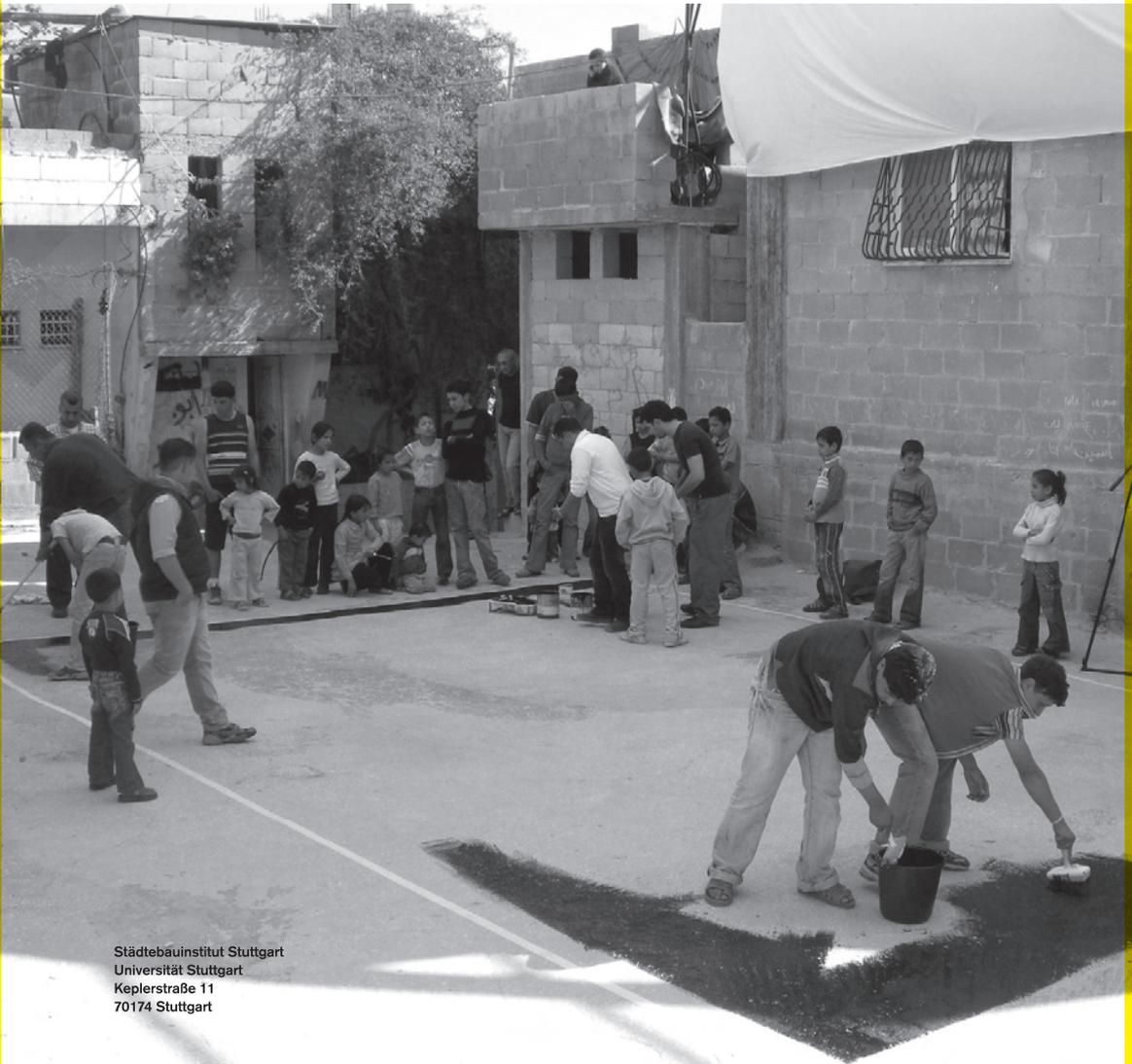


Rehabilitating Camp Cities: *Community-Driven Planning for Urbanised Refugee Camps*

vorgelegt von
Philipp Misselwitz
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Rehabilitating Camp Cities: Community-Driven Planning for Urbanised Refugee Camps

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vorgelegt von

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Zusammenfassung

Flüchtlingslager werden im Allgemeinen als eine notwendige Übergangssituation begriffen, die für den Schutz oder die Verwahrung der Opfer von Vertreibung eingerichtet wurde – von Technokraten geplant, von humanitären Organisationen geführt, vom Militär beschützt. In Diskursen vorbereitender oder baulicher Art finden Flüchtlingslager kaum Erwähnung und wenn überhaupt, dann hauptsächlich in Bezug auf eine (mögliche) Perfektionierung ihrer temporären Notfallstruktur. Ein Besuch in einem fast beliebigen Lager, von denen weltweit über Hunderte existieren, stellt uns jedoch vor eine weitaus komplexere Realität und zwingt uns dazu, unsere vorgefassten Meinungen zu ändern. Anstelle einer zeitlich begrenzten Situation finden wir ein Szenario vor, das de facto auf Dauer eingerichtet ist und sich zu verschwinden weigert. Anstelle wohlgeordneter Zeltstädte treffen wir mit größerer Wahrscheinlichkeit auf Straßen, Märkte, Läden oder öffentliche Gebäude, die von einem Dickicht improvisierter Behausungen umgeben sind: Eine urbanisierte Umgebung, die sich von ihrer Außenwelt nur noch durch die Omnipräsenz der UN-Flaggen oder der Logos der internationalen NGOs (Non-Profit-Organisationen) abhebt.

Eine nähere Untersuchung der Entwicklung von Lagern zeigt, dass diese Ambiguität sich mit fast sofortiger Wirkung entfaltet. Sobald eine Art von „Normalität“ einsetzt, manchmal nur Wochen oder Monate nach der Ankunft, passen sich die Flüchtlinge dem Leben unter neuen Bedingungen an und werden zu Lagerbewohnern. Sie werden zu Experten, was das Überleben mit geringsten Mitteln angeht, sie improvisieren, behelfen sich mit allem, was vor Ort als brauchbar verwendet werden könnte und führen somit in kürzester Zeit eine Transformation des physischen, räumlichen, sozialen und ökonomischen Umfeldes ihrer ursprünglichen Notsituation herbei. Zelte werden umgestaltet, erweitert oder durch stabilere Strukturen ersetzt. Provisorische Tische mit Waren zum Verkauf verwandeln sich in Läden. Mit der Entwicklung von Zeltstädten zu Kasbah-ähnlichen, urbanen Strukturen verkörpern palästinensische Flüchtlingslager eines der stringentesten Beispiele für diesen globalen Trend in Richtung „Camp-Urbanisierung“.

Inzwischen haben Ethnographen, Geographen und Anthropologen damit begonnen, sich der neu entstehenden Hybrid-Situationen anzunehmen. Als Folge davon entstanden neue konzeptuelle Modelle wie das der „Virtuellen Städte“ (PEROUSE et. al.) oder der „Camp Cities“ (AGIER). Ein wesentlicher Antrieb für diese Recherchen war der Wunsch, in den humanitären Instanzen und bei Gebern ein Bewusstsein für die tatsächlichen komplexen Bedürfnisse jener überfüllten, verarmten und slum-ähnlichen Umgebungen zu wecken. Bisher verhielten sich die jeweiligen Instanzen zögerlich, die Realität der urbanisierten Lager anzuerkennen. In vielen Fällen wurden progressive Maßnahmen blockiert, teils seitens der Regierung des Aufnahmelandes, teils sogar von den Lagergemeinden selbst: Im Vordergrund stets die Furcht vor einer „Normalisierung“, sprich, einer endgültigen Verwandlung des Lagers in eine „feste“ (permanente) Stadt.

Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es, Camp Cities aus stadtplanerischer Perspektive zu diskutieren. Unleugbar zählen urbanisierte Flüchtlingslager zu den labilsten, überbevölkertsten und entmenschlichsten Architekturen der Welt; dennoch ähneln sie den organisch gewachsenen Slums, die den Großteil jeder urbanen Umgebung weltweit ausmachen. Trotz offensichtlicher Unterschiede ist beiden Szenarios eine Reihe wiederkehrender und alltäglicher Probleme gemeinsam. Es scheint daher ebenso angemessen wie einleuchtend, eine Brücke zu schlagen zwischen dem vergleichsweise neuen Diskurs über urbanisierte Camps und den bereits existierenden, reichhaltigen Erfahrungen im Umgang mit infor-

meller Urbanisierung. Die Verbindung beinhaltet zwei Vorteile: Erstens geht aus der Fülle des Recherchematerials deutlich hervor, dass die in illegalen Siedlungen entwickelten Fähigkeiten wie Improvisationstalent, Zähigkeit und komplexe Überlebensstrategien ein wertvolles Instrumentarium formen, um sich auch den Bedürfnissen der Camp Cities konzeptionell anzunähern. Die analytischen und operativen Schlüsselbegriffe, die aus den Untersuchungen zur Rehabilitation und Verbesserung „klassischer“ Slums gewonnen wurden, behalten ihre Relevanz auch im Kontext der urbanisierten Camps. Zweitens, so argumentiert diese Dissertation, kann das intensive Studium der Camps auch den internationalen Diskurs über dicht bevölkerte, sich inoffiziell entwickelnde Stadtviertel bereichern.

„Von urbanen Camps lernen“ bedeutet die innovativen Praktiken anzuerkennen, die sich in diesen Camps entwickelt haben, ob mit oder ohne Hilfe – und manchmal sogar zum Trotz – der anwesenden humanitären Kräfte. Tatsächlich sind es die Camp Cities, die immer öfter zu Laboratorien werden, in denen Demokratie, Emanzipation, Geschlechtergleichheit und weitere grundlegende Gemeinschaftsangelegenheiten neu verhandelt werden. Zahlreiche Beispiele aus Flüchtlingslagern zeigen, wie der Ruf nach politischen Rechten, die Kritik an lokal verankerten Repressionstraditionen oder an autoritärer Regierungsführung zu einem „Trojanischen Pferd“ im Kampf für kulturelle und politische Reformen im Heimat- oder Gastland wurden. Die Anwesenheit der internationalen Organisationen fungiert hier als eine Art Katalysator. Auch wenn das Gros der Aufnahme-regierungen politischer Mobilisierung weiterhin mit Argwohn gegenübersteht, so beginnen doch einige das Potential der Camp Cities im Hinblick auf eine Stimulierung der lokalen Ökonomie für sich zu entdecken und nutzen die aus den Camps gewonnenen Erkenntnisse strategisch als „Entwicklungswerkzeuge“ für ihr eigenes Land.

Große Organisationen wie das UNHCR (Flüchtlingskommissariat der Vereinten Nationen) sind inzwischen zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass der traditionelle „Fürsorge“-Ansatz („die Opfer füttern“) im Kontext der urbanisierten Camps ebenso entwürdigend wie ineffektiv ist. Das Wiederaufleben des neueren „Entwicklungsansatzes“ verdeutlicht einen Sinneswandel in Richtung einer Ermutigung zu nachhaltigen Strategien und der Entwicklung sozialer Aktiva. Diese Dissertation argumentiert, dass die Implementierung einer umfassenden und integrativen urbanen Planung eine offenkundige, jedoch noch fehlende Schlüsselkomponente dieses „Entwicklungsansatzes“ darstellt. Eine enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Lagergemeinden, Architekten und anderen Beteiligten (Stakeholders) ist wesentlich, um ein räumliches Koordinationsinstrument für eine gesamtheitliche Entwicklung zu erarbeiten, innerhalb dessen die Prioritäten verschiedener Projekte und entsprechende integrative soziale, bauliche und technische Maßnahmen definiert werden können. Bis dahin wurden materielle Verbesserungen überwiegend unter technokratischen Aspekten gehandelt. Die Einbeziehung von Architekten und Stadtplanern eröffnet einen weitaus breiter gefächerten strategischen Ansatz. Eine partizipatorische städtische Planung stellt effektivere Instrumentarien im Umgang mit so dringenden Problemen wie Übervölkerung und unzulänglicher Infrastruktur bereit und verschafft durch Konsolidierung und Neuorganisation eine Atempause, die Camp Cities dringend benötigen.

