visited the vegetable market myself, I understood what the participants were talking about, because of the way the space was highly compact in addition to the fast paced movement of people, coupled with the loud noises and high level of activity.

Together these factors permitted harassment and made the experience of being in that space highly uncomfortable. In the vegetable market however, I did not face harassment, which was something that made me wonder about why I was spared, when the other young women were not. I got my answer during another conversation with a young man in the camp on a later visit. He explained to me that I was easily spotted as an outsider to the camp inhabitants, they knew that I was not from the camp, and therefore they did not harass me for fear of the consequences. In a way, I had unknowingly interrupted the operations of the fear factory, due to my background and lack of knowledge of the rules of conduct.

When I asked him what it was about my appearance that revealed that I was an outsider, he told me that it was not easy to explain, having to do with the way I moved, the fact that I observed my surrounding when I walked, appeared to be lost sometimes, stopped to take photos and look at things, in a manner that suggested that I was a reporter or a journalist. That kind of position rendered me as someone important, someone the camp inhabitants would not want to be caught harassing, because the consequences would be unknown, potentially bigger, and therefore were better avoided. In his explanation of what rendered me as an outsider, the young man drew a link between my patterns of movement and my distinction as an outsider. That was not something I had considered before, having relied on my appearance and language skills in relating myself to the camp inhabitants. From that, it would be concluded that young women from the camp moved in a certain way, having learned to move quickly and to keep their interactions with their surroundings to the minimum, disciplined to behave and act in a certain way. More generally, being from the camp meant that a person knew their surroundings better and because of that, moved more spontaneously and quickly through them.
In the discussions, a number of streets were distinctly identified as unsafe zones, especially the commercial streets that were also compact and crowded, with the participants telling me that the narrower and more isolated the street, the more dangerous it was. The feelings of unsafety were also linked to certain times of the day and certain times of the year, as explained by a young woman:

“If you walk in the camp during Eid, or the last days of Ramadan, God only knows what will happen to you! You will not be spared, the chances of you getting harassed will drastically increase because of the huge crowds that will flock to the market to buy new clothes for the holidays.”

“Always avoid the narrow alleys, listen to me, especially after dark, there, you will be groped and harassed.” Added another young woman, anxiously advising me.

“What do you mean? This happens here? In our camp? Impossible.” Interrupted an elderly woman.

“We have well behaved sons that would not do that, stop exaggerating.”
Added another.

The act of policing younger women was obvious in many encounters in the camp, including this one that happened during the second focus group discussion, where the older woman tried to not only police the younger women but also the discussion, by using conventional tactics of intimidation and denial, assuring me that their sons would not behave that way, that men in the camp were not like *that*.

Other elderly women blamed the harassment on the street vendors that came from outside the camp, assuring me that the people from the camp would not behave that way:

“Ever since the street vendors came to the camp, quickly occupying the streets and using up every meter available of pavement, the situation dramatically got worse. They made the experience of walking on the streets uncomfortable for everyone! Some even sell drugs and engage in many illegal activities.”

Among the recent transformations in Al Wehdat Camp, the growth of the market was at the expense of the camp inhabitants that are losing more of their camp space to the street vendors and their carts and kiosks. Out in public, on the streets, the high levels of activity and rising chaos, amidst the streets vendors and kiosks, reproduced the spaces of the commercial streets and transformed them into unsafe spaces where anything could potentially happen, conceptualized as part of the women’s geography of fear and places they were better off avoiding.A number of streets were also mentioned as highly unsafe, with the two most-mentioned streets being Sumaya Street and Al Bareed Street. Participants told me that in Sumaya Street, the high level of traffic and heavy flow of pedestrians made them more prone to harassment, paired with the fact that it was an area where many young boys loitered in front of shops along the street, which together also increased harassment and made women feel very uncomfortable as they walked by. A number of participants also explained to me how certain types of drugs were mixed with hot beverages sold in small kiosks along that street, which made walking past them suspicious. Afraid of the risk of gaining a bad reputation, participants told me that they tried to avoid the streets especially during rush hours. As for Al Bareed Street, I was told that drug dealing was quite prominent in that street and around that area, with one of the well-known drug dealers residing in that neighborhood. The participants told me they avoided that street because it was risky, considered as a place where fights were likely to happen and an area where one could get caught up in bad business. Remarkably, I had walked in Al Bareed Street numerous times but never sensed anything wrong. Again, I might have not been very aware of what was happening around me due to my limited knowledge of the area and I might have also been spotted as an outsider and therefore avoided.

In the findings of the focus group discussions, the role the architecture of the camp plays in the gendering of the camp spaces was clearly highlighted. Whether it was the narrow alleys, the many dead-ends, the lack of streetlights at night, the shading elements that isolated some dark streets, the compactness of the camp’s layout; these factors worked together in increasing harassment and increasing the feelings of unsafety for the women.

For those reasons, the participants agreed that the presence of commercial shops in any residential neighborhood made it relatively safer, because of the way it lit up the street and increased activity. The participants seemed to have a mental map of the dangerous streets in their minds, mentioning how they knew how important it was to avoid them. On that same mental map, they seemed to know which streets were safer to walk in, which became the daily routes they took around the camp. The wider, unshaded and better-lit alleyways were in general the safer option to walk in, both at night and during the day.

That discussion brought to my mind Jane Jacobs (2016) and her concept of 'eyes on the street' and the role mixed-use streets play in ensuring higher levels of safety in urban neighborhoods. In many of the conversations with the camp inhabitants, it was continually mentioned how the social fabric of the camp had drastically changed over time, with many of the "original" inhabitants moving out, replaced by new inhabitants that hardly knew each other. This weakened social ties that had previously contributed to adding more 'eyes on the street' and increasing safety. Because of the many families that chose to move out, there were also many empty houses, or houses that had been turned to commercial storage spaces, which also decreased the levels of safety and surveillance in those neighborhoods.In Al Wehdat Camp, life is hard on everyone, but those challenges seem to have a heavier weight on the women, who among the other things need to be extremely aware of their environments and produce intricate mental maps in their minds about where they can go and where they should not in order to stay safe and avoid danger.

To conclude this chapter, what becomes apparent through the different discussions is the dynamic social, economic, and spatial relationship Al Wehdat Camp has with the city of Amman, particularly when studied from the perspective of movement and activity. The terrain, on one hand, works on both connecting and disconnecting the camp from the rest of the city, coupled with a network of activities that continue to expand the territory of the camp and further merge it with the rest of the city. Moreover, the continuous influx of Palestinian refugees has also shaped the camp's relationship with the city, stretching the boundary of the camp with their settlement patterns and continuous movement from one place to another, into, out of and around the camp, as they project notions of the home-land, and their loss of the home-land, into the spaces and the territories they inhabit.
Al Wehdat Market also continues to move and expand in the space of the camp, occupying more space and changing more of the land use, and with it, the camp also continues to move and expand, along the movement of shoppers, vendors, and flows of activity, in a manner that contributes to the transience of the camp territory and its transformation beyond its formal boundaries and the redline.

To see the difference in the camp space with and without the commercial activity elements, one can visit Al Wehdat Camp late at night, after the street vendors have packed up their things and stored them away in the storage spaces. The camp at those hours becomes almost unrecognizable, with the highly crowded commercial streets appearing to be wide and quiet, and the architecture of the camp beginning to come into focus, having been buried before behind the different layers and components of the market. Al Wehdat Camp at night, returns to being a space of habitation, even if for brief hours, before returning to a market in the following morning, as the streets are occupied again by the street vendors and shoppers.

Remarkably, the streets are not very safe to walk in at night, as I was repeatedly told, which means that not many camp inhabitants get to experience the camp in those hours of quiet, because the camp streets are generally avoided in the late hours in fear of the rising levels of crime. The lived reality of the camp today, with the outburst of street vendors and shoppers, and the huge number of refugee shelters that have been transformed into shops, is not represented in any of the institutional maps nor reflected on any of the official drawings. This highlights the huge discrepancy between the official records and the reality one experiences on the ground. Moreover, the undocumented buying and selling of the residential units in the official records, whether they have been turned into shops or sold or rented to different owners, further contributes to the discrepancy between the formal and informal reality of the camp, between what is shown in the records and what is experienced in the everyday life of its inhabitants. Because of that, the change in the camp demographics is also undocumented, despite the fact that a huge number of the original unit users and families have now moved out, having sold or rented out their units to new inhabitants from a variety of different backgrounds.

Today, Al Wehdat Camp is not only inhabited by Palestinian refugees, but also by a number of other communities, like Syrian refugees for example, who sought refuge in Jordan after the war started in Syria in 2011. Additionally, the camp became an attraction to several communities from the working class from East Asia and some African countries, who rent apartments in the camp for their central location, cheap rent, and close proximity to services. These were things mentioned by a number of camp inhabitants who sometimes referred to themselves as original inhabitants, and referred to the new inhabitants as outsiders. Those outsiders were sometimes blamed for the rising levels of crime during some of the discussions, given that the camp inhabitants did not know where they came from and did not feel they could trust them.

Those sentiments expressed some of the social dynamics that influenced the social relations between those currently inhabiting the camp, who because of their different paths of arrival, engaged in a number of othering practices and drew boundaries between each other.

“Do not take photos of these kids, they are not Palestinian. These kids come from Syria.” Said one woman to me through her half opened window one day, when she saw me taking pictures of some kids.
“If you are looking for Palestinian kids, you can find them playing in the neighboring street.”

That sentence exemplified many things, most important of which was the perception that Al Wehdat Camp was a space for Palestinian refugees, and anyone who was there to study it, was obviously looking for Palestinian refugees and also Palestinian refugee children to engage with and photograph

In the field, in time, I came to understand the space of Al Wehdat Camp as one that exists not only at the intersection of several displacement paths of Palestinian refugees who arrived from Palestine, but also refugees and immigrants from countries all over the world, like Syria, Sudan, Bangladesh, Egypt among others, who sought shelter and refuge in Al Wehdat Camp for several political, social and economic reasons. That being said, the time and financial limitations of this study will not allow me to widen the scope of my research, deciding to render that conclusion as one that opens up the space for future research endeavors, highlighting this as an important gap in knowledge that is in need of studying.



TOC

5 The Walls of the Communal Spaces

The Home-camp

5.0 The Women's center

- “Where can I find the Women’s Center?”

- “Walk further down, for a few more meters, you will find the center’s green door on your left.”

After complaining to a camp inhabitant about the fact that most of the inhabitants he referred me to were men, he advised me to visit the Women’s Center if I wanted to talk to women from the camp. He advised me to go there given how that space was one of the few public spaces where women gathered in Al Wehdat Camp. I got in contact with the center’s director and scheduled a meeting for that day, and to get there, I was following the instructions she gave me on the phone.

In that narrow, sheltered market street, lined with a variety of shops and stacked with items and merchandise that were gradually swallowing what remained of the pathway, I was not sure where exactly I was going to find the Women’s Center. The street looked very commercial, too crowded and small to house anything larger than a 2 x 2 meter shop. It was 10 in the morning, too early in the day for any shoppers to be around, but just in time for shopkeepers to be opening up.

I was scheduled to have a meeting with the Women’s Center’s director on that morning in July of 2019. Three shops and two mannequins later, I found the green door, half opened, leading into a tiled pathway.



FIG. 5.1 Lost between the stacks of items while attempting to find the women's center.

I was not sure whether it was appropriate to step inside, feeling like an intruder, was that a private or public space? This was a Women's center, and I, well, am a woman, so that maybe permits me to enter?

I took a few steps inside, to find a big open courtyard lined with huge trees. That was the first time I found myself in such a big open space in Al Wehdat Camp, which was otherwise heavily crowded, with more solids than voids, with more concrete than trees, with more buildings than courtyards. In that courtyard, there was a children's playground, seating areas, shading tents, a variety of plants and a tiled path that connected the different outdoor areas with a small building to my left, which had a sign that read: The Women's Center – Al Wehdat Camp.

I took a few steps inside, to find a big open courtyard lined up with huge trees. That was the first time for me to find myself in such a big open space in Al Wehdat Camp, which was otherwise heavily crowded, with more solids than voids, with more concrete than trees, with more buildings than courtyards.



FIG. 5.2 The green door at the entrance of the women's center.

In that courtyard, there was a children's playground, seating areas, shading tents, a variety of plants, and a tiled path that connected the different outdoor areas with a small building to my left, which had a sign that read: The Women's Center- Al Wehdat Camp. The courtyard gained its definition from the four high walls that constituted its edges, separating the open space on the inside from the heavily built environment outside. In a way, it almost looked like the four walls were pushing back the tall buildings that were peeking from behind them, casting their shadows across the open courtyard. Because of the high, concrete walls that bound the Women's Center, it was almost impossible for anyone walking around it to imagine that such an open place existed across the walls. It felt like a secret garden amidst a sea of concrete. I took a few hesitant steps and looked around me, not sure whether I was supposed to be moving deeper into the space or whether I was supposed to wait for someone to greet me. Where could I find the center's director?

To my right, I noticed a group of kids on the swings and others on the slides. Across from them was a group of women under a shading umbrella talking and socializing.

Inside, I realized that this was the first time I saw women sitting in the camp. Except for the occasional elderly women sitting at the steps in front of their houses, female camp inhabitants were usually moving, whether walking to get somewhere, shopping or moving around the market.

The fact that they felt comfortable enough to be sitting was an indication of the qualities of that space, most important of which was arguably the level of safety women experienced there, safe enough to sit and relax. I allowed my gaze to travel around the space, noticing the mural that was painted on the opposite wall. The drawings on the wall further emphasized the contrast between the center's friendly atmosphere and that of the outside market, which was very commercial and chaotic. The drawings also emphasized the presence of the wall, with their vibrant colors and details, bringing it into focus as a separator between the inside and the outside.

I was later greeted by the center's director who welcomed me into her office in the small building adjacent to the courtyard. She started to tell me about the center and its programs, after treating me to a warm cup of tea.



FIG. 5.3 Inside the Women's Center, inside the walls with the friendly murals..

5.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have discussed Al Wehdat Camp on an urban scale, investigating its relationship with the city. This was primarily done by analyzing the way different boundary-demarcating elements connected and disconnected the camp to/from the city, as well as how these elements connected and disconnected the camp to/from itself and its different neighborhoods. This chapter will be used to discuss Al Wehdat Camp on a more architectural scale, moving the discussion to the walls in order to investigate their role in demarcating boundaries and producing a network of heterogeneous spaces within the camp itself. More specifically, I will be looking at walls as architectural elements that draw lines of ownership, function, authority and safety. These walls will also be analyzed as elements that distinguish between the public and the private, the outside and the inside, the institution and the inhabitant. In that sense, I will be studying walls as separators that produce different spatial conditions on their two sides, demarcating different spatial experiences within the camp itself, both in the communal and the domestic spaces. Because walls are also surfaces that can be used as mediums of communication, I will also look at walls as interfaces between the camp's different inhabitants, reflecting some of the camp inhabitants' values and ideas, by studying graffiti as a medium of expression and a tool of defiance.

In the first part, I will be studying the walls of communal spaces by focusing on three complexes in the camp: The UNRWA Complex, The Women's Center, and Al Wehdat Sports Club. These three complexes represent three of the major institutional power entities in the camp: The Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA), Al Wehdat Club Administration, and UNRWA. By studying these complexes and their architecture, I aim to better understand the power networks that are producing and transforming the camp's spaces. The walls of these communal spaces construct interior spaces with distinctive qualities which, when studied, reveal some of the power relations that play a role in shaping the camp's built environment, whether through the interplay of power dynamics within these walls, or the influence they exert on their surroundings. In the second part, I will be studying a number of walls with graffiti in the camp (both communal and domestic walls). In doing so I create a comparison between the drawings inside the communal spaces where the influence of the institution is the most prevalent, and the drawings outside the walls of the communal spaces and on the domestic walls, as a way of mapping out the power distribution within the camp space and the radius of influence of the three institutions that I will be investigating.

5.2 Walls as Boundary Demarcating Elements: The Communal Spaces

When walking around the camp, there is a variance in scale between the communal and domestic buildings, with the large scale of the communal buildings (or rather, communal complexes) standing in great contrast to the dense grain of the smaller, domestic buildings, which are still occupying the same 96 square-meters on the ground floor as when they were first built in 1955. These communal spaces are usually recognized by their long walls that extend for many meters, usually painted over with graffiti and drawings. These are notable and visible in some instances, while being covered up by commercial activity in others, depending on that complex's location within the camp relative to the main streets. In this part, I will discuss the walls of three complexes within the camp space to understand the spaces they produce within. I argue that these interiors are distinguished for their spatial qualities, and aim to understand the interplay of power relations inside the walls together with the influence they exert on their surroundings.

5.2.1 The Women's Center: A safe space for women and children.

Inside the walls of the Women's Center, I experienced a space that felt safe for women to be in; one of the few public spaces that women occupied in the camp. This came after discussing the feelings of unsafety that the women felt in the camp's streets and markets. The Women's Center was a space that was outside, in the public space, but also inside, sheltered by the four walls, where women sat down, took classes, felt empowered, socialized and fostered a sense of community that offered them support and guidance. That feeling of safety in the space was both material and immaterial, produced through the architecture of the Women's Center and the walls that bound the spacious and green courtyard, keeping danger out; and also through the different programs offered by the center and the networks of support that brought the women closer together. I knew that women felt safe there because they told me they did, but I also knew that they felt safe because they were sitting and not moving, which was quite remarkable in the camp context, especially when comparing it to their rapid activity outside on the streets and in the markets.

In my conversation with the center director, who worked under the administration of the DPA, she reaffirmed what was previously said to me about the camp's gendering of space, describing the camp as a male-dominated space, with very limited psychological and spatial room for women.
To help support and empower the women in the camp and allow them to find their space within the camp's context and their own everyday lives, specific programs were designed and implemented in the center, in coordination with a number of local and international organizations that worked with women and children.

5.2.1.1 The Walls, the Programs, and the Land

After a number of visits to the Women's Center, I realized that the four walls that demarcated the space of the center played a role in materially creating a safe space for women and children. Inside the courtyard, they were physically sheltered against harassment and exploitation from the outside space of the camp and the dangers and threats it posed, further supported by the immaterial solutions and programs and all they had to offer.

According to the center's director, to help women feel safer and more empowered it was important to teach the women how to become more financially independent. Doing so would allow them to ensure a respectful quality of life for themselves and their families. For those reasons, the center launched a number of training workshops that include tailoring, embroidery, arts and crafts, makeup courses, and cooking. These capacity-building workshops helped women develop their skills and become more likely to find jobs, especially since more families had begun to allow their daughters and sisters to work. Thereby helping to provide an extra source of income and support the family, given the very challenging economic conditions and increasing life expenses. Moreover, to help counter the issue of illiteracy that affected a number of the female camp inhabitants, a number of literacy classes were launched to help women develop their reading and writing skills, empowering them psychologically and economically. These solutions aimed to decrease women's financial dependence on the males in their families, whether their fathers, brothers or husbands, which had previously made them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The levels of unemployment in the camp were high, which also increased the levels of poverty and worsened the living conditions of many families in the camp, reflecting badly on the women.

What the program's director told me was clearly highlighted in the Fafo Foundation report (2013), in which Al Wehdat Camp, or what is officially known as Amman New camp, was ranked second of the ten official camps in Jordan in terms of poverty. In Al Wehdat Camp, a total of 34% of the Palestinian refugees have been reported to have an income below 814 Jordanian Dinars, which is the national poverty line. Female unemployment in Al Wehdat stands at 24%, ranking second among the ten official camps.

Another prevailing issue that affected the women in the camp was the lack of awareness in relation to a number of issues shaping their lives. For that reason, different programs were launched to spread awareness between women and children across all age groups in the camp about all the relevant issues that were critical to their wellbeing and everyday lives, tackling issues such as gender equality, assault, harassment, protection and empowerment. Women also benefited from the legal empowerment program, which offered legal consultation to the women in the camp to help them better understand their civil rights with issues related to marriage, child custody, employment, lawsuits and divorce. The objective of this program was to help women claim their rights and protect themselves against unfair and illegal treatment with issues related to domestic conflicts and abuse. Together, these programs helped build a safe space for the women in the camp, one that they returned to for support, guidance, and empowerment.

Entry of men to the Women's Center was not formally forbidden, but it was more of a common understanding that this space was designated for women and children only and any entry of men would directly raise both questions and eyebrows.

From a power perspective, the land on which the Women's Center was built was the subject of continuous dispute between a number of entities that wanted to gain control over that plot, as described by the center's director. Seen as an attractive and spacious plot of land with a prime location within the camp's context, a number of entities were trying to take over the land and change its function, which included Al Wehdat Sports Club and the DPA. The land was neighbored by the sports club on one side and several markets on the other three sides, which rendered it as a suitable plot for the club to expand, or for it to be converted to another commercial complex such as the ones around it. The land on which the boundary of the formal camp was built, as explained earlier, is rented by the Jordanian Government through the DPA for 99 years from its private owners. In that sense, none of the plots that fell within the formal boundary was owned by either the Government or the camp inhabitants themselves because the land was used through a temporary framework of ownership. Control over the plots and determining their function, on the other hand, was under the control of the DPA — with the exception of the UNRWA complex, which fell under

the control of UNRWA, also bound by a wall that demarcated the plot and identified its boundaries and the space of the agency's control and administration. For the Women's Center, the director explained to me that some employees at the DPA believed that there could be a better use of that land, most likely through building a commercial complex that could generate income for the department, after relocating the center to a smaller and more compact building elsewhere.

Wanting to understand the space better, I visited the neighboring shopping center, known as Souq Al Defatayn. I tried to find a way to access the building's roof to look at the Women's Center from above and understand its spatial relationship with its surrounding context of the markets, the sports club, the vegetable market, and the surrounding plots. On that day, I was visiting the camp with my mother, who decided to accompany me on my visit. With the help of a shop owner in Souq Al Defatayn, we walked to a ladder on an outside balcony to get to the roof.



FIG. 5.4 The Secret Garden: The Women's Center as seen from above.

“Where are you from?” The man asked my mother as I stood examining the wooden ladder.

“From Biddu, a village between Al Quds and Ramallah.” Said my mother.

“I have heard of it. It is very nice to meet both of you.” He said.

I was aware of the fact that he must have assumed that I too, was from Biddu, but did not go ahead and clarify that my father was from Jordan. We were in Al Wehdat Camp, and while in Al Wehdat Camp, I too was from Palestine, I too was from Biddu.I carefully climbed up the ladder and reached the top. The Women’s Center was on the opposite end of the shopping center, looking even more like a secret garden from above. I took a number of photos to document the spatial qualities of the Women’s Center and study its spatial relation with the surrounding buildings, particularly, the contrast between the inside and the outside of the secret garden, and the role the wall played in producing that distinction and space.

In front of me, a little girl was swinging in the playground, with the children of the mural appearing to be watching her, as shown in Figure 5.4. The space looked peaceful and quiet. The walls came into focus, giving a strong and clear definition of the space. Big trees rose around the courtyard, looking green between all the concrete.

From that point, I gained a more comprehensive view of the setting and the center’s spatial setup, after having previously experienced it from the ground.

5.2.1.2 Around the Table, Under the Tent:

In a later visit to the Women’s Center, I attended one of the literacy classes. I wanted to speak to the women myself and hear more about their lived experiences in the camp, to visit the interiors of their lives, including their experience of coming to the Women’s Center. Around the table, under the tent, 6 women sat in the class, focused on writing the new letters they had learned that day.
The group was diverse in terms of age. Some students were elderly women, others were young teenage girls. I sat down with them for a while until they finished their class. The teachers were women volunteers from the camp, moving around the table and checking on the students. It was in this class that I later met Sarah, who introduced me to Um Hasan and Sameera who played a huge role in producing several aspects of this research.

In the class, I felt that the environment was pleasantly relaxed and that the class was more of a socializing event than a formal class. Once they were done, one of the teachers introduced me to the students and asked whether any were interested in chatting with me, the doctoral student who came from abroad to study Al Wehdat Camp. The woman examined me closely, before one offered me some biscuits and invited me to sit next to her. She was an elderly woman with a grandmotherly demeanor; it might have been the biscuits and the smile. She introduced herself as Afaf. When I asked her to share her story, Afaf calmly started talking,

"I moved to Al Wehdat Camp in 1970, specifically Sumaya Street, having moved here from Jabal Al Weibdeh, which is a much fancier neighborhood in Amman when compared to Al Wehdat Camp. I moved to the camp when I got married. The biggest challenge that faced us in those early days was the lack of infrastructure: no sewerage or drinking water. We used to line up to fill water tanks from UNRWA drinking fountains and use the public bathrooms. I always felt trapped in the camp, the living conditions were very hard. It is not clean and lacks sanitation. It is very overcrowded which causes a lot of diseases. There is a high level of crime; I don't feel it is safe."Her friendly smile faded as she continued talking, replaced with a frown and a look of frustration,

"As a mother, I was very protective of my daughters and did not allow them to leave the house except for school because I did not feel that the camp space was safe. The boys, on the other hand, had more freedom to move and go out with their friends. I have five sons and five daughters.
My husband passed away when I was young and I raised my children on my own. I married young and do not know why I had to go through all of this suffering."
She paused for a few moments, lost in thought. I felt bad for having reminded her of the hardships that she had to endure. "My children have all married and moved out of the camp. I have beautiful grandchildren who always come and visit. I did not move out, where was I supposed to go?"I was reminded once again of how many of the camp inhabitants stayed in the camp because they had no other options, whether due to the economic hardships or social responsibilities. Her notebook was sitting in front of her on the table; she opened it and showed me her handwritten letters and words, her friendly smile finding its way back to her face.

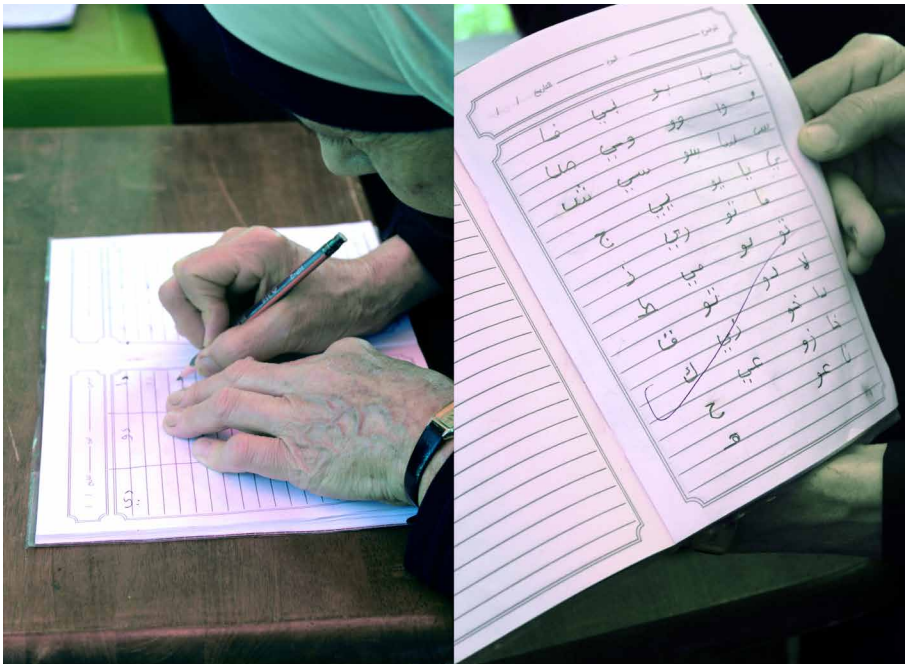


FIG. 5.5 Writing and Learning. Afaf practicing writing in the literacy class in the Women's Center.

"I have recently enrolled in the literacy classes, I have finally learned to read and write on my own! I feel very proud of myself. I never had the time before but now I do and I feel very accomplished. Sometimes while sitting with my family in the car, we pass by a shop whose name I manage to read. I cannot tell you how happy I feel when I do. More biscuits?"

The happy energy that that woman had radiated while she practiced writing the letter in her little notebook was remarkable. I saw the positive influence those literacy classes had on her life, she felt a lot more capable and that she was doing something for herself.

The reality of people's lives in the camp always managed to be heavier than what I knew or seemed to remember. I observed the woman sitting in front of me and wondered how many other women shared that same story? Early marriage, huge responsibilities at a young age, raising children in a challenging and harsh environment, struggling to make ends meet?

Another woman approached me with her teenage daughter and sat down to chat.“We moved to the camp after the war started in Syria. I am Syrian; my husband is Palestinian but has lived his entire life in Syria. We moved here because my husband and children carry the UNRWA identification cards that allowed them access to healthcare and education here at the camp.”

Her daughter picked up her notebook and started to practice writing the words she learnt in class today, while the mother continued talking.“Our apartment here is rented, located in Liddawi street. We rented it from a Palestinian refugee family in the camp. This is the third time we move. We had to move out of the first apartment because the son of that family got married and wanted to move into our apartment, on top of his parent’s apartment on the ground floor. We moved out of the second apartment because the owner raised the rent. were no longer able to afford it.”

This woman’s story revealed to me some of the challenges that some refugee families were facing in the camp, related to renting houses when the families were not the original owners of the units. Having to continually move, continuing to be displaced in various scales and for different reasons. It also revealed the social structure of the families in the camp, and how families lived in close proximity to one another, extending vertically whenever a son got married. As per her explanation, her family chose to come to Al Wehdat Camp after the war started in Syria, to be close to UNRWA services, because they had UNRWA identification cards, in a manner that highlighted the fact that refugees were still arriving in the camp, and that it continues to be a point along many paths of displacement for refugees until today. Listening to her story also reminded me of the heterogeneity of the refugee experiences in the camp, how the date of arrival and place of departure strongly reflected on the refugee families experience of living in the camp, because these factors played a role in determining whether or not the family was given a unit to use, or whether they had to rent, and also, whether or not they had UNRWA cards that made them eligible for services or not, which strongly reflected on their economic situation.

I asked her about her daughter and the literacy class. She responded by saying, “My daughter never went to school. Not in Syria, nor here. I was always afraid to let her leave the house. It is not safe. I worry so much about her. You see, she was engaged, but recently broke up with her fiancé. She is 15 years old, but I am sure that she will meet someone else, someone better.” The women sitting around us jumped in to reassure her that there was still time, and that God will send her someone better. I was worried they would ask me about my relationship status and their reaction if I told them that I was single at 30. I was glad they did not.

She continued, “When I learnt about these classes, I signed up my daughter. I would drop her off here in the morning for the class and sometimes leave her here all day, before picking her up in the evening. She would learn how to read and write, and socialize with the other girls. This place offers the safety and support that would allow me not to worry about her. This is the only place I would allow her to come to in the camp. I consider everywhere else to be unsafe.”

I tried to envision the life of that young girl, who did not say anything throughout the entire conversation. I also thought about the Palestinian and Syrian refugees who continued to arrive at the camp after the war in Syria. According to many of the camp inhabitants that I have interviewed, this was one of the major events that changed the camp demographics in the recent ten years, given how many of the original families were moving out, and many other families moving in. Those sentiments, usually coming from some of the original families who were still living in the camp, were usually shared with a hint of dissatisfaction and frustration, as if the camp was losing its Palestinian-ness with all the new nationalities that were now moving in. Around that table, a third woman approached me and asked whether I wanted to drink tea. When I agreed, she returned with a warm cup of tea and introduced herself and started talking,

“I was born in the camp on Sumaya Street. I am 40 years old. My parents were exiled from Palestine and ended up in the camp. My children were born here, five daughters and two boys.”
I noticed how the three women that day had included their street address while introducing themselves: Sumaya Street, Lidawi Street, and Sumaya Street again. Wayfinding in the camp depended heavily on street names, in a manner that almost divided the camp into a number of districts around the different streets.

I had noticed that in earlier interviews as well, with inhabitants using their street names when introducing themselves, because the camp was relatively huge and narrowing down the exact location helped determine whether the inhabitants were likely to know each other, whether they lived in close proximity, or shared some of the same experiences. In a way, it proportionally felt that a street in the camp was a neighborhood in the city. The lady continued, “One of the biggest challenges in the camp is the overcrowding. Boys are out on the streets playing all day and night, so much noise. You can hardly sleep sometimes. Buildings are so close to one another, you can hear everything.The reason the boys are always outside is because there is no space for them inside, so they prefer to stay outside, to find more space to kick the ball and play. We are of course very protective of our daughters though; we rarely let them out because it is dangerous.”

The three life stories that I heard were definitely not representative of all the women in the camp, but have rather allowed me to intimately and closely visit some of the interiors of the female camp inhabitants, with all what they house of love, fear, power and protectiveness. Those interiors also allowed me to learn more about the family dynamics such as marriages, gender roles and the role the center played in their lives. To better understand the spatial setting of the Women's Center, I produced a diagram of the Women's Center as seen from the top as seen in Figure 5.6, which I had perceived as a moment of quiet amidst chaos.

In the diagram, I tried to highlight the qualities of the Women's center, the ones that distinguish it from its surrounding context, primarily the ones that were produced by the walls. The first quality is the feeling of safety, represented in blue, coming as the result of both the material and immaterial structures of the Women's center, as discussed in this section. The second quality is the feeling of a garden, due to the presence of vegetation, which is quite uncommon in a camp that is heavily built and lacking trees. That garden tends to take the characteristics of a secret garden, emphasized by the four walls that isolate the space from the rest of the camp and informally control who gets to access it, informally limiting the users to females only. The third quality is the spaciousness of the space, coming as one of the few rare open spaces in the camp, in what is otherwise a very dense urban setting.

In the camp, any open spaces, whether the vacant lands or the streets happen to quickly get occupied by the street vendors with their stalls and kiosks, in a manner that turns the space of the camp to a very chaotic and overcrowded setting. The walls, in the Women's center, seem to be protecting that space of that market spread, designating that space for the education, recreation and empowerment of women..

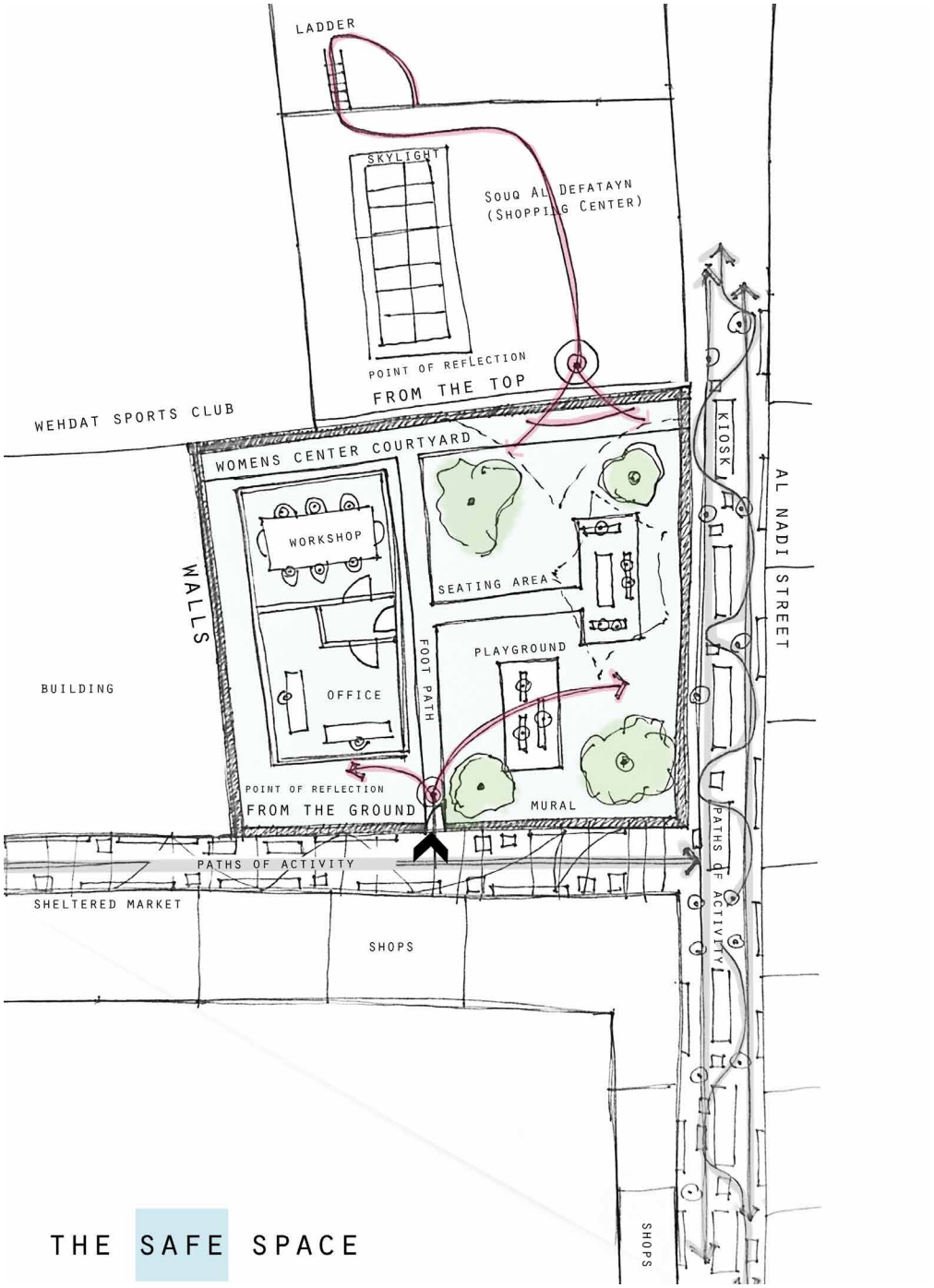


FIG. 5.6 A diagram of the Women's Center as seen from above, produced through my field observations..

TOC

5.2.1.3 The Demolition of the Secret Garden and the Destruction of the Safe Space:

In February of 2023, I visited the Women's Center again, only to learn that its former building and garden had been demolished. I decided to once again head to Souq Al Defatayn, to study the transformations of the center's space and get a better understanding of what had happened to the secret garden.

Looking over at the Women's Center, I noticed how it was all gone.

Most of the trees were cut and the playground was removed along with the seating areas, the grass and the shading elements. The small building of the Women's Center was also demolished, and so was the fourth wall that separated the courtyard from the neighboring plot. The site was much bigger now, standing as one big plot that extended over a huge area. In a melancholic scene that resembled the aftermath of a storm, the kids drawn in the mural stood there, as witnesses to all that happened, as shown in Figure 5.7.

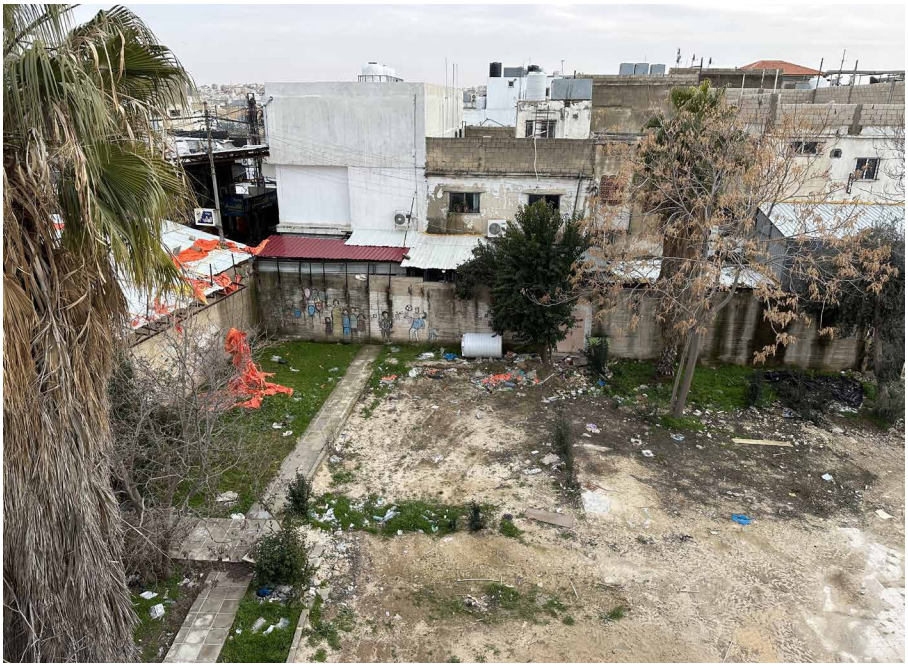


FIG. 5.7 The Women's center after the demolition in 2023.

There was so much that was taken from the women of the camp with that demolition, not only physical space which they enjoyed and sat in, but also a safe space that had offered them support and safety. Did the department decide to use the site for more important purposes, to generate money? Were they converting the site to another commercial center, like the director had told me 4 years ago?

When I asked about the demolition, a shop owner at Souq Al Defatayn told me, "I heard many stories. Some said it was because the space had turned into a dangerous hotspot, frequented by drug addicts that came here at night to shoot up drugs, making use of the high wall, you know, to hide away from the eyes of the camp inhabitants. Someone had to do something to make it stop, so the department decided to relocate the center to a building at the plot's other end. There, look at it. The site is now being prepared for the construction of new commercial buildings."

The irony behind that sentence did not escape me. The same walls that kept danger out, were now what invited danger in? What was a safe space for women, was now a safe space for drug addicts who flocked to the place to use drugs, scaring women out?

I took a few more minutes to examine the view. There it was, the expanding sea of concrete, in its full glory, ready to expand and swallow up the only open space left in the camp. I took a few photos, like those shown in Figure 5.8, examining a site I knew would soon become heavily occupied with more commercial buildings, swallowing the little remaining open space.

Leaving Souq Al Defatayn, I walked to the opposite side of the site, to examine the newly erected Women's Center, the one the shop owner directed me to. It was still under construction. The center's sign was hung up on the main facade, confirming it was indeed the center's new location, almost hidden by the hanging clothes and items displayed on a vendor's kiosk. The sign read, "The Women's Center. Sewing. Beauty. Handcrafts. Embroidery. Computer. Legal Consultation," shown in Figure 5.9.



FIG. 5.8 The Women's Center opened to the neighboring plot after the destruction of the fourth wall.

The building typology of the new center resembled that of all the other commercial buildings in the camp, built out of unfinished concrete, with three floors, hardly any different from the commercial building next to it. The demolition reminded me of how much influence certain entities in the camp had, making decisions that changed the social, economic, and physical landscapes of the camp in what was a considerably short period of time. The ambivalent system of governance made it more ambiguous to understand who was responsible for what, which in turn produced a space where things could happen, outside the limits of the conventional models of planning and control

By observing what had happened to the Women's Center, I learned a few things about how things were run in the camp and the influence the DPA had on the camp space. They decided which buildings to demolish, relocate and transform, and also how to use every plot of land in the camp, whom to lease it to, and from whom space could be taken.



FIG. 5.9 The newly built Women's Center.

The official territory of the camp was built on rented land indeed, but what happened on that rented land was decided by a number of power entities, one of which was the DPA, representing the Jordanian State. I looked at the tall concrete building again.

How were they going to run the programs inside that building, with the spaces stretched vertically instead of horizontally?
Would the center have several adjacent rooms along a corridor, like an office building? Will they be able to reconstruct that safe space, both socially and spatially?
Where would the women socialize?
How would they be able to enjoy the sky if a thick concrete ceiling, like everywhere in the camp, blocked their view and hung over their heads?
Was it still a public space, were they still outside if they were inside a room, with no sky?

5.2.2 Al Wehdat Sports Club.

Moving from a space that is primarily occupied by women, to a space primarily occupied by men, I will move the discussion to Al Wehdat Sports Club, which is located directly adjacent to the Women's Center, as shown in Figure 5.10. In the previous chapter, I have introduced the club as a space that was described by women as an unsafe space.

TOC

I have also discussed Al Wehdat Sports Club and its soccer matches in Al Quisemeh Stadium, which play a role in expanding the informal boundary of the camp to include a larger territory in which Al Wehdat Sports Club, and by extension Al Wehdat Camp, is present and represented.

In this chapter, I will look at the sports club as an architectural complex in the camp, and study the space demarcated by its four walls to understand the interplay of power relations that has made it a vital actor in the camp. I will also discuss a brief history of Al Wehdat Sports Club to understand its growth and transformation in relation to the camp's history and transformation. Remarkably, the street which Al Wehdat Sports Club was located in was known as Al Maghfar Street, gaining its name from the presence of the Police Station in the beginning of the street, right at the intersection with Madaba Street. The street perpendicular to Al Maghfar Street, is known as Al Nadi Street, which translates to Club Street, which was a vital commercial street lined up with shops. Why was Al Nadi Street given the name of the club, despite the fact that the club was not located in it, but rather in the street perpendicular to it?

I had coincidentally arrived at an answer to that question during a discussion with an elderly man from the camp who explained to me that the Club's old building had a different location, which used to be at the beginning of Al Nadi Street, giving the street its name. The old building stood at the corner between Al Nadi Street and Al Maghfar Street, with the entrance of Al Nadi located in Al Nadi Street. To help explain these spatial relations, I produced a diagram, seen in Figure 5.10, showing both streets and the locations of both the new and the old buildings of the sports club. In the same drawing, I also indicated the location of the new Women's Center, in relation to the old one. The location of both is visible in relation to Al Wehdat Sports Club, demonstrating how the communal buildings in the camp have been and still are changing locations in relation to an interplay of power relations between the different power entities. In the location of the old club building currently stands a small shopping center, Souq Al Defatayn, the one I climbed on top of when I took the photos of the Women's Center as discussed in the previous section. For a building that was as prominent as Al Wehdat club, its entrance was not as noticeable as one might think, almost swallowed by the clutter of the shops and the street vendors on its front, shown in Figure 5.11. The club's entrance, currently located along Al Maghfar Street, had a huge black metallic door that was usually closed, almost unnoticeable under the physical and symbolic heaviness of the Dome of the Rock sculpture, which is a significant mosque for Muslims in Al Quds, the capital of Palestine. In the background, the building's gigantic metallic white hangar seemed to stand unnoticeable, not as colorful and chaotic as everything else in the foreground.

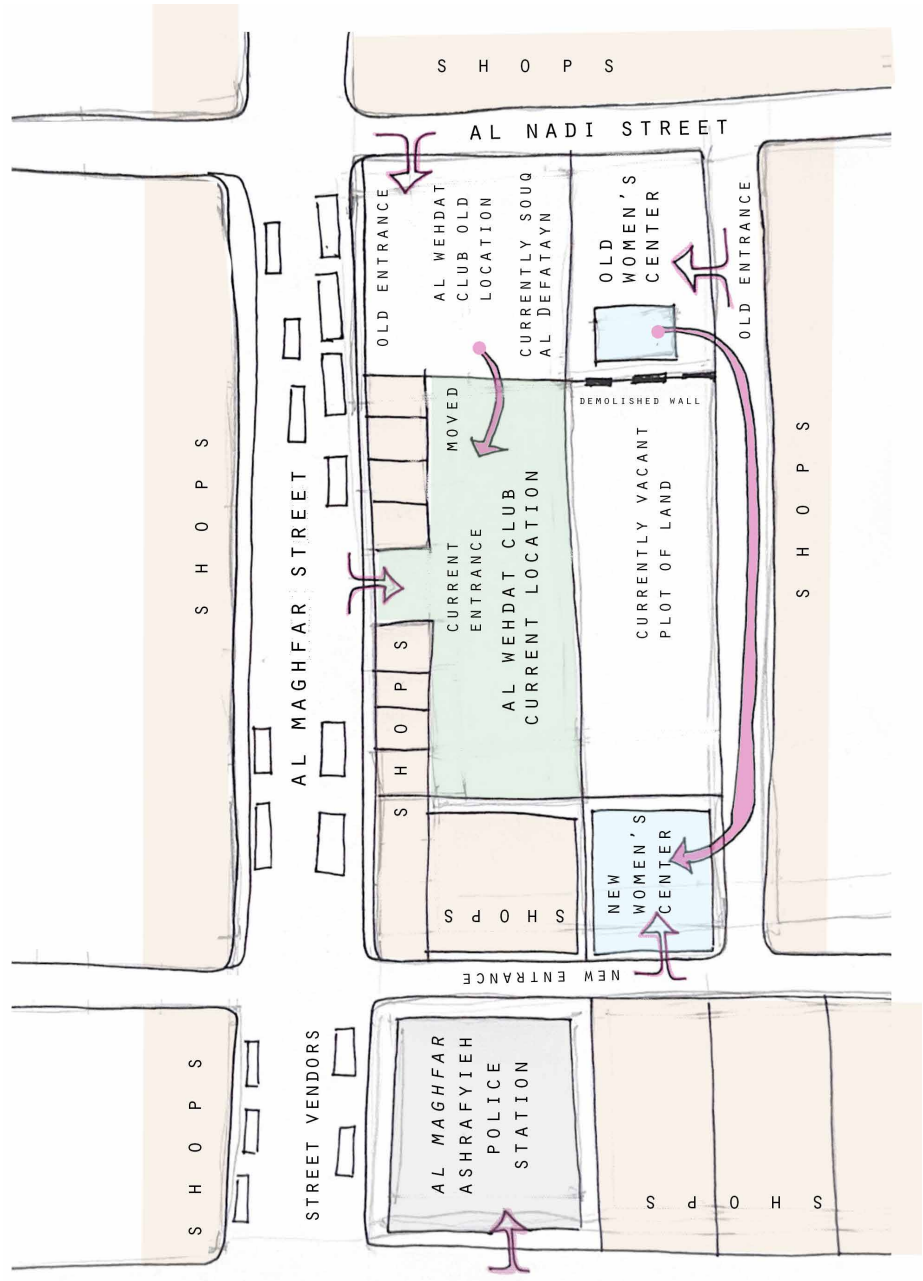


FIG. 5.10 The locations of the new and the old Al Wehdat Sports Club buildings and the old and new Women's Center, mapped on a diagram that I produced in reference to my conversations with the camp inhabitants..

TOC

After observing the entrance, I noticed how the club's building consisted of an overlapping of materials, colors, and typologies, which together reflected the chronological growth of that complex and its expansion through the years. That building did not reach that stage at once, but grew gradually over the years as it expanded, with new elements added to it over the years. That was a speculation that was later confirmed to me by several shop owners, as they told me that the shops on the front elevation were actually built at a later stage, added in front of the structure of the hangar, serving as an exterior shell to the main body of the Sports Club's building.



FIG. 5.11 Al Wehdat Sports Club entrance, almost swallowed by the commercial activity.

On the entrance, under the Dome of the Rock sculpture, the words "We will Return" were written on a stone plaque, shown in Figure 5.12, further affirming the club's connection with Palestine, explicitly articulated on the walls. From there, I knew that studying the walls was the starting point to understand the values and the aims of the club, extending the role of Al Wehdat club beyond just being a Sports Club. A camp inhabitant had enthusiastically told me that that stone plaque was actually brought in from Palestine and that is why it was rather significant, chosen as the medium to write those words on.



FIG. 5.12 "We will return" written on a stone plaque on the club's entrance.

I was not sure how accurate that story was, but was reminded of how the immaterial layers that overlapped with the material layers in the camp gave things more significance and meaning, especially if it represented a connection with Palestine. Figure 5.12: "We will return" written on a stone plaque on the club's entrance.

I was entering the club for the first time on that day, the first time to move beyond its walls into the inside. I had scheduled a meeting with Al Wehdat Sports Club's secretary to know more about the club's history, committees and activities. I was also there to reflect on what the women had told me in the focus groups about the club, to see for myself what they were talking about. I hesitantly opened the door and stepped inside.

In the lobby, I examined a huge poster with the picture of Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque, seen in Figure 5.13, with the words, Al Wehdat Club: The Social Committee, on the poster's header, between the Palestinian and Jordanian flags. On the left of the poster, the words, Al Quds the Eternal Capital of Palestine, were written in red. A few minutes later, a man approached me and introduced himself as Al Wehdat Club Secretary, inviting me to his office to begin the interview.



FIG. 5.13 The poster of Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque at the entrance of Al Wehdat Sports Club..

5.2.2.1 Al Wehdat Club amenities, committees, and newspaper.

I learned from the secretary that Al Wehdat Sports Club was much more than just a sports club, but had a wide range of activities and projects in the camp and outside of it. The symbolic and political value of the club as a representative of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan, in addition to the wide range of activities the club initiated and ran, rendered Al Wehdat Sports Club as an unofficial decision maker and influential power entity that shaped certain aspects in the camp, in coordination with the official institutions: the DPA and UNRWA. According to the secretary, Al Wehdat Sports Club is as old as the camp, established in 1956 as Al Wehdat Youth Club, beginning as a community center that offered a range of activities for the camp's youth. The club gradually shifted its focus to sports in the following 20 years, having its name changed to Al Wehdat Sports Club in 1974 when it was registered as an official national sports club under the Ministry of Youth.

Today, Al Wehdat Sports Club operates through three different committees: the cultural committee, the social committee, and the sports committee, running a wide range of activities that vary in scope and scale, both locally, nationally and internationally. From its building in the camp, the different committees managed a number of activities that were directed inwards towards the community of the camp, which the sports club represented in the national and international sports competitions.The social committee was dedicated to supporting the vulnerable communities in the camp and the surrounding neighborhoods through social welfare. That help ranged from financial aid and donations that are collected from local community members as well as national and international donors, to capacity building programs that aim to help the camp inhabitants develop their skills.

An example of the programs sponsored by international donation include the computer training which takes place in the computer lab built inside the club building itself.The cultural committee, on the other hand, is responsible for holding cultural events and forums to discuss issues related to the camp on a local scale, and to commemorate events related to Palestine on an international scale. From poetry forums and book signings to press conferences, Palestine was present and remembered through different platforms. The cultural committee also managed a small library inside the club's building, where a variety of books, journals and references about different and relevant topics were available to the inhabitants. Additionally, the cultural committee worked on printing a weekly newspaper under the name of Al Wehdat. They published news about the club and the camp in addition to national news and events, and distributed the paper around Al Wehdat Camp and other camps in Jordan.

The first newspaper was issued in 1996 and continued to be printed until 2018, before becoming digitized and continuing in digital format only. According to the secretary, the first editor whose name is Saleem Hamdan had played a remarkable role in turning the newspaper into an important publication nationally. In the newspaper, a fixed section named, Not to forget, commemorated different Palestinian villages and towns through archival materials and interviews, aiming to do exactly what the name suggests: remember Palestine and its villages and keep that vital connection with the homeland through its readership. To tell me more about the newspaper, the secretary accompanied me to the newspaper office, which turned out to be a small room with a desk and cabinet lined up with folders, seen in Figure 5.14. The secretary introduced me to the newspaper's editor, asking him to show us some of the older issues of the newspaper.

I skimmed through a number of the issues from the archive, gradually moving from the older to the newer issues, noticing how each issue was divided between news about the sports club, the camp community and the club's events, in addition to sections dedicated to news about Palestine or commemorating villages, people, and significant national dates.



FIG. 5.14 The Newspaper Office (left), and the first issue of the newspaper (right)..

5.2.2.2 Al Wehdat Sports Club and the boundary between the home-camp and the home-city.

Returning to his room, the secretary introduced the sports committee, the third of the three committees, which worked on different activities and events for the sports club's different teams, which included the soccer team, the volleyball team, the basketball team and the kickboxing team.

Discussing the soccer team, the most successful and known of the club's teams, the secretary revealed some of the power dynamics and existing tensions between the Jordanian State and the management of the sports club, which were known tensions, continually discussed inside and outside the camp. Representing Al Wehdat Camp in the national soccer tournaments, Al Wehdat Soccer team was seen as a representative of the camp, Palestine, Palestinians and Palestinian refugees everywhere; a sentiment expressed in local newspapers and among people in Amman and Jordan.

TOC

The club's local rival, Al Faisaly Sports Club, was seen as a representative of the Jordanian State and people, igniting a growing polarization between the club's fans, and also on another level, between Palestinians and Jordanians in the country. When I asked the secretary about the nationalistic divide between the two clubs' fans, he explained to me that this was not a phenomenon unique to Al Wehdat, but on the contrary, was something fans of most soccer clubs in the world experienced. As he explained, it is considered a part of the game itself, mentioning clubs such as Barcelona and Madrid in Spain as a way of telling me that soccer clubs were never only sports clubs but rather, were reflections of people's identities if not producers of these identities over time.

Along these lines, the secretary explained to me how the Jordanian State had tried to ease some of the tensions surrounding Al Wehdat Sports Club by changing the name of the Sports Club in 1974 to Al Defatayan which translates to, the Two Banks of the River, which is the Jordan River, in a notion that suggests that the club represented both: Palestine (the west bank of the river) and Jordan (the east bank of the river). That name was never picked up by the fans, who continued to refer to it as Al Wehdat Sports Club, emphasizing its role as a representative of the camp and its inhabitants and their political ideologies, refusing to have it scaled up to that level in a manner that would dismantle its significance and fragment its symbolism. The name was officially changed back in 1990.The discussion about the club represented an example where the boundary that separated the home-camp from the home-city was explicit and strong, demarcating the territory of Al Wehdat Camp and giving it a distinguished identity that disconnected it from the city through the process of connecting it to Palestine — the home-land that the Palestinian refugees arrived from and to which they will return. The soccer matches between Al Wehdat and Al Faisaly Sports Clubs could be understood as moments where the camp stood vis-a-vis the city, with the boundary that separated them from one another embodying the tension between them.

After we wrapped up the interview, the secretary took me on a tour around the building, proudly and enthusiastically showing me the trophy room and the press conference room, seen in Figure 5.15 and 5.16. There, I was reminded that this was the building of a soccer club, one where people played soccer, and not just a space of commemoration and political activism, because of how present Palestine had been up until then. In both rooms, I noticed how big pictures of the Jordanian Royal Family were taking center stage, taking a prominent position inside each room between the club's achievements. In relation to everything that was said about the tensions between the soccer club and Jordanian State and people, I gathered that it was some sort of pledge of allegiance to Jordan, by the club and its administration.



FIG. 5.15 The Trophy room, lined up with trophies, awards and pictures of the Royal Hashemite Family.



FIG. 5.16 The press conference room, lined up with chairs, a podium and picture of King Abdullah of Jordan.

TOC



FIG. 5.17 The logo of Al Wehdat Club with its Dome of the Rock and connection to Palestine.

On my way out, I examined the logo of the club on the wall, seen in Figure 5.17. From it, I concluded that the Club was connected to Palestine through a direct path, with the name of the Club at the bottom, representing the present, the here and now, and the Dome of the Rock, at the top, representing the future, the there and then. I understood that the white path that connected the two symbolized the distance that separates the club, and by extension the camp, from returning to Palestine, and that return will be guided by a soccer ball, a torch and a book. The logo was designed with the colors of the Palestinian flag: red, black, white and green. The Dome of the Rock was colored in yellow.

I did not want to ask the secretary about the meaning behind the logo and preferred to stick to my reading of it, for all the ways it aligned with my research's line of argumentation and its focus on paths and connections between the home-camp and the home-land. Among all the other public spaces that I have been in the camp, I had never seen Palestine more explicitly present than what I saw inside the building of Al Wehdat Club.

Whether it was the sculpture on the entrance, the logo, the posters, the events or Al Wehdat newspaper, these elements reflected the club's clear political ideology that explicitly affirmed the club's, and by extension the camp's, vital connection with Palestine.

In the existing literature, the politics of Al Wehdat Sports ClubClub were studied in a number of scholarly works. For example, the master's thesis of Joshua Mackenzie (2015) titled, "Allah! Wehdat! Al-Quds Arabiya!": Football, nationalism, and the chants of Palestinian resistance in Jordan, focused on the role the soccer club played in producing a distinctive national Palestinian identity for Palestinians in Jordan, further affirming their Palestinianess. Highlighted in the title, Mackenzie also addressed the chants of the club's fans in the stadiums during the matches, primarily centered around praising the Lord, praising Al Wehdat Club and Camp, and emphasizing the Arabic identity of Al Quds. According to Mackenzie, those chants play a role in turning soccer matches into political events and stadiums to political arenas, especially when also addressing the clashes that erupt after the matches between the club's fans and those of their opponents.

Another paper, written by Julieta Espín Ocampo (2023), focused on the role the club played in fostering a sense of Palestinian nationalism and mobilizing political activism in the camp. Through a historical analysis of the Palestinian and Jordanian relations, particularly of the role Jordan played in hosting Palestinian refugees, Ocampo argues that the tensions between the two rivals: Al Wehdat Sports Club, seen as the representative of Palestinian Refugees, and Al Faisaly Club seen as a representative of Jordan and Jordanian people, reflected the underlying political disagreements between the two communities that supported them in Jordan.

Al Wehdat Sports Club fans saw the club as a symbol of the lost homeland and by supporting their club reflected their desire to return to Palestine, refusing resettlement in Jordan and full integration into the Jordanian society. The fans of Al Faisaly club, prominently native Jordanians, supported their club as a way of testifying to their Jordanian identity and their rejection of foreigners, or those who pledged allegiance to another country.

In the context of my research, the distinctive nationalistic identities that the fans of both clubs have developed in relation to their teams, or the nationalistic identities that the fans proudly saw were represented by their clubs, were political manifestations of the boundary that separated the home-camp from the home-city, one that produced two territories distinguished for the distinctive identities of their inhabitants.Al Wehdat Camp was a territory that was Palestinian, inhabited by people who identified as Palestinian and also as Palestinian refugees.

The city of Amman was a territory that was Jordanian, inhabited by people who identified as Jordanian, who were there before the Palestinian refugees arrived. Because of the rising tension between the two groups, the boundary that separated both would become explicit, obvious, pronounced, increasing in intensity with the escalation of clashes and conflict.
In that sense, unlike the commercial activity that blurred the boundary between the home-camp and the home-city, discussed extensively in the previous chapter, the sports club reinforced it and made it more explicit in the minds of the camp's inhabitants and the club's fans, and also in the city. For these reasons, a good portion of the general public have started calling for the suspension of both clubs, for the way they work on polarizing the Jordanian society and igniting hatred between Palestinians and Jordanians, unnecessarily driving a divide between people over issues much more complex than sports, or even, amplifying existing divisions and bringing them to the forefront.

5.2.3 The UNRWA Complex.

The third communal complex that I will be discussing is the UNRWA complex, located on the east side of the camp, sandwiched between Sumaya Street and Al Madares Street. The history of UNRWA and the role it has played in the lives of Palestinian refugees in the seven decades following its establishment is a vast topic that I will not be fully engaging with in this dissertation. It is not at the core of this investigation but a topic that indirectly affects and shapes my line of inquiry. For those reasons, it is important to acknowledge my limited engagement with the huge body of knowledge that exists on UNRWA across the different fields, shifting my focus particularly to the spatial implications of UNRWA's institutional power in Al Wehdat Camp, saturated inside the UNRWA complex and bound by the walls. I will also look at how the change of its role and influence is reflected on the architecture of the camp and the number of its amenities within the camp's formal boundary.

That being said, I have benefited from the work of a number of scholars that have discussed the different dimensions of the agency in depth, such as Jalal Al Husseini (2010) whose work looks into the political dimensions of UNRWA's mandate, tracing the evolution of UNRWA's role from a relief provider to an international representative of the refugees, shifting its apparatus from that of a disciplinary regime to one that encourages community participation and development.

That evolution was also thoroughly discussed in the edited book titled, UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees, edited by Sari Hanafi, Leila Hilal, and Lex Takkenber (2014), which discusses issues of camp governance, camp improvement projects and community building processes, and the role UNRWA is plays in resolving the Palestinian refugee issue.

I also benefited from the work of Randa Farah (2009) who discusses the paradoxical position UNRWA employees hold, being both Palestinian refugees sharing a collective history with the other Palestinian refugees in the camp, while also acting on behalf of the institution whose matrix organizes and controls life in the camp, while fully knowing they will not have the same level of authority of the international employees in senior positions. Other works have focused on more specific aspects of UNRWA's operations, such as education in the camps, with focus put on learning during times of adversity (Abdul-Hamid et al., 2015), the challenges and benefits of inclusive education in schools (Rodriguez, 2019), and the importance of education for Palestinian refugees (Arafat, 1989).

Yet another body of work focuses on healthcare in UNRWA facilities, with research looking into how budget cuts to UNRWA in recent years has affected healthcare services for refugees and the politicized healthcare access given to Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan (Halsey et al., 2022).
In this chapter, I will be discussing UNRWA as a physical structure that exists in the camp territory, while also studying some aspects of its administrative structure and scope of services to better understand the role it plays in producing and transforming the camp's space, as the humanitarian agency that is still managing the camp until today as part of its mandate in providing relief and works to Palestinian refugees in its five fields of operation, which include Jordan.
By studying the walls as material structures that demarcate the UNRWA complex, I aim to understand what they encompass of immaterial dimensions and relations that influence the camp space, beyond the complex's walls out into the camp.

Just like the Al Wehdat Sports Club, I had walked past, across and in parallel to the UNRWA complex for several times during the early phases of my research, and it was not until August of 2019 that I actually stepped into one of its buildings, which was the office of the UNRWA camp director for the interview that I addressed earlier. Inside that room, the complex became more than just a pathway or a landmark that the camp inhabitants referred to, to me help me find my way, but it became a node, a meeting point, demarcated by the four walls that gave it its spatial and legislative definition.

To get into the camp, from Sumaya Street, or out of the camp, also through Sumaya Street, I sometimes walked across the UNRWA complex, which had doors at its opposite ends that allowed entry and exit through the complex, shortening the walking distance that would have otherwise been stretched longer, if one had to walk around the walls, into the camp.

From the outside, the walls of the UNRWA complex seem to stretch endlessly, with the scale of the complex being much larger than anything else in the camp. It occupies a large area along Sumaya and Al Madares Street, with the buildings peeking from behind the walls, distinguished by their distinctive UNRWA blue color.

As per usual, to study the UNRWA complex from above, I had climbed up a neighboring building earlier and took the picture shown in Figure 5.18, showing the open spaces inside, the huge buildings, and the scale of the complex within the camp.