Die Beweisführung dieser Arbeit basiert auf den direkten Erfahrungen des Autors als Initiator einer Pilot-Initiative zur Einführung von partizipativer Planung in Flüchtlingslagern. Im Auftrag der Universität Stuttgart war er mit der Leitung eines Planungsteams

im palästinensischen Flüchtlingslager Al Fawwar, West Bank, betraut und entwickelte eine neue operative Methodik zur „Verbesserung der Planung in Flüchtlingslagern“ (Camp Improvement Planning – CIP). Die CIP-Methodik wurde inzwischen von der UNRWA als Schlüsselinstrument zur Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen in allen 58 offiziellen palästinensischen Flüchtlingslagern übernommen. Absicht des Autors ist es, über die Fokussierung auf palästinensische Camps die potentielle Wichtigkeit einer urbanen Planung im Hinblick auf Flüchtlingslager weltweit zu verdeutlichen. Im Besonderen konzentriert sich die Arbeit auf die Rolle von Architekten und Stadtplanern als Vermittler partizipativer Planungsprozesse, sowie die Möglichkeit durch ihre Erfahrungen und Fachwissen zur visionären Neu-Konzeption von Camp Cities beizutragen.

Einführung zu den einzelnen Teilen und Kapiteln

Teil I - Die Urbanisierung von Flüchtlingslagern als globale Herausforderung

Der erste Teil der Dissertation gibt einen allgemeinen Überblick über das globale Phänomen der Urbanisierung von Flüchtlingslagern. Kapitel 1.1. beginnt mit einer Darstellung der wichtigsten historischen und gegenwärtigen Trends und Schlüsselfaktoren im internationalen Flüchtlingsschutz unter spezieller Berücksichtigung der Arbeit der UNHCR. Anschließend werden die komplexen und oft umstrittenen Begriffe und Definitionen diskutiert, nach denen entschieden wird, wer internationalen Schutz verdient. Kapitel 1.2. stellt die „Flüchtlingslager“ als eine der bekanntesten, aber auch umstrittensten Schutzmaßnahmen vor. Nach einer kurzen historischen Einführung in die Ursprünge und verschiedenen Einflüsse, die die Lagerarchitekturen bislang geprägt haben, werden „Flüchtlingslager“ mit anderen Formen der Flüchtlingsunterbringung und räumlichen Schutzmodellen verglichen. In Kapitel 1.3. wird der Begriff der „Camp-Urbanisierung“ als globales Phänomen zur Diskussion gestellt, wobei sich Analyse und Interpretation auf bisher nicht ausgewertetes, von der UNHCR bezogenes Material stützt. Zum Schluss werden die Konzepte der „Camp City“, der „Virtuellen Stadt“ und anderen, von internationalen Wissenschaftlern entwickelten Modellen vorgestellt und im Hinblick auf die Urbanisierung von Lagern untersucht.

Kapitel 2 beinhaltet eine kritische Reflexion der vorhandenen Mittel und politischen Richtlinien der UNHCR, der Hauptkommission in internationalen Flüchtlingsfragen. Im Mittelpunkt stehen Debatten und Diskurse, die zur Wiederbelebung des „Entwicklungsgedankens“ und einem „Rechte-orientierten“ Ansatz (rights-based approach) in den Grundsätzen und Programmen der UNHCR geführt haben. Allerdings offenbart allein die Kurzanalyse aktueller Zustände in drei exemplarischen afrikanischen Camps die vielen politischen Hürden und Hindernisse, die einer vollen Implementierung einer Entwicklungs- und Rechte-orientierten Vorgehensweise im Wege stehen.

Teil II - Fallstudien: Palästinensische Flüchtlingslager in der West Bank

Der zweite Teil der Dissertation beginnt mit einer Einführung in die Situation der palästinensischen Flüchtlingslager, dem Hauptthema dieses Papiers, und veranschaulicht in detail die Gründe, die zu einem beispiellosen Urbanisationsprozess geführt haben. Kapitel 1.1. bietet eine Übersicht der wichtigsten Entwicklungsstadien der Flüchtlingskrise seit 1948 und der Geschichte der UNRWA als die UN-Instanz, die für Belange der Flüchtlinge einsteht. Eine Übersicht regionaler Aspekte wird in Kapitel 1.2. vorgestellt, einschließlich einer Kurzanalyse der aktuellen Situation in den 58 offiziellen Flüchtlingslagern im Libanon, Syrien, Jordanien, der West Bank und im Gazastreifen. Alle La-

ger weisen vergleichbare, wenn nicht noch extremere, Bedingungen fortgeschrittener Urbanisation auf, die in den von der UNHCR verwalteten Camps offenbar werden.

Kapitel 2 fasst die Ergebnisse von drei Fallstudien von palästinensischen Flüchtlingslagern zusammen. Die aus dem bereits erwähnten Pilotplanungsprojekt (UNRWA-Universität Stuttgart) gewonnenen Basisdaten werden in Kombination mit den Ergebnissen zusätzlicher Feldarbeit interpretiert und führen so zu einer tiefgehenden und detaillierten Situationsanalyse. Kapitel 2.1. beginnt mit einer gesamtheitlichen Einführung in die nunmehr 60-jährige Entwicklungsgeschichte der Flüchtlingslager, unter Einbeziehung von Archivmaterial der UNRWA. In Kapitel 2.2. werden die aus der Recherche über informelle, urbane Siedlungen bekannten Analysemethoden auf die Fallstudien angewandt: Landnutzung, Zoneneinteilungen, Baudichte und Bevölkerungsdichte, Gebäudenzustand, Infrastrukturen – gefolgt von einer Analyse der Integration der Flüchtlingslager in ihren jeweiligen städtischen, vorstädtischen oder ländlichen Kontext. Kapitel 2.3. vervollständigt die räumlich-physische Beschreibung durch eine Analyse der Urbanisierung aus sozialer und kultureller Perspektive. Unter anderem werden die Strukturen und vielfältigen Aufgabenbereiche lokaler Institutionen beschrieben, die Rolle der Führungselite der Lagerpopulation, Geschlechtsrollen, sowie interne wie externe Konfliktmuster und vorhandene Mechanismen zur Konfliktlösung.

Kapitel 3 fasst die Resultate der Fallstudienanalyse in operative Vorschläge und Empfehlungen für eine umfassende Verbesserung der Lagerbedingungen.

Teil III - Partizipative Planung für palästinensische Camp Cities

Der dritte Teil der Dissertation reflektiert kritisch über das Pilotprojekt der partizipativen Camp-Planung, das zwischen 2007 und 2008 von dem Team der UNRWA/Universität Stuttgart durchgeführt wurde. Das erste Kapitel befasst sich mit den Konflikten und Debatten, die die Diskussion um „Camp-Verbesserungen“ traditionell begleiteten, gefolgt von einer Analyse der Faktoren, die schließlich zu einer neuen UNRWA-Initiative zur Verbesserung der Flüchtlingslager („Camp Improvement Initiative“) führten.

Kapitel 2 untersucht die wichtigsten Planungsstadien des Pilot-Projekts. Es beginnt mit einer kritischen Einschätzung der Ausgangssituation und der ersten Kontaktherstellung zur Flüchtlingslagergemeinschaft von al Fawwar. Es folgt eine Einschätzung der partizipativen Umfragen zur Ermittlung der Entwicklungsprioritäten und eine Diskussion des ersten Entwurfes des „Plans zur Verbesserung der Lagerbedingungen“ („Camp Improvement Plan“ – CIP) inklusive der definierten Implimentierungsmaßnahmen. Kapitel 2.2. positioniert die angewandte Planungsmethodik im Kontext der globalen Diskussion um Entwicklungsplanungen. Anschliessend wird verdeutlicht, wie die kritische Evaluierung der Erfahrungen aus dem Pilot-Projekt zur Formulierung eines 7-stufigen, operativen Planungsmanuals für eine umfassende, partizipative Rehabilitation aller palästinensischer Flüchtlingslager führte. Das Kapitel schließt mit einem kritischen Kommentar zu bislang unbeachtet gebliebenen Schlüsselaspekten, die nach Auffassung des Autors in Angriff genommen werden müssen, um die volle Umsetzung der CIP-Methode in allen Lagern zu gewährleisten.

Kapitel 3 diskutiert drei spekulative Entwicklungsszenarien: Ein „worst-case“-Szenario, das eine katastrophale Zukunft für die Camp Cities für den Fall in Aussicht stellt, dass die CIP-Methode oder vergleichbare Verbesserungs-Initiativen scheitern. Ein

zweites Szenario beschäftigt sich damit, wie eine erfolgreiche Implementierung der CIP-Methode diese düstere Prognose durchbrechen könnte – ein „bestmöglicher Kompromiss“ bei andauernder Flüchtlingskrise. Auch wenn die Verbesserung der Flüchtlingslager die ausstehende politische Lösung weder ersetzen kann noch sollte, muss, mittelfristig gesehen, die traditionelle Vorstellung von „Flüchtlingslagern“ radikal undefiniert werden, und zwar im Interesse all jener, die gegenwärtig unter der extremen Enge, der Armut und der entwürdigenden Umgebung zu leiden haben. Das letzte Szenario stellt eine Situation vor, in welcher „der Friede ausbricht“. Wie könnte sich ein umfassender Friedensvertrag auf die Realität der Camp Cities auswirken?

Teil IV - Schlussfolgerungen

Im letzten Teil der Dissertation zieht der Autor allgemeine Schlüsse in Bezug auf die Anwendbarkeit der CIP-Methodik auf Flüchtlingslager außerhalb des Mittleren Ostens. Palästinensische Camps zählen sowohl zu den urbanisier testen als auch zu den am höchsten subventionierten Flüchtlingslagern weltweit und sollten eine Führungsrolle in der Suche nach innovativen Ansätzen im Umgang mit Camp-Urbanisierung übernehmen. Angesichts der globalen Zunahme an semipermanenten, verstädterten Lagern, könnten die UNHCR und andere Akteure der internationalen Flüchtlingsprotektion von den Erfahrungen der Palästinenser profitieren. Durch Anwendung des palästinensischen Modells einer integrativen, partizipativen Planung auf Camps, die noch nicht das kritische Level der Überfüllung erreicht haben, ließe sich ein „im Entstehen begriffene Desaster“ eventuell abwenden. Außerdem vermag das CIP-Modell eine Vorbildfunktion zu erfüllen, die sich auch für nicht-Flüchtlings-Kontexte als nützlich erweisen könnte, nämlich den illegalen, überfüllten und verarmten städtischen Umgebungen des Mittleren Ostens; dazu wäre sie hilfreich bei der Einführung von partizipativen Planungsmethoden, und der nachhaltigen Einbeziehung von lokalen Gemeinden in strategische Planungsprozesse.

Summary

Refugee camps are commonly thought of as transitory emergency situations set up for the protection or containment of displaced victims, planned by technocrats, run by humanitarian missions, protected by the military. Architectural or planning discourse rarely includes refugee camps and, if at all, mainly in order to discuss how to perfect its temporary emergency structures. A visit to almost any of the hundreds of refugee camps that exist worldwide, however, confronts us with a more complex reality, forcing us to re-think our preconceptions. Instead of temporary situations we find *de facto* permanent settings that refuse to disappear. Instead of ordered tent cities, we are more likely to find streets, markets, shops or public buildings surrounded by jungles of makeshift buildings: An urbanised setting, often only distinguishable from its host environment by the ubiquity of UN flags or the logos of international NGOs. We are confronted with an ambiguous space somewhere between emergency camp and city.

A closer study of the evolution of camps reveals that this ambiguity emerges almost at an instance. As soon as a form of normality sets in, sometimes only weeks or months after arrival, refugees turn into camp dwellers, adapting themselves to life in a new environment. Camp dwellers become experts in surviving on minimal means, improvising, making do with what can be found and almost immediately transforming the physical, spatial, social and economic constitution of their initial emergency setting. Tents are adapted, extended or replaced with more stable structures. Makeshift tables with goods for sale are turned into shops. In sixty years, Palestine refugee camps evolved from tent cities into kasbah-like structures, representing some of the most extreme examples of the global trend towards “camp urbanisation”. They are considered to be amongst the most congested urban settings in the world, suggesting what the future of many other younger Camp Cities might hold.

The work of ethnographers, geographers or anthropologists has begun to investigate the hybrid situations of urbanized camps and as a result new conceptual models such as “Virtual Cities” (PEROUSE et.al.) or “Camp Cities” (AGIER) have emerged. Much of the research has been motivated by the drive to raise awareness amongst humanitarian agencies and donors to the actual needs of congested, impoverished, slum-like settings. So far, however, agencies have been slow to acknowledge the reality of urbanised camps. In many instances, progressive action has been blocked because of the fears of host governments - and sometimes even camp communities themselves - of “normalisation”; that is, of camps becoming permanent cities. For many, even the concept of Camp Cities is still a taboo.