The process of alternating between the ground level and a higher point of observation to understand spatial relations has been a useful exercise during my field visits, with each point offering a different perspective and way of looking at and understanding the context and the architecture of the camp, it also aligned with my research approach of vertical and horizontal paths of investigation, alternating between positioning myself up in the sky and down on the ground. I climbed down the building and walked towards the UNRWA complex, making my way through the entrance, to meet the camp director inside.

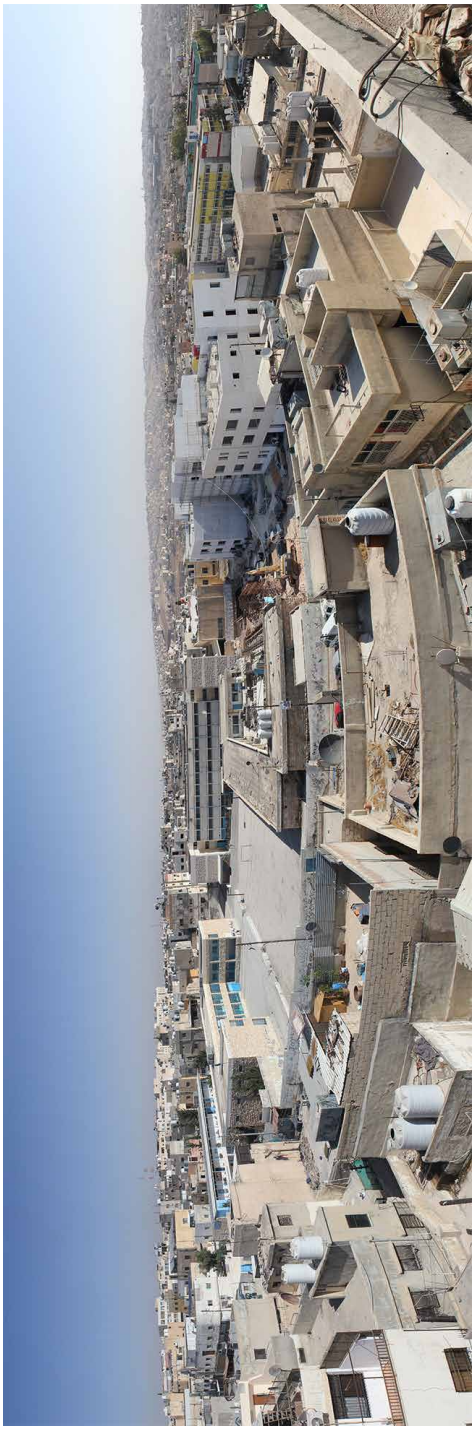


FIG. 5.18 The UNRWA complex as seen from the top.

TOC

5.2.3.1 Situating the UNRWA complex in the camp:

The reason I had scheduled that interview with the camp director was because I wanted to know more about UNRWA's operations in the camp, its radius of influence, and the way it viewed the camp and its inhabitants, almost six decades after its establishment and starting its operations in Al Wehdat Camp. In reference to walls, this interview will be used as a way to understand the role UNRWA, as an institutional entity, plays in the camp. This entails studying the UNRWA both as an administrative structure and a physical structure, running its operations from the director's office in the UNRWA complex.

I began the interview by asking the director about the UNRWA complex and the boundaries of this specific territory within the camp's territory, and what this means on an administrative and physical level. To explain things simply, the director told me that whatever fell within those walls was under his direct administration, whether in the schools, the school playgrounds, the relief center, or the other administrative offices. What fell outside the walls, within the camp territory, was under his administration in coordination with the Jordanian State, represented by the DPA. Opening and closing the doors of the complex to the camp and allowing people inside was also his decision, depending on the circumstances and what was happening inside the complex and how busy things were in the camp. After saying that, the director went on to describe his relationship with the camp inhabitants as dynamic, built around years of experience that taught him how to deal with the camp inhabitants' complaints regarding UNRWA services, while also maintaining a good relationship with them.
The director assured me that UNRWA was not just a service provider, that it was also a custodian of the refugee's documents and registration cards, like the ones his grandparents are carrying, which on their own stand as a testimony to the refugee's displacement and exile. The director's grandparents became refugees after Al Nakba, after having been displaced from their hometown in Palestine to Jordan, where three generations of his family have been living since.

It was interesting to observe how the director's attitude changed when he switched roles between being the camp director and being from Palestine. While assuming the former, he spoke with an authoritative and detached tone, sharing facts and information, with a high level of neutrality, mirroring the agency's neutral position and institutional perspective. When he spoke about his family, pointing at pictures of his grandfather's stores in Palestine in the city of Tabaria which were hanging on the walls of his office, his tone completely changed, as he became more personal and showed a more clear position in relation to Palestine, describing it as the homeland.

5.2.3.2 UNRWA Services in the camp provided to those from inside and outside the camp

To gain a better understanding of UNRWA's services and how they changed over the years, I will use the following section to discuss the historical transformation of UNRWA's role in the camp.

According to the director, UNRWA was established in 1949 by the UN General Assembly and began its operations in May of 1950, with the purpose of carrying out direct relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees.

In reference to what had been previously discussed in relation the formal boundary being what determines UNRWA's field of operations, the redline is in fact the line that demarcates its administrative boundaries. It does not, however, limit the scope of its services to the people that live exclusively in that boundary. What had historically rendered Palestinian refugees eligible to UNRWA's services was their UNRWA identification numbers and cards, which they are given when registered in UNRWA offices after having arrived in one of UNRWA's five fields of operations (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip), regardless of their place of residence. In other words, if a Palestinian refugee family had registered with UNRWA and chose to live outside one of the official camps, they were still eligible to have their children enrolled in UNRWA schools, receive UNRWA relief services, or get treated in UNRWA healthcare facilities, among other services.
Not all Palestinian refugees who had registered with UNRWA had resided in the camps and not all those who had resided in the camps have stayed in the camps. Some have moved elsewhere, but that did not change the fact that they were still eligible for the different UNRWA services that they accessed in the different camps, where the different UNRWA facilities were located. Therefore, it could be said that the service provider was based in the camps, operating within its formal boundary, while the service user, or beneficiary, is not strictly residing inside the camp's territory. The reason that allowed Palestinian refugees to reside outside the camp or move out of it in time was because many of them had dual refugee/citizen status, carrying both the UNRWA identification cards and the Jordanian citizenship, in a manner that allowed them to do move out to other locations, as previously discussed in **Chapter 3**.

In Al Wehdat Camp, UNRWA is operating 12 schools, 6 for each gender, and one healthcare clinic. In the past, it used to operate a restaurant that provided meals for school students, and public hydraulic service nodes that provided drinking water through public fountains and public restrooms. The restaurant was demolished after the suspension of the food rations in 1978, and the public nodes were substituted with hydraulic infrastructure servicing every residential unit in 1979.

The director explained to me that the radius of influence of UNRWA has been decreasing over the years, now relatively limited to the UNRWA complex. This is paralleled by an increase in the role the DPA is playing in the camp, which has been taking on more responsibilities over the years. The increase in DPA responsibility is reflected in the built environment, for example, the demolition of a number of UNRWA's facilities, such as the UNRWA restaurant and UNRWA public hydraulic nodes, and the construction of a number of DPA offices in their place. The gradual decrease of UNRWA's scope of services was mirrored by the decrease in the number of its facilities in the camp territory until its facilities were limited to the ones within the UNRWA complex, also demarcating what is now UNRWA's field of influence and control.

5.2.3.3 UNRWA Schools

In his novel Birds of Caution, Ibrahim Nasrallah reflects on his years of studying in UNRWA schools in Al Wehdat Camp and says:

"Each school had a distinguished name, one chosen by UNRWA, a neutral name that did not refer to any past nor future. A name as cold as a mathematical equation: The First Elementary School of Amman Camp, The Second Elementary School of Amman Camp. The Second Female Intermediate School of Amman Camp. The First. The Third. The Fourth. That name was one easily forgotten by the students, who chose to instead refer to the schools by the names of their principals: The School of Abdeljabar Tayyem, the School of Abu Bashar, etc. Principals were the sultans of their schools, their commands were always obeyed. They were feared by parents as much as students. To the students, transferring from the elementary school to the intermediate school felt like being transferred from one prison to another, mysterious, like entering a new political age, subjected to an invisible power that the students heard about long before they got to experience. Urgent issues at the school were usually handled by the principal, with the majority of issues being considered urgent, whether it was a student forgetting their handkerchief at home, or a student missing school because they were too afraid of the religion teacher that was sent by Allah to punish those who did not memorize his words." (Nasrallah, 2009, p189)

Through that text, I was able to gain a better understanding of some of the power dynamics in the UNRWA schools, distributed between the agency's administration and its employees, both the principals and the teachers.

Also clearly highlighted, was the supposed neutrality that the agency practiced in different ways, including the names given to the schools that the author felt had no connection to the past or the future, but were merely managerial, designed to help the agency run its operations. Once again, when comparing the formal and informal names in Al Wehdat Camp, it becomes clear that the names given by UNRWA, such as Amman New Camp, were top-down names that were imposed on the camp and its inhabitants, ones they felt did not resonate with their lived experiences. Just like the way the name, Amman New Camp, was overlooked in favor of Al Wehdat Camp (inspired by the building typology of the shelters in the early days of the camp), the names given by UNRWA to the schools did not catch on, replaced by names related to each school's principal, which were names closer to the everyday life of the students in the schools.

This practice also arguably reflected the magnitude of the principals' power and control. Through the quote, it also became clear how strict the school was, how organized, how disciplinarian, with what sounded like a military system that brought strong order to the lives of the students. The mention of the handkerchief reflects the strictness of adhering to the uniform, while mentioning the religion teacher reflects how religious education was part of the education at the UNRWA schools.
What was described were details that I heard often in a number of my interviews with the camp inhabitants, who also brought up the school-naming system and how they identified the schools by the names of their principals. One camp inhabitant also explained to me that one school was referred to as Al Za'ra, which means the little one, because that school building was shorter than the others. What was being shared during these walks down memory lane painted a picture about a shared life experience that many students remembered all too well; accumulated experiences that constructed an interior they have grown up in and around, one in which they earned their education, grew up, made sense of the world and practiced being refugees, together. That was an interior I stood outside the walls of. I knew that it was an interior that I would not be able to inhabit or entirely make sense of, so I stood outside, on the threshold, catching glimpses of the life that unfolded within through openings in the walls. Those openings that were constructed with every story, memory or reflection, allowed me to see and observe to the extent that the people inside allowed. Some openings were bigger than others, revealing so many details and insight; others were smaller, more intimate, carefully letting me in with caution.

That notion was one I felt I had captured through the photograph I had taken of the UNRWA complex one afternoon, through an opening in the wall, shown in Figure 5.19.



FIG. 5.19 A glimpse into the UNRW complex through an opening in the wall.

Through the interviews and the stories, I was getting glimpses of the interiors of Palestinian refugees' lives in Al Wehdat Camp, particularly the ones that unfolded inside the UNRWA complex and around its different amenities. This allowed me to learn more about the earlier days of the camp and the various, collective, lived experiences they shared around the camp's different spaces, demarcated by the different walls and all they contained.

According to the camp inhabitants, schools presented a fully rounded system that did not only provide education, but also nutrition to the students, to help improve their health. Many mentioned the fish oil tablets that were given to students in the morning before classes, taken with a glass of milk. Students used to line up to receive the nutrients, observed closely until they swallowed them. A number of the inhabitants told me how horrible these tablets had tasted, and how much they dreaded taking them, not being given the choice.

Others told me that they believed these tablets made their skin yellower than normal, while some told me they hid the tablets under their tongues only to spit them out later. It was sad but also very funny, like many things that happened then. Maybe it is only funny now, I do not know.

"When I was in my final year in school, the Zinco roofs were leaking rainwater over our heads. The wind was very strong, always making the unit very cold. In the summer, the unit was extremely hot, we felt like we were inside a metal tank."

The mention of metal tanks reminded me of the final scene of Men in the Sun, the very famous novel by renowned Palestinian author, Ghassan Kanafani (1991), in which a group of Palestinian refugees meet their fate inside an empty lorry, while trying to illegally cross the border to Kuwait from Iraq, where they were headed in hopes of a better life. Forced to spend more time at the border than planned, the lorry driver who was also the smuggler stood outside the walls of the tank, dragged into a long and pointless conversation with the border control, as the bodies of the three Palestinian refugees collapsed inside the very hot metallic structure of the lorry because of the very intense heat and lack of oxygen.

The closing sentence of the novel was,
"Why did they not bang on the walls of the tank?"

Once again, walls come into focus, walls that could symbolize many things in the context of Palestinian refugees: borders, experiences, feelings of safety, feelings of unsafety, feelings of estrangement, the inside, the outside, among many other things. The symbolism in Ibrahim's story was too strong not to be noticed and it made me wonder, were Palestinians refugees always destined to suffer inside metal tanks? Were those tanks the epitome of their suffering, refugeehood, displacement, diaspora, and loss of home?

Another window that allowed me to look into the past, inside the complex walls, was the UNRWA archive, which had a wide variety of images from the earlier days of the camp, digitized and open to the public on the UNRWA website. I will be sharing a number of these images.

In Figure 5.20, a girl's classroom in one of the UNRWA schools is shown, with female students seated in front of their desks in their school uniforms. On the white board, the date is written: 06/03/1969, 14 years after the camp was established, and the students were in the 5th grade. UNRWA schools were all gender-segregated, an aspect that is notable in the image.



FIG. 5.20 A girl's classroom in one of UNRWA schools in Al Wehdat Camp. (Source: the UNRWA Digital Archive).).

Visiting the archive and looking at the images helped paint a clearer image of the material reality of the earlier days of the camp, adding visual details to the oral stories shared during the interviews.

I also sat down for an interview with a former teacher that taught at the UNRWA schools in Al Wehdat for a number of years, after having taught at Al Ashrafieh Governmental school for 20 years. The teacher did not reside in the camp, but outside of it, coming to the camp every day to her job as a teacher in one of the schools inside the complex. It is important to make this distinction because her experiences in Al Wehdat Camp were limited to the walls of the school and what unfolded inside.

She began the interview by praising the quality of education offered in the schools, describing the level as one that exceeded the level of education offered in government schools in the country, having worked in both. The reason behind that was because the teachers were under close supervision from their administration, undergoing continuous procedures of evaluation and development.

From her experience, she found that students in Al Wehdat Camp were very keen on pursuing education, working hard to get high school diplomas, to be able to get a university education and later a job that would help them improve their family's living conditions, within a context where most families were financially struggling. In the light of the limited funding to UNRWA and the overcrowding of the camp, classrooms inside the schools were very crowded, with up to 53 students in each class. Facilities were in need of maintenance and lacked cooling and heating around the seasons. The UNRWA school system offered education to students between kindergarten and the 10th grade, and after that students had to transfer to one of the four neighboring governmental schools for the 11th and 12th grade, to be able to get their high school diplomas. After being transferred to one of the four governmental schools in the surrounding areas, girls from the camp tended to sometimes face racism from their Jordanian peers for being Palestinian and for being from the camp, with the employees of some of these schools stigmatizing the students as well.

After transferring, some of the girls would feel that they had moved away from their community and an educational space they felt they belonged to. That sentiment, expressed by a number of young female inhabitants in some interviews, highlighted the social boundary that demarcated the camp community and constructed a territory to which they felt they belonged. That was a sentiment that resonated with what the director of the Women's Center had told me during our interview. Reflecting on her personal experience, after having transferred to the governmental schools from the UNRWA school, she and her friends felt that they have lost part of their identity, after moving away from the classrooms in which all students were Palestinian refugees from the camp. Having stepped outside their territory, the girls became part of a larger and more diverse group that they did not always feel they identified with. Being from Al Wehdat Camp and sharing the everyday experiences in it were a vital part of how the girls from the camp identified themselves. The division between the girls from the camp and the girls from the city of Amman was always apparent, especially because the girls from the camp arrived at the governmental schools at a later stage, seen as newcomers to classes in which the girls from Amman have studied together for many years before.

According to the former UNRWA teacher, the administration of UNRWA schools used to be keen on keeping the connection with Palestine present between its students and teachers, through the very wide range of extracurricular activities it designed for students, ranging between poetry competitions about Palestine, periodical school newspapers with articles about the homeland, school projects that aim to document the names of the cleansed villages inside Palestine and creative writing classes that discussed each student's family history and origins.

What the teacher told me contradicted what the camp director told me about UNRWA's neutrality in relation to the politics of the camp, but that that might have been a sentiment that varied between the larger management of UNRWA and that of the schools themselves, or rather, a change of attitude in time, emphasized by the decrease of UNRWA's influence in the camp. It might have also depended on different individuals within the institution itself, and how they chose to navigate that neutrality or practice it in the activities of everyday life.
Through a brief discussion about the UNRWA schools, it became clear how their classrooms were a place where the young Palestinian refugees began to form early notions of their identity, produced through a sense of collectivity and community and a number of shared lived experiences they navigated and explored, with all the challenges contained within the school's walls.

5.2.3.4 The UNRWA Playgrounds and open spaces.

While Al Wehdat Sports Club represented the camp outside of the camp, there were a number of tournaments running inside the camp itself, within the walls of the UNRWA complex. In my interview with Ali, who had first introduced me to Al Jabal in the previous chapter, he explained to me the concept of Al Sudasiyat tournaments, or the Sixes, which were soccer matches played by six players that take place every week in the camp. It was fair to say that Ali was one of the most memorable camp inhabitants I interviewed, he was not so keen on trying to paint the camp in a positive light, he just shared his reflections with me, his lived experience, and the way he understood the camp and its territory. He had a great interest in politics, history, and culture, sharing with me many of the theories and the knowledge he had accumulated through the years of reading various books about numerous topics. He worked as a school counselor and possessed a high level of critical thinking and a good understanding of humans in general. He told me that since he was a kid, he and his friends organized soccer matches in the UNRWA school playgrounds every week, particularly on Friday mornings. These games were quite a big deal in the camp, attracting a large number of the camp's youth who competed in teams against one another in what turned out to be very intense and exciting matches. To help paint a clearer picture of the games, Ali sent me a number of old photos documenting these matches, which I have included in my research after receiving his permission, shown in Figure 5.21 and Figure 5.22.

The photos showed the players in action, excitedly running across the field, with the audience lining up on the sides and on the school buildings' parapets, with the photos reflecting so much energy and color.



FIG. 5.21 Al Sudasiyat inside the UNRWA playgrounds, organized by the camp's youth. (Source: photo sent to me by Ali).



FIG. 5.22 The UNRWA school appears in the background of the soccer matches. (Source: photo sent to me by Ali).

TOC

I compared the pictures that Ali shared with me with an archival photo from UNRWA shown in Figure 5.23, noticing how busy those playgrounds have always been throughout the years. In a highly compact urban setting like that of the camp, open spaces were very limited, with the UNRWA school playgrounds considered some of the very few spaces where children could actually play. In the archival photo, I looked beyond the walls to examine the camp setting, noticing the units in the camp and how they had single floors, in their original form, before they began their vertical expansion, surrounded by a number of trees, a sight no longer common in the camp. The architecture of the UNRWA complex kept changing over the years, with the construction and reconstruction of the school buildings and the different amenities within the walls.

According to Ali, there used to be a small concrete seating area facing the playgrounds in the past, where the audience would gather to cheer for their teams. In recent years, that structure was demolished as part of the reconstruction of the complex, with international donations coming in annually to fund the building of new structures and the maintenance of some of the existing ones. When I asked Ali about how the boys entered the school playgrounds during the weekends for the matches, when the school was closed, he started laughing and told me that in the camp, you just needed to know the right people *to open closed doors,* in the literal and metaphorical sense. That was how the boys entered the complex and how they also entered Al Wehdat Sports Club to play billiards and hang out during the weekends.

What Ali described, the act of maneuvering around walls and administrative structures to get into spaces made me look at those walls in a different way. There was always a way around the existing institutional and physical structures, a pathway that was constructed through lived experience and accumulated everyday knowledge, one that allowed the inhabitants to transgress boundaries and move beyond them into the everyday spaces of the camp. In that sense, I could argue that the walls, which come as physical manifestations of the institutional *strategies* of managing and controlling the camp, were transgressed using the everyday *tactics* that the inhabitants developed through their knowledge of their territory, which are two notions discussed by Michel de Certeau (2011) in *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

In the same sense, Ali described to me how the school playgrounds would be turned into paid parking lots in the busy seasons, like the summer vacation and the holidays, to make money off the flows of shoppers that would flock to the camp from different parts of the city to do their shopping. Some people who worked inside the complex would use their keys to open the doors that led to Sumaya Street, allowing cars in, making some extra money by turning the complex into a large parking lot.



FIG. 5.23 An archival photo showing the UNRWA playgrounds, busy with students. (Source: the UNRWA Digital Archive).

5.2.3.5 The UNRWA Distribution Centers.

In the earlier days of the camp, UNRWA provided the young school children with ration cards that allowed them to have lunch in the UNRWA restaurant after school. The restaurant used to be located close to Al Ashrafieh Police Station before being demolished. In that small restaurant, meals were served daily, prepared with humble ingredients that were loaded with healthy nutrients.

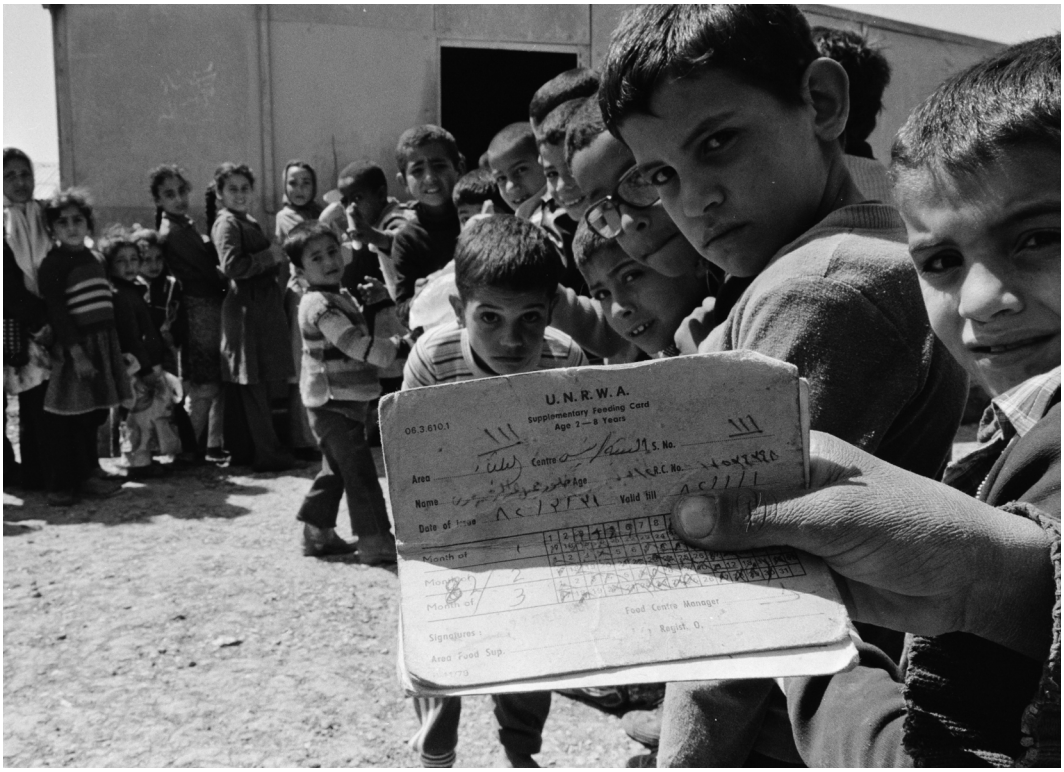


FIG. 5.24 Children in line at the health-care center in Amman New Camp, Jordan. (Source: UNRWA Archive).

"I would go there after school, look at the menu and decide whether the food was worth eating. The restaurant served one meal daily, mostly lentils, rice, and vegetables. Not remarkable, but good enough." Said an elderly camp inhabitant to me during one interview. "The food was not very fancy, but I would go there on the days when my mom did not cook. It was free and close by." Said another elderly camp inhabitant.

UNRWA also offered supplementary ration cards that provided children from different age groups with food and milk, which they lined up to receive from different distribution points in the camp including the healthcare center. In the UNRWA digital archive, I was able to find two photos that documented those practices, shown in Figure 5.24 and 5.25. In Figure 5.24, a hand carrying the UNRWA supplementary ration card is at the center of the image, with a group of children of different ages lining up in the background to receive aid from the healthcare center. The architecture of the healthcare center appears to be rather simple, a single-floor concrete building constructed on unpaved ground.

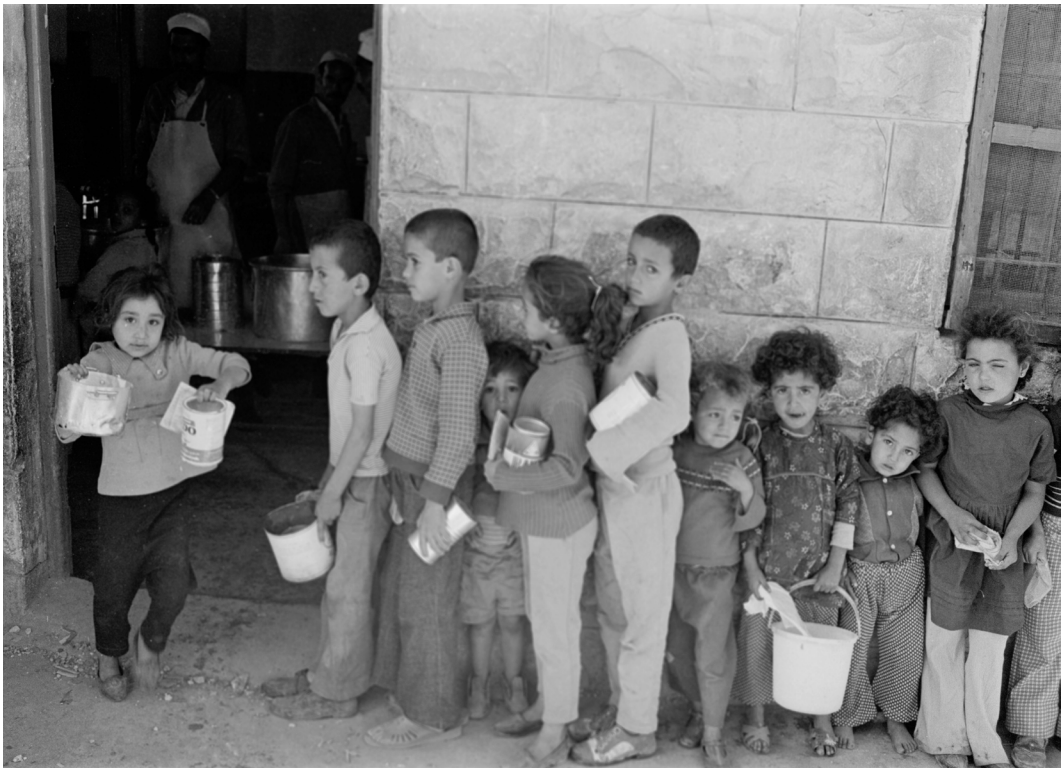


FIG. 5.25 Daily milk distribution for Palestine refugee children under fifteen years of age, Amman New camp, east Jordan. (UNRWA Archive. Photo by George Nehmeh).

I was often told that there were hardly any paved areas in the camp in the earlier days, just sand that would turn into mud during winter. The image appeared to be rather staged, to a certain extent, with the placement of the hand at the center. The presence of the unknown photographer in that setting must have interrupted the children's activities, while the presence of the camera must have definitely created a disruption in the setting. To me, looking at that image now, with me as a spectator being positioned at the end of the line, situated in the place of the camera lens, I felt that the children were looking at me from the past, with the way their bodies were turned around, away from the health center, towards the camera. I was observing their interior, their experiences, almost 50 years later, in the present, through a portal, an opening in the wall.

In Figure 5.25, another group of children lines up to receive milk, with each child carrying a pot to fill, again with the children staring at the photographer, their small bodies huddled together, politely lining up along the wall.

Through the open door, one could trace the silhouette of an employee wearing an apron, distributing the milk from behind the table that had a group of large pots. Unlike the first image, the location of this distribution point is not disclosed, but from the architecture of the building, specifically the use of the stones, I guessed it could be inside the UNRW complex, because the buildings inside the complex still looked like that. Building with stone was not a common practice in the camp, especially in the earlier days, because it was an expensive building material, much more expensive than concrete that was the more common building material, typically limiting the use of stone to the official and institutional buildings like those in the UNRWA complex.

The way the children were staring at the camera, also reminded me of Edward Said's book (1999), After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives, and the photographs of Jean Mohr, introduced in the first chapter, in which they were keen on showing Palestinians as active subjects that were staring straight into the camera instead of the more typical images of Palestinians absently staring into the a distance in a manner that they argued rendered them as passive objects. I was not sure whether those were the intentions of this photographer, but it appeared to be the case.

In the two images, the walls demarcated the boundary between the aid provider and the refugee, between the giver and the receiver, between those who had something and those who were in need of it. Because of that, the one who had something dictated the rules of practice, who was eligible for receiving it, when to give it, and how to give it. The walls also demarcated the line of the queue, given how the children and youngsters lined up along them.

The main UNRWA distribution center was located along Al Badiya Street, north of the current UNRWA complex. From that center, the camp inhabitants would get their monthly supplies of food, which included wheat and rice, using the food rations that used to be distributed to the Palestinian refugees in the earlier days of the camp. The food rations were suspended in 1978 and with that the distribution center was demolished. Returning to Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel, I was able to get a more detailed description of the process of receiving aid, the lines, and the network that emerged around the distribution center:

"Get up and go get the aid, said his mom, so he did. He carried his textile bag and stepped out into the dark, which seemed to swallow everything including him. In the low building in the corner, the lines were long; women, men, girls from all ages. The long line was anticipating the wheat, the soya oil, lentils, and the stinky soap. Women stood in a line, men stood in another, and children were given the option to choose between both. The women's line was shorter." (Nasrallah, 2009, p.207)

Nasrallah also discussed the network of merchants that bought aid from the refugees:“He sat in the opposite corner of the yard, where the small shops were, whose owners would buy aid from the refugees who preferred to stay hungry to get a few piasters, ones they needed more than bread. Others sold the UNRWA wheat because they were too good for it.”
(Nasrallah, 2009, p.208)

The more I studied the archive and the more stories I heard about the earlier days of the camp, the more I realized how frequently camp inhabitants used to line up for things in the past; for food, milk, water, aid, among other things. There was a lot of waiting, dependance and control. The act of lining up in space, using one’s body to occupy a spot, to receive help, to survive. Lines were such strong disciplinarian tools, you had to behave and act in a certain way to receive what you needed. The movement, the order, and the unspoken rules. As if lining up for things was an integral part of a refugee’s life, a part of their embodied knowledge about the camp. Another amenity that was also demolished inside the UNRWA complex was an underground bunker that sheltered camp inhabitants during the events of Black September in 1970. The camp inhabitants hesitantly mentioned the bunker in a number of interviews, telling me the bunker was used to shelter camp inhabitants when the Jordanian army invaded the camp during the clashes with a number of Palestinian resistance fighters. The UNRWA school yards were also used during the events, where tens of tents were erected to shelter the camp inhabitants whose units were destroyed during the fighting. Fifteen years after they settled in their units in Al Wehdat Camp, a portion of the camp inhabitants were back in the tents, as if they were traveling back in time to an earlier point in their lives when they were still displaced inside temporary shelters.

A more thorough discussion of Black September will follow in the next chapter.Inside the walls of the UNRWA complex, many immaterial layers of the camp’s complex and heavy history have been imprinted, accumulating over time and invisible to the naked eye in the present, but recognized by the inhabitants who lived through these events. As such, the complex is a spatial archive of its own, one that is not very different from the official digital archive that I was finding those archival images in.

Through the continuous reconstruction projects and the destruction of the amenities inside the complex and everywhere else in the camp, less material traces are surviving. As a result, more importance is placed on documenting and preserving the oral histories of the camp inhabitants and their lived experiences. To map the spatial relations between the different buildings within the UNRWA complex, I produced the diagram in Figure 5.26.

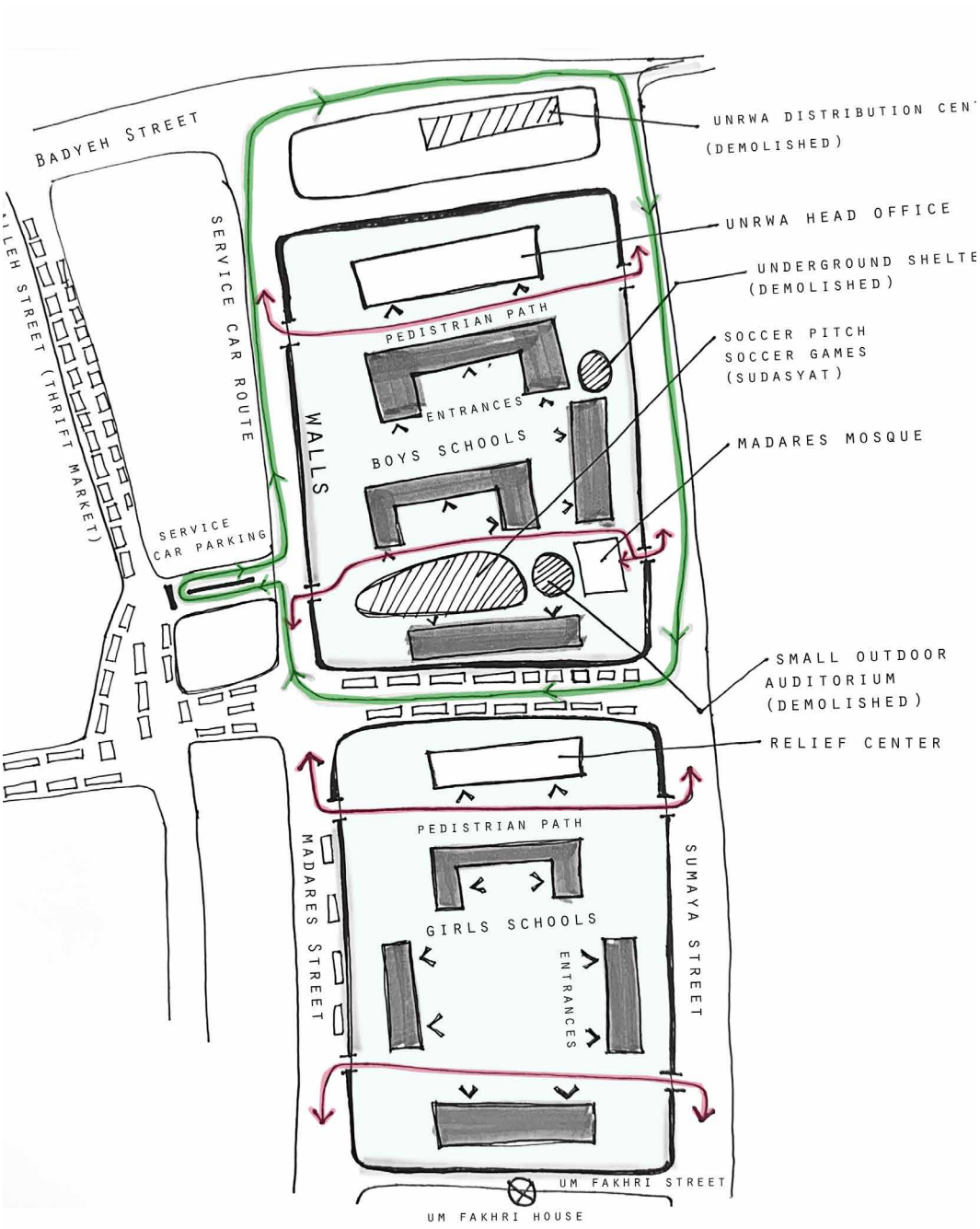


FIG. 5.26 The UNRWA Complex: A diagram mapping the buildings and amenities inside the UNRWA complex while also showing the complex's relation to the surrounding streets.

TOC

5.3 Walls as mediums of communication and interfaces between different groups

In this part I will be studying the walls and graffiti in Al Wehdat as an apparatus for understanding the social processes guiding the production of space in Palestinian refugee camps, almost 60 years after their establishment. The recurring themes in the graffiti can highlight certain concepts and ideologies that are of prominent importance to camp inhabitants, while the thematic mapping of their locations within the camp can help reveal underlying power relations dominating the camp space, analyzing where they are located within the camp itself and also where they have been erased and painted over.

Who is allowed to say what and on what walls? Are some walls more censored? Are some notions more tolerable?
What is the difference between commissioned graffiti work or street art, and organic and personal graffiti that the camp inhabitants drew on their own?

I will also study graffiti's underlying processes of appropriating the communal and making it private, in addition to the different ways graffiti expresses notions of Palestinian identity and acts of resistance against forgetting. Assessing graffiti through the use of photographs will uncover how the different social groups in the camps have claimed space, expressed their ideologies, and utilized the camp as an urban space for remembering and celebrating the Palestinian identity, producing an extension of Palestine beyond its geographic borders and emphasizing the continuity of Al Nakba of 1948 until the present day



FIG. 5.27 The exterior wall of the UNRWA complex with the words "Palestine, we will return" next to a map of Palestine, as seen from Sumaya Street.

5.3.1 Graffiti in the Urban Landscape

In the existing literature, urban graffiti is one of the most prominent sources of visual culture in contemporary cities today, situated at the heart of heated legal and authoritative debates between local authorities and artists since its inception in the 1960's. Graffiti has been viewed as an act of vandalism and destruction and a curse of civil societies on one hand, and an unmediated manifestation of public opinions and attitudes through a pure form of artistic expression on the other (Schacter, 2008).

An existing body of knowledge has extensively studied graffiti, its forms, development, and motivation, through research which was conducted in fields such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, and urban geography.

TOC

The nature of each study varied, addressing issues such as adolescent behavior (Peretti et al., 1977) gender differences (Stocker et al., 1972) sexual attitudes and artistic expression (Romotsky & Romotsky, 1975; Feiner & Klein, 1982), and territoriality (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Alonso, 1999). In other research, more emphasis has been put on the criminality of graffiti and its destructive impact on the urban Environment (Black, 1997). An important distinction has also been made between graffiti and street art, highlighting the major differences between both (MacDonald, 2001 and Snyder, 2016).
Some of graffiti's forms include tagging and piecing, consisting mainly of complexly stylized written text that includes the artist's name or logo, demanding recognition and highlighting power. The text is often found to be illegible to anyone but artists from the subculture of graffiti artists who utilize graffiti as a method of private communication. Street art, on the other hand, is more legible and addresses a wider public audience, depending more on graphic drawings with more complex artistic compositions and no direct links with graffiti subcultures or underlying motivation to exert power or mark territory between gangs. One of the similarities between graffiti and street art is their illegality (McAuliffe, 2012) due to the way public surfaces and elements are appropriated without permission. There are, however, cases where street art could be considered legal, and that is when it is granted permission to be utilized as public art for the purpose of raising awareness or bringing attention to a social issue. Graffiti on the other hand, could never be legal since the compliance with the system contradicts with its very nature and motives.

Political geographer, Adam Ramadan (2009), worked on studying graffiti in Palestinian Refugee camps, focusing on Rashidieh Camp in Lebanon. Ramadan argues that the presence of certain graffiti symbols in the camp reinforce the Palestinian identity and the inhabitants' sense of belonging to Palestine: "This is Palestinian space, you are Palestinian. Repetition of slogans, the flag, the map and so on turns background space into national, distinctively Palestinian space. The repetition of Palestinian symbols helps turn the space of the camp into a national space: a part of Palestine, not Lebanon or anywhere else."(Ramadan, 2009, p.86).

He then went on to argue that camps are very politicized in nature, with the built environment standing as a manifestation of that, up to the point that even the walls become part of narrating stories about the Palestinian homeland. "In doing so, the landscape of the camp calls for its own destruction, because its message is that the Palestinian people belong in Palestine, and they will one day leave Rashidieh Camp for their true homeland" (Ramadan, 2009, p.95).

In a more general sense, according to geographer, Alex Alonso (1998), the purpose of graffiti within its context depends on its type and the subgroup or subculture it stems from. These forms differ according to the message graffiti conveys, whether it is written or drawn, and the location where it is placed. Alonso studied gang graffiti in the city of Los Angeles, surveying the different graffiti types and their characteristics as a way of deducing their messages and learning more about the subgroup that he was studying, their behavior and attitudes, conceptualizing graffiti as a tool of defying the hegemonic group. Through his work, he divided graffiti into four types: political, existential or expressive, tagging and piecing. The first three types are simpler in their execution, consisting of written words or simple drawings that do not require artistic skills, while the fourth type, piecing, consists of graphical drawings that require more skill and ability, illustrating social or political issues. Piecing is also a type that is sometimes viewed as a form of artistic expression, unlike the first three, which are more typically considered acts of vandalism.

5.3.2 The drawings on the UNRWA Walls and along Um Fakhri Street

Inside the UNRWA complex, the agency has used the walls as a medium to promote good virtues, reminding students to behave respectfully, have good morals, and to be good people. In line with its disciplinarian and authoritative approach with the camp inhabitants, which manifested in different ways discussed in the previous section, the messages that were conveyed on the walls were of the same nature, there to discipline students and keep them in check. Moreover, with neutrality being a crucial part of its mandate, the writings and the drawings inside the UNRWA complex, like those shown in Figure 5.28, are generic, lack context, are apolitical and do not illustrate any connection with Palestine. This stands in contrast to some of the organic drawings on the outside of the complex walls themselves, ones drawn by camp inhabitants.

Because these drawings are official drawings commissioned and approved by UNRWA itself, I will be referring to them as street art.
The messages conveyed in the drawings in Figure 5.28 include:

“NO to Violence! Yes to Peace!”, “label jars..not people”, “No more Stigma.” and, “Forgiveness, Justice, Dignity.”



FIG. 5.28 Samples of the street art on the inside of the UNRWA complex walls.

On one of the outside walls of the complex, seen in Figure 5.29, a verse from the Quran is written in huge letters, translating to, “And say, My Lord, increase me in knowledge.” indicating that the school was also promoting the teachings of Islam through its messages.

Some of the street art in the complex is more graphic, showing drawings and not just words, such as the one shown in Figure 5.30. On the outside of the wall of the complex, the one facing Al Madares Street, an UNRWA school building is drawn in the middle of a green field, with the blue UNRWA flag on the top, surrounded by trees under a vast blue sky, depicting a context opposite to the gray and compact setting of the camp. Two school students are seen walking to the school in one corner, and a boy getting bullied in the other, with the words, “No to Violence,” next to it.

TOC



FIG. 5.29 A Verse from A Quran on the outside of the UNRWA complex wall reading: "And say, My Lord, increase me in knowledge."



FIG. 5.30 Street Art outside the UNRWA complex, along Al Madares Street.

TOC

In all of the UNRWA commissioned street art, Palestine is not mentioned, nor is the immediate setting of the camp contextualized in any way, representing abstract and generic notions detached from reality. The only drawing that could arguably hold a connection to Palestine is the one shown in Figure 5.31, depicting a group of women in traditional Palestinian clothes with traditional Palestinian embroidery, dancing the traditional Palestinian dance known as Al Dabkeh, with a man, also in traditional clothes, playing the flute. That connection with Palestine, could arguably be considered neutral, neutral enough to be allowed within the UNRWA complex at least..



FIG. 5.31 A drawing inside UNRWA complex depicting dancing Women in traditional Palestinian thobe.

Outside the UNRWA complex, a narrow pedestrian alley that had been given the name of Um Fakhri Street in 2018, connects Sumaya Street to Al Madares Street, previously indicated on the diagram in Figure 5.26. Along that narrow alley, the southern wall of the UNRWA school extends for a few meters, demarcating the edge of the complex and also the edge of Um Fakhri Street, where Um Fakhri, who gave the street her name, lived before she passed away in 2018.

In 2019, I visited Um Fakhri's house and met her daughter Um Mohammad who spoke about her late mother with so much affection. The activities and virtues of Um Fakhri turned her into a local figure within the community, and also kept her memory alive in the minds of many of the camp inhabitants after her passing.

Um Fakhri was her social title, translating to the mother of Fakhri, with Fakhri being her eldest son, which was a common practice in Palestine and Jordan, for women to be called by the name of their eldest son. Um Fakhri's full name was Kamila Abu Shehadeh, born in 1936. Kamila was a first generation Palestinian refugee that had grown up in Al Wehdat Camp after moving to it as a young girl with her family, having been displaced from their village around the city of Al Lid during Al Nakba of 1948. After getting married, she and her husband opened a small shop in their residential unit that sold groceries and sweets. The location of Um Fakhri's house, so close to the UNRWA schools, turned her shop into a destination for many students after school.The location of her shop also made her claim the position of a chaperon that protected the female students from the harassment of loitering boys. Outside her shop, a small clearing was used to put out a clay pot with drinking water for the passersby, in addition to a traditional baking oven to bake bread and distribute to those in need. That small clearing was used in multiple ways, acting as a front yard around which different communal activities took place, blurring the boundary between the private space of the house and the public space of that street. Two sofa chairs, seen in Figure 5.32, were also put out sometimes for her to sit on and host people from the local Wehdat community, which were left in their place after her passing.

Standing next to them, I felt the sofa chairs symbolically embodied her presence, making me feel she was still there in the street. Keen on commemorating her memory and keeping her legacy after her passing, members from the local camp community signed a petition and filed it with the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) to have the street named after her. In 2018, the street was officially given her name, documented through a street sign hanging at the beginning of the street, with the street maintained and asphalted by the municipality. As part of that commemoration, the long school complex wall that faced her house was turned into a mural, illustrated by local artist from the camp, Hussein Al Asmar, with a number of graffiti drawings celebrating icons of the Palestinian culture, shown in Figure 5.33.

On the bottom left of the mural, Hanthala, who is the famous character by Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al Ali , is seen hiding behind the Palestinian map, under the words, "No to an alternative homeland, yes to the right to return."



FIG. 5.32 Two sofa chairs, reviving the memory and the presence of Um Fakhri.

TOC



FIG. 5.33 Parts of the Mural that artist Hussein Al Asmar had drawn in Um Fakhri Street.

Hanthala has become an international symbol that represents Palestinian children everywhere, developed by Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al Ali (2009), who described Hanthala as a ten-year-old Palestinian boy who will continue to turn his back to the world in objection to their international policies that have contributed to the occupation of Palestine. Hanthala is 10 years old and will not grow older until Palestine is liberated, depicting Naji Al Ali's age when he was displaced from his village of Al Shajara during Al Nakba of 1948. He wears torn clothes that represent the hardships that Palestinian refugees, which include Naji Al Ali, have and are still going through. Next to Hanthala, the famous line by Palestinian Poet Mahmoud Darwish is written, "On this earth, there is what is worth living for."

On the top left, three Palestinian women are drawn, wearing the traditional Palestinian dress or thobe, with one of them carrying a clay pot over her head. On the top right, an old Palestinian man is drawn carrying a city over his shoulders, the city being Al Quds, imitating a famous painting by Palestinian artist Sliman Mansour which he drew in 1974 called, The Camel of Hardships, where the Palestinian people are conceptualized as carrying the weight of their cause and their history over their shoulders.

TOC

In the bottom right, a Palestinian woman is drawn holding on to her olive tree, with an Israeli bulldozer arriving to extract her from her land, depicting a famous photo that was taken in Palestine when that incident took place. Above, in the middle, an elderly Palestinian man is sitting facing water, wearing the Palestinian Kuffyieh and playing the flute, opposite to a boat that is carrying the Palestinian map that was colored with the colors of the flag, among a number of passengers with the words, "Oh waves calm down, we have been away for far too long."

It could be said that Hussein Al Asmar was commemorating Palestine, the lost homeland, as part of his commemoration of Um Fakhri, the lost community member, in a manner that overlapped different notions: the past and the present, the public and the private, the collective and the individual with the boundary between these contrasting notions blurred and made ambiguous in the camp.

In 2020, I visited the street again, to find that the sofas were removed and that the mural was painted over, as shown in Figure 5.34. The drawings were replaced with generic statements very similar to the ones that were inside the UNRWA complex, seen in Figure 5.35

Examples of what was written on the wall after its repainting included:
"When you pay your water bill, think of others, those who have nothing to feed on but clouds," which is a line in a famous poem by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish.

When I met again with Um Fakhri's daughter, she expressed her frustration with what happened,
"We used to wake up every morning and say hello to Hanthala. He's gone, they painted over him." When I asked about the erasure of the graffiti, the UNRWA camp director nonchalantly explained that it was to cover foul language that was covering the walls, done as part of the annual maintenance of the camp's infrastructure and that I should not think too much of it. I was not sure whether to believe him or not, but I couldn't help but think that the mural was public property that was forcefully taken away from them. Who owns what in the camp? That was a question that was always ambiguous and complex. As a way of narrating Um Fakhri's story, I produced a collage that folds different layers of the time intervals and practices around the street that now hold her name, shown in Figure 5.36.

In the collage, a cross section through the street cuts through the wall to show the spaces on both sides of the UNRWA complex, while also cutting through time to show the past and the present. Behind the wall, I superimposed a picture from the UNRWA archive, showing the female students in the school yard back in 1973.



FIG. 5.34 Um Fakhri Street in 2020, with the chairs removed and the mural painted over.



FIG. 5.35 The mural in 2020 after being painted over in Um Fakhri Street, with generic statements that promote good virtues.

TOC

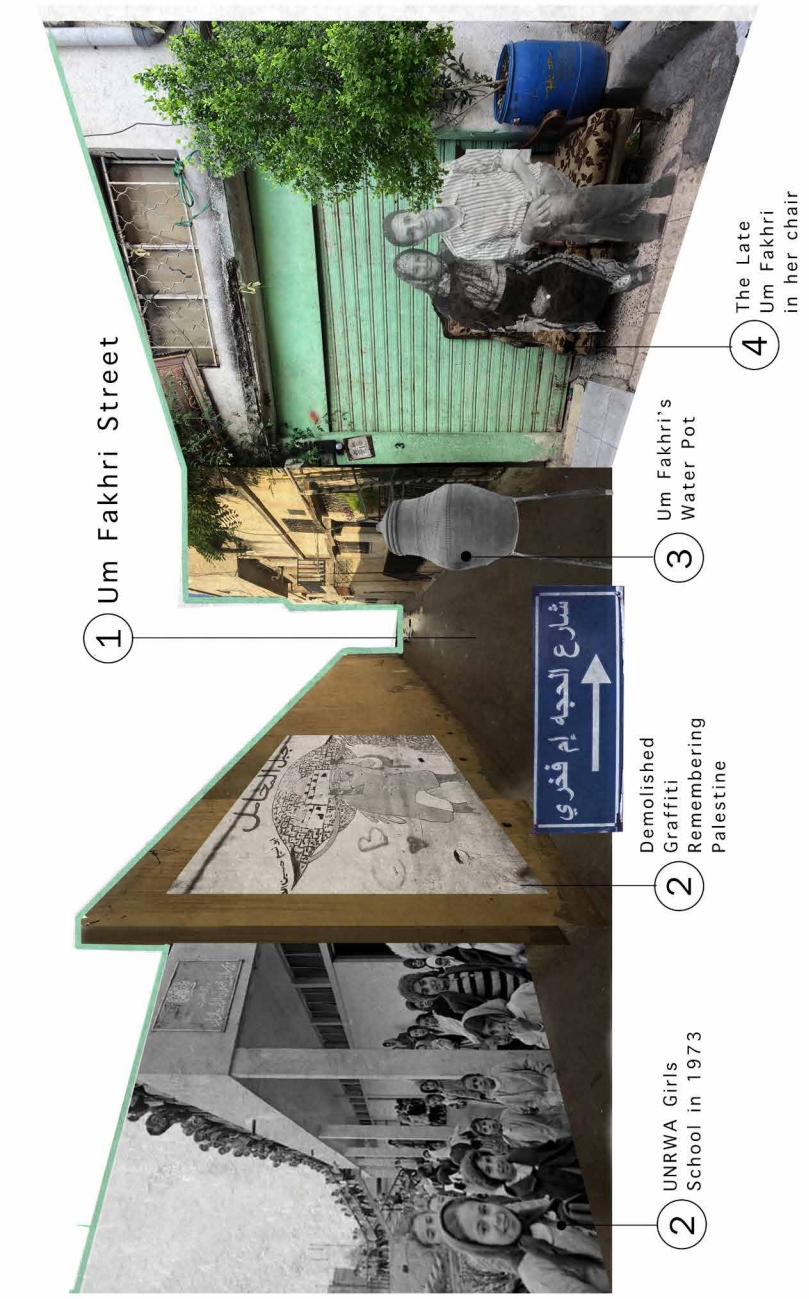


FIG. 5.36 The story of Um Fakhri, the street, the wall, and the school narrated through a collage that I created combining a number of archival photos and photos I took in the camp. (Source: Picture on the left is from the UNRWA digital archive. The picture on the right is from a Facebook post commemorating Um Fakhri).

TOC

This is done as a way of remembering the role of Um Fakhri as a chaperon of these girls, and to highlight her presence in the memories of the students who used to buy sweets from her. In front of the wall, I have superimposed the picture of the graffiti drawing that Hussein Al Asmar had drawn in commemoration of Um Fakhri and Palestine, which has now been painted over. On the opposite side, I have superimposed an old picture of Um Fakhri, sitting on one of the two sofas outside her house, with a young man from the camp, bringing her memory to the present and bringing her presence back to the street that now carries her name. This is officially documented through the blue sign at the center of the collage that now hangs in the street. Studying the different layers that have overlapped on the complex's walls, with images and words being drawn, erased and painted over, reveals some of the underlying power dynamics that are shaping the camp and producing its spaces; particularly in relation to UNRWA and its control over the spaces inside the walls and control over the walls themselves as mediums of communication between the inside and the outside, between the institution and the inhabitants.

On the UNRWA complex wall that faces Sumaya Street, right around the corner from Um Fakhri Street, a huge mural is painted of Dome of the Rock with the cityscape of Al Quds in the background, shown in Figure 5.37. Unlike the other drawings on the complex walls today, this is the most elaborate drawing that represents a connection with Palestine, which was not erased nor painted over.

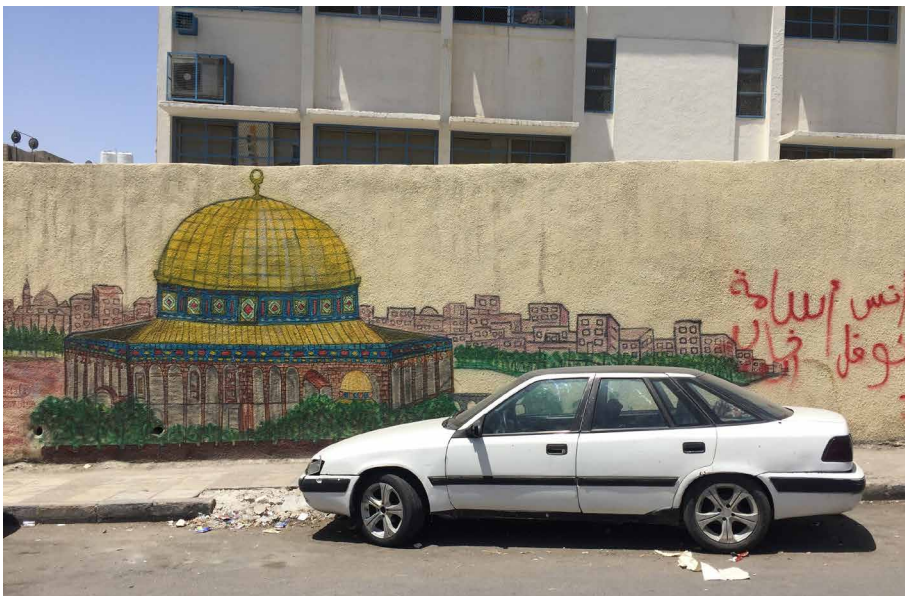


FIG. 5.37 Dome of the Rock on the wall of UNRWA as seen from Sumaya Street.

TOC

5.3.3 The drawings around the camp walls, remembering Palestine and celebrating Al Wehdat Camp.

Unlike the walls of the UNRWA complex that are subjected to high levels of institutional control, the walls in the residential neighborhoods are under less surveillance. I was able to conclude this due to the wider spread of political and expressive graffiti on the walls there, communicating a variety of messages and notions. In this part, I will thematically group the graffiti into different subsections, using photography to showcase a selection of the drawings I have seen on the walls of the residential neighborhoods. Doing so will allow me to interpret the messages that the camp inhabitants are communicating, while also studying their underlying meanings and values.

5.3.3.1 Remembering Palestine, the map, the flag, and Hanthala.

According to Palestinian anthropologist, Khaldun Bshara (2012), Palestinian refugees view their mere act of existence as a form of resistance and for that reason are keen on celebrating different aspects of their culture and identity in every space they occupy. In the camp, after almost 69 years of its establishment, Palestine remains a vital notion among the inhabitants who still maintain their connection with the homeland, as illustrated by the various Graffiti writings that alternate between "Palestine" as a written word and depictions of the Palestinian flag, as shown in Figure 5.38.



FIG. 5.38 Graffiti spotted around Al Wehdat Camp remembering "Palestine", both written and drawn.

TOC

Historically, there was a time when the use of the word, Palestine, was prohibited by the Jordanian Government on all governmental correspondences or as a title for any youth or community groups, as part of the government's process of 'Jordanization' of all Palestinians on its lands, after King Abdullah's annexation of the West Bank (Brand, 1995). Because of that, writing Palestine's name is considered political, whereby the act of remembering has become an act of resistance.

On another wall seen in Figure 5.39, the word, Palestine, is written next to the map, the flag, and Hanthala, with the phrase, "We are the children of War, Surrendering does not suit us." Through that graffiti, a number of notions could be deduced. The first is the way camp inhabitants identity with a collective, we, having formed a collective identity that was produced through being the children of war, directly linking their present form of being with the events of the past, the events which have resulted in the loss of the homeland. Despite all of that, they will not surrender, they will continue to fight and resist, while holding on to Palestine, represented with the flag, the map, and Hanthala, who once again is seen on the walls of the camp. It comes as no surprise that Hanthala is drawn often in the camp, particularly for the way he is recognized as a Palestinian refugee himself, inclining the camp inhabitants to personally identify with him. I have spotted Hanthala often in Al Wehdat Camp, he was a refugee but has managed to temporarily find a home for himself on the walls in the camp, seen in Figure 5.40.

Another graffiti celebrating Palestine, also spotted in one of the residential neighborhoods, seen in Figure 5.41, documents the names of the different Palestinian cities and villages that camp inhabitants have been ethnically cleansed from in 1948 and 1967. Memories of the homeland are passed down from one generation to another and have constructed what could be called an 'imagined' homeland for the Palestinian refugees who have never visited Palestine but constructed imaginary landscapes around the stories they heard from their parents and grandparents. At the top part of the drawing in the middle, the words, "We will return," are written, emphasizing the Palestinian refugees' right to return and rendering the act of remembering the villages of origin as a one that resists forgetting and strives to achieve that promise to return to the homeland.



FIG. 5.39 Graffiti Writing, "Palestine, We are the children of War, Surrendering does not suit us."

TOC



FIG. 5.40 Hanthala finding refuge on the walls of Al Wehdat camp.



FIG. 5.41 Graffiti with the names of different Palestinian cities and villages.

TOC

5.3.3.2 Significance of Al Quds/ Jerusalem and other Political Notions

On 13 December 2017, the United States of America recognized Al Quds or Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, abandoning decades of US policy and igniting rage in many Arab and Muslim countries (Sherwood, 2018). In the camp, the inhabitants of Al Wehdat expressed their rage and refusal of the decision on the walls, as shown in Figure 5.42, with statements such as “Al Quds is the capital of Palestine,” and “We are all Al Aqsa Mosque.”

The first phrasing directly rejects the Israeli claim to Al Quds/ Jerusalem, while the second reaffirms the Muslim Identity of Al Quds, represented by Al Aqsa mosque. In other phrases, inhabitants wrote “Al Quds is the bride of your Arabism,” quoting the late Iraqi poet, Muthaffar al-Nawab, who stated that Al Quds stands at the very heart of Arabism and Arab Unity, in a poem carrying that verse as its title.



FIG. 5.42 Graffiti expressing the significance of Al Quds.

What could be interpreted from these writings is the way the walls of the camp are utilized as tools of expression in response to the major political events that have and still are taking place regionally and internationally concerning the Palestinian case in general, shaping Palestinian nationalism in the refugee camp and reflecting its ideologies (Ramadan, 2009).

TOC

Moreover, the cultural references that are made through these writings and drawings, whether by citing the work of Palestinian cartoonist, Naji Al Ali, or that of Iraqi poet, Muthaffar al-Nawab, reflect a good knowledge of the existing, regional literature and a sense of belonging to a larger community of resistance and system of knowledge that exists beyond the boundaries of the camp.



FIG. 5.43 Graffiti calling for the Boycott of Israeli Products.

Other graffiti writings were representative of specific campaigns launched in the camp in parallel to the events that were unfolding, such as the campaign in Figure 5.43 which calls for the, "Boycott of Israeli products," in the name of defending Al Aqsa Mosque.

Other graffiti drawings or piecings emphasized the unity between Jordan and Palestine, as shown in Figure 5.44, represented with drawings of the Jordanian map and Palestinian map or the two flags next to each other. Another more detailed drawing shows the Dome of the Rock in the background with the two flags shaking hands in front of it, in a notion that suggests that unity is what will allow Palestinians and Jordanians together to liberate Palestine and Al Quds. The Kuffiyeh is also spotted in this type of graffiti, which is a piece of fabric with a checkered print that was used as a piece of clothing in Palestine and Jordan before becoming a symbol of resistance when it was worn by resistance fighters to conceal their identity, simultaneously becoming a marker of Palestinian identity (Ramadan, 2009; Bshara 2012).

Striving for unity and seeking to achieve peace between Palestine and Jordan has been an idea that gained more popularity in the camp in the past few decades, especially among the younger generations who are now more focused on a more stable and convenient lifestyle and a decent standard of living (Mackenzie, 2015).



FIG. 5.44 A number of drawings that emphasize the importance of unity between Palestine and Jordan.

5.3.4 5.3.3.3 Belonging to Al Wehdat Camp and other Existential and Territorial Notions

For the younger generations in Al Wehdat Camp, the notion of belonging to the distant homeland of Palestine and the greater Palestinian cause didn't seem to be enough. Their process of self-identification is influenced instead by more immediate notions existing inside the camp: Al Wehdat Camp as an independent entity and Al Wehdat Sports Club (Mackenzie, 2015). This is apparent in the existential graffiti with writings such as, "Al Wehdat, Al Wehdat: a love story, Movement of Al Wehdat Camp Residents," illustrated in Figure 5.45.

TOC



FIG. 5.45 Graffiti celebrating Al Wehdat and belonging to Al Wehdat Camp.

The camp's slogan, which was repeated to me often during the interviews, and also spotted on walls is: "Al Wehdat: Don't worry." Linking the presence of the camp to feelings of reassurance and safety to all people who belonged to it and identified with its territory. As such, the camp is perceived as a space of safety, unity and belonging, reaffirmed in the writings that celebrated that sense of belonging to the camp.

Another term often used in the camp is, mukhayyamji, which translates to, person from the camp, portraying the character of a strong male leader with the ideal model of values, a title conditional to those born in the camp. In contrast, people who are born outside the camp are viewed as less manly, weaker, and not as reliable as the mukhayyamji (Mackenzie, 2015). While working on this research, and during the site visits, encounters with a number of children and youth highlighted their pride in being part of the camp, viewing it as their home and place of origin, since it was the only home they have known since birth. This notion highlights the intergenerational differences between camp residents (Jayyusi, 2007; Lybarger, 2005; Richter-Devroe, 2012), reflecting how each generation identified with Palestine and the homeland differently, especially after the 1970's Civil War in Jordan (Mackenzie, 2015). These findings also resonate with the work of Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2013) on the plurality of home for refugees, expressing a sense of belonging to both the home-land and the home-camp. In the camp, Al Wehdat Sports Club is considered a source of pride for residents, especially among the youth. The important role the soccer club started to play in sports on the scale of Amman was paired by a cultural role when it launched a magazine called,



FIG. 5.46 Different tagging examples of logos and signatures around the camp.

The Wall, which was displayed in a number of camps in Jordan and the West Bank. According to Tuastad (1997), Al Wehdat Sports Club is seen as a reflection of Palestinian's integration with the Jordanian community and as a way of assimilating and letting go of their "Palestinianess". MacKenzie (2015) on the other hand had an opposing opinion, viewing the inhabitant's pride in the club as a manifestation of their "Palestinianess" and resistance against the process of "Jordanization" stressing on their refugee status and taking the club as a symbol of the Palestinian national struggle.

Another form of writing that is also used to demarcate territory, on a smaller scale that does not include the home-land but is more focused on the home-camp, is a type of graffiti known as tagging. Tagging is the act of using spray paint to write distinctive signatures and logos for graffiti subgroups, unique for their stylistic curves and colors. When compared to other types of graffiti, tagging is the one primarily motivated by the desire to exert power and claim territory within an urban context, always addressing an audience and sending a message (Ley and Cybriwsky, 1974). In Figure 5.46, a number of tagging examples from the camp are shown. Some of the camp inhabitants stylistically write their names to exert their dominance, whether by writing their first names, such as Jihad, or their family names, such as Atout, challenging others and emphasizing their importance by writing things like, "Faumi and no one else," or directly writing their full names such as Zaid Karjeh, and Rayan Shlaly.

Building on the work of Alex Alonso (1998) and his taxonomy of graffiti, I built a framework of the most prominent graffiti types in Al Wehdat Camp shown in Table 5.1. This taxonomy for Al Wehdat Camp could be applied to other urban Palestinian camps in Jordan who are under UNRWA governance, which share a number of similarities with Al Wehdat in terms of development and growth.

TABLE 5.1 Different Types of Graffiti found in Al Wehdat Map.