This dissertation aims to discuss Camp Cities within an urban planning context. While acknowledging that urbanised refugee camps count amongst the world’s most unstable, congested and dehumanising built environments, they are in many ways not dissimilar to the informally developed slums, which account for the major part of the urbanised world. Despite obvious differences, certain recurring and common problems emerge within both settings. Linking the comparatively new discourse on urbanised camps and the rich discourse on informal urbanisation is therefore only natural and timely. This connection offers two advantages: Firstly, the rich body of research that has taught us to understand and utilize the skills of improvisation and resilience, as well as the coping strategies, within squatter settlements can provide valuable conceptual tools for addressing the needs of Camp Cities. The analytical and operational tools developed for slum upgrading and rehabilitation are highly relevant to the context of urbanised camps. Secondly, this

dissertation argues that a closer study of urbanised camps can enrich the international discourse on dense informally developed neighbourhoods. “Learning from urbanised camps” means acknowledging the many innovative practices that have emerged in camps, with or without the help of - and sometimes even despite - the presence of humanitarian missions. Indeed, Camp Cities have frequently become frontiers of democratisation, emancipation, gender equality and grass-root participation. There are numerous examples where the championing of political rights and challenging of both repressive local traditions and authoritarian government policies have acted as “Trojan Horses” for cultural and political reform. Here, the presence of international organisations has a catalyst-like effect. While most host governments remain wary of political mobilization, some have begun to recognize the potential for Camp Cities to stimulate the local economy and strategically use camps as “development tools” for their own countries.

Large refugee organisations such as the UNHCR have come to realize that a traditional relief-based approach (“feeding victims”) is both dehumanising and ineffective in the context of urbanised camps. The recent revival of a “developmental approach” represents a shift of emphasis towards encouraging self-sustainability and the development of social assets. This dissertation argues that an obvious, yet still missing key component of the “developmental approach” is the introduction of comprehensive and integrated urban planning. Close cooperation between camp communities and other stakeholders and architects and planners is needed to provide a spatial development and coordination framework for defining development priorities and integrating social, economic as well as spatial and physical improvement measures. Until now, physical improvement has largely been considered a technocratic issue. Architects and planners can offer a much broader strategic approach to spatial development: Participatory urban planning can not only more effectively address urgent problems such as congestion and substandard infrastructure, but also create the breathing space that Camp Cities will need in the future.

This argument is based on the direct experience of the author in devising and delivering a pilot initiative to introduce community-driven urban planning to a refugee camp context. On behalf of Stuttgart University, the author led a planning team for the Palestinian refugee camp of Al Fawwar, West Bank, developing the new operational methodology of “Camp Improvement Planning” (CIP). The CIP methodology has since been adopted as a key developmental tool by UNRWA for improving living conditions in all of the 58 official Palestine refugee camps. By focusing on Palestine camps it is the author’s intention to shed light on the potential relevance of urban planning to refugee camp environments worldwide. In particular, there is a focus on the role architects and urban planners can play in facilitating participatory planning processes as well as providing guidance and expertise in the development of a spatial vision for Camp Cities.

Introduction to Parts and Chapters

Part I – The Urbanisation of Refugee Camps as a Global Challenge

The first section of the dissertation provides an overview of global phenomenon of refugee camp urbanisation. Chapter 1.1 begins with a historic and current overview of the major trends and key actors in international refugee protection, with a particular emphasis on UNHCR. This is followed by a discussion of the complex and much contested definitions of who is and is not considered to be a refugee deserving of international protection. Chapter 1.2 introduces “refugee camps” as one of the most established, yet also most frequently criticised method for refugee protection. Following a short historical introduction to the origins and diverse architectural influences that have impacted on the architecture of refugee camps, “refugee camps” will be compared to other forms of refugee concentrations and models of protection. Chapter 1.3 will discuss “camp urbanisation” as a global phenomenon, analysing and interpreting original data on refugee camps obtained from UNHCR. Finally, the notions of “Camp City”, “Virtual City” and other conceptual models developed by international scholars in relation to camp urbanisation will be introduced.

Chapter 2 critically reflects upon the existing tools and policy guidelines developed by UNHCR, the main agent of international refugee protection. The chapter focuses on debates and discussions that have led to the recent revival of “developmental” and “rights-based” approaches to UNHCR policies and programmes. However, the brief analysis of actual situations in three exemplary African camps reveals the many political hurdles and obstacles, which prevent a full implementation of a developmental and rights based approach in practice.

Part II –

Palestine Camp Cities: Case Studies of Urbanised Refugee Camps in the Near East

The second part of the dissertation introduces Palestine refugee camps, the main focus of this dissertation and explains in detail the factors that have led to a spectacular and perhaps unparalleled urbanisation process. Chapter 1.1 provides an overview of the main evolutionary stages of the refugee crisis since 1948, as well as the history of UNRWA, the UN Agency, which provides services to the refugees. A regional overview is provided in chapter 1.2, including a brief analysis of the present constitution of the 58 official refugee camps and the large refugee concentrations dispersed across Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank and the Gaza Strip. All camps reveal comparable, albeit more extreme, conditions of advanced urbanisation visible in many UNHCR administered camps around the world.

Chapter 2 outlines the results of three detailed case studies of exemplary Palestine refugee camps. Basic data generated by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project managed by the author, is combined with additional fieldwork and interpreted to form an in-depth situation analysis. Chapter 2.1 provides a general introduction and historical background. Using archival data, the author traces the historical evolution of the camps. In chapter 2.2 tools and methodologies from urban research in informal settlement contexts are applied to analyse land use, zoning, degrees of density and congestion, building safety, infrastructure and the camp’s physical integration into its urban, suburban or rural context. Chapter 2.3 complements the spatial and physical analysis with an analysis of urbanisation in social and cultural terms including the camp’s institutions, leadership as well as gender roles, internal and external conflicts and resolution models.

Chapter 3 synthesizes the findings of the case study analysis into operational recommendations for comprehensive camp improvement.

Part III – Camp Improvement Planning: Piloting Community-driven Urban Rehabilitation for Palestine Camp Cities

This section provides a critical reflection on the pilot project in participatory camp improvement conducted by the UNRWA-Stuttgart planning team between 2007 and 2008. The first chapter begins by discussing the conflicts and debates that have surrounded camp rehabilitation, followed by an analysis of the factors that led to UNRWA's camp improvement initiative.

Chapter 2 critically reflects upon the main stages of the UNRWA/Stuttgart pilot planning project in Fawwar camp, beginning with preliminary research, first contacts with the community, participatory needs assessments and leading to the drafting of the first "Camp Improvement Plan" (CIP) and implementation projects. Chapter 2.2 reflects on the methodology related to current global discourse on development planning. It explains how a critical reflection of the pilot experience led to the formulation of a 7-step methodology for comprehensive, community-driven camp improvement and the compilation of an operational manual for universal application. The chapter ends with a critical comment on key outstanding issues that need to be resolved before camp improvement can be fully launched in all camps.

Chapter 3 proposes three speculative scenarios: A worst case scenario which predicts a catastrophic future for Camp Cities in case the camp improvement initiative or its successors will fail. A second scenario speculates on how successful camp improvement might prevent the gloomy predictions of scenario one as a "best possible compromise" in the context of an enduring refugee crisis. While camp rehabilitation cannot and should not substitute a long-overdue political settlement, in the intermediate term, the traditional notion of "Refugee camps" could be radically redefined in the interest of those suffering under the extreme congestion, poverty and dehumanised environment of the present. The final scenario describes a situation in which "peace breaks out". How might the reality of a negotiated peaceful settlement ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict impact on the Camp Cities?

Part IV – Conclusion

In the final part of the dissertation the author draws more general conclusions on the applicability of the CIP methodology to refugee camps beyond the Middle East, arguing that Palestine camps – which are both, the most urbanised, and also the best-funded – should lead the search for innovative approaches to camp urbanisation worldwide. Facing increasing protracted and urbanised camp situations, the UNHCR and other actors of the international refugee regime could benefit from the Palestinian experience. The application of the Palestine model of integrated, community driven urban planning to other camps that have not yet reached the critical levels of congestion could prevent a "disaster in the making". Furthermore, the CIP model provides lessons which can be useful to non-refugee contexts such as informally developed, congested and impoverished urban settings in the Middle Eastern region and beyond, and help to champion notions such as grass-root participation, community empowerment, and strategic planning.

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Part I

The Urbanisation of Refugee Camps as a Global Challenge

Chapter 1

Refugee Camp Urbanisation as a Global Phenomenon

1.1

Actors and Agents of International Refugee Protection

1.1.1 Introduction to Refugee Movements and Protection in the c20 and c21

Throughout history, people have been forced to flee from their homes and the humanitarian principle of offering refuge to them was well established before the 17th century when the term “*refugee*” was coined for the Protestants fleeing France to avoid forced conversion. The political upheaval in Europe in the 19th century gave rise to the term “*émigrés*” to refer to political revolutionaries who fled persecution. In the 20th century the forced expulsion of people who were then denied their nationality brought in the concept of the “*stateless*”. Despite the long history of refugeehood, it was in the c20 when public discourse on refugees dramatically changed and the “*international refugee regime*”¹ (ZOLBERG et al. 1989) and current understanding of the “*refugee*” was born, which subsumed the three earlier notions. The “*international refugee regime*” of today includes the United Nations and various subsidiary agencies, National Governments and their agencies, as well as a vast number of non-governmental institutions and grass-root initiatives - a global network of actors and agents, which will be described in more detail in section 1.1.2. Before introducing the actors in detail, this section intends to provide a short overview of the key events and most important factors that impacted on refugee movements in the c20 and c21 and the way we perceive refugees and refugee protection today.

Overcoming the European Refugee of World War I and II

GIL LOESCHER describes refugee protection before the c20 as ad hoc, pending on individual initiatives of countries and without international mechanism for assistance. A global refugee regime, “*comprising a formal international organisation for refugees, legal conventions, and an international structure to care for displaced only began to emerge in the aftermath of the First World War.*”² (GIL LOESCHER et al. 2008) The gradual introduction of new immigration laws, national passports and other legal and administrative barriers in response to nationalism and the nation state system created new problems for displaced. Many were unable to produce such documents upon arrival in the host country and therefore needed international protection. Millions of people were made stateless after the Soviet revolution and the collapse of the two multi-national, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires. At the initiative of the Red Cross and the League of Nations the first “*High Commissioner for Refugees*”³ was created and mandated to protect Russian, and later also Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian and Armenian refugees. However, a universal definition of “*refugee*” was lacking and only specific groups were recognized as such, an omission with catastrophic consequences for other, such as European Jews under Nazi persecution. Only the aftermath of the Second World War, when tens of millions of displaced people across Europe posed a huge challenge to the international community, necessary reform efforts were made. The 1947 establishment of the “*International Refugee Organization (IRO)*” for instance intended to spread the burden of refugee aid across the globe, mandated to provide material assistance to refugees and to try to ensure that people were able to return to their countries of origin if desired or to re-establish their connection to a state in some other way. In December 1950 it was succeeded by the “*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*”⁴, coinciding with the drafting of a new United Nations refugee definition on refugees. In July 1951, the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was approved providing a long overdue definition of who is a refugee and working basis for the UNHCR. Due to the fact that the convention was passed in Geneva, it is generally referred to as the “*Geneva Convention*”.⁵ While in 1951, the definition of “*refugee*” was limited to protecting European refugees after World War II, displaced before January 1, 1951, the Protocol re-

¹ Zolberg, Aristide, Suhrke, Astri, Aguayo, Serio. “*Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*”, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1989.

² Loescher, Gil, Batts, Alexander, Milner, James. “*The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – The Politics and Practice of Refugee Protection Into the Twenty-First Century*”, Routledge – Global Institution Series, London, 2008

³ Under the leadership of Fridjof Nansen the High Commissioner for Refugees introduced the Nansen Passport, a passport for refugees, for which it was awarded the 1938 Nobel Peace Prize.

⁴ The UNHCR was mandated to provide international protection to refugees and to seek solutions through voluntary repatriation or ‘assimilation’ (UNHCR Statute 1950, Article 1).

⁵ The Geneva Convention’s definition replaced an earlier, much broader and open definition: Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided that “*everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.*” (source: Loescher et al. 2008).

moved geographical and time limit.⁶ This definition is still the legal basis for UNHCR and key reference to most other humanitarian agencies worldwide (see also sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 for further discussions on UNHCR's Mandate and refugee definitions).