Category	Graffiti	Street Art
Done by	Camp residents	UNRWA
Legitimacy	Illegal	Legal
Location	Around Residential Neighborhoods.	Inside and outside the UNRWA complex.
Type	**A) Political** 1) Remembering Palestine 2) Significance of Al Quds	**A) Written** Imperative Statements/ Promoting Virtues
	B) Existential/ Expressive – Belonging to Al Wehdat Camp	**B) Graphic** Positive Messages about Education/ UNRWA Schools
	C) Tagging – Name Tags/ Name Logos	
	D) Piecing/ Bombing	
	1) Unity between Jordan and Palestine 2) Right to Return to the Homeland	

In conclusion of this chapter, walls are not just material objects, but come as manifestations of a number of social, political, and economic dimensions that have played a role in transforming the camp's space. Walls are also boundary-demarcating elements constructed to keep people inside or outside, or to control the movement of people through doors, gates and checkpoints. By studying the transformation of a number of institutional complexes in the camp and their walls and spaces, studying their demolitions and the new constructions, I aimed to study the shifts in the power dynamics of the different institutional bodies and the influence they exert on the camp space.

The question of who controls what in the camp remains vague and ambiguous, with a number of institutions collaborating to manage the camp's space through a number of legislative frameworks in a manner that leaves room for certain bodies and entities to take over and guide the camp's spatial transformation. This is not always considerate of the camp inhabitants' needs, driven instead by forces of capital.

Unlike other Palestinian refugee camps in other countries, Al Wehdat Camp is not separated from the rest of the city with walls or fences, but is rather demarcated by a network of other much more subtle material and immaterial boundary-demarcating elements that I have been investigating so far. Because of their ambiguity and invisibility, these elements have produced a more complex urban reality that does not adhere to strict lines but rather continues to move and transform between a number of contrasting notions and divisions while also oscillating between different places and times through a transience in its territory.

In the camp, walls also played a role in the gendering of the spaces in the camp, demarcating some spaces as highly male-dominated and others as highly female-dominated, rendering the first as unsafe for the women and the second as safe for women. Al Wehdat Sports Club, demarcated by four walls that materially emphasized the highly gendered nature of the sports club, both as a sport, as a team, and as a building, worked on rendering it as unsafe and inaccessible to the women. As for the Women's Center, the four walls worked on materially constructing a safe space specifically for women, both in a physical and metaphorical sense, with the center described as one of the few spaces where women felt safe to be out in public. That safe space also allowed women to build a community and network of support between each other.


أسامة
أبو لاشة
مشغل
سنيورة
تصليح الأ
الكهربائية

6 Walls of the Domestic Spaces

The Home-Home

6.0 Um Hasan's Home

"Are you still living in the same address, in Sumaya Street, in Al Wehdat Camp?"
"No, we have recently moved to a new place, outside Al Wehdat Camp, in Al Quiesmeh.".

In the summer of 2021, two years after visiting Um Hasan and Sameera in their unit in Sumaya Street, I knew that I had to visit them again to continue some conversations about the camp and life in it. Over the phone, I was surprised to learn that they had moved out of Al Wehdat Camp. In our first interview, Sameera had told me that the only reason they would leave Al Wehdat Camp would be to return to Palestine. But here they were, across the valley from Al Wehdat Camp, in Al Quiesmeh. Learning about their move came as a surprise, especially when I remembered how persistent Sameera was in telling me about her decision to stay, when everyone else was leaving.

At the end of that call, I scheduled a meeting with Sameera and her mother in their new place, which I arrived at later that week, using Sameera's directions. The neighborhood was quiet, the street was less crowded, and their apartment was tucked below street level, accessed through a few steps. In the few meters in front of the apartment, Sameera had replanted many of her plants that used to be inside their old place; part of a vibrant garden I photographed and discussed in Chapter 2.



FIG. 6.1 Some of the plants in Sameera's front yard in the new house.

In that moment, I could tell how proud Sameera was of her plants, seeing the joyful look on her face as I moved around the garden and took photos of her many planters. Plants were around every corner, hanging on the walls, planted in the soil, lined up against the parapets, stacked up against the stairs.

"We needed two trucks to transport these plants to the new place." Sameera told me as we sat down outside in the garden, sipping tea with her mother, Um Hasan, who sat next to me.

"How long has it been since you moved here?" I asked Sameera. "Only a few months."

"It's a nice area around here. My grandparents' house is close by, in an area called Al Manara."
"Your Palestinian grandparents right, not the Jordanian ones?" Um Hasan asked.



FIG. 6.2 Another corner from Sameera's front garden.

I was glad to find that she still remembered me, and couldn't help but be amused by what she remembered about me in particular, despite it not coming as a surprise. "Yes, the Palestinians." I said with a smile, "So you do remember me?" I asked. She nodded.

Um Hasan's comment stemmed from the fact that a huge number of the neighborhoods in that area east of Amman were inhabited by Palestinians, like Al Naser, Al Mahata, and Al Manara.

"Why did you move?" I asked Sameera, trying to keep my voice casual, not to show my surprise.
"We decided to move out during the pandemic. The area got so loud, with many young men loitering in Sumaya Street. We couldn't sleep at night with all the noise, it became unbearable. I still return to Al Wehdat Camp though, to buy groceries, vegetables and fruits. The market over there is something else.



FIG. 6.3 The two sofas we sat on for our conversation in front of the main entrance.

Later in the conversation, when Sameera went inside to make coffee, Um Hasan started telling me about their new home,
"We moved here because the owner of our unit decided to increase our rent. We were no longer able to afford it, we had to look for a cheaper option, so we came here."

I watched as the symbolic image of the camp as a space of resistance and steadfastness began to crumble in front of me, replaced instead with a very mundane and material space whose inhabitants had to leave, because they could not afford rent, after an international pandemic and global inflation.

In that sense, the camp was not very different from any other neighborhood in the city.

It was during moments like this one that I was reminded how important it was to study the camp from that close of a distance, to stay grounded and real in my investigation. If I wanted to understand the everyday life of the inhabitants, I had to continue speaking to the inhabitants and study the camp through their lived experiences and perspectives.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will be studying the walls of domestic spaces by beginning with a general overview of the transformation of the residential units over time. I will also reflect on the change of the building regulations that have guided the morphological evolution of the unit from a 96 square-meters single-floor Wehda, to a four-story residential building not very different from the rest of the city.

In the second part of the chapter, I will zoom in to discuss four residential units in particular in order to understand the spatial transformation of the Wehda, or the Unit, the singular form of the word Al Wehdat in Arabic, which in its plural form gave the camp its name. The unit has become a space of temporary refuge for three generations of Palestinian refugees who have been residing in them.

Having studied the walls of the communal spaces as separators between the different public spaces of the camp, demarcating the institutional influence of the DPA, Al Wehdat Sports Club, and UNRWA, I will study the walls of the domestic spaces as separators between the public and the private, between the institution and the individual, between the collective and the intimate. Moreover, by studying the morphological transformation of the residential units, I will study the change in the architecture of the camp and its typological shift towards permanence, putting that in contrast with the symbolic and political temporariness of the camp as a space of temporary refuge for Palestinian refugees after Al Nakba. That is a notion that was thoroughly discussed in the work of Palestinian scholar, Nasser Abourahme (2019), who argued that the camp is still a space of refuge for generations of Palestinian refugees who have been uprooted from Palestine, and the shift towards material permanence does not disconnect the camp from its history. Instead he draws a direct link between the camp and the colony, arguing that camps were produced through the systematic colonization of Palestine and the Palestinian refugees embody that history in the present.

Inside the units, I will study the way the walls have created safe spaces for Palestinian refugees to keep the connection with their home-land alive through time and space, creating the very spatio-temporal folding of space that I argue characterizes the space of the camp. Inside the walls, I will be studying the social, economic and political dynamics of the domestic spaces in the camp in addition to investigating the relationship of the Wehda to the home-camp and also the home-land.

This part of the chapter will move the discussion to a more intimate scale, concluding the dissertation's shift from the regional to the urban to the architecture scale, having started the investigation in the home-land, before moving it to the home-city, then the home-camp and all the way to the single family home, the Wehda, which had grown in time to become a four-floor building.

To make the discussion more focused and personal and because the domestic spaces in the camp are too many, with heterogeneous and diverse stories that I will not be able to entirely tell, I will focus on four specific units in the camp. The stories I will present are stories I found best aligned with my research motives and chapter aims. I encountered these stories through my Taqato'at with four camp inhabitants: Younes, Nawaf, Hisham and Um Hasan, whom I have introduced in **Chapter** 2.

Each of the four units revealed a set of different domestic dynamics and allowed me to enter a different interior in the camp, opening up the space for rich layers of history and events to unfold, ones that will help me gradually bring this dissertation to a close. Having gone full circle, from the macro to the micro, from the sky to the ground, from the outside to the inside, I will proceed to climb up to the roof and conclude; standing at the threshold between the boundary-demarcating elements that have produced the different spaces and dimensions of Al Wehdat Camp.



FIG. 6.4 The residential unit in Al Wehdat Camp, or the Wehda, the single family unit.

6.2 The Wehda in Al Wehdat Camp: A space of temporary refuge

The most remarkable features of Al Wehdat Camp is its building typology, having been built around concrete shelters from the start, each unit, or Wehda, was distributed on a plot of land with a total area of 96 square-meters. These units were later assigned by UNRWA to each of the Palestinian refugee families that arrived to Al Wehdat Camp.

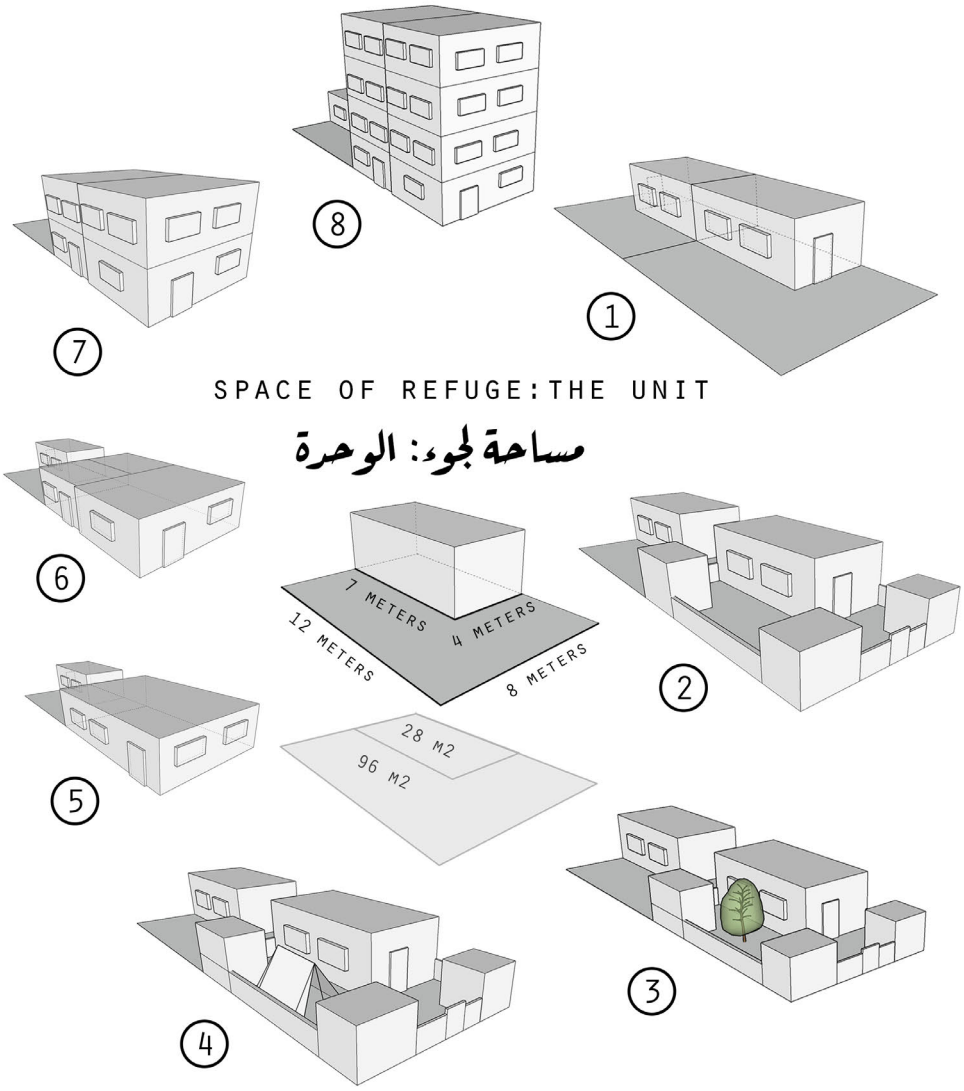
Unlike the other nine official Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Al Wehdat Camp was the only camp that was not founded as groups of tents that later transformed into units in time, but rather, was established as concrete units from the beginning.

Having not followed the typical shift in typology from temporary shelter to permanent unit, Al Wehdat Camp gained its informal name from that distinguishing feature, being referred to by the inhabitants of Amman and the camp itself as Al Wehdat for its concrete units. Its formal name, Amman New Camp, was the name given by UNRWA to distinguish the camp from Jabal Al Hussein Camp, built three years earlier. Within the formal boundary of the camp, as previously discussed, the camp inhabitants do not own the units but rather have the “right to use” them within a temporary ownership framework that was established when Al Wehdat Camp was built. This is still the framework officially controlling the relationship between the Palestinian refugees and their offspring, and the residential units they have been inhabiting for decades.

To illustrate the transformation of the unit in the past six decades, in line with the change in building regulations, I have produced the diagrams in Figure 6.5 to show the different stages of the Wehda’s horizontal and vertical expansion. This came in response to the change in the number of floors and change in the uses of the unit, after permitting commercial activity.

I have drawn the diagram in conclusion of my interviews with the camp inhabitants and employees from the DPA who explained the change in building regulations through the years. Upon arrival at Al Wehdat Camp, every Palestinian refugee family was assigned a single-floor modular unit with a total area of 28 square-meters, built on a plot of land with an area of 96 square-meters. That single-floor unit consisted of one room, with the dimensions of 4 x 7 meters on a plot of land with the dimensions of 8 x 12 meters.

TOC



1 UNIT PLACEMENTS ON NEIGHBOURING PLOTS IN THE EARLY DAYS, SURROUNDED BY YARDS.
2 MORPHOLOGICAL GROWTH IN TIME/ ADDITION OF SPACES AS A REFLECTION OF NEEDS.
3 SOME FAMILIES PLANTED TREES IN UNIT YARD.
4 TENTS ERECTED IN UNIT YARDS WITH INFLUX WITH MORE REFUGEES PRIMARILY IN 1967.
5 HORIZONTAL EXPANSION COVERING ENTIRE PLOT IN TIME.
6 50% OF THE UNIT CAN USED FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY 1980'S
7 ALLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL FLOOR IN 1997 + USE OF GROUND FLOOR FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY.
8 ALLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO ADDITIONAL FLOORS IN 2012 + USE OF GROUND FLOOR FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY.

FIG. 6.5 The morphological transformation of the residential unit in Al Wehdat Camp..

TOC

Inside the singular room, families would conduct all their domestic activities, which included sleeping, eating, studying and cleaning, among other activities. There were no bathrooms or kitchens. To access these amenities, families had to use the UNRWA hydraulic infrastructure in the public nodes, while cooking in the open yards surrounding the plots. In time, each family began their horizontal expansion around that single room, adding makeshift sheds to make more room for the family, assembling whatever material they could get to build spaces for cooking, storage, or to construct small rooms to sleep in or use. Soon after, each plot was demarcated with a fence, planters, pots or any other physical markers that would draw lines of ownership around the plot, materially tracing the 96 square-meters of land each family was given in the camp. In some instances, if the family was big, they would be given two neighboring units, dividing the family members over two plots. In that open yard surrounding the unit, families would also sometimes plant trees, hang up their laundry, cook, eat, clean, and conduct whatever activities that would not fit inside the unit that was already too crowded.

In 1967, with the second influx of Palestinian refugees to Jordan, as discussed in the previous chapters, a large number of the Palestinian refugees sought refuge in the existing camps, staying with members of their families and relatives. Soon after, tents began to show up in the camp, erected in the small yards, creating a symbolic folding of time, with a tent being erected next to a concrete shelter. The refugees were back in tents again, but what was remarkable was that in Al Wehdat Camp, tents only appeared later, not having been there from the start. In the years that followed, as the camp inhabitants accumulated enough money the horizontal expansion accelerated due to families building more rooms around the original room. Gradually the inhabitants covered the entire land plot and the yard that had previously acted as a semi-open, semi-closed space around the unit.

The growth of each unit depended on each family's financial ability and their spatial needs, which created variation in the units' morphology over time, with some units staying in their original form for years because their owners did not have enough money to expand. Other units expanded using more temporary materials, building rooms out of corrugated metal sheets and wood because that was what they could afford. Families who were able to afford it rebuilt their units entirely, reflecting their economic ability in their use of building materials like stone for facade cladding.

In the early 1980's, as discussed in the previous chapter, commercial activity was permitted inside the units due to the challenging economic situation of the camp inhabitants and the rising rates of unemployment and poverty, permitting camp inhabitants to convert a maximum of 50% of their units into small shops in which they can sell goods and supplies to the other camp inhabitants.

In time, this accelerated the camp's gradual transformation from a space of refuge to a space of commerce.

In 1997, for the first time since the camp's establishment, due to the high levels of over crowdedness, building regulations changed to permit the construction of an additional floor above the original unit, which had at that point horizontally expanded and covered the entirety of the 96 square-meters for most units in the camp. From there, the vertical expansion of the camp began, in line with the camp's further transformation towards commercial activity, given how camp inhabitants at that point were permitted to turn 50% of their unit for commercial activity, which with the change of regulations, included all of the ground floor, while residing on the first floor. In 2012, the regulations changed again to allow the addition of two extra floors, making the total 4 floors, allowing inhabitants to use the first two floors for commercial activity, while residing in the top two floors. With that, the residential units in the camp completed their vertical transformation, to the state they are in today, built as high as any other residential building in any other neighborhood in Amman, reaching a new level of spatial integration with their context, morphologically and typologically.

Relying on my walks around the camp, and using what was previously discussed about the unit's transformation, I produced the diagram in Figure 6.6 by putting together a number of photographs I have taken from around the camp, resembling different examples of the units' morphological transformation today. Through the collage, I aimed to highlight the fact that not all units have transformed in the same way. While some are still in their original form, others have added only one floor, and some have rebuilt their unit entirely, all with varying levels of adherence to the original parameters of the 96-square-meter plot. I also drew generic, architectural plans of each unit's ground floor as a way of understanding the changes and transformations on their interiors as well, and not only their exteriors.

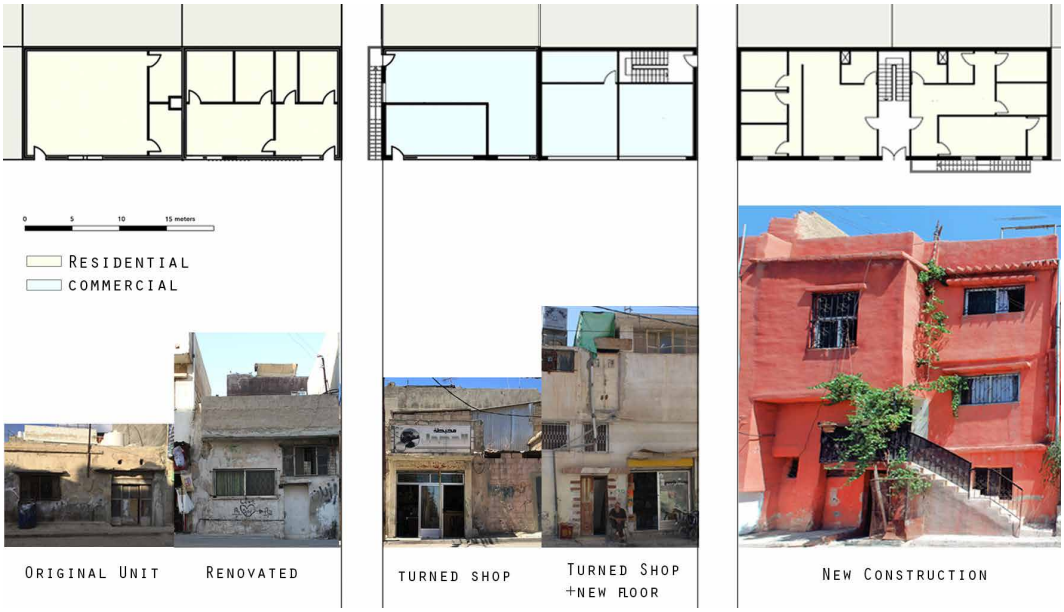


FIG. 6.6 Typological mapping of some of the units in the camp today.

Having studied the morphological transformation of the units, I argue that the spatial and legislative transformations that were happening in the camp were not happening in isolation from the larger context, whether that of Jordan or Palestine, or that of the region, whose events were directly reflected on the social, economic, and political context of both countries.

In his study of Al Wehdat Camp, Jordanian scholar Ala Hamarneh (2002) discussed the events that have shaped and guided the camp's spatial transformation, beginning with signing of the peace treaty with the State of Israel through the Oslo Accords which destroyed many of the camp inhabitants' return narratives and made the right to return feel like more of an illusion. In Al Wehdat Camp, or what was previously known as The Factory of Return Dreams, the urban setting started to change, with the camp shifting towards permanence, gradually integrating with its surroundings. Hamarneh also discussed the implications of the Gulf War of 1990 on the camp, with the migration of thousands of Palestinians to Jordan after leaving Kuwait, a portion of which returned to Al Wehdat Camp where their families were residing, creating a sudden surge in the number of the camp inhabitants. This surge could have arguably resulted in a change in building regulations in 1997, permitting the construction of an extra floor.

TOC

With the influx of Gulf returnees, as Hamarneh called them, came an influx of money which financed the construction boom in that period.

As per the camp inhabitants, the different waves of vertical expansion in the camp caused the taller buildings to cast their shadows on the camp space, obstructing the entry of sunlight and natural ventilation into the units which drastically affected the indoor environments in their units and reflected badly on their health and wellbeing.

What also emerged was a new spatial practice in the camp of building exterior stairs, usually with lightweight materials such as steel, connecting the ground floor with the newly added floors, constructed on the outside of the building to gain more space inside, as seen in Figure 6.7.

In that sense, camp inhabitants were building outside the parameters of their 96 square-meters of land, demarcating the boundaries of the same plot that they were assigned when they moved into the camp. The camp inhabitants were practicing what Palestinian scholar, Samar Maqusi (2021), in her research of the architecture of Al Baqa'a Camp in Jordan and Burj Al Barajneh in Lebanon, terms spatial violations, which are a set of spatial practices through which the Palestinian refugees reclaim the spaces of their camp and practice their agency in shaping their everyday spaces. According to Maqusi, through these acts of spatial violation, Palestinian refugees have disrupted the perceived order of the institutional layout, giving rise to new power dynamics and establishing an alternative structure. However, this renewed arrangement is not without its share of violence, as it remains vulnerable to potential destruction orchestrated by the institution, namely the DPA, which seeks to maintain spatial control. By rejecting adherence to the prescribed boundaries set by the humanitarian bodies and the State, Palestinian refugees openly acknowledge and accept a certain degree of inherent violence in each 'spatial violation' they undertake, as part of their attempts to reclaim their agency within a highly controlled space.

These spatial violations were not limited to the stairs but included bigger extensions to the size of rooms that stretched outside the limits of the units into the streets, as seen in Figure 6.8, or smaller extensions in the size of small steps built in front of the units, that I will refer to as the thresholds, which are built for practical and also social reasons.



FIG. 6.7 External steel stairs connecting floors on the outside, extending beyond the parameter of the unit.



FIG. 6.8 An entire room that was added as a spatial violation.

TOC

The thresholds were a common feature I spotted while walking around the camp, which I was told were built to protect the interiors of the units from rainwater and floods, given the unit's proximity to the streets and the lack of buffer zones to protect them against dirt and water. The thresholds were also used for sitting, producing a series of small social spaces around the camp, used in some neighborhoods by women, children and men to socialize, amidst an absence of other social spaces in the camp, like that seen in Figure 6.9.

Built on the limit between the inside and the outside, the thresholds blurred the boundary between the private and the public, between the individual and collective, especially for the women and the elderly, who were the ones usually sitting on them, with the women using these thresholds to socialize in close proximity to their home and the elderly using these thresholds to pass time, given how they had that in abundance. Little children also gathered around their door steps, playing around their houses and staying in safe distance from their families.
The further the neighborhood was from the commercial streets, the more lively it was and more vibrant with activity, reflecting a sense of community in some areas that were notable through the children that were playing on the streets, the people gathering around the corners, and the general presence of people outside.



FIG. 6.9 Thresholds in front of the house used for sitting and socializing on the neighborhood scale.



FIG. 6.10 Sofas in front of units that create thresholds for socializing.



FIG. 6.11 A beige sofa in front of a community building in the camp.

TOC



FIG. 6.12 Women socializing on the thresholds in front of their homes. (Photo anyonomized).

TOC

The thresholds were also created by putting out sofas and chairs in front of the units, like the one shown in Figure 6.10 and 6.11 and like that in front of Um Fakhri's unit, discussed previously.

I met Ahmad Al Lidawi for the first time in 2019 at the threshold of his home during one of my early visits to Al Wehdat Camp, when I took his picture, shown in Figure 6.13, after receiving his consent. Born in the city of Al-Lid in 1942, Ahmad was displaced as a 6-year-old boy from his city during Al Nakba, settling in Al Jofeh Camp in Amman with his family before moving to Al Wehdat Camp in 1955 when it was first established. As a young man, Ahmad worked as a security guard in a small security office that operated in the early days of the camp, before working as a security guard with the DPA and the Post Office in the years that followed. I sat next to Ahmad on the threshold, as he reminisced about the early days of the camp, with all the hardships and the few pleasant memories he and many of the other camp inhabitants had experienced together.

During our conversation, he pulled out his wallet and showed me a picture of himself as a young man, also shown in Figure 6.13, telling me how different his life would have been had he not been displaced, had he grown up and stayed in Palestine and not become a refugee.

In 2022, three years after meeting Ahmad Al Lidawi, during a later visit to the camp, I found him still sitting in front of his house. I felt overwhelmed by that spatio-temporal intersection, as if time had stopped between the two meetings. There was something to be said about the way he was sitting, long before I arrived and long after I left. He sat in waiting, as if his life had been suspended, interrupted, with his displacement having uprooted him for his home, displacing his body from Al Lid down his path of that led him to Al Jofeh Camp and then to Al Wehdat Camp, where my path intersected with his twice, in 2019 and 2022.

I introduced myself again and asked him whether he remembered me, and to my delight, he reassured me that he did. Sitting there on his threshold, bearing witness to the camp through its different phases, Ahmad, like many members of the first generation of Palestinian refugees, had borne witness to his family's displacement, having lived through the loss of Palestine, having known the process of becoming a refugee by having experienced it first-hand. This way of knowing, as discussed in **Chapter 2,** produced what Tuan (1980) refers to as a sense of rootedness in place.

How did it feel to be rooted in a place that far away from one's body?



FIG. 6.13 Ahmad Al Lidawi sitting in front of his house, in 2019 and also in 2022.

6.3 On the Inside: Beyond the walls, into the Lived experiences

In this part, I will step beyond the walls to see inside the units and inside the life stories of a number of camp inhabitants from a more intimate distance. After providing an overview of the residential units and their transformation, developed in response to a number of interviews I had around the camp, I will discuss a number of life stories in more detail.

TOC

These are sampled to reflect the heterogeneity of the lived experiences of the Palestinian refugees, whose experience with displacement unfolded in different ways. Through these interviews, I also aim to reflect on how a number of events, which have been collectively experienced, have manifested in different ways for the four groups that I will be interviewing, the most prominent of which are the events of Black September.

The first group consists of two second generation refugees, Younes and Nassim, who have been friends for a long time and helped me learn about the earlier days of the camp. The second group consists of a second generation refugee, Nawaf, who has managed to return to Palestine as a young man before returning again to Al Wehdat Camp. The third group is the family of Hisham, belonging to what is known locally as Al Nawar, or gypsies, to shed light on their practices and their distinguished identity as a part of the Palestinian refugee community. The fourth group is Um Hasan and Sameera, who I will conclude this chapter with, in their new home outside the camp.

6.3.1 Younes and Nassmin: Comrades in arms.

Interviews with both Younes and Nassim took place in Younes's guest room in September of 2021, in his residential unit in the camp. That meeting was organized by Malek, my research assistant who was also a camp inhabitant. He helped me reach camp inhabitants and facilitated my interviews with them. Younes and Nassim were old friends and were around the same age, having grown up together and having shared many experiences as children and as grownups. In the guest room, I sat opposite of the three men, including Malek who was there to help mediate, on three sofas aligned around a small wooden table, with the noisy fan hovering over our heads.

I examined the room carefully, particularly aware of the fact that I was now inside the unit, in the three-dimensional space, beyond the wall that had, up until then, been a two-dimensional facade separating the inside from the outside.

I felt slightly uncomfortable, feeling that I was intruding. Researching the camp while I was outside felt easier, more relaxed, because I was in the public space, the space that was accessed by everyone. Here, I was taking up space in people's homes and in their lives. Being inside the unit was a lot more personal, seeing inhabitants' furniture, the pictures on their walls, hearing their conversations from the other rooms, smelling hints of their meals, seeing what color they chose to paint their guest rooms, what style of sofa they selected, tasting their coffee and food.

The owner of this unit was Younes, a second generation Palestinian refugee uprooted from Al-Safiriyya, a village located 11 kilometers southeast of Yafa, ethnically cleansed during Al Nakba.

Younes was quite the storyteller and had a strong personality that dominated the conversation, occasionally cracking jokes and skillfully diverting the conversation from the topics he did not feel like discussing. We started the conversation with him explaining to me how the specificity of the building typology in Al Wehdat Camp reflected on its social and spatial fabric and growth over time. Younes was an architectural draftsman and wanted to show off his knowledge of architecture and space, after learning I was an architect. According to Younes, in the Palestinian refugee camps that have started with tents, family members and refugees arriving from the same villages clustered around each other, moving their tents closer together, to stay connected and to enhance their safety and increase their protection against any theft or danger. That behavior was very territorial, gradually forming the layout of many Palestinian camps in time, as the tents transformed into concrete shelters, resulting in the Palestinian refugees from the same family or village of origin settling in the same neighborhood. This practice transferred an aspect of the socio-spatial organization from the villages in Palestine to the Palestinian refugee camps, with some of the neighborhoods given the name of the village of origin, or the name of the biggest family residing in that neighborhood. This socio-spatial practice was also discussed in the work of Palestinian scholar, Khaldun Bshara (2012), on space and memory in Palestinian refugee camps, and also in the work of Palestinian scholar, Hania Maraqa (2004), on the social use of space in Palestinian refugee camps.

In Al Wehdat Camp, the setup was different because the units were built in place, with the arriving families being assigned shelters as they arrived without consideration of their village of origin or being given the choice where to settle. Younes arrived at Al Wehdat Camp on the first of October of 1955 as a young, two-year-old boy.

efore settling in Al Wehdat Camp, Younes had lived with his family in Al Jofeh Camp where he was born in 1953, which was a makeshift Palestinian refugee camp in Amman, where refugees had settled for a number of years after Al Nakba. Having lived in Al Jofeh Camp in a tent with his family, Younes explained to me how in Al Jofeh, the refugee families have followed the pattern of clustering their tents according to village of origin, reflecting the same socio-spatial organization of other camps that have started with tents.

Because their tents were clustered together, the families in Al Jofeh Camp were given sequential numbers by UNRWA during their registration. Al Jofeh Camp was soon dismantled, just like Wadi Al Seer Camp which was introduced in **Chapter 4**, with the Palestinian refugees moved to one of two camps: Jabal Al Hussein Camp that was established in 1952 or Al Wehdat Camp that was established in 1955.

In the newly-built camps, family members having sequential UNRWA registration numbers reflected on their placement in the units, being assigned neighboring shelters because their numbers proceeded one another. Because of that, families have also ended up living in close proximity to one another in Al Wehdat Camp through an indirect procedure that worked in the Palestinian refugees' favor, who preferred to live with their extended family members, just like they did in their Palestinian villages in Palestine before Al Nakba. Explaining the process to me, Younes explained that it was also what happened with his family, who ended up settling in a neighborhood in Al Wehdat Camp whose majority have arrived from the village of Al-Safiriyya, because they have previously clustered together in Al Jofeh Camp in tents. Remarkably, Younes had experienced the trajectory of moving from a tent to a residential unit, which was the typical experience of many refugees in camps, but for him, that experience was divided over two camps: Al Jofeh Camp and Al Wehdat Camp.

The story of Nassim, who I have introduced in **Chapter 4** was similar to the story of Younes. Arriving at Al Wehdat in 1957 from Wadi Al Seer Camp, Nassim's family settled in the southern part of Al Wehdat Camp in a unit that was erected as part of the second phase of building the camp, completed that year. He mentioned to me how in Al Wehdat Camp, his family was given a unit with an area of around 28 square-meters located on a plot of 96 square-meters, adjacent to another unit given to the family of his uncle. Adjacent units were designed to have entrances on opposite ends, giving each family more privacy, more space around their units for activities, and more room for future horizontal expansion.