Refugees and the Cold War

The foundation of the UNHCR took place against the background of a deepening east-west conflict and the beginnings of the Cold War. Right from the beginning, the UNHCR was seen as a project led by the US and her European Allies. Yugoslavia was the only Soviet Bloc state actively participating in the establishment negotiations, which were dominated by the US. According to LOESCHER, both, the formulation of the UNHCR statute and the Geneva convention's definition of "persecution" made it an ideal tool to be adapted for ideological purposes, i.e. to "stigmatize the fledging Communist regimes as persecutor", such as in the 1953 crisis in East Germany and the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary (LOESCHER et al. 2008). US policy towards the UNHCR followed a dual strategy: As the key donor, US ensured control over posts and, to some degree, also its policy. At the same time, the US was keen to limit the powers of the office. Initial Mandate was only granted for three years, the Agency was placed on a tight budget, its work restricted to legal protection only, not being allowed to administer any programmes of material assistance. The US had refused to ratify the 1951 Geneva Convention (only the later 1967 protocol was ratified) and pursued its own, parallel, anti-communist refugee policy.⁷ LOESCHER states that "no international organisation has had such an unpromising beginning as UNHCR" and indeed it was only due to constant pressure of various High Commissioners that this restrictive mandate was slowly extended. According to LOESCHER, the US eventually gave in to an extended Mandate beyond Europe, including the delivery of material assistance, as it recognized that the UNHCR could be a useful servant in Cold War battlegrounds worldwide (for example 700,000 Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, or Northern Korean refugees in South Korea).

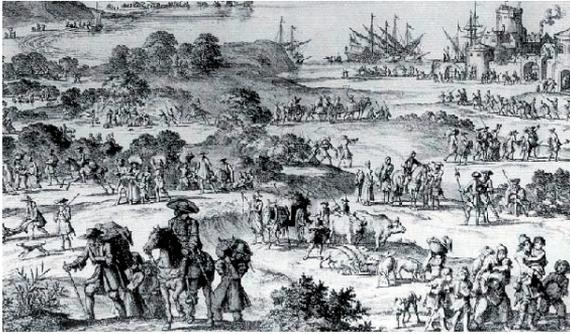
From a European Problem to a Global Problem

By 1960, all refugee camps of Europe were closed and the WWII stipulated refugee crisis officially ended. However, UNHCR had long become a global refugee organisation. Instead of being an exporter of refugees, Europe now became an importer as conflicts triggered by superpower rivalry, violent decolonization, and post-independent conflicts (which also mostly took place against the background of interference from either the US or Russia as both sides were vying for influence in the developing world) led to new refugee crises. In Africa and Asia millions of fugitives from persecution, hunger, and natural disasters continued to scramble for secure homes. Refugee numbers have been on a steady increase. While in the early 1950s, 1.5m displaced persons were recorded, by 1990 this figure had swelled to 45m, following a major increase since the beginning of the 1980s, which is shown at the graph below. Amongst the most important factors that contributed to this sharp rise are:

- The ongoing competition between the superpowers in Africa (where most refugee crises emerged) not only triggered the arming of local regimes and militia and therefore contributed to a sharp rise in conflicts.
- The USA as the main donor to UNHCR continued to have a strategic interest in refugees as an ideological, which could demonstrate the "failure" of communist-minded regimes such as Ethiopia or Mozambique. UNHCR received large funds to make refugees in Sudan (1.5m Christian Eritreans) or Somalia (Ethiopian Refugees) visible, aided by the emerging news agencies such as CNN (founded in 1980), which guaranteed worldwide exposure.

⁶ The definition of a refugee according to Article 1 of the Geneva Convention as amended by the 1967 Protocol: "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." (source: Wikipedia). The definition does not cover those displaced persons who have not crossed an international border, also named Internally Displaced Persons IDPs.

⁷ As a non-signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, the US developed its own legislation, which was deeply linked to Cold War attempts to expose human suffering in Soviet controlled states: In 1948 the Displaced Persons Act, primarily inspired by anti-Communism, finally led to a relaxation of US immigration policy. The US Escapee Program was established in the same year, and offered sanctuary to a limited number of refugees from Communist countries. The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 provided for the admission over three years of 214,000 refugees - of these, it was laid down that 186,000 should be from Communist countries.



→ 001
Hugenots from France on their escape route
 (Detail of print by Jan Leyken, 1696)

After 1685 more than 200,000 protestant French citizens (Hugenots) fled persecution or forced conversion. Refugees were welcomed in Holland, Switzerland and the protestant areas of Germany where their presence stimulated local economic and cultural development. (source: www.zeitstrahl.bildung-lsa.de)



→ 002
First World War Belgian Refugees in UK

Belgian refugees arrive in Gateshead port (United Kingdom) in 1918 to return to their homeland.



→ 003
Second World War Refugees

Track of refugees in a destroyed French city in the last years of World War II.

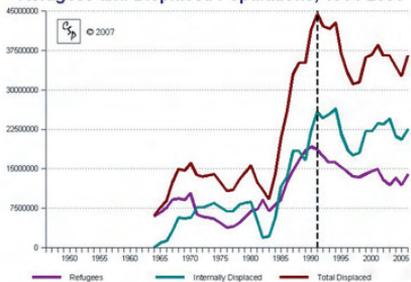


→ 004, 005
Refugees as a Political Propaganda Tool in the Cold War

Above: Propaganda poster against the perceived threat of Russia under Josef Stalin
 Right: Refugees from Cuba arrive in Florida to a press conference. Media coverage of refugees was a major tool in the US propaganda war.



Refugees and Displaced Populations, 1964-2006



→ 006

Displaced Populations (Refugees and IDPs) 1964-2006

Graph of the annual numbers of transnational refugees (including asylum seekers) and internally displaced civilians for all countries, as reported in the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants' (USCRI) annual series World Refugee Survey (the most recent edition, 2007, counts displaced populations as of December 31, 2006). Beginning with the 2007 edition, the USCRI no longer reports figures for "internally displaced populations" (IDPs); estimates of IDPs are now reported annually by The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. The enormous increase in the global population of forcibly displaced persons beginning in the mid-1980s is difficult to ascertain. There are surely some reporting issues involved but it appears that the magnitude of the increase may be best explained by a confluence of at least four factors: 1) armed conflicts are more likely to be located in poorer countries; 2) the protractedness of societal conflicts progressively challenges the ability of societies to meet and maintain basic needs production;



→ 007, 008

"Economic Migrants"

Above: A track of economic migrants on their way through the Sahara towards Europe. Right: German Magazine headline "Attack of the Poor" with a lead story on Europe's fear of a mass migration from poor countries. (source: Spiegel Magazine No 26 (26.06.2006))



3) there is a breakdown in distinctions between combatants and non-combatant populations; and 4) there is a tremendous expansion in the numbers and capacities of non-governmental organizations willing to provide humanitarian assistance to war-torn societies.. (source: www.systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm)



→ 009

Asylum Seeker Camp in Rotterdam

Asylum seekers in the Dutch city of Rotterdam are forced to reside on a container float until their asylum applications have been processed.

→ 010

Asylum Seeker Camps in/ around Europe

Blue (camps for asylum applications), yellow (rejected asylum applicants about to be deported), red (mix of the two). source: Migreurop 2004

• In the 1980s, the numbers and capacities of non-governmental organizations willing to provide humanitarian assistance to war-torn societies tremendously expanded, which also meant that more and more refugees and displaced persons were actually counted.

Protracted Refugee Situations in the Post Cold-War Era

In 2007, 67m persons including refugees and Internally Displaced Persons were recorded as victims of forced relocation caused by violence, wars or natural disasters.⁸ Although numbers have always fluctuated and lowered in the 1990s, much seems to point to the assumption that the recent increase in refugee and IDPs numbers will not be temporary. The world is likely to face an expanding displacement crisis, particularly triggered by potentially vast numbers of IDPs due to the following factors:

1) Localisation of conflicts: After having been concealed for a long time by the Cold War “*offering them an ideological cover in lieu of a deeper sense, and above all it dominated the political and military systems of the regions in conflict*”⁹ (MICHEL AGIER 2008), local wars between tribes, ethnic groups or armed factions erupt. Militarization and polarisation within developing world, a legacy of the Cold War can still be felt. In general, however, the contributing factors and patterns of wars have become much more complex, including social wars, urban revolts, ethnic wars, guerrilla wars, Islamist rebellion, expulsions, targeted killings, oppressions or terror attacks. Now, combatants and militias become professionals of permanent warfare (AGIER 2008), often overlapping with criminal gangs. An indicator of the localisation of conflict is the sharp rise in conflict-related internally displaced (26m IDPs in 2007) that have vastly outnumbered the 11m “refugees” who crossed international borders.¹⁰

2) Competition for energy and natural resources: The bipolar Cold War order has been replaced by a more complex system of multiple competing actors. New powers such as China or India are building global spheres of influence in the developing world to secure vital energy and natural resources. In the case of the USA, the same interest is blurred with its global war on terror that has led to a far-reaching confrontation with the Islamic world. Russia's new assertion over the Caucasus region is in part motivated by extending its dominant position over European energy supply.

3) Natural disasters: It is still highly debated whether the frequency with which major natural disasters seem to strike in recent years is coincidental (international news coverage is now more widespread and more developed than ever before) or whether it is an early effect of global warming. The vast number of internally displaced due to natural disasters has risen to 25m, almost the same number as conflict-related IDPs. Often natural disasters such as drought or flooding combine with conflicts to multiply displacement. In recent years, the UNHCR has already taken on more and more post natural-disaster-management such as earthquakes (Pakistan) or Tsunami instead of focussing on recognized refugees only. This trend is expected to continue.

4) Harsh asylum policies of the First World: While most of the world's post WW II refugees were resettled in Western countries and resettlement programmes continued throughout the Cold War, the 1990s marked a turning point. The improvement in communication and the raise of air travel lured more and more asylum seekers to Europe or the US and Northern governments responded with harsh immigration laws and the dramatic reduction of resettlement schemes. JENNIFER HYNDMAN notes: “*As states increasingly shirk their legal obligations to those who seek asylum and par down their respective welfare states, they [are] looking at multinational organisations such as UNHCR to take care for the refugee problem. UNHCR is poised to do the job and is paid sizeable sums by states to provide humanitarian assistance... to take over responsibilities that formerly belonged to them...*”¹¹

⁸ see UNHCR, 2007 Global Trends, 2008: The figure of 67m includes refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs). For full discussion on refugee and IDP numbers and definitions see chapter 1.1.3.

⁹ Agier, Michel. “On the Margins of the World – The Refugee Experience Today”, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008
¹⁰ source: UNHCR, 2007 Global Trends, 2008 (the figure is not including 4.6m Palestine refugees)

¹¹ source: Hyndman, Jennifer. Managing Displacement – Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism”, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, page 14

As a consequence, none of the durable solutions - repatriation, local integration and resettlement - poses a viable option and refugee crises seem more desperate than ever before. Not only are numbers on the rise again. In the early 2000s the average age of exile changed from 9 years (early 1990s) to 17 years and the majority of refugee situations are now termed “Protracted Refugee Situations” (PRS), which will be more fully discussed in chapter 1.3.1. PRS often resulted in refugees ending up in a situation of dependency and marginalization (LOESCHER et al. 2008), overcrowded camps in which refugees are “warehoused”. In 2008 it was estimated that over three quarters of registered refugees (excluding IDPs) or 8.5m¹² resided in protracted situations with no durable solution in sight.

This dissertation will focus on the new reality of congested and urbanised camps which are part of the larger problem of Protracted Refugee Situations. Chapter 2 will investigate how far current UNHCR tools are aware and able to deal with the more complex needs of urbanised camps.

¹² source: The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), www.refugees.org, 2008

1.1.2 The UNHCR and Other Main Actors of Global Refugee Protection

The following section will provide a brief overview of the main actors and agents involved in today's "global refugee regime", including United Nations agencies, host governments and its agencies, as well as globally acting NGOs. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) – a separate body assisting Palestine refugees will be introduced in more detail in Part II of this dissertation.

(1) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

From its foundation in December 1950 to the present day, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) dramatically evolved from a temporary Agency with a specific task to the most powerful designated humanitarian agency in the world. The UNHCR is currently active in support of 31,7m¹³ "persons of concern" that no longer just include "refugees" but also "internally displaced people" or other migrants affected by persecution or violence (for statistics see section 1.1.3). It is responsible for over 150 refugee camps worldwide (not including IDP camps). It advises governments in their refugee and asylum policies, as well as in their disaster relief programmes. It monitors the compliance with norms, rules and decision-making procedures of those states that have signed up to the 1951 Geneva Convention (and the 1967 protocol), which continues to be the legal base for its operations. In the following, the Agency's aims and objectives, its organisational structure and key areas of operation.

Aims and Objectives

The UNHCR is mandated to protect refugees and seek a durable solutions to the respective refugee crisis. This poses two key questions: Who is a refugee? What is a durable solution? The definition of who is a "person of concern" to UNHCR is a contested subject and will be discussed in more detail in section 1.1.3, which will provide definitions of the various groups of displaced persons. The general trend however is that UNHCR is no longer only protecting refugees (as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention, see discussion in previous section), but increasingly takes on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)¹⁴ which were displaced by natural disasters or civil war. While the "convention refugees" are automatically part of UNHCR's responsibility (provided that they are hosted by states who a signatories of the Geneva Convention), for IDPs, UNHCR needs to seek an additional Mandate from the respective country in which the refugee crisis occurred.

The definition of durable solutions is equally contested and has been subject to many changes. According to UNHCR's Master Glossary of Terms, 2006, durable solutions are officially defined as follows: "*Any means by which the situation of refugees can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved to enable them to live normal lives.*" These durable solutions can take three different forms: "*1) voluntary repatriation to the home country; 2) resettlement in another country; or 3) finding appropriate permanent integration mechanisms in the country of asylum.*" Local integration, the third durable solution, is a legal, socioeconomic and political process by which refugees progressively become part of the host society. It is, however, difficult to quantify in numerical terms given the large variety of forms it can take.¹⁵

Throughout its history, it claims to have help over 50m refugees to restart their lives through one of these three solutions. Voluntary Repatriation aims to return refugees to the country of origin based on the refugees' "free and informed decision" and has been, historically, the most frequently applied durable solution. UNHCR Statute 1950, Article (1) further states that "*Voluntary repatriation may be organized, (i.e., when it takes place under the auspices of the concerned governments and UNHCR), or spontaneous (i.e., the refugees return by their own means with UNHCR and governments having little or no direct involvement in the process of return).*" Resettlement means the transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another

¹³ source: UNHCR "2007 Global Trends", 2008.

¹⁴ In 2005, UNHCR's Executive Committee voted to open UNHCR activities to IDPs wherever possible and based on the agreement with the respective country in which the displacement occurred.

¹⁵ Durable solutions and Local Integration (UNHCR, 2007 Global Trends), citing the UNHCR Statute 1950, Article (1).

State that has agreed to admit them. It acknowledges the fact that refugees will never return to their country of origin. Here refugees may be granted asylum, resident rights or become naturalized citizens. One of the main ambitions is to introduce an international *“burden and responsibility-sharing mechanism.”* The third option, local integration, is equally based on the assumption that refugees will never be able to return to their country of origin. Local integration is a *“a durable solution to the problem of refugees that involves their permanent settlement in a country of first asylum, and eventually being granted nationality of that country.”* (UNHCR Statute 1950, Article (1))

Mode of Operation

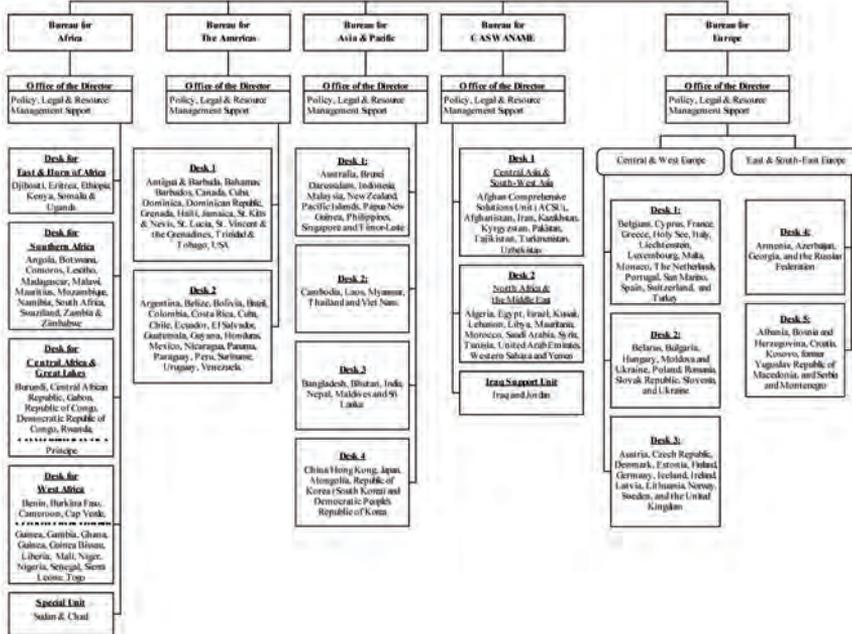
Throughout the history of UNHCR the tools and strategies for assistance as well as the prioritization of one of the three durable solutions changed in response to the larger political context. During the Cold War of the 1960s and 70s, the majority of recognized refugees were fleeing Communist regimes and the assumption was that repatriation was not an immediately viable option. Hence, resettlement (in Europe or the US) or local integration were pursued until the 1980s. However, Western governments had an interest to keep repatriation to a minimum and which meant that masses of refugees had to stay put in African or Asian host countries. In this context, UNHCR developed innovative tools such as the concept of self-sustained rural settlements, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, as an alternative option to camps in which refugees would live until a durable solution could be found. This early introduction of a *“developmental approach”* earned UNHCR the second Nobel Peace Prize in 1981 (the first had been awarded in 1954) and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.1 of this dissertation. For donors, sustainability was above all a tool to reduce costs in the medium and long term. This innovative developmental approach was *“forgotten”* again in the 1990s with a one sided emphasis on *“repatriation”* as a durable solution. UNHCR wrongly believed that the Fall of Communism would allow for speedy return of all refugees. Northern State cut resettlement programmes to the point of insignificance and Southern states became extremely reluctant towards local integration. Instead of self-sustainability, traditional emergency relief (food, water, shelter, health care) became once again the main tool of assistance. According to GIL LOESCHER the emphasis on repatriation programmes *“blinded UNHCR to the fact that large numbers of refugees throughout the world were trapped.”* Refugees were therefore caught in limbo. The need to come to terms with these *“Protracted Refugee Situations”* triggered a new wave of internal reforms and a return of the developmental approach, livelihood and self-reliance strategies - this time accompanied and legitimized by a *“rights-based approach.”*

Organisational Structure and Funding

Today, UNHCR is a vast organisation with 6,300 working in more than 110 countries. UNHCR's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. The headquarters is structured in seven divisions: the Executive (High Commissioner's) Office; the Division of International Protection Services responsible for the agency's core protection mandate; the Department of Operations which covers all field programmes; the Division of External Relations, the Division of Human Resources Management for personnel, the Division of Information Systems and Technology, and the Division of Financial and Administrative Management. Operations in the fields are directed by 5 regional UNHCR divisions and bureaux: 1) Africa; 2) Asia and the Pacific; 3) The Americas; 4) Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and Middle East (CASWANAME); and 5) Europe. In addition to regional offices, the UNHCR runs a network of representative offices in major donor countries worldwide.¹⁶ UNHCR's High Commissioner (since 2005, ANTÓNIO GUTERRES) is appointed by the General Assembly on a 4-year term and reports to the UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting on an annual basis. In 2004, the UNHCR overall expenditure was just under 1,1 billion USD (or 11% of the UN's total expenditure for programmes, funds and other organs).¹⁷

¹⁶ source: www.unhcr.org.
¹⁷ source: www.globalpolicy.org/finance/tables.

UNHCR Divisions and Bureaux as at 1 July 2006



→ 011

Organigramm of UNHCR, 2008

UNHCR is split into the following bureaux:

- Africa Bureau
- Bureau for the Americas
- Bureau for Asia and Pacific
- Bureau for CASWAME (Central Asia, South West Asia, North Africa and Middle East)
- Bureau for Europe

Each Bureau has several desks dealing with specific subregions and countries.

(source: www.unhcr.org)



I.1.1 Actors and Agents of International Refugee Protection
 .2 The UNHCR and Other Main Actors of Global Refugee Protection



→ 012

Map of UNHCR Regions

Location of UNHCR Bureaus and "desks" for subregions/ countries on the global map.
 Source: www.unhcr.org



→ 013

Map of initial signatories to the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as compiled by UNHCR.

Key:
 Light Green = party to only the 1951 Convention
 Yellow = party to only the 1967 Protocol
 Dark Green = party to both

(2) UNHCR's Cooperation with Other UN bodies

Within the UN, the UNHCR holds primary responsibility towards refugees. On a practical level however, its work frequently overlaps with other UN agencies.¹⁸ The UN, frequently exposed to criticism for bureaucratic structures has devised several mechanisms to foster such cooperation achieve more coordinated responses to emergencies, develop an integrated and holistic approach to challenges such as poverty reduction and also reduce costs. These mechanisms include the local coordination of all UN activities under the umbrella of a "UN Country team"¹⁹ or the setting up of the "The Inter-Agency Standing Committee" (IASC)²⁰ as a joint planning and management mechanism. IASC's most important initiative to address the inflexibility and confusion that can emerge on the ground due to lack of inter-agency cooperation has been the adoption of a policy package termed "Collaborative Approach" in relation to IDPs for which UNHCR does not automatically have a mandate.²¹ The policy encouraged the sharing the responsibility for protecting and assisting IDPs among the UN agencies, i.e. UNHCR, Unicef, WFP, UNDP, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-governmental Organization IOM, the ICRC and International NGOs. Overall coordination is the responsibility of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator in the country concerned under the auspices of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). However, the first applications of the collaborative approach have come under increasing criticism. ROBERTA COHEN reports: "Nearly every UN and independent evaluation has found the collaborative approach deficient when it comes to IDPs. To begin with, there is no real locus of responsibility in the field for assisting and protecting... There is also no predictability of action, as the different agencies are free to pick and choose the situations in which they wish to become involved on the basis of their respective mandates, resources, and interests. In every new emergency, no one knows for sure which agency or combination thereof will become involved."²² From 2005, the Cluster Approach, successor to the collaborative approach, was launched to mend some of the problems faced. From now on, sectoral responsibilities ("clusters") were given to different humanitarian agencies, with UNHCR taking on the responsibility for protection and the management of camps and emergency shelters.²³ Practical uses of these mechanisms included joint need assessments and relief planning in the case of the East Asian Tsunami or the more recent refugee crisis in Dafur. Amongst the many UN programmes and agencies that cooperate with the UNHCR, the following deserve a more detailed discussion as they are of particular relevance to refugee camps:

• The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

In April 1997, UNDP and UNHCR agreed to co-operate in five principal areas:

- Improving the capacity to detect significant population movements, thereby permitting a timely response to an emerging crisis in the country of origin and in those countries where the refugees may seek asylum;
- Handling problems caused by large inflows of refugees on the host country or area and taking into account their impact on local economic, social and environmental resources;

¹⁸ Frequent co-operations and working relationships in the field include "The World Food Programme", "The UN Children's Fund", and "The World Health Organisation". UNHCR also works closely with "The Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs" (OCHA), "The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights", and the "UN Development Programme", which includes the "UN Volunteers", the "UN Development Fund" and the "International Labour Organisation". UNHCR also collaborates with the "UN Population Fund" on reproductive health issues and with "The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation" on education projects. (source: unhcr.org).

¹⁹ UN country team: The United Nations Country Team: The UNCT should work as a team rather than as a collection of UN agencies, taking advantage of the individual strengths of the agencies and the combined influence of the Resident Coordinator System. Where required, UNCTs should utilise additional national and regional experts in relevant technical areas to reinforce the capacity of the UN to assist in the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. UN country and regional staff have important opportunities through participation in and implementation of PRSPs. However, their technical capacity may need to be strengthened so they can play a more effective role in the PRSP process. (source: United Nations Development Group: "Guidance Note on UN Country Team Engagement in PRSPs", 2004

²⁰ Inter-agency standing committee: The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The IASC was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/192 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. General Assembly Resolution 48/57 affirmed its role as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. Under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the IASC develops humanitarian policies, agrees on a clear division of responsibility for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identifies and addresses gaps in response, and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles. (source: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc).

²¹ source: IDMC, Internal Displacement – A Global Overview, 2005

²² source: Cohen, Roberta, "Strengthening Protection of IDPs: The UN's Role", 2006

²³ The clusters were originally concentrated on nine areas: 1) Logistics (WFP) 2) emergency telecommunications (OCHA-Process owner, UNICEF Common Data Services, WFP – Common Security Telecommunications Services) 3)camp coordination and management (UNHCR for conflict-generated IDPs and IOM for natural disaster-generated IDPs) 4) emergency shelter (IFRC) 5)health (WHO) 6) nutrition (UNICEF) 7) water, sanitation, and hygiene (UNICEF) 8) early recovery (UNDP); and 9) protection (UNHCR for conflict-generated IDPs, UNHCR, UNICEF, and OHCHR for natural disaster generated IDPs.), (source: www.wikipedia.org).

- Promoting at the community level post-conflict recovery, peace building and reconciliation in war-torn countries with a large displaced population;
- Providing basic services and economic opportunities to support the reintegration of the returnees and strengthening their ties with local communities;
- Fostering an early phase-out of humanitarian assistance in favour of sustainable basic services and local development in areas that have suffered severe damage and displacement resulting from conflict.