Nassim also recalled how his family had hosted members of his extended family, who were displaced from Palestine during Al Naksa of 1967. In that sense, refugees became hosts to the new refugees. Because Nassim's family had two adjacent units, they were able to host their relatives inside their units when they arrived until they were able to figure out their living arrangements.

Returning to Younes's story, he soon started his own family after marrying his cousin Heba, who was born and raised in Jabal Al Hussein Camp. Heba joined us halfway through the conversation with a tray of tea, followed by dishes of fruits and Turkish coffee.

She had a friendly smile and was wearing a Palestinian thobe with traditional Palestinian Embroidery.

After getting married, Younes and Heba lived in the house of his brother in Jabal Al Quisemeh, an area close to Al Wehdat Camp. In 1978, when their first-born son was six-months-old, they moved back to Al Wehdat Camp and settled in Younes's family house. When people in Al Wehdat Camp learned that Heba came from Jabal Al Hussein Camp, they thought she was from Al Lidd City in Palestine, given how the majority of the refugees in that camp were uprooted from that city. Younes had to tell them that they were in fact cousins, both from Al-Safiriyya, but had ended up living in two different camps in Amman because of where each one's family had settled. After returning to Al Wehdat Camp, Younes settled with his new family in his childhood home that had become vacant at that point. This home comprised the original UNRWA unit in addition to two separate rooms that Younes's father had built on opposite ends of the plot: one room was used as a bathroom and the other as a bedroom for Younes's brothers to use when they visited from Kuwait, where they worked at the time.

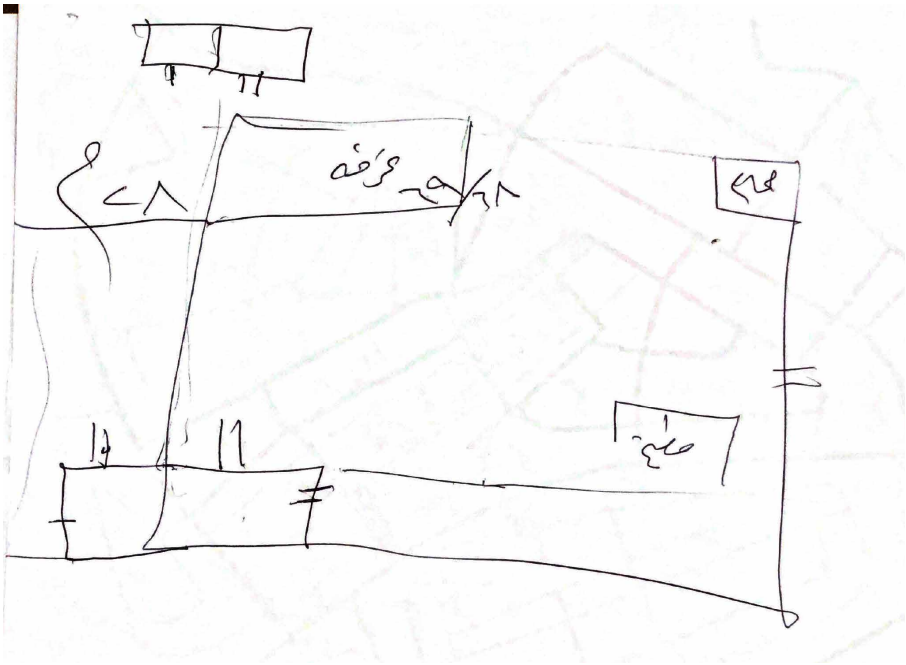


FIG. 6.14 Younes's sketch of his family unit's expansion. (Source: Younes, sketched in his home, 2021, Amman, Jordan).

TOC

In Figure 6.14, Younes sketched the architecture of his family's unit. In the years that followed, the residential unit started to grow with Younes's family as it reached 6 members, including him and his wife and their four children. More rooms were added, older rooms rebuilt, and the horizontal expansion covered the entire plot with its 96 square-meters. After the change of building regulations in 1997, Younes decided to build an extra floor above the ground floor to add two identical apartments for his two sons to get married in. He also built an interior staircase that connected both floors. His daughters, on the other hand, moved out of their unit after getting married, settling with their husbands' families both in and outside of Al Wehdat Camp. It was typical in Al Wehdat Camp, according to Younes, for sons to stay living with their parents or build apartments over their units after getting married, while daughters moved to stay with their husband's families. Officially, the residential unit was still registered under the name of Younes's late father.

In Figure 6.15, I sketched the interior of the unit of Younes and Heba, after Heba took me on a quick tour of their home and showed me the different rooms.

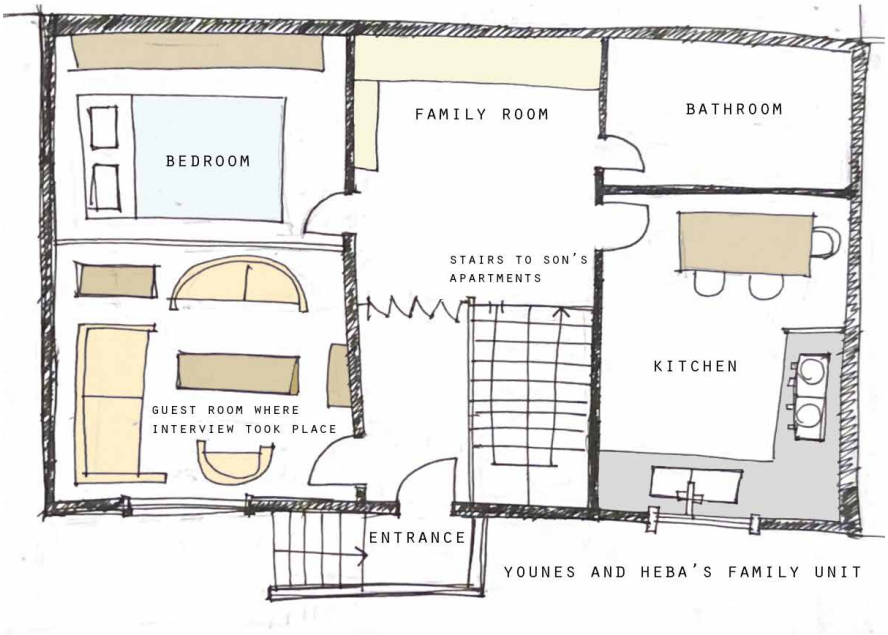


FIG. 6.15 A sketch I produced of the interior of Younes and Heba's family unit.

TOC

Malek took me to Younes's unit to discuss Black September because he and Nassim have lived through them as young men. According to Malek, it was important to have that conversation in private, behind closed doors, somewhere where the walls could keep us safe from the eyes and the ears of the State that would be watching and listening.

In that sense, walls are also considered separators between safe and unsafe zones, but not in terms of harassment as discussed previously, but in terms of freedom of expression, between spaces where inhabitants could say and talk about things freely, mainly politics, and spaces where State surveillance and control worked on limiting expression.

So what can you tell me about Black September?" I asked, leaving the question to float in the room.
"What do you want to know?" Asked Younes carefully.
After reassuring me of his respect for the Jordanian government and his position as a good and law abiding citizen, Younes began talking about the events of that period.

According to Younes, after 1967, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) members arrived from the West Bank, along with a second wave of Palestinian Refugees, taking base in the Palestinian refugees camps, including Al Wehdat Camp. With time, the camp became a base for the Fedayeen, guerrilla fighters of the PLO, as they took part in several programs that included military training, planning and mobilizing to get more members to join them as part of their armed preparation to return to Palestine and fight in their home-land for their country's liberation. The Fedayeen had their own radio channel, their own newspaper, and even their own army that patrolled the streets of Amman and retained a certain level of control over the areas surrounding the camp, mainly the area of the downtown.

In the area north of the camp, in the woods that used to surround Al Ashrafieh Hospital, or Al Bashir Hospital, were the youth training camps. There was also a camp for females recruits, called Muaskar Al Zahrat, translating to The Camp of The Flowers, and another for male recruits, called Muaskar Al Ashabal, translating to, The Camp of The Cubs.

In time, the Jordanian government started to feel that it was losing control over the areas that were controlled by the Fedayeen, especially after they announced their independence from the Jordanian State, announcing Al Wehdat Camp as the Jumhuriya or, Republic.

To regain their control, the Jordanian Army invaded the camp with tanks, starting a series of armed clashes with Al Fedayeen that lasted for 9 days before Al Fedayeen evacuated the camp and escaped to the north of Jordan, hiding in the caves of a city called Jerash, with those who have survived later fleeing to Syria through the northern border.

During the clashes, the Jordanian army attacked the camp with cannons, mostly the southern parts of the camp around what is known as Rashad alley, launching cannons from Jabal Al Quiesmeh, and destroying huge parts of the camp, leveling many units to the ground. During those attacks, some inhabitants sought refuge in an underground bunker in the UNRWA complex. That bunker was also a spot where people sought first aid and treatment when injured.

In the UNRWA archive, I was able to find several photos that documented the size of the destruction of Black September, shown in Figure 6.16 and Figure 6.17. In the photos, I understood the role architecture plays in not only reflecting people's spatial practices and their patterns of activity that together produce their everyday spaces, but also the role architecture, through its destruction, plays in documenting the physical effects of wars and conflicts, and in this case, the intensity of the fighting that took place in the 9 days of September in 1970.

In Figure 6.16, an overview of the camp shows the size of destruction, with the units turned to rubble and ruins that were no longer inhabitable.

The camp looked quite different when the units only had single floors, with the low density of the urban fabric making it almost unrecognizable when compared to the setting of the camp today.

In Figure 6.17, a family rushes to collect their personal belongings from between the rubble, with their unit destroyed completely except for a wall that remained standing amidst the ruins. The symbolism behind that picture is strong, as is the contrast between the destruction and the mundanity of the everyday elements the family was rushing to save; pieces of clothes, kitchenware, a carpet, a bucket. Behind the wall, after I looked closely, I spotted an elderly woman sitting on some rubble. The way she was sitting reminded of Ahmad Al- Lidawi sitting in front of his unit.

That was a position many elderly inhabitants assumed in the camp, with little left for them to rush to save, and a lot to sit and think about, and this elderly woman was no exception.



FIG. 6.16 An overview of Al Wehdat Camp showing the size of the destruction after the end of clashes in 1970. (Source: UNRWA Digital Archive).



FIG. 6.17 A wall as the only surviving element from a residential unit in the camp. (Source: UNRWA Digital Archive).

TOC

How much destruction can one person endure?

Around them, the entire block appears to have been destroyed, with entire units leveled to the ground, turned into rubble. According to Younes and Nassim, after the fighting concluded, rebuilding the destroyed units took some time and depended on each family's financial ability.

During that time, as education resumed in the UNRWA schools, some classes resumed inside tents that were erected in the school yards, after the destruction of some parts of the school buildings.

As we sat there, the conversation grew heavier, as they also explained to me how crucial it was for the Jordanian State to quickly bury the dead bodies of those who had fallen during combat mostly from Al Fedayeen. This was done with a huge mass grave dug north of the camp next to Al Bashir Hospital; in the area where the old emergency room was located, where they have now built the new library. Its length exceeded 100 meters.

Remarkably, the open square opposite Al Nadi's old entrance, where kiosks and vendors today cluster, used to be known as Martyrs' Square, because a number of fallen Fedayeen had been buried there, with a Palestinian flag put up over their graves to commemorate their memory as fighters for Palestine. That act proved to be too provocative to the Jordanian State, because they later entered the camp and dug up those graves and moved the bodies to another location. The camp inhabitants were told that they were not allowed to bury dead bodies in the middle of a highly compact residential area like the camp. In the years that followed, calling it the Martyrs' Square soon stopped, because it became part of the past or because it referred to an event that was too political; a moment of direct clashes between the Palestinian refugees and the State.

Through that conversation and after examining these photos, I began to understand how fragile the architecture of the camp was, not in its structure but in its symbolism and politics. The architecture of the camp was not built to last. When building their units, the Palestinian refugees were building spaces to meet their needs and provide shelter for their families. They were not building them hoping they would last, but were building them in the hopes to soon leave them; leave them to return to Palestine or to move elsewhere, somewhere where the living conditions were better. For three generations, every generation was building another floor hoping that they would be the last generation to live in the camp, that the next one would live somewhere better.

On the other hand, the politics of the camp, as demonstrated by the events of Black September, rendered the camp as a space vulnerable to destruction. It was possible to dismantle structures of resistance and political activity that were launched from the camp to the surrounding areas, once that activity became too transgressive and violent to others, mainly those who were striving to stay in control.
At the same time, through my conversation with Heba, I also realized that these sentiments do not contradict a sense of attachment to the camp, built around the memories the inhabitants had there.

After the passing of his father, Younes and his siblings inherited the unit, but being the one who was residing in it with his family for a long time, while his siblings resided either abroad in the Gulf or in other parts of Amman, he decided to buy it from his siblings, and unofficially register it under his name. Nassim, on the other hand, moved out of his family's unit in Al Wehdat Camp to give a chance to others and leave room for other members of his family to live in and use the unit. After moving out of the camp, Nassim moved between a number of locations before settling with his wife and family in a rented unit in Prince Hassan Refugee Camp or what is unofficially known as Al Naser Camp, not very far from Al Wehdat Camp. Nassim continued to visit Al Wehdat Camp after moving out, to visit his friends and family and connect with the place and the people he grew up with. Younes and Heba, on the other hand, told me that they do not want to move elsewhere, having formed a strong attachment to both their Wehda and to Al Wehdat Camp as a whole.

Having lived in the same unit for more than three decades, now as four generations residing in the same unit, with Younes's parents being the first generation, Younes and Heba being the second, their sons and daughters being the third, and their grandchildren being the fourth, the idea of moving out was not an option, unless it was back to Palestine.

When I asked her the question, Heba frowned and said, "Why would I move? The idea alone scares me so much. I would love to return to our village in Palestine, but not anywhere else. I have so many memories in the camp. I came here as a young bride in the late 1970's and have lived in this house since. I had all my children, except one, in this place, and I am now enjoying living in it with my grandchildren. Whenever I leave the camp, I find myself eager to return to it, I find myself recognizing the smell of Al Wehdat Camp the closer we get to it."

Amused, I asked her to describe the smell. She said it was not something you can describe, but one she could recognize, signaling her arrival back in Al Wehdat Camp, which to her, gave her a strong sense of relief and made her feel at home.

That was an interesting statement, how to Heba, a certain smell, even if metaphorical, was what drew the boundary of the camp and what demarcated its territory.After completing the interview, I drove Nassim back with my car to his house in Al Naser Camp. We spent the car ride discussing the history of the camp, and the major events that have shaped its transformation.

It felt like we were stretching the camp along with us, beyond its border, with the movement of the car and the stories Nassim was sharing. I wondered whether Nassim had really moved out of the camp, or whether he had taken the camp with him to his other house in the other camp, moving along a path of displacement that will always connect his life story to Al Wehdat Camp, and to Palestine, and more particularly, to Saqiya, from which his family was uprooted. In so many ways, I got the sense that Nassim and Younes both embodied Al Wehdat Camp, with their vast knowledge of its history and places, and all the events they have experienced around its streets, slopes, and alleys, through generations, and across several decades.

How well does one need to know a place, before one becomes it?

6.3.2 Nawaf: In pursuit of a home.

The story of Nawaf is one I occasionally find myself returning to, for the strong impact his story left on me. On the day I met Nawaf, I made it a point to walk in the southern part of the camp, the one that had been built as part of phase two of establishing Al Wehdat Camp.

Given the irregular shape of the land plot and the sharp edges of its boundaries, the layout of the southern part was more compact, with narrower alleyways and very dense rows of residential units. In the southern part, the area was mostly residential, with the exception of a small number of shops located at its edges. The character of the area, shown in Figure 6.18, was different from the northern part, where the streets were wider, busier, and more colorful, bustling with shoppers, kiosks and commercial activity. The long distance from the police station and the institutional buildings rendered the area as less surveilled, which, according to a number of camp inhabitants, turned it into an unsafe neighborhood filled with drug dealers and prostitutes



FIG. 6.18 A narrow alley in the southern part of Al Wehdat camp.

I stopped to take a photo of the map of Palestine, drawn on the exterior of an old unit, shown in Figure 6.19. That pause, that interruption, is what caused my path to intersect with Nawaf and for that spatio-temporal intersection to happen.

I recognized the unit as an original UNRWA unit, with its rectangular proportions, its small square windows, the low roof, the rough unfinished concrete of the façade, the deteriorating physical condition, sealed shut with chains to prevent trespassers. A large number of these units have been demolished in time, replaced with new residential units like the ones I have previously discussed in this chapter. Spotting me taking photos, a young man approached me and asked whether I wanted to enter the unit, to take more pictures from the inside.

Prior to that, I had never stepped inside an original unit before. I nodded, with hesitation. I wasn't sure whether stepping into an abandoned and isolated unit with a young man was safe.
Yes, of course, would that be possible?" I asked, "Sure, please wait here."
He responded.



FIG. 6.19 The map of Palestine drawn on the facade of an original UNRWA Unit.

Would it be safe? I stood there weighing the options as the young man returned with an older man. That gave me a little reassurance. Using a key to unlock the chain, Nawaf introduced himself and welcomed me inside. He nodded for his son to leave. "This unit belongs to my cousin, he wants to sell it. We are waiting for a buyer. You can of course take photos in the meantime."

Once inside, as we stood in the old unit I noticed that the roof had collapsed, opening the unit up to the sky and the passing of time, shown in Figure 6.20. There, Nawaf began sharing his life story.

The details, twists and turns of that story managed to turn what I had perceived as a typical, middle-aged man from the camp into one remarkable character that I knew I would remember for a long time. Nawaf's life story was one of continuous movement, as he was constantly in pursuit of people, places, and ideas. He moved between Al Wehdat Camp, Syria, Palestine before returning to Al Wehdat Camp again, completing a full circle.



FIG. 6.20 The inside of the original UNRWA unit where Nawaf and I had our conversation.

Born in Al Wehdat Camp in 1964, Nawaf joined the PLO as a young man, and fought in the front lines for Palestinian's liberation for years before being prisoned in Israeli prisons for a long time. Released as part of a prisoner exchange deal, Nawaf left Palestine and moved back to Al Wehdat Camp, where he now runs a small vegetable shop with the help of his son, located a few meters away from the unit we were in. Nawaf began his story by explaining how as a young boy, he was hiding with his mother in an underground bunker in Al Wehdat Camp, during the armed clashes of 1970. He woke up one day to find that his mother was not there, so he started looking for her around the bunker but could not find her. He thought that she might have returned to their house to get food, so he decided to follow a woman who was leaving the bunker, to go looking for his mother.

He climbed up the ladder that connected the bunker with the outside world, and walked a few meters in the street before coming to a full stop:
"I suddenly stopped when a man was shot in front of me. A sniper had shot him. That Jordanian sniper was in Jabal Al Quiesmeh, shooting at anyone he spotted walking outside. I remember that moment very well, how the man's blood splattered on my face.

Can you imagine what that would feel like for a young boy, to see a man shot in front of you? Seconds later, I fell to the ground. I was also shot in my foot by that sniper."

Nawaf's pursuit of his mother soon became a pursuit of an idea; he joined the resistance and devoted his life to fighting for the liberation of his homeland.

"In the years that followed, I joined the PLO to join the fight for liberation. I fought in a number of sites and was stationed in different locations. In Syria, in Palestine, in the West Bank, in Gaza."
"Where are you from, my daughter?"
"From Biddu, a village Northwest of Al Quds."
"I know Biddu, I was stationed around that area for a while."

Once in Palestine, Nawaf was keen on returning to Gaza, his place of origin, to reconnect with the place his family had been displaced from during Al Nakba.

"I was based in Gaza for a period of time while serving with the PLO. I thought that being back in my city would make me feel at home, after all those years of living as a refugee elsewhere. But contrary to what I had believed was going to happen, in Gaza, I felt like an outsider. They used to refer to me as the Jordanian because they knew I was born in Jordan, not in Gaza. I didn't feel comfortable at all. I was reminded again and again that I was different because my experiences were different from those of the people there. It was not how I expected it to be at all, this return to Gaza, to Palestine."

Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat Camp constantly spoke about their right to return to their home-land and how they imagined that return to be. Nawaf was one of the Palestinian refugees who had actually got to experience returning to Palestine in his lifetime, only to realize that it was different from what he had imagined, with the current inhabitants of Gaza excluding him from their territory, viewing him as an other, someone different, having been born and raised elsewhere.

"How did it feel for you to be on the frontlines of the armed resistance, to fight for Palestine, to be with the PLO in pursuit of your country's national liberation?" I asked, in awe of his bravery.
"You know what, don't believe what they tell you. All that was for nothing, all that I went through was for nothing."
"All of it was nothing?" I asked, repeating his words, in shock.
"Yes, yes, for nothing!" He repeated, his eyes filling up with tears. "It was for nothing,"

He pulled up his sleeve to reveal a swollen arm that appeared to have been injured during fighting.

“Look at my arm, what was all this for? It had been permanently damaged by the bullet. Did we really need to go that far, I lost a lot and for what?”There was so much disappointment and anger in his voice. I sensed that much of it was the frustration of not having found what he had set out to find during his continuous pursuits.

“I returned to Al Wehdat Camp after being prisoned for a long time in Israeli prisons. I was happy to return to this place, where I knew everyone and everyone knew me. I realized that Al Wehdat Camp was my home. I was also happy to be reunited with my mother. Mothers are everything, their love and kindness is like no other. May her soul rest in peace.” Nawaf’s eyes started to tear up again.

I was very blessed to have been around her, I was very lucky to have had the chance to take care of her, feed her, bathe her, and cater to her every need. I was married several times. One of my wives had once made a remark about my mother, asking me why I was taking care of her, whether I felt overwhelmed by that task, whether it was really my responsibility. I didn’t accept that kind of tone nor did I think that she had the right to interfere. I didn’t tolerate anything said about my mother, so what if I bathed her and changed her clothes? That’s a blessing, to be able to pay her back for all the hard work she had put into raising my siblings and me. My wife got a divorce soon after. There is no one like a mother, take good care of your mother my daughter, always be there for her, never leave her alone, mothers are Allah’s blessings on earth.”

Looking back on Nawaf’s story, I could say that it started that day in the bunker, as he went out looking for his mother in 1970, only to start a much longer and complex journey during which he was in pursuit of different places, ideas and people, all presenting different faces of the same notion, him being in pursuit of a feeling of belonging.

In the end, he completed a full circle by returning to the camp, to Al Wehdat Camp, to his mother, whom he later dedicated his life to, realizing that she and the camp offered him the comfort, the sense of safety, and the familiarity he was seeking all along.

After our conversation, we left the house and walked outside to the street where I noticed how people were eyeing us closely, wondering what the two of us could possibly be talking about.

“Let me show you something.” Nawaf said before he walked for a few meters and stopped in front of an electricity pole. “You know the events of Black September? The shooting and the snipers? Look at this pole. Look at the holes caused by all the bullets.”

I was shocked. The pole was perforated with a collection of bullet holes, puncturing the metal at different angles with chaotic rhythms. Had Nawaf not pointed out bullet holes for me, I don’t think that I would have noticed them, shown in Figure 6.21.“The exterior walls of some residential units were also damaged, but there are hardly any traces of that now because many of the units were renovated if not rebuilt. It has been more than forty years, but the poles? These weren’t changed. Check for yourself, many of the other poles in the camp look like this.” Said Nawaf. There was something so profound about that moment, about that particular act of seeing. I have read and heard so many things about the events of Black September, but it was only then that I have seen physical traces of those events and the marks they left. I felt myself standing at such close proximity to the camp that was back then, to the events that have destroyed so many houses in the camp and resulted in the death of many PLO members and camp inhabitants.



FIG. 6.21 Electricity pole with bullet holes fired during the events of Black September in 1970.

There was also something very symbolic about this man showing me the bullet holes on this pole, after having just shown me the bullet bruises that had grazed his body. Both bodies, that of Nawaf and the pole, had physical traces of the events of that period, both inside and outside the camp, all connected to Palestine.

Was it really for nothing?

That was a perspective that I have never heard before nor do I think that many people were brave enough to say out loud. After my intersection with Nawaf, I felt extremely unsettled. This was a very different way of looking at things, it bothered me to hear these things being spoken by a fighter who I would have otherwise believed would have been proud and very convinced of the sacrifices he had made for Palestine.

I was learning something new and this knowledge shook some of the convictions I thought were anchored and set. In the case of Nawaf, his body was literally a vehicle of memory, with his flesh holding actual physical traces of the events he had survived. For those reasons, I found myself recalling this story often in my head, viewing it as one that reflected the heterogeneity of the camp inhabitants and how they positioned themselves in relation to the home-camp and the home-land. The majority of these inhabitants see the camp as a temporary point along a much longer path of displacement that started in Palestine during Al Nakba and hopefully, for them, would one day allow them to return to their places of origin. A smaller group of camp inhabitants, such as Nawaf, saw the camp as the end point of the path, having gotten the chance to return to Palestine, and having decided to still return to Al Wehdat Camp after.

That being said, it is important to note that when Nawaf returned to Gaza, Palestine was still colonized, like it is today, which did reflect on his experience there. For many Palestinian refugees, the imagined return is a return to a liberated Palestine, one that is free from the settler colonial State of Israel and all the social, economic, political, and spatial manifestations that colonial rule has on their land and the everyday life that they will be having in Palestine when that happens. For that, it is not only a return to a physical place, but rather to a life where their home-land is liberated and they can freely live in it as they like, without restrictions and limitations on their movement or their everyday experiences.

6.3.3 Hisham and Al Nawar – The Palestinian Gypsies

In the camp, a lot of the bad activities were blamed on Al Nawar. Al Nawar was a term that was used by the camp inhabitants to refer to a social group with a distinguished lifestyle similar to that to the gypsies, moving from one place to another, known for their love of dance and festive activities. Al Nawar was also sometimes used in a derogatory sense, associated with chaotic, messy and undisciplined behavior.

During many of the interviews I had with the Palestinian refugees in the camp, I was continually warned about Al Nawar, described as the ones responsible for all the illicit activities happening in the camp and the reason Al Wehdat Camp had started to gain a bad reputation in the city. I was even warned about walking in their neighborhoods, talking to them, or meeting any members of their community, because that would give the impression that I was taking part in their activities. In one interview, a woman from the camp told me to avoid Al Fann Street or The Street of Arts, located in the southern part of the camp, which was known for its artistic activities.

“What kind of arts?” I asked her, “You know, dancing…and other things.”

The whole practice of stigmatizing Al Nawar was centered around stigmatizing the activity of their women, who were harshly judged for working as dancers in some clubs, or sometimes as prostitutes in some brothels inside and outside the camp. Unsure whether to, or to what extent to believe what was said about that community, I decided to sit down with some of their members to get a better understanding of who they are and what they do for a living. Given how they were a group that also inhabited the camp, I decided that it was crucial to interview them to be able to understand the heterogeneity of the camp inhabitants and know more about that group of people who allegedly ran these businesses and played a role in the social transformation of the camp, as expressed by a number of the camp inhabitants.

Through my research facilitator Malek, I tried to schedule a meeting . He told me that it was a bit challenging to schedule that meeting because many members of that community felt wary of talking to strangers. I asked him to assure them that it was for research purposes only and that their personal information was to be kept confidential. After a week of failed attempts, Malek called me saying that he had finally managed to set up meetings with a family in the camp.

I had previously thought that Al Nawar clustered together in certain neighborhoods in the camp, but realized on that day that they were dispersed in different locations all around the camp, sometimes clustering together in some neighborhoods, but not always. We got to the address and found an elderly woman sitting on a wheelchair outside the house. We asked her whether it was the right address, she nodded and told us to go inside, through the main door that was left open.

In that house, I got to learn a few things about that community which I had heard so many things about. I knew that they would have not felt safe to share their information had we not had that conversation inside, behind those walls which kept them safe from judgment and criticism, and also protected them from the surveillance of the State which criminalized their activities and behavior.

Furthermore, the fact that I had approached them through Malek, who knew people who knew some of the family members, was something that helped me form a level of trust with the family.

Once we entered the house, we found six people sitting on the floor, in the middle of what appeared to be a family meeting. They were sitting cross-legged on the floor, with no furniture, deep in conversation. When they saw us, they stopped talking and looked up. Malek introduced me as the doctoral researcher that was there to conduct academic research, but had nothing to do with the government nor was there to judge them or accuse them of anything. A middle-aged man looked at me and asked what I wanted to know. To the family, I explained that I had heard so many things about their community, but wanted to learn about their lifestyle and activities from them first hand. That seemed to please the man, who asked me to sit down and served me tea, after introducing himself as Hisham. The rest of the family sat around me, examining me closely.

Hisham, who introduced himself as the patriarch of the family, proceeded to talk about his family. He began by proudly telling me that they were originally from the Arabian Peninsula, from Al Murrah tribe, who led a nomadic lifestyle and traveled around the region, later settling in different Arab countries across the Arab world. Their part of the tribe moved to Gaza in Palestine, long before Al Nakba, and settled there for decades. They were known for their love for music and dance. The women in particular used to perform in weddings all over Palestine, especially in the coastal cities known as Al Janaki, a term that referred to the women's job as dancers.

After Al Naksa of 1967, Al Nawar were displaced from Gaza, like many other Palestinians that were experiencing displacement for the first or the second time. The family that I was interviewing was among those who settled in Al Wehdat Camp. They were given UNRWA identification cards and were legally considered as Palestinian refugees, but not as Jordanian citizens.

“Officially, we were treated in Jordan like all the Palestinian Falaheen (peasants) from Gaza that became refugees after Al Naksa of 1967. We are Palestinians, but we also still identify as Al Nawar, because we are proud of our heritage. We take pride in the fact that we come from the Arabian Peninsula, we speak the proper Arabic, unlike Al Falaheen who come from Palestine, who do not originate from the Arabian Peninsula like we do.”

When I asked Hisham about the negative image that their community is associated with, he refused these allegations and told me that it was another group of Nawar that engaged in those activities, not the group that his family belonged to.

“We don’t have the Jordanian citizenship, which means that we cannot work in governmental jobs. This makes things harder for us. Palestinians from Gaza struggle a lot in Jordan, so do we. We also cannot own land or property, unlike Al Falaheen who were given the Jordanian citizenship and have better access to jobs and the ability to own and sell property.”

It was interesting to observe how Hisham shifted in position during the conversation, identifying as a Palestinian refugee from Gaza when the conversation focused on Palestinian refugees in general, but then insisted that he belonged to Al Nawar community, when the conversation focused on the differences between the different Palestinian refugee communities, adamantly distinguishing between Al Nawar and Al Falaheen.

Malek used the second half of the conversation to assure the family that there was nothing wrong in any sort of activity the family might be engaged in and that they can feel safe around me because I was only there for research. Gradually, the ladies in the group started to admit that they used to work as belly dancers in a number of nightclubs in Amman. The tradition began with their grandmothers who used to perform in weddings around Amman as Al Janaki, carrying that practice with them from Palestine to Jordan, but as that tradition gradually diminished from weddings in Amman, the women shifted their focus to dancing in nightclubs.

When I asked one of the ladies, Lubna, what had motivated her to start dancing, she proudly told me that she felt jealous of all the other girls who were dancing and wanted to do that herself. She started dancing when she was 14 and continued to dance for 20 years, until six years ago, when she decided to stop dancing and got married. She enthusiastically told me that after her marriage, she gained the Jordanian citizenship from her husband, which helped her gain better civil rights and gave her better stability. Lubna then told me that she now leads a more conservative and religious lifestyle, having started praying, worn the hijab, and changed her lifestyle completely after having started a family and had children.

After sharing her story, Lubna looked at Malek and asked him, "You want to convince me that you have never been to a nightclub before?" He nodded and said, "Yes I have, of course."
"So you know the drill, why don't you explain it to her? Why bring her to me to explain?"
Taken aback by her fierceness and comment, I said, "Because I want to hear about it from you directly, not from someone else."

My comment seemed to satisfy her, because she decided to then explain to me the nature of her former line of work. In the camp, an elderly lady usually acted as the manager of the younger girls, coordinating their dancing jobs and distributing them between the nightclubs in Amman. That manager also managed their pay, spoke to the nightclub owners and ran the different operations.

When she was still a dancer, she felt proud of what she did and did not feel ashamed. The men in Lubna's family did not mind her dancing and accepted that as part of Al Nawar culture.
"It is part of our culture, we dance. The women are usually the ones providing for the family, our men struggle to find jobs given the fact that they do not have the Jordanian citizenship, but that is not a problem for the women. My dad did not have an issue with me dancing, but had an issue with me getting an ear piercing for example. It is a question of what is accepted and what is not for every family."

What Lubna said reminded me of an earlier remark I heard from another camp inhabitant, who said that during the late hours of the night, the girls who worked in dancing (or prostitution) would line up along Madaba Street to hail cabs to get to their places of work. They gathered at Madaba Street because the likelihood of finding taxis there was higher.
Along that same street, groups of men would line up in the early hours of the day to sign in at the police station, required to do so as part of their house arrest that obliged them to check in with the station every morning.