In another example of co-operation, the UNDP Country Office currently represents UNHCR in ten countries with small refugee populations.²⁴

• **The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**

UNICEF is mandated to advocate for children’s rights, help meet their basic needs, and expand their opportunities. The Agency’s work with refugees is based on a resolution from its Executive Board calling on the agency “to continue providing emergency assistance to refugee and displaced women and children, particularly those living in areas affected by armed conflict and natural disasters.”²⁵ UNICEF and UNHCR jointly promote children’s rights such as obtaining support for unaccompanied and separated children; insuring the psychological well being of children and their families; providing basic education; and meeting the health needs of children, adolescents, and their mothers. In refugee camps UNICEF also sometimes engages in works to strengthen water and sanitation services for the benefit of refugees and displaced persons and in the case of repatriation of refugee populations.

• **The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

UNHCR cooperates with UN-HABITAT’s “Disaster Management Programme”, which provides support, in post-conflict and natural disaster situations, to national governments, local authorities and communities by offering protection and rehabilitation housing, infrastructure and public facilities. It helps resettle displaced people and returning refugees. It also helps restore local social structures through settlement development, provides land and settlements planning and management for disaster prevention, as well as creating coordination mechanisms for improved disaster management. In 2003, the two agencies signed Memorandum of Understanding is significant because it enables closer linkages between the emergency and humanitarian work of UNHCR, and the developmental and longer-term activities of UN-HABITAT in order to bridge the gap between emergency relief and reconstruction. The agencies declared their intention to work together on providing shelter solutions for refugees and returnees, settlement planning and management; land and property rights; infrastructure planning and development; and building the capacity of local and national authorities, particularly in post-conflict areas.²⁶

The cooperation between the two agencies is fairly recent and, according to a former UNHCR staff member “still underdeveloped, but potentially of huge significance for refugee camps.”²⁷ So far, cooperation is almost exclusively restricted to IDPs and some returning refugees, within the UN’s cluster approach. UN-HABITAT engaged with IDP’s for example in Kosovo, Afghanistan (rehabilitation and reconstruction), Pakistan (post earthquake) as well as during the post tsunami reconstruction in most of the hit countries - notably Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Somalia. In an interview with a UN-HABITAT staff member, one of the rare examples of direct cooperation on refugee camps is “in eastern Sudan for example where the camps, that housed Eritreans, are now being integrated in the fabric of Sudanese settlements.”²⁸ Another UN-HABITAT staff member explained in more detail the scope of the involvement: “As the physical and social infrastructures in the camps were typically superior to those of the host communities, UN-HABITAT undertook facility refurbishments and was intended to train the local authorities in the running and maintenance of the social and physical infrastructures. The latter, however, did not materialize as UNHCR’s mandate and financial regulations did not really allow for the project’s ‘software’ of training. Hardware components such as rebuilding, refurbishing and extending infrastructures was no problem and funds kept on flowing for those purposes.”²⁹

²⁴ source: www.unhcr.org

²⁵ source: www.unhcr.org

²⁶ source: www.unhcr.org

²⁷ source: conversation with Louis Neumann, July 22, 2008.

²⁸ email conversation with Mohamed El Sioufi, Head, Shelter Branch. Global Division. United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Nairobi, July 26, 2008.

²⁹ email conversation with Joseph Maseland, Regional Office for Africa and Arab States, Regional and Technical Cooperation Division, Nairobi, July 30, 2008, UN-HABITAT.

(3) Non-Governmental Organisations and Universities

A vast array of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society initiatives, advocacy groups, foundations or universities devote resources and offer services to displaced persons. To provide a complete overview of is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, the following grouping may provide an introduction to the diverse aims and objectives pursued:

• Service Providers and Partners in the Field

UNHCR itself stated that it has formal relations to a vast network of 649 NGOs from around the world who deliver specific services to refugees and are paid by the UNHCR to do so.³⁰ Seventy five percent of these organizations are local or national organizations; the others are international, some of which have been UNHCR partners for decades. The other type of partnership is purely operational based on voluntary coordination. Here partners provide their own funds for activities. Areas of cooperation include protection, emergency response, capacity training, advocacy or fund raising and is usually based on a “Framework Agreement for Operational Partnership” (FAOP).³¹ Under this Framework, partners are guided by humanitarian principles found in the Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations, which includes a commitment to ensure that the humanitarian imperative comes first and to determine aid priorities based on need alone.

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview over the vast network of NGOs engaged in refugee and displaced persons issues. Some of the largest and most well-known globally acting NGOs who engage in partnership with UNHCR are MSF (“Medicins Sans Frontieres”), “Oxfam”, “Care”, “The International Committee of the Red Cross”, “The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies”, “The International Organisation for Migration”, “Save the Children”, the “British Association for Adoption & Fostering BAFF”, the “Maternity Alliance”, or “Shelter” have been very active in promoting refugee rights in Europe.

• Research and Policy Initiatives

Academic research on refugees and displacement is dominated by NGOs and specialized university departments or independent and multidisciplinary research foundation such as Fafo (Norway), the Refugee Council or Oxford University’s Refugee Studies Centres Council (UK). Key magazines or websites, which dominate the global discussion on refugee issues such as Forced Migration Review; Refugee Journal, Refugee Survey Quarterly and so forth, often part of or with links to NGOs. More importantly, many key policy initiatives, which influence global refugee work were initiated by NGOs. One example is the “Sphere Project”³², which was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, aiming at improving the effectiveness and accountability of disaster response. The “Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response” published in 2000 (often also referred to as the “Sphere Handbook”) was key in launching a global initiative to promote a right’s-based approach to disaster relief. It *“sets out for the first time what people affected by disasters have a right to expect from humanitarian assistance. The aim of the Project is to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by disasters, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system in disaster response.”* UNHCR refers to the Sphere initiative as a key external influence to promote quality standards and an awareness that the *“right to live in dignity”* is a fundamental right also applicable to refugees.³³ Another important NGO driven initiative is the “End Warehousing Refugees Campaign”, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.1/ section 2.1.1.

• Watchdog Organisations

The third key area of engagement for NGOs is to monitor the policies and actions of the United Nations (including UNHCR) and national governments vis a vis refugees and displaced persons. These include “Human Rights Watch”, “Amnesty International”, “Refugee Action”, “Pro Asyl”, or the “U.S. Commit-

³⁰ Between 1994 and 2006 UNHCR channelled USD 5.4 billion through its implementing partners; two-thirds of this amount went to NGOs. In 2006, UNHCR channelled \$359.4 million through NGOs. Of these NGO partners, some 490 were national or local NGOs. (source: UNHCR report “NGO Partners in Refugee Protection”, 2007).

³¹ source: UNHCR report “NGO Partners in Refugee Protection”, 2007.

³² source: www.sphereproject.org

³³ source: Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006)

tee for Refugee and Immigrants (USCRI).” This includes harsh critique, not only of repressive governments, but also of UNHCR. As ED SCHENKENBERG VAN MIEROP states “NGOs often have the feeling that UNHCR’s policies are too submissive to the wishes of governments, instead of protecting refugees... sometimes UNHCR gets caught between the contradictory desires of these stakeholders. The result is that UNHCR’s policy decisions can, indeed, be troubling from the viewpoint of NGOs that are interested in protecting refugee rights and not states’ interests.”³⁴ On other occasions UNHCR has been accused of one-side and narrow relief work, also called “truck and chuck”. Human Rights Watch accused UNHCR of ignoring urban refugees. In (then) Eastern Zaire and Tanzania UNHCR was heavily criticised for turning a blind eye to the fact refugee status had also been granted to many individuals implicated in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Several NGOs left the camps in protest. These examples illustrate the often tense nature of the relationship between UNHCR and NGOs, the lack of dialogue or insufficient explanations of UNHCR rationale for its policies and decisions.

(4) Governments/ Governmental Organisations

Governments and governmental organisations are key in refugee crises. Even if governments are signatories to the 1951 Geneva Convention or the 1967 Protocol, many aspects of refugee rights are open to interpretation. Thus, key factors such as the location of camps, the right to access the local labour market, the right to free movement and so forth can be interpreted by the host government in very different ways. This has a tremendous effect on the situation of refugees, inside and outside camps. Camp situations in more welcoming countries such as Uganda or Zambia are significantly easier than in Nepal or Algeria, which forced refugees to remain in camps. Much depends on the ethnic origin of the refugee population, the countries relationship with the country that caused the refugee crisis or international pressure. On the whole, LOESCHER et al. state that the willingness for host governments to receive refugees has dramatically declined, including Western countries. (LOESCHER et al. 2008)

However, governments are not only stakeholder as hosts to refugee crises. Without governments and governmental organisations support as donors there would be no global protection regime including UNHCR. The political leverage that this role gives to national governments can be felt in any refugee situation and has, to some extent already been described in section 1.1.1. Furthermore, governmental ministries and agencies are also independent actors that to some extent engage in refugee crises, mostly if they affect the infrastructure or economy of the host country. Countries with active governmental agencies active in refugee crises include Switzerland (Swiss Development Corporation SDC) or the United States of America with the powerful “USAID”, the nation’s foreign assistance program whose 2007 operational budget of USD 1,1 billion³⁵ matched that of UNHCR (although not all is spent on displaced persons). Another respected governmental agency is that of the German “Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GTZ GmbH” is a respected implementing Agency closely linked to the “Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung” (BMZ). Direct involvement of the GTZ in refugee camp situation however is however rare as most Western Governments prefer to use UN channels such as UNHCR. PEROUSE and KAGWANJA (2000) refer to GTZ initiated greenbelts around the Kenyan Dadaab camp to stop arid winds and allow for micro-agriculture for the Bantu farmers from Somalia (for further discussion see section chapter 2.2/ section 2.2.2). Here, GTZ is also participates in UNHCR managed activities under the cluster approach. At Dadaab for instance the GTZ ensured medical coverage, and food assistance from the World Food Program was distributed by the GTZ in cooperation with “Action Against Hunger” and “CARE”. Other GTZ activities in relation to refugees include UNHCR-GTZ cooperation in Burundi.³⁶ Most recently the GTZ has embarked on a support programme for UNRWA in relation to Palestine Refugee Camps, which will be more fully discussed in Part 2 of this dissertation.

³⁴ source: Schenkenberg van Mierop, Ed (Coordinator of the Geneva-based International Council of International Agencies. ICVA). “UNHCR and NGOs: Competitors or Companions in Refugee Protection?”, 2004 (published in www.migrationinformation.org).

³⁵ source: www.usaid.gov

³⁶ for further information see: www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/afrika/579.htm

1.1.3 Who is a Refugee? Problems of Classification of the Global Refugee Population

“Given that there are no reliable ways to enumerate refugees and that there are so many interests involved, it is important not to have high expectations of the quality of figures that are put in the public domain. The numbers always need to be put in the context of where they have come from, how they have been generated, who is using them, and who is counted as a refugee. Because so many of the figures are presented through the media, with its reputation for exaggeration, it may be tempting to assume that the figures bandied about are overstating the case. However, there are many interests, which may tend to play down the figures and general rules are dangerous. Refugees themselves are largely excluded from the counting process except as its objects. They are exposed to the much more dangerous situation of vital resources being allocated to them according to a highly subjective, political system over which they have no control.”

OLIVER BAKEWELL, 1999

Methodological difficulties

It is the intention of this chapter to provide an overview of data and definitions on displaced people worldwide. I am acutely aware however, that the following compilation only provides a rough overview of the official regime of refugee classification, which provides a very distorted view of actual displacement situations on the ground. Many Agencies base their statistic on different definitions. The definitions themselves (and therefore also the statistics) are often blurry due to multiple provenances and the politicization of refugee data in general. Most variation in refugee data comes from differing definitions of what is a “refugee” and how definitions are applied in practice (BANKI 2004). International Agencies such as UNHCR have a strictly defined mandate who they may count and serve and who they should not serve and therefore also do not count. An important factor that distorts the accuracy of the global counting regime is also the fact that a fast number of the displaced remain unrecorded because they have no access to agencies that may record them or because they choose to deal with their displacement beyond official channels. According to HYNDMAN “...displaced persons often defy the spaces, categories and structures in place to assist and monitor them.” According to CRISP (2000) this interminable and impossible struggle to pin down clear-cut, internationally streamlined definitions, the politicization of refugee numbers and the difficulty of data collection in general (high estimate number of unreported cases) explains, that refugee data is notoriously flawed.³⁷

Overview of Established Definitions and Categories

The following section is based on four main categories if the displaced which have been created by the international recognition regime: (1) Before recognition; (2) Recognized, potentially qualifying for international humanitarian assistance; (3) Unrecognized/ without defined legal status (but can be assisted) – The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); (4) Not-recognized/ rejected/ unrecorded. In the following, a brief definition of each category is provided highlighting their inherent flaws and difficulties when applied to complex situations on the ground:

(1) Before Recognition: The Asylum-Seekers

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs proposes a general definition of a “displaced person” which is a “Persons who, for different reasons or circumstances, have been compelled to leave their homes. They may or may not reside in their country of origin, but are not legally regarded as refugees.”³⁸ Any displaced person may also be considered an asylum-seeker - an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it: “Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.”³⁹

³⁷ Further literature on problems with statistic data regarding the refugee population, see: Harrell-Bond, Barbara, “Counting the Refugees: Gifts, Givers, Patrons, and Clients”, 1992; Bakewell, Oliver, “Can we ever rely on refugee statistics?”, 1999; Banki, Susan, “Refugee Integration in the Intermediate Term: A Study of Nepal, Pakistan, and Kenya”, 2003; Crisp, Jeff, “Who has counted the refugees?”, 1999

³⁸ source: UNDHA - United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1992

³⁹ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006

(2) Recognised Refugees

Through an official process, an asylum-seeker may become a recognized refugee. The most common definition of what is a refugee is provided by the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which obliged contracting states to recognise the rights of refugees to asylum, rights of association, freedom of movement, employment and welfare and obliges the contracting state to cooperate with the UNHCR. In the document which has become known as the Geneva Convention a refugee is defined as a person who, “... owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”⁴⁰ In short, only the crossing of an internationally recognized border makes a displaced person eligible for official refugee status. In addition, the initial definition only included those who ran from a particular threat of persecution that was targeted towards them as individuals. In order to claim refugee status a person had to demonstrate the particular danger they faced. The 1951 Convention itself does not establish clear procedures for determining refugee status. The status may either be granted by a nation state (here, refugee status is often linked to the granting of territorial asylum status), or be granted by the United Nations. Therefore the body who is in charge of a refugee status determination (RSD) may apply the refugee definition, particularly since some States have not signed the Geneva Convention on refugees:

(1.1) Recognition by State:

Nation States play a key role in the recognition process. As part of its obligation to protect refugees on its territory, the country of asylum is normally responsible for determining whether an asylum-seeker is a refugee or not. Many States have incorporated the refugee determination process into the national legislation of the country and, although it may be derived from the 1951 Refugee Convention, may vary considerably. Other states have not signed to the Geneva Convention. States have the unique power to grant territorial asylum, i.e. to permit a displaced asylum-seeker to remain for a temporary or indefinite period.

(1.2) Recognition by UNHCR:

In some countries, primarily in the developing world, UNHCR conducts refugee status determination under its mandate. This can be the case if a country has not signed up to the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol or has not enacted refugee legislation. Another reason can be if the State’s national refugee status determination (RSD) procedure is not functioning (including countries that have made reservations related to RSD); the State has a national RSD procedure that does not meet minimum standards for fairness and efficiency; and/or for a residual population of asylum-seekers after an RSD hand over to the national authorities. In addition, in a few countries UNHCR undertakes RSD for the purpose of identifying refugees with resettlement needs.⁴¹

(1.3) Recognition by UNRWA:

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), founded just 1.5 years before UNHCR, has formulated its own working definition of a (Palestinian) refugee in order to determine eligibility for registration and services: “A Palestinian refugee is defined as any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who has lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.” Significantly, and different to the UNHCR definition “the definition also includes the descendants of the above as well as non-refugee wives of registered refugees.”⁴² The implications of this separate definition on the Palestinian refugee situation, especially its demographic dynamics will be more fully discussed in Part II of this dissertation.

(1.4) Recognition by African Union:

In Africa the narrow definitions of the Geneva Convention proved inadequate, as there were mass movements of people fleeing from the general upheaval of war as independence struggles flared up during the 1960s. The Organization of African Unity extended the provisions of the UN Convention to those who

⁴⁰ UNHCR Statute 1950, Article 1 (2)
⁴¹ source: UNHCR, 2006 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, 2007).
⁴² source: UNRWA and Palestine Refugees 1950-2000; UNRWA Headquarters Gaza, July 2000, page 23.

Category of forced displacement	Total (in million)
Refugees under UNHCR mandate	11.4
Refugees under UNRWA mandate	4.6
Total number of refugees	16.0
Conflict-generated IDPs	26.0
Natural disaster IDPs	25.0
Total number of IDPs	51.0
Total number of refugees and IDPs	67.0

→ 014

**Statistical Overview of Recorded Displacement
 Around the Globe**

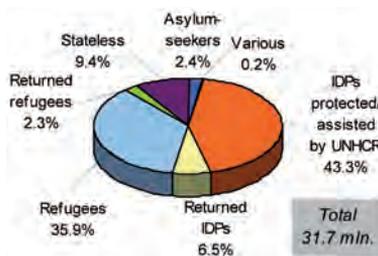
Source: UNHCR, 2007 Global Trends,
 2008.

Refugees under UNHCR's responsibility:	35.9 % (11.4m) (including some 1.7m people in refugee-like situations)
Returned IDPs (between Jan. and Dec. 2007):	6.5 % (approximately 2,060,000)
IDPs receiving assistance under both the Cluster Approach and other arrangements in which UNHCR was either the lead agency or partner:	43.3% (13.7m) (including 1 46,000 people in IDP-like situations)
Stateless persons:	9.4 % (3m) (statistical data on statelessness is not yet available in many cases)
Asylum-seekers:	2.4 % (approximately 760,000)
Returned refugees (between Jan. and Dec. 2007):	2.3 % (approximately 729,000)
Others of concern:	0,2 % (68,600)
Persons of concern to UNHCR (total):	31,7m

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Persons of Concern to UNHCR

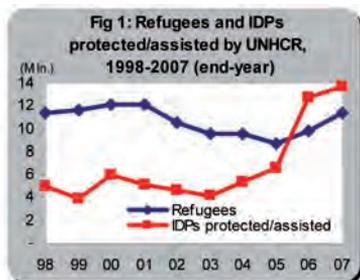
Source: UNHCR "2007 Global Trends", 2008.



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Total Number of Persons of Concern to UNHCR

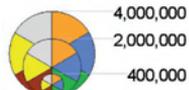
Cake diagram visualizing the composition of the total population of concern to the UNHCR.
 Source: UNHCR "2007 Global Trends", 2008



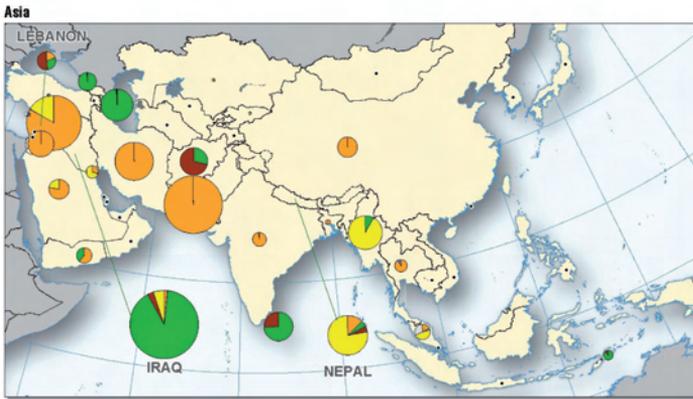
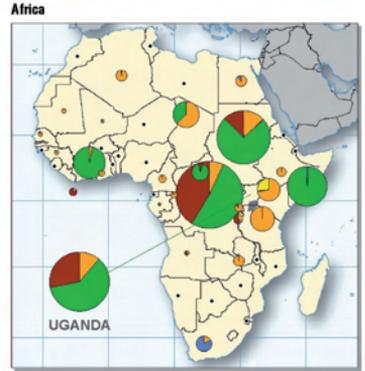
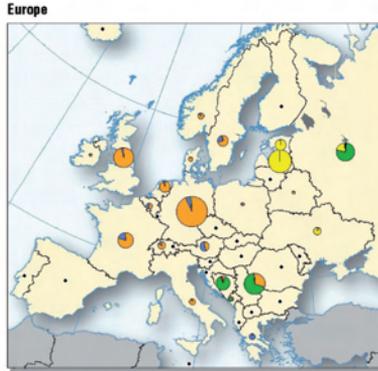
→ 017

Relation between IDPs and Refugees served by UNHCR

The graph shows on ongoing trend since 2005: IDPs are set to become the main target group of concern of the agency.
 Source: UNHCR "2007 Global Trends", 2008



- Refugees *
- Asylum-seekers
- IDPs protected / assisted by UNHCR **
- Returned refugees, returned IDPs
- Stateless persons
- Others of concern
- Total population below 10,000
- * Including people in refugee-like situations
- ** Including people in IDP-like situations



→ 018
 Map of initial signatories to the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as compiled by UNHCR.

Key for amps:
 Light Green = party to only the 1951 Convention
 Yellow = party to only the 1967 Protocol
 Dark Green = party to both
 Source: UNHCR "2007 Global Trends", 2008

were forced to flee owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing the public order (OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 1969, Article 1 (2)). A similar regional definition was made for Latin America in the Cartagena Declaration of 1984. Thus, a person recognised as a refugee in Africa would not necessarily be accepted as a refugee in Europe.

(1.5) Prima Facie Refugees:

In recent years, the recognition of displaced groups as “prima facie” refugees has increasingly gained importance. Rather than on the individual basis (as required by Geneva) a State or UNHCR can recognize an entire group as refugees, if objective criteria related to the circumstances in their country of origin, which justify a presumption that they meet the criteria of the applicable refugee definition are fulfilled. The “*prima facie group determination of refugee status*” is a more flexible and time-saving practice by which all persons forming part of a large-scale influx are regarded as refugees.⁴³

(3) Unrecognized, without defined legal status, but receiving assistance: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The majority of the world’s officially recorded displaced persons have not crossed an internationally recognized border and therefore do not have an officially recognized refugee status. The British Government’s “Department for International Development (DFID)” has defined this group as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): “*Persons displaced from their habitual place of residence by disaster, fear of persecution or fear of physical harm, but remaining within the territorial limits of their country of origin. Unlike refugees, IDPs have no internationally defined legal status.*”⁴⁴ In international law it is the responsibility of the government concerned to provide assistance and protection for the IDPs in their country. However, as many of the displaced are a result of civil conflict and violence or where the authority of the central state is in doubt, there is no local authority willing to provide assistance and protection. Unlike the case of refugees, there is no international humanitarian institution (like UNHCR), which has the overall responsibility of protecting and assisting the refugees as well as the internally displaced. A number of organizations have stepped into the breach in specific circumstances, including UNHCR. UNHCR does not have a global mandate to protect or assist all conflict-generated IDPs (2.6m). Since the introduction of the Cluster Approach, however, UNHCR has become increasingly involved with IDPs. Indeed, the share of IDPs of the overall number of persons receiving aid through UNHCR has risen to 43%.⁴⁵

(4) Not-recognized/ rejected/ unrecorded

The last category is a general definition of those who have not gained recognition by the international registration regime. They may have been rejected for justified or unjustified reasons, or may have never had a chance (or ambition) to gain access to the recognition process. These include:

(4.1) (Economic) migrants:

An economic migrant is a person “*who leave their countries of origin purely for economic reasons not in any way related to the refugee definition, or in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood. Economic migrants do not fall within the criteria for refugee status and are therefore not entitled to benefit from international protection as refugees.*”⁴⁶ In reality, in most situations, the motivation for leaving a country includes complex combinations of economic, political and social reasons and a just evaluation of the circumstances remains often al-

⁴³ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006; The prima facie status often causes complications as it is often not fully recognized by host governments.

⁴⁴ source: DFID - Department for International Development, 2003.

⁴⁵ The UNHCR has traditionally argued that it does not have a “general competence for IDPs” even though at least since 1972 it had relief and rehabilitation programs for those displaced within a country. However, in cases where there is a specific request by the UN Secretary General and with the consent of the State concerned it has been willing to respond by assisting IDPs in a given instance. In 2005 it was helping some 5.6 million IDPs (out of over 25 million), but only about 1.1 million in Africa. In 2005, the UNHCR signed an agreement with other humanitarian agencies. (Cluster Approach, see beneath) “Under this agreement, UNHCR will assume the lead responsibility for protection, emergency shelter and camp management for internally displaced people.” (source: Wikipedia).