The temporal division of the street in relation to gender was quite remarkable, because in a conservative society like that of Amman, and that of Al Wehdat Camp, it was usually the other way around, with the men being out more often at night and the women finding safety in the hours of the day. Through these two examples, what was happening was the opposite, but that was also because the men lined up as part of a disciplinarian process conducted by the police station, while the women lined up to get to their jobs in nightclubs and other places, which were part of the underground nightlife of Amman.

After completing the interview with the family, as Malek and I were leaving the house of the family, Hisham stopped us at the door and said, "I just got a phone call from the DPA office, they were asking whether you were at our house. Someone told them you are here. I told them that you were not. I thought about letting you know so you can be careful."

To double check, Hisham looked outside and said, "The guy from the office is waiting for you at the entrance of the street from the right. You should leave from the opposite direction."

I was not sure what was happening but decided to let Malek take the lead, because he knew the camp setting and the DPA much better than I did. We exited the unit and started walking in the direction that the man had advised us to take, but after walking for a few meters, Malek started hurrying up before he soon started running, yelling to me to hurry up.

When I asked him what was happening, he told me that there was a governmental official looking for us, and that we had to leave the camp immediately.
We hurried down the camp's alleys until we made it to Sumaya Street. There, Malek received a call from a DPA employee, asking him where we were, because the office received a call warning of a person chasing us, and that he was calling to check whether we were okay. Malek assured him that we had left the camp already and that there was no need to worry. Despite the fact that I had the official permits to conduct the work, there we were being chased for reasons that were beyond my comprehension.

Later that week Malek called me and told me that given how we were in the camp on the 25th of May, on Jordan's Independence Day, there were increased levels of security and surveillance on the ground, especially because we were talking to Palestinians from Gaza in the camp. I cannot say that I fully understood what had happened, and why talking to Palestinians from Gaza in the camp was considered a risky thing, but I was glad that I at least had completed the interview.

After that incident, I was reminded of how many eyes were on the streets of the camp, and how crucial the walls were in concealing inhabitants' lives and activities, no matter how mundane and simple, and constructing a space where they can have some privacy and practice free expression, given how outside those walls, out of the streets in public, there were none.

6.3.4 Um Hasan and Sameera: Moving outside the camp and taking the camp with her.

In both homes of Um Hasan, I felt that I was in a museum, because of all the exhibits and items put on display. Time appeared to stop in that place, with the many items that lined every surface and spread across every wall. Just like the way Sameera had decorated her small garden, with so many items and arrangements, shown in the opening of this chapter, the rest of the house was heavily decorated, causing me to get lost inside, between all that was there.

What was remarkable about stepping into the family's new home in Al Quisemeh, was realizing that the same setup had traveled with the family to the new place, retaining the same level of intensity and detail. Sameera had proudly told me that most of the artworks and decorations were her creations, being an arts teacher at the UNRWA school in Jabal Al Naser Camp, in an area not very far from Al Wehdat Camp.

The majority of the exhibits commemorated Palestine, celebrating different elements of the culture such as the map, the flag, Dome of the Rock, Al Aqsa Mosque, Hanthala, among other symbols. In Figure 6.22, a huge drawing was put on display, depicting the Palestinian refugees' return to Palestine after Liberation, as they line up, on their path back to the home-land. That artwork, framed by other elements like the Keffiyeh, the Palestinian flag, the map of Palestine, was powerful because it appeared as an inverse of Al Nakba, with flows of displaced people walking back to their villages and home-towns.

In that sense, the walls of Um Hasan's and Sameera's house helped them construct a safe space where they can express their vital connection with the home-land, away from the eye of the State that did not always open up the space for expression. If the erasure of the graffiti revealed something, it is that political forms of expression were not always welcomed or allowed in the camp. As such, the wall becomes a physical element that draws a line between the inside and the outside, between the public and the private, between a space that only allows expressing notions of Jordanian identity, to a space that also expresses and celebrates notions of Palestinian identity.

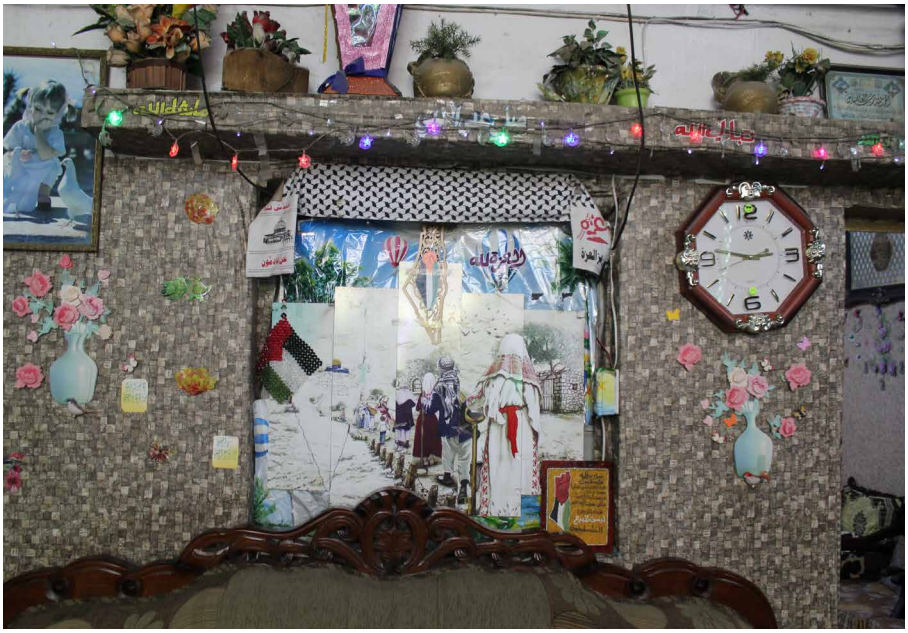


FIG. 6.22 One of the walls inside the home commemorating Palestine, taken in Um Hasan's old house in 2019.



FIG. 6.23 A poster showing the wall of Al Quds and Dome of the Rock, taken in Um Hasan's old house in 2019.

TOC

On the walls, I also noticed how Sameera had pinned up pictures of her family, which included her father, Abu Hasan, and several other family members who had fallen while fighting for Palestine. Their pictures, strongly present in many rooms, were hanging between several artworks that celebrated Palestine, in a notion that mixed the personal with the national, the social with the political, the family with the home-land. That practice was quite common in the camp, such as the wall that Hussein Al Asmar had drawn on to commemorate Um Fakhri, depicting different elements of Palestinian culture, discussed in **Chapter 5**.

The repetition of the symbols in Um Hasan's old house reproduced the space of that unit as a Palestinian space, heavily loaded with layers of history, memories, and politics, that came as a reflection of Al Wehdat Camp itself and its vital connection with Palestine, years after Al Nakba. Outside, the expression of Palestinian identity was contested in the camp in a manner that I argue has led a number of the camp inhabitants inwards, to their homes, where they chose to materially express their sense of belonging to Palestine behind safe walls, through an extensive repetition of elements of the material culture of Palestine. That practice was not specific to Um Hasan and Sameera only, but was something I noticed in several houses I visited in the camp.

More generally, in every Palestinian house, there was either a map of Palestine, a flag, or an item with Palestinian embroidery. I still remember the huge map of Palestine we had hanging in our house when we were kids, and all the other maps that have been pinned up in all the homes I inhabited since. The loss of one's home was the root of displacement, the loss of the home-land and the loss of one's community and sense of safety. For those reasons, when studying the homes of Palestinian refugees in the camp, one can begin to understand the different ways they attempted to reconcile with that loss, in exile. This is not to say that reconciliation is ever complete, but the practices that I saw in that house in the camp were an example of some of the attempts of Sameera to reclaim what was taken from her. Further yet, it was an attempt to keep building bridges and connections beyond the political borders that have been preventing her from returning to Palestine, despite her longing and eagerness to do so, which were all things she repeatedly said in both the interviews I had with her.

The space that was built inside Um Hasan's house in Al Wehdat Camp, with all the notions and connections it embodied, was transferred to the space of the new house, which I noticed had the same artworks and memorabilia.

In that sense, both women had transferred Al Wehdat Camp with them, stretching its boundary beyond its formal one, across the valley, to Al Quisemeh, after Um Hasan had transferred the space of her village, Beit 'Affa, with her to Jordan, stretching Palestine beyond its colonial border across the Jordan river, to Al Wehdat Camp



FIG. 6.24 Items celebrating Palestine lined up on a shelf, taken in Um Hasan's new house in 2021.

In that sense, I argue that the bodies of displaced Palestinian refugees, like that of Um Hasan, are vehicles of memory and producers of territory who, through their movement across land, transgress colonial borders and stretch the boundaries of their home-lands to their new places of settlement. Through the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, Um Hasan was able to transfer that home-land, the rooted knowledge about it, and a sense of belonging to it, to Sameera, who built a vital connection with Palestine from afar, from a distance. All this, decades after her mother's displacement, having constructed an imagined home-land for herself, and for her mother, in every house she had inhabited and every house she and her mother were generous enough to host me in.

At the end of our interview in the new house, I asked Um Hasan whether I could take her picture, knowing that I would want to remember her. She did not agree and told me she did not like taking pictures. “Take a picture instead of Abu Hasan, look at how handsome he looks in that suit.”

After taking the picture, I asked for her permission to publish it in my dissertation, and she agreed. It made sense to include it, given how present he was in every room, how present he was in his family’s life, long after he had gone, and how present he was in my conversations with both his wife, and daughter.



FIG. 6.25 The photo of the late Abu Hasan, hanging in his family’s living room, taken in Um Hasan’s new home, in 2021.

How can one photo inhabit an entire home?

To conclude this chapter, having discussed the morphological transformations of the residential units in Al Wehdat Camp as a result of the change in the camp inhabitants' needs, family growth, and the change in building regulations, I aimed to emphasize the multiplicity of the condition of the camp and the multiplicity of the lived experiences of the camp inhabitants. This in turn manifested in the units and their architecture, characterizing the camp units with a shift towards material permanence that stood in contrast with a prevailing political temporariness, without each negating the other.

Erected as four floors of concrete, the residential units in Al Wehdat Camp still stand on a plot of land of 96 square-meters for each Wehda, and 0,48 square-kilometers for Al Wehdat Camp. It is still legally and politically considered a temporary space of refuge that was built in response to an ongoing Nakba, whose implications and consequences are ones Palestinians still live in today, predominantly, the fact that because of Al Nakba, Palestinians became refugees after losing their homeland.

The simultaneity of home and the different scales that home takes are two notions that I aimed to capture in this chapter, and also in this whole dissertation, discussing the different ways the camp inhabitants express a sense of belonging to the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home, without that coming as a contradiction or having one negate the other. By using this chapter to step inside of four different units and learn more about the life of four different families from the camp, I stepped closer to these family's interiors and learned about the different ways walls have demarcated spaces of safety and free expression. Further, I gained insight into the spaces that the inhabitants considered their homes, while away from their home-lands. Inside these walls, I was able to learn more about events such as Black September, an event that had greatly impacted Al Wehdat Camp. I also learned more about Al Nawar community and their lifestyle. I got to learn more about the return to Gaza and back, about those who found a home in the camp and felt like outsiders in the home-land. I found out about those who carried weapons, who fought for Palestine, about the diversity of the Palestinian culture beyond just one definition of who a Palestinian is. I entered spaces of fallen, original units who captured the passing of time. I entered spaces where four generations of Palestinian generations have lived; spaces filled with love and beautiful family bonds. I entered spaces that celebrated Palestine like no other, and saw more Palestinian flags and maps than I have seen anywhere else.

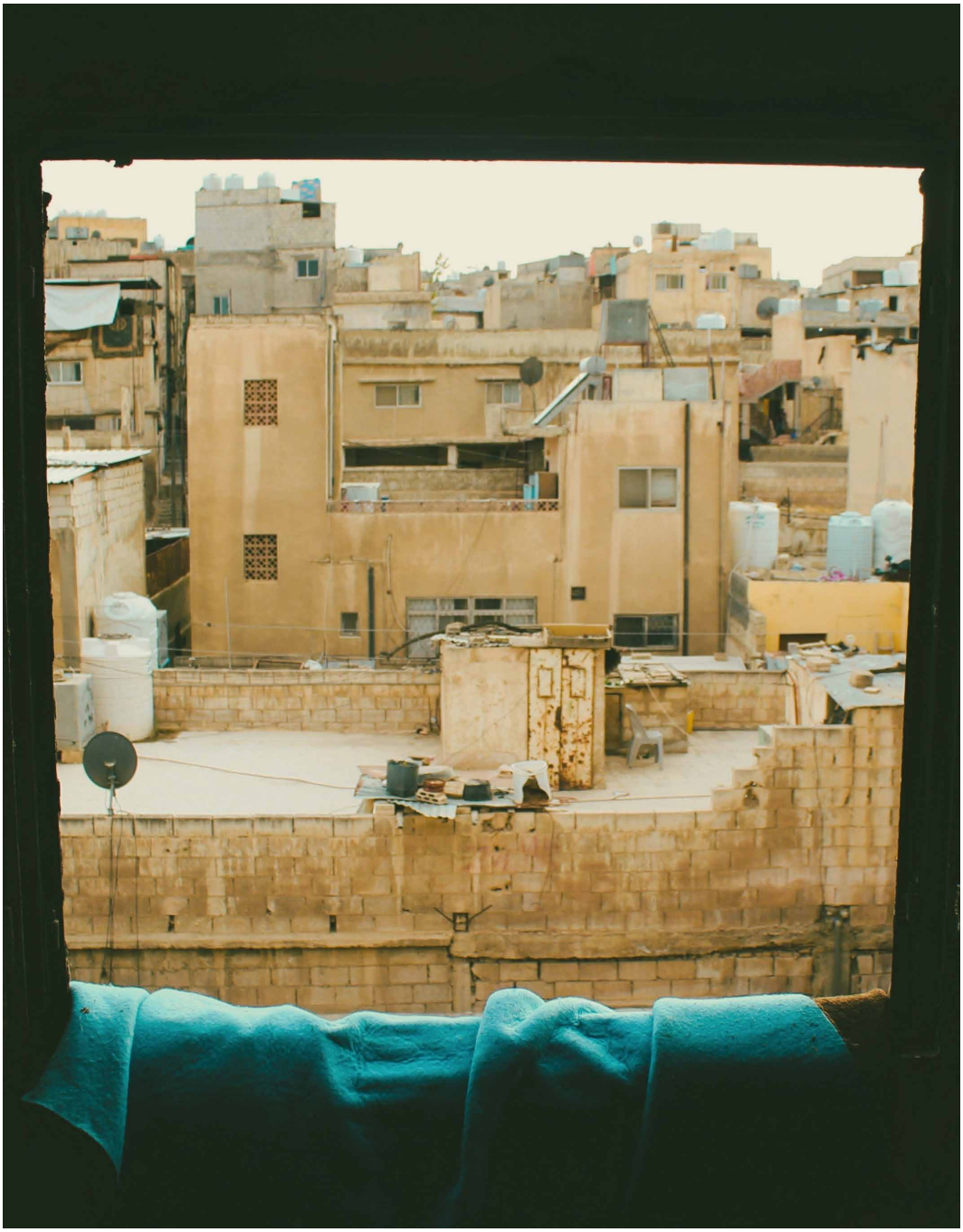


FIG. 6.26 Looking out at Al Wehdat Camp from inside a residential building.

TOC

TOC



TOC

7 Conclusion

On the Roof: the Birds and the Refugee's Return

Blocks of concrete seem to swallow up all of the camp's space. Between all the rows of buildings, colorful kiosks, seas of bodies, and expanding noise, there is so little room left to breathe or think. So little of the sky could be seen, blocked by growing residential units in which life seems to unfold; millions of parallel lives happening all at once behind closed doors. To get a different perspective, I decided to spend the day observing the camp from above.

With the help of my research facilitator Malek, I scheduled several interviews with the pigeon breeders who used their building's rooftops to grow their businesses and fly their birds. They did so as hobbies, as an escape, as a safe space to exist and reflect, away from the intensity of life in the camp and the weight of everything that occupied its space and ground. My interest in pigeons stemmed from Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel, Birds of Caution, which I have referenced throughout this dissertation. In the book, Nasrallah creates a number of similarities between the Palestinian refugees and birds. This is a comparison discussed in several chapters of this dissertation, using that analogy to discuss the different challenges of life in the camp and emphasize on the theme of migration, the foundation upon which the camp was built. In another instance, Nasrallah also writes about his hobby of hunting birds in the camp:

"The school teacher approached the little boy and said, 'I want to see you after school.'

The rest of the students looked at each other, the little boy was in trouble. They did not leave the school yard after school in anticipation of the results.
'I heard you are the best hunter?' asked the teacher. The little boy nodded in silence.
'I hunt and capture the birds and then I set them free.' He said carefully.
'Why?' asked the teacher.

'To teach these birds caution, how to become cautious.' He replied.

TOC

The teacher did not understand, he remembered his other 52 students.
'Why not help me teach the students too? If you are so good at teaching birds?' asked the teacher.
'That's a different matter.'

'Why is that?' The teacher asked.
'Because the birds are much smarter.'"
(Nasrallah, 2009, p.188)

After reading that novel, the image of the Palestinian refugees as immigrating birds stayed with me. It became the lens through which I began to understand displacement, migration, and movement across a different number of homes. Was this link between the refugees and the birds also a reflection of what the refugees were longing for the most, this sense of freedom? Longing to have the ability to move and travel, with no limitations or constraints; without borders, checkpoints, passports, or visas?

In the sky, the birds seemed to move freely and travel from one place to another without any limitations, which was a reality that the Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat Camp were deprived of, having spent the past sixty-nine years and three generations waiting in Al Wehdat Camp for a better life, for a bit of freedom, for a chance to return to Palestine.In another part, Nasrallah poses the question of return, of the point of origin, using the little boy to discuss those ideas:

"Leaning on a broken wall, with the cage between his legs, he thought of all the myths he heard about wings, now exploding in his imagination. His body piled up in the corner, he found himself facing the canary birds, the lovebirds and the parrots that all continued to confuse him. Whenever they found a chance to escape their cages and fly towards the open sky, they would eventually return in the evening. He used to wonder and ask his mother and his aunt Maryam, 'Why do the canaries and the lovebirds return to the cage after being set free?' Maryam would answer: 'These birds are not from here, they are strangers. They would fly away, not meet anyone they know, and that's why they would return.'"
(Nasrallah, 2009, p.302)



FIG. 7.1 Birds on the roof, immigrants from everywhere.

That question was playing in my mind as I sat down with the pigeon breeder on the rooftop of his home in Al Wehdat Camp, on that hot summer day in 2022. The first question I asked him was, "How do you get the birds to return, after setting them free to fly in the evening? I mean look at them, they're flying in flocks, in circles around this spot, how do they not escape?" To him, my question was odd, and his answer was rather straightforward: "They are used to this place, they grew up here, and I spent years feeding and taking care of them. To them, this is home. No matter how far they go, they will eventually return here."

He then went on to explain, "Once these pigeons hatch on this roof, I tape their wings to their bodies, not allowing them to fly for a certain amount of time. Once they hit puberty, I match pigeons, each male and female in a designated cage, where I lock them up for a few days so they would get to know each other. After that, I set the male pigeon free and allow him to fly freely, fully knowing that he will return, to his female partner, to their little cage."



FIG. 7.2 A pigeon breeder in his pigeon shed, on a roof in Al Wehdat camp.

I was surprised with the level of cruelty involved in that process but said nothing; I wanted him to continue talking, and he did, "So the bond that grows between the male pigeon and this rooftop, to answer your question, is based on years of habitation and a relationship he grows with the breeder as well, and his female partner and their little cage."

Another man joined us on the roof, he was there to also take part in the interview. He introduced himself as a former breeder, who has now left that job and is currently an Imam at the mosque.
"Back when I was still a breeder, I gifted my brother a couple of birds, which he took with him back to Palestine, where he was living. A few weeks later, the birds returned to me. Can you believe it? They returned to my rooftop. Pigeons are loyal, they never forget their home or their breeder."



FIG. 7.3 A flock of pigeons flies over Al Wehdat camp.

What would the generations of Palestinian refugees think of the birds giving up the opportunity of living in Palestine, only to return to the camp? Did it even make any difference for the birds, knowing that they were in Palestine, or were they more determined to return to the place they have grown up in, regardless of what it was named or what it looked like on the map? Would the Palestinian refugees feel that way if they were ever given the opportunity to return? Would they choose the camp instead? Was that why Nawaf returned to Al Wehdat Camp from Gaza?



FIG. 7.4 Artwork titled anti nationalists by Palestinian artist Suhad Al Khatib (source: www.suhadalkhatib.com)

TOC

The correlation between birds, Palestine, and borders is one of the themes in the work of Palestinian artist Suhad Al Khatib. This theme is vividly expressed in her artwork titled "Anti Nationalists," shown in Figure 7.4. For Al Khatib, birds symbolize anti-nationalism because they do not recognize borders and can move freely to and from Palestine without limitations.

In "Anti Nationalists," Al Khatib depicts the geographic map of Palestine and Jordan without the political borders that have fragmented the once unified territory and isolated parts of the homeland from each other. Those political borders have also disconnected the Palestinian people from each other and made the return of four generations of refugees, impossible. The homeland in Al Khatib's artwork is inhabited by several species of birds in various sizes and stages of flight.

On her Instagram page, Al Khatib dedicates the artwork to the birds of her ancestors' homeland, which she describes as one stolen by a fascist nationalist colony today. She also notes that an estimated 530 species of birds cross Palestine every autumn and spring.

Did any of those birds ever fly over Al Wehdat Camp during their immigration?

Returning to the Pigeons' breeders and my conversations with the Imam on the roof, I noticed how there was vulnerability and a level of affection in that Imam's voice when they spoke about his birds, which was hard not to notice. In what is a highly masculine camp environment, where men were expected to perform in a certain way and retain a certain level of toughness,



FIG. 7.5 The pigeon cages behind red doors on the roof of a building in Al Wehdat camp.

The Imam continued, “I am a strong believer and hope that Allah will allow me to enter heaven in the afterlife. If I do make it, the first thing that I will ask from Allah in heaven is to be reunited with a pigeon that I had a few years ago. He passed away, but I still hold him so dearly to my heart. A breeder usually has a favorite bird, one he would talk to and play with on the roof. Breeding and flying birds is closer to being an obsession, there are no words to describe it.”

I was very surprised and found it hard to make sense of that sacred bond the men sitting in front of me had with their pigeons. Were the rooftops a safe space that allowed men, who were otherwise deprived from expressing their emotions, a place where they were finally allowed to be affectionate and loving, in what was considered a socially acceptable manner, that did not render them as less manly, less tough, less powerful?

From their descriptions, I also realized that these rooftops and the practice of breeding and flying birds offered a form of escape for these men, as they described the way they hid there and spent long hours with the pigeons after work. No one was allowed up there. Not their wives nor their children. Just the sky, a rooftop, and the birds. No problems to fix, no challenges to deal with.

Up there, away from the reality of life in the camp and everything that was just not working, away from the concrete and the piling bills and all the financial struggles, the pigeon breeders found some peace, and were also able to make some money on the side, selling and buying birds.
I walked away from the men towards the edge of the roof, where I took some time to observe the neighboring roofs. Not all roofs were used to breed and fly pigeons. I noticed how other roofs were used to grow roof gardens, dry laundry, ride bikes, film Tik Tok videos, sit and socialize, store things, line up water containers, line up satellite dishes, among other activities.

While walking along the camp's narrow alleyways, I was walking along forts of concrete. I was unable to see into people's lives or see much beyond the high walls. That made total sense, it was through these walls that the camp inhabitants were able to retain the bare-minimum level of privacy, within a very dense urban setting. In the alleys, the walls constructed guarded interiors that the inhabitants lived inside, one of the few spaces they still had control over, one of the few spaces where they felt safe and could work on building homes for themselves. On the roof, I was able to see more of the camp's inhabitants' activities and everyday lives unfold in front of me as they took to the roofs to enjoy a little more space and a little more sky

Were they any different from the birds that I came to learn more about? Do we all belong to the sky, and long for that level of freedom and ability to freely travel and escape? It was not always about the point of departure nor about the point of arrival, because those do change, but more about having the ability to move between both, and escape when it became too overwhelming.

In many of the encounters that I have had with camp inhabitants I was overwhelmed with the amount of suffering and hardships they had to endure in their everyday life. The extreme levels of poverty, the overly compact neighborhoods, the camp inhabitants' inability to find jobs, the harsh living environment of the camp, and the high crime rates and the spread of drugs were among the challenges that shaped the everyday lives of people in Al Wehdat Camp.
The camp inhabitants were expected to endure all of these hardships because they were Palestinian refugees in a camp that had to continue to exist as a custodian of the right to return for generations of Palestinian refugees in exile.



FIG. 7.6 A woman takes care of her garden on a rooftop in Al Wehdat camp.

TOC



FIG. 7.7 Rooftops in Al Wehdat camp.

As if it was a tax they were expected to pay for being Palestinian. The weight of these stories and my personal experience of visiting the camp and seeing these things with my own eyes usually left me with a feeling of dread and despair. The longer I studied the camp and the deeper I investigated its reality, the heavier the weight of that reality became.

In that sense, I too, was a bird.

I started this research while hovering above the camp, which to me was an abstract and symbolic notion, but in time I have landed on the ground, sometimes with a strong force that opened my eyes to the complex reality of the camp and the lived reality of displacement. I have walked those streets of the camp and gotten my feet dirty from walking through muddy roads. I have climbed up more ladders than I had expected to, trying to make my way up to roofs to look and understand.

I have had to push through crowds of street vendors and chaotic commercial streets that sometimes felt they would swallow one's body entirely. I have come to know the camp through its different realities and stories.

Al Wehdat Camp, like all Palestinian refugee camps, was built in response to Al Nakba as a space of temporary refuge to generations of Palestinian refugees who were uprooted from their homes. In this research, I conceptualized home as a multi-scalar territory that exists in different places, in different time intervals, all at once, through a spatio-temporal simultaneity that produces Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory, existing here and there, now and then, at home and in exile. Through the different chapters of this dissertation, I studied those different scales of home, the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home, through an interdisciplinary research approach and framework that were built around three pillars: the body, movement, and territory. I have also worked on studying the socio-spatial relationship between these different territories, and the boundary-demarcating elements that work on connecting and disconnecting these territories from one another, shaped by flows of movement and activity.

In **Chapter 1,** I have explained my interdisciplinary research methodology, which encompasses methods from the fields of architecture, anthropology and the visual arts, achieved through what I termed Taq'otat, my spatio-temporal intersections with both the camp's spaces and its inhabitants. I used my movement in the camp's space; whether along the vertical axis that allowed me to shift in along the different scales of home and also shift between the symbolic understanding of the camp and its intimate material reality; or my movement along the horizontal axis within the camp and its inhabitants, as a way to produce knowledge about the camp, its inhabitants and its architecture.

In **Chapter 2**, I studied several paths of displacement that the Palestinian refugees have traveled across during their uprooting from Palestine; mapping their movement across the landscape and the different locations they have settled at to get to Al Wehdat Camp. Through that tracing of the different paths, I was able to conceptualize the camp as a point that exists at the intersection of a number of paths that have led the Palestinian refugees to the camp and also allowed them to move past it to different locations within the city. That continuous movement of displaced bodies from Palestine to Al Wehdat Camp has brought with it the embodied knowledge, memories, culture and traditions of the Palestinian refugees, allowing them to transgress the colonial borders that have disconnected them from the space of the home-land, and to reproduce the space of Palestine in the space of Al Wehdat Camp. Further, this has enabled them to intergenerationally transfer that knowledge to the younger generations who have constructed their own versions

of an imagined home-land, in the spaces of their home-camp. By tracing these paths, I have also been able to conceptualize the camp as a transient territory that transcends colonial borders and exists beyond their demarcations as a moving and transformative space which continues to respond to the movements and activities of the Palestinian refugees.

In **Chapter 3**, I worked on studying the home-camp's socio-spatial relationship with the home-city, shifting the scale of the investigation closer to the ground to investigate the boundary that distinguishes the territory of Al Wehdat Camp from the city of Amman.

Through this chapter, I created a comparison between the institutional ways of demarcating the camp: the formal boundary or the redline (unchanged since the camp's establishment in 1955), and the camp inhabitants' ways of knowing and demarcating their camp through what I referred to as the informal boundary or the greenline. As a result of this comparison, I was able to conclude that the redline was drawn and traced by the State in coordination with UNRWA in response to considerations of land ownership and land use. Further, the redline's existence today confirms the camp's status as a temporary space of humanitarian refuge. That status continues to shape the camp's hybrid model of governance, coordinated between the DPA and UNRWA, through which the camp's space and its different models of temporary use, as well as the ownership frameworks of the land and the refugee units are managed and controlled.

The greenline was the topic of investigation in **Chapter 4**, which I have used to investigate the production, transformation and manifestations of the informal boundary of the camp in the everyday life of the camp inhabitants. In the field, I studied the greenline by asking what produced it for the camp inhabitants, which turned out to be the following boundary demarcation elements: the terrain, the settlement patterns and the overspills around the camp, and the streets and markets. By studying paths of movement and activity around these elements, I have managed to show some examples of how they work on simultaneously connecting and disconnecting the space of the camp from the space of the city, producing Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory in continuous movement with a dynamic boundary that is in continuous transformation.

In **Chapter 5**, I was able to conclude that when comparing Al Wehdat Camp with itself, moving the investigation inwards and studying the camp as a network of nodes, landmarks, streets, edges and districts, it becomes explicit how it is not homogeneous nor uniform.

Rather, it is characterized by a multiplicity of spaces and lived realities that are the result of the interplay of power relations that continue to shape the camp's lived reality and architecture. To map that power distribution, I studied the walls of a number of institutional complexes in the camp, which are the Women's Center, Al Wehdat Sports Club, and UNRWA complex, stepping into their interiors to understand their physical and managerial structures, their services and the radius of their influence on the camp and the inhabitants. I also studied the walls as interfaces of communication, concluding a big difference between the values of the institutional bodies with respect to the camp and its inhabitants, and the values of the camp inhabitants themselves, whose writings and drawings reflected different scales of belonging to the home-camp, the home-land, and the home-city.

Through the collection of graffiti drawings, I was able to highlight the multiplicity of home for the camp inhabitants and also the manner through which they overlap the personal with the national, the past with the present, and the public with the private.

In **Chapter 6**, I entered the private and intimate domestic spaces, sharing the life stories of several camp inhabitants which unraveled different layers of the camp's social, economic, political and spatial transformation. I also revealed, in high detail, aspects of the everyday, lived experiences of the Palestinian refugees in Al Wehdat Camp alongside the respective contradictions, hardships, heterogeneity, and complexities that they encompass. By stepping into those interiors, into the homes of the inhabitants, I was able to conclude how different and heterogeneous the camp inhabitants were, and challenge the ways Palestinian refugees are represented as one homogeneous group with the same values and attitudes.

As architectural elements, walls of the homes produced a level of privacy and freedom of expression that was not always available in the camp due to the presence of eyes, ears and hands that control the narrative as well as the material and immaterial forms of expression. I concluded the chapter with the story of Um Hasan after having started with her in the beginning of this dissertation, bringing the dissertation to a full circle. The story of Um Hasan captures Palestinian refugees' continuous movement due to displacement across different borders and territories, not only as a result of political circumstance, but also social and economic factors, producing a state of transience and movement across different scales.

In every location she had settled, Um Hasan and her daughter, Sameera, reproduced the space of their home-land through different practices, through their oral history and elements of Palestinian material culture, transcending place and time. I will never forget the taste of the Carob fruit I had at their house, the one that came from Nablus, or the picture of Abu Hasan in their living room.

The displacement paths that the Palestinian refugees have walked along after Al Nakba will continue to unfold wherever they go, with those movements and different places of settlement coming together as material expressions of their uprooting. Further, that path which unfolds across the landscape as a thread will continue to spread, encapsulating time and generations. It will, nevertheless, stay pinned to the village of origin, no matter how long that thread becomes.



FIG. 7.8 A minaret in the middle of flocks of immigrants in the camp.

Through this dissertation, I conducted a thorough investigation into Al Wehdat Camp, taking it as one example which, when studied, can help me better understand the political, social and economic factors that have influenced and transformed Palestinian camps over the years, studying its architecture as an expression of the shifts between these different factors on a local and international scale.

Through the work that I have produced in this research, I do not claim that I have reached a conclusive and concrete understanding of what a Palestinian refugee camp is, and what makes a camp a camp, but I have worked on deconstructing the different material and immaterial layers that produce Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory that transcends time, space and borders.

I came to the camp with one question, "Where is the camp?" That question was rather simple, especially when compared to the more typical research questions that tend to be longer and more complex. The answer, on the other hand, was anything but simple, requiring 400 pages and five years to explain.

Through this study of paths, edges and walls, I cannot claim that I found a definitive answer. Rather, I have used the question as a compass which allowed me to navigate the processes that have produced the architecture of Al Wehdat Camp as it stands today, and also see where it stands in time and place.

The Palestinian refugees residing in the camp today, everywhere, were ethnically cleansed from their villages and hometowns, their homes were taken from them and so was their land. Their lives have been so violently interrupted that a rupture in time and place has been created. They have been pushed to live in refugee camps awaiting a resolution that never came. The camp moves with its people but the camp also stands in its place as a physical expression of the establishment of a settler colonial state in Palestine. For that, and as long as Palestine continues to be colonized, and as long as their home-land continues to be occupied, the story of Palestinian refugees will continue to unravel, and the Palestinian refugee camps will remain political spaces which testify to what happened in Al Nakba, when Palestinians became refugees.

On the roof of that building which I visited in Al Wehdat Camp on that summer's day, after my interview with the pigeon breeders, I found what I was looking for explained in graffiti that I spotted in a neighboring building, which said:

"The camp will always remind us of the smell of Palestine. We will return."



FIG. 7.9 Graffiti on a roof of Al Wehdat Camp that reads, “The camp will always remind us of the smell of Palestine. We will return.”

TOC


غزة

Epilogue

15th of January, 2024

As I write these words, the war on Gaza has entered its 100th day, with more than 24100 martyrs, 12345 of which are children, 7100 are women, 337 are medical staff, 117 are journalists, and 209 are educational staff. In addition, 7000 are missing, still under the rubble of their destroyed homes, according to the numbers presented by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

There is something so surreal about attempting to finish this dissertation about Palestinian refugee camps as a genocide unfolds in Gaza, as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are ethnically cleansed from their homes again, for the second and third times. How many times does a Palestinian have to become a refugee? Does one only become a refugee once, and then spend their lives in exile, unable to find safety and comfort away from one's home, until their return? Or is refugeehood an experience that gets darker and heavier after each time, after each time one is back in a tent? I have spent a good number of years reading about Al Nakba of 1948 and all that has been said about it being an ongoing Nakba, for the prevailing political, social and economic consequences that continue to shape every aspect of Palestinian lives, both inside Palestine and outside of it, in camps and outside them. I have examined numerous archival photos of Palestinians during their displacement, when they became refugees, and it is particularly those photos that helped me develop my research framework of the body, movement and territory. Displacement is a very embodied experience, with bodies being violently pushed outside their homes, outside their lives, into the unknown as one travels along paths of displacement that never stop unfolding. Palestinians have walked across the landscapes of Palestine for endless miles before they reached their destinations, before beginning to move again and again and again.

As this dissertation has explained, displacement did not happen at once, and Palestinian refugees have not moved from point A to point B, but rather, have continued to move in the years following Al Nakba across multiple locations. They have settle within and outside of camps, in several camps, inside and outside Palestine, before arriving in Al Wehdat Camp, and sometimes, even moving beyond it to other places, yet managing to carry a bit of the camp with them, just like they have managed to carry a bit of Palestine to Al Wehdat Camp before.

The archival pictures that I have examined are black and white, 76 years old. Today, I see the same scenes unfold in real time, in color, as the people in Gaza are forced to leave their homes and forced once again down the path of displacement. Long lines form of displaced Palestinians, carrying what they can of their things, carrying their children and elderly, walking to the unknown. In Gaza, Palestinian refugees are back in tents, scattered everywhere across schools, parking lots, and open fields. It is winter, it is raining, how will they survive amidst this blockade that is depriving them of food and all means of survival?In Gaza, Palestinian refugee camps are heavily bombed, becoming important targets to the settler colonial state of Israel. These include: Jabalia Camp, Al Nuseirat Camp, Bureij Camp, Rafah Camp, Maghazi Camp, Beach Camp, Khan Younis Camp, Deir El-Balah Camp. Palestinians living in these camps were already refugees, having been ethnically cleansed from their villages and hometowns in 1948. They have become refugees again, where do you go after being displaced from a camp?

Reading the news, I was reminded of Um Hasan, who was displaced from her village in Beit ‘Affa and has attempted to find a home since. I also remembered Nawaf, who returned to Gaza as a young man yet did not manage to find a place for him there and preferred instead to return to Al Wehdat Camp. These are two stories, among millions of stories of each Palestinian refugee family everywhere in the world, as heterogeneous and as different as each story is, unfolding along a unique path of displacement, all these stories have one thing in common and that is the loss of one’s home. The events in Gaza have emphasized the continuity of the atrocities and violence of the settler colonial state of Israel, which is keen on occupying more of Palestine’s lands, driving more Palestinians out. The manner through which the war has been framed as one that started on the 7th of October, completely de-historicizing and decontextualizing the current reality of the settler colonization of Palestine resonates deeply with the work of Ariella Azoullay (2019) on the production of Imperial History. This is discussed in **Chapter 2** of this dissertation, as a way of disconnecting the present from the past, and dealing with the past as an event that could not be reversed, as a way of erasing the imperialist power’s crimes and atrocities. The bloodshed did not stop in 1948 and Palestinian refugees sitting in camps since Al Nakba are the physical expression of all the events that have unfolded since. Those who I have interviewed and met during the time of conducting this research in Al Wehdat Camp, such as Ahmad who has been sitting at the threshold of his house for years, waiting, stuck in his place, stuck in the past is proof of this. In the existing literature about Palestine and Palestinians, the concept of Sumud, or Steadfastness has been thoroughly discussed (Schiocchet, 2012; Rangitsch, 2007).

The concept means having patience and endurance against adversity, staying in one's place despite hardships; not moving, not moving from one's place, not moving away from an idea one believes in, staying strong and continuing to fight back. For 76 years, Sumud has been Palestinian refugees' way of living as they've endured all sorts of hardships and challenges, whether while residing in camps or outside of them. In Al Wehdat Camp, many inhabitants told me, "We will not leave this place, unless we are returning to Palestine," expressing high levels of Sumud and a refusal to move away from the camp, nor what they believe in. In that sense, in reference to my framework, not moving is also as productive as moving. One can choose to not move, to occupy space and take a stand. Another notion that has been extensively discussed in the existing literature about Palestine and Palestinians is that of home. This investigation has helped me to understand the multiplicity of the notion of home, that home could be several places at once.

In Gaza, I watched these two notions intersect, Sumud and home. As the settler colonial state of Israel forced people to evacuate their homes, many people refused to leave, choosing to stay, to not move. The settler colonial state of Israel proceeded then to bomb those homes, leveling them to the ground, collapsing them over the heads of the families that inhabited them for years. With the lack of equipment and tools to bring people out from under the rubble, many were stuck there for hours and days, before passing away. Some are still under the rubble today, more than three months after. In that sense, Sumud is exemplified in the most poetic yet tragic of ways, with Palestinians holding on to their homes, steadfast in them, until they get destroyed over their heads. Their bodies became part of the destruction, their flesh and bones mixed with the concrete.

Every single Palestinian refugee in Al Wehdat Camp has a story to tell, and through this dissertation, I tried to tell as many stories as I can, to counter the colonial production of history in the present, to counter forgetting, to preserve what we can amidst all that has been lost. In the same way, every single martyr in Gaza has a story, a life, a family, and a favorite day of the week, and every single story is worth telling.

Those sentiments were captured in the poem, If I Must Die, by the late Palestinian writer, poet, professor, and activist from Gaza, Refaat Alareer (2024), who refused to leave Northern Gaza and remained steadfast, falling as a martyr the 7th of December, 2023, two months after the war began. I could not think of better words to end with.



TOC

If I Must Die

If I must die,

you must live

to tell my story

to sell my things

to buy a piece of cloth

and some strings,

(make it white with a long tail)

so that a child, somewhere in Gaza

while looking heaven in the eye

awaiting his dad who left in a blaze —

and bid no one farewell

not even to his flesh

not even to himself —

sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above,

and thinks for a moment an angel is there

bringing back love.

If I must die

let it bring hope,

let it be a story.

TOC

Bibliography

A'Amiry, S.M., (1987). Space, kinship and gender: The social dimension of peasant architecture in Palestine.

Ababsa, M. and Daher, R. (2008). Villes, pratiques urbaines et construction nationale en Jordanie. Beyrouth: Institut français du Proche-Orient.

Ababsa, M. and Kohlmayer, C. (2013). Atlas of Jordan. Beyrouth: Inst. Française du Proche-Orient.

Abdul-Hamid, H., Patrinos, H., Reyes, J., Kelcey, J. and Varela, A.D., 2015. Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees. World Bank Publications.

Abourahme, N. (2014). Assembling and Spilling-Over: Towards an 'Ethnography of Cement' in a Palestinian Refugee Camp. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 39(2), pp.200-217.

Abourahme, N. and Hilal, S., (2009), February. The production of space, political subjectivication and the folding of polarity: the case of Deheishe camp, Palestine. In Peripheries: Decentering Urban Theory'conference, University of California, Berkeley (pp. 5-7).. Black September and identity construction in Jordan. Journal of Georgetown University-Qatar Middle Eastern Studies Student Association, 2015(1), p.12.

Abourahme, N., (2019). Beneath The Concrete: Camp, Colony, Palestine. Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

Abreek-Zubiedat, F. (2014). The Palestinian refugee camps: the promise of 'ruin' and 'loss'. Rethinking History, 19(1), pp.72-94.

Abu-Lughod, R. (2010). The Plight of Forgotten Women: Coping with Gender Based Domestic Violence Among Palestinian Refugee Women. NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL, 34 #1.

Abu-Odeh, A. and Delvoie, L. (2000). Jordanians, Palestinians & the Hashemite kingdom in the Middle East peace process.." International Journal.

Abu-Sitta, S., (2010). Atlas of Palestine, 1948. London: Palestine Land Society.

Achilli, L. (2014). Disengagement from politics: Nationalism, political identity, and the everyday in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. Critique of Anthropology.

Achilli, L. (2015). Becoming a man in al-wihdat: masculine performances in a palestinian refugee camp in jordan. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 47(2), pp.263-280.

Achilli, L. and Oesch, L., (2016). Spaces of ambiguity: Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. A contrario, 23(2), pp.17-36.

Agamben, G. (2005). State of Exception. University of Chicago Press.

Agier, M. (2016). Managing the undesirables. Cambridge: Polity.

Ajami, F. (1992). The Arab predicament. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al Daly, J. (1999). Informal settlements in Jordan: upgrading approaches adopted and lessons learned. Lund University.

Al Ghad (2022) "Al-Wehdat and Al-Faisaly match moved to Al-Hassan Stadium," 24 October.

Al Husseini, J. and Bocco, R. (2009). The Status of the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East: The Right of Return and UNRWA in Perspective. Refugee Survey Quarterly, 28(2-3), pp.260-285.

Al Husseini, J. (2010). The Management of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan between Logics of Integration and Exclusion. SSRN Electronic Journal.

Al Husseini, J., (2010). UNRWA and the refugees: A difficult but lasting marriage. Journal of Palestine Studies, 40(1), pp.6-26.

Al Kharouf, A. and Weir, D., (2008). Women and work in a Jordanian context: Beyond neo-patriarchy. Critical perspectives on international business, 4(2/3), pp.307-319.

Al-Ali, N., (2009). A child in Palestine: the cartoons of Naji al-Ali. Verso Books.

Al-Areer, R., Joudah, F., Abu Nada, H., Elias, O., Abu Hawwash, S., Murry, M., Bsharat, A., Aldirawi, B. and Zaqtan, G., (2024). Poems for Palestine.

Al-Mawed, H.S., (1999). The Palestinian refugees in Syria: their past, present and future. International Development Research Centre.
Alnsour, J. and Meaton, J. (2014). Housing conditions in Palestinian refugee camps, Jordan. Cities, 36, pp.65-73.
Alonso, A., (1998). Urban graffiti on the city landscape. San Diego State University.
Alshaibi, S., (2006). Memory work in the Palestinian diaspora (Personal Essay and Art). Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, pp.30-53.
Appleton, J., (1996). The experience of landscape (pp. 66-7). Chichester: Wiley.
Arafat, S., 1989. Formal Education in UNRWA. Journal of Refugee Studies, 2(1), pp.108-112.
Ayrton, R., 2019. The micro-dynamics of power and performance in focus groups: an example from discussions on national identity with the South Sudanese diaspora in the UK. Qualitative Research, 19(3), pp.323-339.
Azoulay, A., (2019). Potential history: unlearning imperialism. Verso Books.
Badawy, U. (2016). Urban Planning Analyses of Refugee Camps, Jabalia as Case Study-Gaza Strip, Palestine. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), 5(4), pp.678-688.
Barghouti, M., (2011). I was born there, I was born here. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Bisharat, G.E., (1997). Exile to compatriot: Transformations in the social identity of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank.
Black, T., 1997. The handwriting's on the wall: Cities can win the graffiti war. American City & County, 112(3), pp.22-25.
Brand, L.A., 1995. Palestinians and Jordanians: A crisis of identity. Journal of Palestine Studies, 24(4), pp.46-61.
Brewer, J., 2010. Microhistory and the histories of everyday life. Cultural and Social History, 7(1), pp.87-109.
Bshara, K. (2012). Space and Memory: The Poetics and Politics of Home in the Palestinian Diaspora. Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE.
Bshara, K., (2014). Spatial Memories: The Palestinian Refugee Camps as Time Machine. Jerusalem Quarterly, 60, pp.14-30.
Certeau, M. and Rendall, S., (2011). The Practice Of Everyday Life. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
Chatty, D. (2017). The Politics of Suffering: Syria's Palestinian Refugee Camps By Nell Gabiam. Journal of Islamic Studies, 28(3), pp.397-399.
Cybriwsky, R. and Ley, D., 2018. Urban graffiti as territorial markers. In Culture and Society (pp. 143-157). Routledge.
Daniel, E.V., (1996). Charred lullabies. Princeton University Press.
Darwish, M., (1984). The earth is closing on us. Victims of a Map, 13.
Diken, B. and Laustsen, C.B., 2005. The culture of exception: Sociology facing the camp. Routledge.
Doraï, M. (2010). From Camp Dwellers to Urban Refugees? Urbanization and Marginalization of Refugee Camps in Lebanon. Manifestations of Identity. The Lived Reality of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.
Doraï, M.K., (2002). The meaning of homeland for the Palestinian diaspora: revival and transformation.
Dot-Pouillard, N. (2013). Between Radicalization and Mediation Processes: a Political Mapping of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon*. Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 1(1).
Dpa.gov.jo. (2019). Department of Palestinian Affairs. [online] Available at: http://dpa.gov.jo/en/ [Accessed 27 Oct. 2019].
Ellingson, L.L., (2008). Embodied knowledge.
Ellingson, L.L., (2012). Interviewing as embodied communication.
Fafo, (2013). Progress, challenges, diversity Insights into the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees in Jordan.
Farah, R. (1999). Popular memory and reconstructions of palestlnlan identity al-baq'a refugee camp, jordan. Doctorate. University of Toronto.
Farah, R., (2009). UNRWA: Through the eyes of its refugee employees in Jordan. Refugee Survey Quarterly, 28(2-3), pp.389-411.
Feiner, J.S. and Klein, S.M., 1982. Graffiti talks. Social policy, 12(3), pp.47-53.
Feldman, I. (2015). What is a camp? Legitimate refugee lives in spaces of long-term displacement. Geoforum, 66, pp.244-252.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., 2013. The inter-generational politics of 'travelling memories': Sahrawi refugee youth remembering home-land and home-camp. Journal of Intercultural Studies, 34(6), pp.631-649.
Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., 2013. Transnational childhood and adolescence: mobilizing Sahrawi identity and politics across time and space. Ethnic and racial studies, 36(5), pp.875-895.
Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., 2016. On the Threshold of Statelessness: Palestinian narratives of loss and erasure. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 39(2), pp.301-321.
Gaus, G. & Arendt, H., "Conversation with Hannah Arendt" from the Series Zur Person.
Gqola, Pumla Dineo (2021) *Female fear factory: Gender and patriarchy under racial capitalism*, Melinda Ferguson Books.
Grbac, P., (2013). Civitas, polis, and urbs. Reimagining the refugee camp as the.
Gren, N., (2002). Imagined Return: The Making of Home, Place and Belonging Among Palestinian Camp Refugees on the West Bank. Göteborg University.
Hailey, C. (2009). Camps. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
Hall, S., (2015). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory (pp. 392-403). Routledge.
Halsey, K., Alarood, S., Nawaiseh, M. and Mir, G., 2022. An exploration of politicized healthcare access for Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Jordan: a question of equity. International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care, 18(1), pp.51-65.
Hamarneh, A. (2002). Transformation of Al-Wihdat Refugee Camp. ISIM Newsletter.
Hanafi, S. and Long, T. (2010). Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon. Journal of Refugee Studies, 23(2), pp.134-159.
Hanafi, S., 2008. Palestinian refugee camps: disciplinary space and territory of exception.
Hanafi, S., Hilal, L. and Takkenberg, L. eds., 2014. UNRWA and Palestinian refugees: From relief and works to human development. Routledge.
Hanania, M. (2011). From colony to capital: A socio-economic and political history of Amman, 1878-1958. Stanford University.
Haraway, D., (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. Feminist studies, 14(3), pp.575-599.
Hazboun, N.N., (1994). The resettlement of the Palestinian refugees of the Gaza Strip (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds).
Hilal, S. and Petti, A., (2018). Permanent temporariness (pp. 122-130). Stockholm: Art and Theory publishing.
Hirsch, M., (1992). Family pictures: Maus, mourning, and post-memory. Discourse, 15(2), pp.3-29.
Hirsch, M., (2012). The generation of postmemory: writing and visual culture after the Holocaust. Columbia University Press.
Humphris, R. and Abuhaloob, L. (2015). A Double Burden or Triple Burden for Palestinian Children Residing in Gaza Refugee Camps ? Exploring the Role of Diet in Malnutrition , Obesity and Dental Caries. Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies, 4-5(2-1), pp.87-92.
Irfan, A. (2016). The Loss of Education : Palestinian Refugees from Syria and UN SDG 4. Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies, 6(1), pp.21-26.
Jacobs, J., (2016). The death and life of great American cities. Vintage.
Jawad, S.A., (2007). Zionist massacres: The creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in the 1948 war. In Israel and the Palestinian refugees (pp. 59-127). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
Jayyusi, L., (2003). Letters from the Palestinian Ghetto 8-13th March 2002. Égypte/Monde arabe, (6), pp.125-129.
Jordanian Department of Statistics (2018). Jordan In Figures 2018.
Joseph, I. (1998). La ville sans qualités. La Tour d'Aigues: Ed. de l'Aube.
Kanafani, G., (2015). The land of sad oranges. Men in the Sun and other Palestinian Stories, pp.75-80.
Karmi, G., (1999). After the Nakba: An Experience of Exile in England. Journal of Palestine Studies, 28(3), pp.52-63.
Kauffmann, K., (2012). "Double Vision": Visual Practice and the Politics of Representation in Edward W. Said and Jean Mohr's After the Last Sky. ariel: a review of international english literature, 43(3).
Kawar, W.K., (2011). Threads of identity: preserving Palestinian costume and heritage. (No Title).
Khalidi, R., (2010). Palestinian identity: The construction of modern national consciousness. Columbia University Press.

TOC

Khalidi, R., (2020). The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017. Metropolitan Books.
Khalidi, W., (1992). All that remains: The Palestinian villages occupied and depopulated by Israel in 1948. (No Title).
Khalili, L. (2007). Heroes and martyrs of Palestine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Khawaja, M. (2003). Migration and the Reproduction of Poverty: The Refugee Camps in Jordan. International Migration, 41(2), pp.27-57.
Lacroix, T. and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., (2013). Refugee and diaspora memories: The politics of remembering and forgetting. Journal of Intercultural Studies, 34(6), pp.684-696.
Latif, N., (2008). Making refugees. CR: The New Centennial Review, 8(2), pp.253-272.
Latte, S., (2009). UNRWA Photographs 1950-1978: A View on History or Shaped by History?.
Lehec, C. (2016). Graffiti in Palestinian Refugee Camps: from palimpsest walls to public space. Articulo – revue de sciences humaines, (15).
Lybarger, L. (2005). Palestinian Political Identities during the Post-Oslo Period: A Case Study of Generation Effects in a West Bank Refugee Camp. Social Compass, 52(2), pp.143-156.
Lynch, K., (1964). The image of the city. MIT press.
Macdonald, N., (2001). Constructive Destruction: Graffiti as a Tool for Making Masculinity. In The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity and Identity in London and New York (pp. 94-150). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
Mackenzie, J., (2015). " Allah! Wehdat! Al-Quds Arabiya!": Football, nationalism, and the chants of Palestinian resistance in Jordan.
Malkki, L.H., (1996). Speechless emissaries: Refugees, humanitarianism, and dehistoricization. Cultural anthropology, 11(3), pp.377-404.
Malkki, L. (2006). Purity and exile. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
Maqusi, S. (2017). 'Space of Refuge': Negotiating Space with Refugees Inside the Palestinian Camp. Humanities, 6(3), p.60.
Maqusi, S., (2021). Acts of Spatial Violation: The Politics of Space-Making inside the Palestinian Refugee Camp. ARENA Journal of Architectural Research, 6(1).
Maraqa, H. (2004). Palestinians; From Village Peasants to Camp Refugees: Analogies and Disparities in the Social Use of Space. Master's. The University of Arizona.
Martin, D. (2015). From spaces of exception to 'campscapes': Palestinian refugee camps and informal settlements in Beirut. Political Geography, 44, pp.9-18.
Massad, J. (2012). Colonial Effects. New York: Columbia University Press.
McAuliffe, C., 2012. Graffiti or street art? Negotiating the moral geographies of the creative city. Journal of urban affairs, 34(2), pp.189-206.
Munday, J., 2014. The practice of feminist focus groups. Feminist research practice: A primer, pp.233-263.
Nasrallah, I., (2009). Birds Of Caution.
Nora, P., (1996). From lieux de mémoire to realms of memory. Realms of memory: Rethinking the French past, 1, pp.15-24.
Nora, P., (1997). Lex liex de mémoire, 3 vols.
Ocampo, J.E., 2023. La lucha identitaria palestina a través del fútbol. Al Wehdat FC en Jordania. Anaquel de estudios árabes, 34(2), pp.301-320.
Oesch, L., (2017). The refugee camp as a space of multiple ambiguities and subjectivities. Political Geography, 60, pp.110-120.
Oesch, L., (2020). An Improvised Dispositif: Invisible Urban Planning in the Refugee Camp. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research.
Pappe, I., (2007). The ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Simon and Schuster.
Peteet, J., (1987). Socio-political integration and conflict resolution in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Journal of Palestine Studies, 16(2), pp.29-44.
Peteet, J., (2011). Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps. In Landscape of Hope and Despair. University of Pennsylvania Press.
Petti, A. (2013). Spatial Ordering of Exile. The Architecture of Palestinian Refugee Camps. Crios, pp.pp.62-70.
Peretti, P.O., Carter, R. and McClinton, B., (1977). Graffiti and adolescent personality. Adolescence, 12(45), p.31.

Phadke, S., (2013). Unfriendly bodies, hostile cities: Reflections on loitering and gendered public space. Economic and Political Weekly, pp.50-59.
Potter, R., Darmame, K., Barham, N. and Nortcliff, S. (2009). "Ever-growing Amman", Jordan: Urban expansion, social polarisation and contemporary urban planning issues. Habitat International, 33(1), pp.81-92.
Ramadan, A., (2009). A refugee landscape: writing Palestinian nationalisms in Lebanon. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 8(1), pp.69-99.
Ramadan, A. (2012). Spatialising the refugee camp. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 38(1), pp.65-77.
Rangitsch, S., 2007. Tracing Symbolic discourse of Steadfastness and Resistance: Collective Memory, Social Practive and Palestinian (trans) Nationalism (Master thesis). Budapest: Central European University.
Richter-Devroe, S., (2012). Return narratives of Palestinian refugees in the west bank: A generational perspective. Palestinian Refugees, Different Generations, But One Identity, pp.103-118.
Richter-Devroe, S. (2013). "Like Something Sacred": Palestinian Refugees' Narratives on the Right of Return. Refugee Survey Quarterly, 32(2), pp.92-115.
Rodriguez, J., (2019). Exploring the challenges and benefits to inclusive education in Jordanian UNRWA schools. Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners, 19(1), pp.44-57.
Romotsky, S. and Romotsky, J., (1975). Plaqueaso on the Wall. Human Behavior, 4, pp.65-69.
Sa'di, A.H. and Abu-Lughod, L. eds., (2007). Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory. Columbia University Press.
Said, E.W., (1979). Orientalism. Vintage.
Said, E.W., (1999). After the last sky: Palestinian lives. Columbia University Press.
Said, E.W., (2000). Reflections on exile. Said EW Reflections on exile and other essays. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, p.174.
Said, E.W., (2000). Invention, memory, and place. Critical inquiry, 26(2), pp.175-192.
Saif, W. (2022) The Palestinian Diaspora - Tales of the Refugee Camp. Amman: Al-Ahlia For Publishing & Distribution.
Salahi, A. (2019) 'The 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the making of today's Middle East'.
Saleh, S. and Gadi, M. (2016). An Investigation into Thermal Comfort of Shelters in Refugee Camps in Palestine Using Questionnaires and Computer Simulation. IUG Journal of Natural and Engineering Studies.
Saleh, S., (2020). Contextualizing the Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Gaza Strip. Contemporary Arab Affairs, 13(4), pp.3-23.
Sayigh, R., (2007). Women's Nakba Stories. Between Being and Knowing. In: A. Sa'adi and L. Abu-Lughod, ed., Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory. Columbia University Press, pp.135-158.
Schacter, R., (2008). An ethnography of iconoclash: An investigation into the production, consumption and destruction of street-art in London. Journal of material culture, 13(1), pp.35-61.
Schiocchet, L. (2012). Palestinian Sumud: Steadfastness, Ritual, and Time among Palestinian Refugees. In: Palestinian Refugees:Different Generations, but One Identity.. Birzeit: The Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies, pp.67-69.
Sherwood, H. (2018). What does US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital mean?. [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/06/us-recognition-of-jerusalem-as-israel-capital-what-it-means [Accessed 20 Oct. 2018].
Smithson, J., (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: limitations and possibilities. International journal of social research methodology, 3(2), pp.103-119.
Stead, N. (2022) "Architectural Education in the First Person: 'Professionalism' and Care in a Pandemic Year," in M. Mindrup and L. Chee (eds) Remote practices: Architecture at a distance. S.l.: lund humphries publishers, pp. 67–73.
Stephan, C. (2016). Discovering the Palestinian Refugee Paradox in Lebanon. Carleton Review of International Affairs, 3.
Stocker, T.L., Dutcher, L.W., Hargrove, S.M. and Cook, E.A., 1972. Social analysis of graffiti. The Journal of American Folklore, 85(338), pp.356-366.
Suleiman, Y. ed., 2016. Being Palestinian: Personal reflections on Palestinian identity in the diaspora. Edinburgh University Press.

Snyder, G.J., 2016. Long live the tag: Representing the foundations of graffiti. Graffiti and street art: Reading, writing and representing the city, pp.264-273.
Totah, F.M., 2020. Palestinian Refugees between the City and the Camp. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 52(4), pp.607-621.
Tuan, Y.F., 1980. Rootedness versus sense of place. Landscape, 24, pp.3-8.
Tuastad, D., 1997. The political role of football for Palestinians in Jordan.
Turner, S., 2005. Suspended spaces—Contesting sovereignties in a refugee camp. Sovereign bodies: Citizens, migrants, and states in the postcolonial world, pp.312-332.
UNRWA, (2023). Al Wehdat Camp Archival Photos. [image] Available at: <https://unrwa.photoshelter.com/search?terms=amman%20new%20camp&> [Accessed 17 May 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Resolution 194 | UNRWA. [online] Available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194> [Accessed 9 May 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Amman New Camp | UNRWA. [online] Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan/amman-new-camp [Accessed 13 Oct. 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Eligibility & Registration | UNRWA. [online] Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/eligibility-registration [Accessed 13 Oct. 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Jordan | UNRWA. [online] Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan [Accessed 25 Sep. 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Protection in Jordan | UNRWA. [online] Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/activity/protection-jordan [Accessed 25 Sep. 2023].
UNRWA. (2023). Who We Are UNRWA. [online] Available at: https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are [Accessed 27 Oct. 2023].
Valentine, G., 1989. The geography of women's fear. Area, pp.385-390.
Wilkinson, S., 1999. Focus groups: A feminist method. Psychology of women quarterly, 23(2), pp.221-244.
Young, R., 2001. Edward said and Colonial Discourse. Robert Young, Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction. New York: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp.383-394.
Zbeidy, D., 2020. Marriage and displacement among Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Jordan (Doctoral dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam).
Zureik, E., 2003. Theoretical and methodological considerations for the study of Palestinian society. Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, 23(1), pp.152-162.

Curriculum vitae

Nama'a Abdullah Qudah

Contact Details
Telephone: +31 6 15 13 21 94
Email: Namaa.qudah@gmail.com
Instagram: @namaa_qudah
Blog: nomadicfrenzy.wordpress

Work Experience

2019-Present **Doctoral Researcher**
Delft University of Technology Delft, Holland
Research title: In Search of Al Wehdat Camp
A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camps

2015-2019 **Full time lecturer**
University of Jordan/ Department of Architecture Amman, Jordan
Taught Courses: Project Management, Building Technology, Urban Planning.
Co-instructor: Architectural Design Studio 1,2,3,5,6,7
Supervision: 7 Graduation Projects

2014-2015 **Junior Architect**
Dar Al Handasah Amman, Jordan

2012-2013 **Copywriter and Social Media Officer**
IMC Digital Amman, Jordan

2010-Present **Freelance copywriter and Translator**
Various print and online services Various
(Most Recent Clients: Delegation of the European Union to Jordan, Lapis, Qull, CG imagine+ invent, OC Magazine)

TOC

Research Experience

2015-2019 **Urban Designer**
SAIB Nonprofit Organization Amman, Jordan
GRCR Project: Part of the organization's work on the social and architectural revitalization of Gaza Refugee Camp in Jerash, we rehabilitated a number of residential units in the camp, by adopting a participatory design process.

2014 **Research Placement**
Bright Ideas through the University of Nottingham Nottingham, the UK
Slave trade legacies Project: Was part of the research team that aimed to reveal the hidden layer of history in a number of touristic sites around the East Midlands area, that connects with the Slave trade legacies.

Publications

Conference Proceedings of the Conference: Transformation of the Urban Character of Arab Cities. Paper Title: Urban Identity in the Age of Globalization. ISBN: 978-1-904839-5
- https://www.palestine-studies.org/ar/node/1652677
- https://adimagazine.com/articles/in-october-the-sky-turned-white/

Education

2019-present **Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture**
Delft University of Technology Delft, Holland
Research Group: Methods of Analysis and Imagination
Research field: The Architecture of Palestinian Refugee Camps

2013-2014 **Master's of Architecture (Theory and Design)**
University of Nottingham Nottingham, the UK
Master's Dissertation Title: Urban Identity in the Age of Globalization (The Case of Al Abdali Project in Amman, Jordan).

2007-2012 **Bachelors of Science in Architecture**
German Jordanian University
Graduated second on my class, with an excellent ranking (84.2%).

2007 **High School Diploma**
Al Azizya High School (Excellent Ranking. 99.6%) Khobar, KSA

Certificates and Affiliations

Leed Green Associate 2015-2017
Jordan Engineers Association 2012-present
PechaKucha Amman City Organizer 2018-present

Software Skills

2D and 3D modeling: REVIT, AutoCad, 3D Max, Sketchup
Adobe Suite: Photoshop, Ilustrator, InDesign, Lightroom
Microsoft Office: Powerpoint, Word, Excel, Front Page

Language Skills

Arabic (Native Language)
English (Full professional Proficiency)
German (Professional Working Proficiency)
Dutch (Beginner)

24#13

In Search of Al Wehdat Camp

A Study of Paths, Edges and Walls and their Production of Transient Territories in Palestinian Refugee Camp

Nama'a Abdullah Qudah

Al Wehdat Camp, like all Palestinian refugee camps, was built in response to Al Nakba, as a space of temporary refuge to generations of Palestinian refugees who were uprooted from their homes. In this research, I conceptualized *home* as a multi-scalar territory that exists in different places, in different time intervals, all at once, through a spatio-temporal simultaneity that produces Al Wehdat Camp as a transient territory, that exists here and there, now and then, at home and in exile. Through the different chapters of this dissertation, I studied those different scales of home, the home-land, the home-city, the home-camp and the home-home, through an interdisciplinary research approach and framework that were built around three pillars: the body, movement, and territory. In my research, I studied a number of paths of displacement that the Palestinian refugees have traveled across during their uprooting from Palestine, mapping their movement to get to Al Wehdat Camp. Through that tracing of the different paths, I was able to conceptualize the camp as a point that exists at the intersection of a number of paths that have led the Palestinian refugees to the camp and also allowed them to move past it to different locations within the city. That continuous movement of displaced bodies from Palestine to Jordan have allowed the Palestinian refugees to transgress the colonial borders that has disconnected them from the space of the home-land, and allowed them to reproduce the space of Palestine in Al Wehdat Camp.

A+BE | Architecture and the Built Environment | TU Delft BK