⁴⁶ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006.

most impossible. Documents may have been lost or destroyed, witnesses may be impossible to find. The differentiation between “refugee” and “economic migrant” has been highly politicized. Many Western governments for instance outbid each other to spot “abusers” of the asylum system, who pretend to be in danger, in order to justify forced repatriation of these “illegals”.⁴⁷ In many cases, deportation was contested by NGOs as governmental asylum policies (and with it the acceptance process) blur with populist agendas and include target figures for asylum seekers. Critics also point to the populist (mis)use of economic migrants policies to justify the sealing off of “Fortress Europe” from the developing world and escape humanitarian responsibilities. Others have criticised the harsh treatment of immigrants in detention camps (e.g. on remote locations such as Italy’s island Lampedusa) without access to a proper asylum registration process, or indeed the construction of detention camps in third countries such as northern Africa to prevent access to the European asylum application system altogether. In general, the populist discussions on mafia-organised “human trafficking”, crime, the general “terrorist threat” has affected the public perception of what is a “refugee” and who should qualify for protection.

(4.2) Unrecorded persons:

A vast and difficult to estimate figure has never had access to recognition procedures. Conflicting parties may prevent UNHCR from entering contested areas to avoid creating “visibility” of displacement. Other conflicts and forced displacement passes by unnoticed. In all cases, political will is necessary to equip UNHCR with the appropriate mandate, i.e. the agreement of the host country and the General Assembly, which in many cases is difficult to obtain. If there is no will, no refugees can be recorded.

Statistical Overview of the Current Refugee Population

The global refugee population is extremely heterogeneous and, as already discussed, not easily to be categorized. The most well-popularized and generally accepted statistics is being prepared by the United Nations, particularly the UNCHR. According to UNHCR’s “2007 Global Trends”, a total number of 67m displaced persons were recorded globally, the majority of which (more than 75%) were IDPs who fled natural disasters or conflict (see fig. XX). More than half of this global displaced population is considered “persons of concern” to the UNHCR and receives some form of assistance from the Agency. “Persons of Concern” to UNHCR is a generic term used to describe all persons whose protection and assistance needs are of interest to UNHCR: *“These include refugees under the 1951 Convention, persons who have been forced to leave their countries as a result of conflict or events seriously disturbing public order, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless persons, and, in some situations, internally displaced persons. UNHCR’s authority to act on behalf of persons of concern other than refugees is based on General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions.”*⁴⁸ As the data above is limited to populations to whom UNHCR has a mandate, it does not provide a comprehensive picture of global forced displacement. For example the increase of population of concern in the year 2005 is directly linked of the increasing responsibility UNHCR overtook for IDPs through the Cluster Approach (2005). According to the latest available statistics by UNHCR (UNHCR “2007 Global Trends”, 2008), the total number of “persons of concern” stands at 37.7m (→ 015 - 016).

As already stated in the introductory paragraph to this section, the differentiation between the above-mentioned categories is problematic and statistics remains unreliable. Above all, this leads to sometimes absurd situations on the ground. Huge problems for instance emerge due to the differentiation “refugees” and IDPs. Often arbitrarily drawn, post-colonial State borders have little impact on tribal living, but gain unhelpful significance in case of humanitarian emergencies. Following MANUEL HERZ’s account, a persecuted tribe traditionally living in the blurry border area of Tschad/ Sudan was therefore torn apart: Since Tschad-based UNHCR camps are only allowed to serve those that come from Sudan (the crossing of an international border gives them the status of refugees) while their family members from across the Tschad border are categorized as Internally displaced People IDPs and therefore denied entry into the camps.⁴⁹ Beyond humanitarian crisis of villagers exposed to the same Janjaweed attacks, it fuels confusion, jealousy and ultimately could lead to local conflict. The fact that UNHCR increasingly (but only through special mandate of the host country) serves IDPs has helps in some situations and the recent attempts to improve inter agency collaboration were designed to deal with such examples of inflexibility and confusion.

⁴⁷ other popular terms include the Italian “clandestini” or “boat people” enter the country illegally from Africa or Albania.
⁴⁸ source: “UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms”, Geneva, June 2006.
⁴⁹ source: Stadtbauwelt 172 (48.06): “Wir Flüchtlinge”, Bauerlag BV GmbH, Berlin, December 2006.

1.2

What is a Refugee Camp?

1.2.1 Architectural Origins and Evolution of Refugee Camps

Historical Origins of Refugee Camps

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a complete overview of the history of refugee camps. While the notion of “refugee camp” has recently been central in the ethnological, sociological and anthropological discourse and critical urban theory no scholarly work has yet traced the complete historical and cultural roots of refugee camps and their application over time. Two important, and interrelated strands will be briefly introduced in order to provide a brief insight into the complex birth process of the architecture of the modern “refugee camp”: (1) The evolution of humanitarian relief camps beginning with religious and missionary activities, (2) the evolution of military camps which defined the architectural language.

Humanitarian Protection

The problem of dealing with the arrival of large crowds of dispersed populations and their need for protection has posed itself throughout history. The agents that could provide protection in medieval or early modern Europe for instance included the church, celestial powers such as kings and nobility, or independent cities. Monasteries, churches, castles, fortresses and city walls frequently harboured refugees and were transformed into temporary safe zones. Particularly, monasteries that served poor, ill or otherwise disenfranchised populations could be considered early predecessors of the modern humanitarian system.

In the c18 and c19 the work of European church foundations and monasteries became a global project, which inextricably linked the protection of needy and displaced with missionary activities. Exemplary are the Jesuit activities in Africa or Latin America, which involved protecting (but also converting) displaced populations in the colonial wars. Early modern multinational humanitarian networks evolved, triggered by large-scale humanitarian projects by church missions such as the engagement of the Quaker overseas service in famine stricken Ireland in 1847-1848, after the Crimean War, or their relief work in towns and villages devastated in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. In 1963, the devout Calvinist HENRY DUNDANT founded the “International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)”⁵⁰, which first served to protect medical services in war times, wounded and captured soldiers in military prisoners of camps. In parallel to the growth of the Red Cross, modern humanitarian law evolved: internationally-agreed rules, applicable to all conflicts, that were to guarantee assistance for the wounded and sick – and later, also to apply to prisoners and civilians. From 1914 the ICRC also protected civilians such as IDPs in purpose built refugee camps, not surprisingly applying the same organisational and architectural framework as earlier prisoners of camps, and became the main predecessor of UNHCR.

Military Architecture

The etymological origin of “camp” goes back to the Latin “campus”, an enclosed piece of land, which is being temporarily appropriated, and was mostly used in connection to the military. The Cologne based archaeologist NORBERT HANEL has researched the military camp typologies ranging from marching camps that could be constructed at extreme steep to protect moving armies, supply camp in the hinterlands, siege camp in frontier zones, training camps, winter camps and so forth. Despite the need to take into account specific factors such as the size of the army to be accommodated, its function and external factors such as topography, contact with the enemy, drinking water resources etc., camp architecture was largely standardized: *“A polygonal plan, with the line of defence being adapted to the topography for strategic reasons... the internal structure [which] followed an orthogonal scheme... the remains of Roman military camps speak for a more or less provisional construction; even in the permanent camps used for a longer period, the half timbered architecture predominated.”*⁵¹ (HANEL 2007). Despite some variations the key criteria of all military camps were to provide sufficient protection against hostile attacks and to allow fast construction. HANEL describes the process of camp construction in detail: *“The starting point when constructing a camp was the crossing (locus gromae) of the two principal roads (via principalis; via praetoria, and via decumana), which were designed to meet at a right angle.*

⁵⁰ The red cross emblem has been frequently criticized as a Christian symbol although the Agency itself increasingly suppressed its Christian roots. In 1929 the Red Crescent was added and in The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement now has three emblems in use following the decision of the diplomatic conference held in Switzerland in December 2005 to create the red crystal emblem, alongside the red cross and red crescent.

⁵¹ source: Hanel, Norbert. “Military Camps, Canabae and Vici. The Archaeological Evidence”, in: Erdkamp, P. (Ed.). “The Companion to the Roman Army”, Oxford 2007, pages 395 – 416.

Parallel to these axes lanes divided the interior of the camp..." (HANEL 2007). HANEL goes on to describe how the fortification of the camp and its internal buildings were separated by an empty strip (intervallum), which served to prevent missiles coming over the fortification and hitting internal camp buildings and sometimes also included latrines, workshops, bread-ovens or sheds. The camp itself would consist of the barracks and officers structure grouped around a centrally located "*headquarters (principia) were – comparable to the forum in towns – the representative, administrative, and religious centre of the camp*" (HANEL 2007), as well as utility buildings, health facilities, bath houses and so fort.

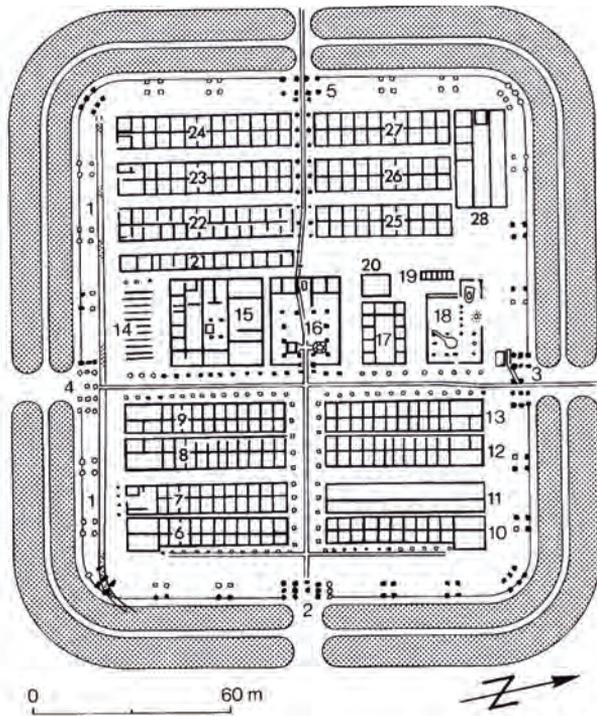
Camp Architecture: Blurring Agendas of Protection and Containment

Modelled on their Roman predecessors armies used similarly protective temporary architecture throughout history and the difference between civil and military use was frequently blurry. Not only did military camps resemble idealized, temporary cities, which frequently also protected civil inhabitants. Some Roman camps evolved into cities. Camps also served to contain or protect enemy or friendly populations. Most importantly, however, the architectural principles defined by Roman camps have become universal standards which dictated the planning of army camp, settler camps, prison camps, detention centres as well as refugee camps.

It seems ironic that the same architectural devices can be used to protect by controlling an enemy outside the territory of the camp, or to control a prisoner inside its territory. Architecturally, the same principles apply: diagram-like functional layout, orthogonal spatial organisations, temporary structures, and surveillance and control devices such as watch towers or perimeter fences: The fact that the same architectural language can perform in both, seemingly opposite ways, is ironic and paradoxical at the same time, and indicative of the fact that military thinking, control and organisation prevails in situations of emergency, outside civil normality, be it in the service of aggressive or protective agendas, or both, depending on the point of view of those inside and those guarding it.

Two historical examples illustrate how control and protection is inevitably blurred: Famine, poverty or pogroms in central and eastern Europe throughout the c19 triggered the first global migration movement. The transatlantic crossing from European ports such as Rotterdam, Bremen or Hamburg facilitated the transit of over 20m migrants. Private and state-run camp-like facilities were set up to contain thousands of would be immigrants to process transit visas or immigration papers. Between 1850 and 1934, the privately run camp BallinStadt in Hamburg processed 5m transits alone. 12m immigrants passed through Ellis Island in New York as the main entry point into the US. Architecturally, these camps combined all functions needed to house thousands of migrants for weeks or months, such as mass accommodation, health facilities, communal bath houses, churches, synagogues, shops and so forth, but equally included perimeter fencing and walls, monitoring facilities and a strict regime of rules: Each of the migrants could carry dangerous diseases, have criminal intentions or could otherwise be declared unfit to enter the country. The camps were not only gateways to a new life but also site of tragedies and despair, as well as death through disease or suicides. A contemporary equivalent to the historical migrant camps is the network of containment and detention camps set up within Europe and increasingly along its peripheral boundaries to gather captured illegal migrants or contain asylum seekers until their application is approved or rejected followed by forceful deportation. A typical examples is the Sangatte holding centre which was set up by the French Red Cross upon request of the French interior ministry in 1999 to accommodate a growing number of refugees found on the streets of Calais and surrounding towns. At that time the Kosovo crisis was at its height and a quiet seaside resort seemed the perfect place to offer shelter to refugees from the Balkan conflict. The camp is housed in a giant warehouse that was used for storage while the concrete lining of the Channel Tunnel was built. Conditions in the overcrowded and strictly supervised camps are alarming. A clear differentiation between refugee camp, detention centre and prison is no longer possible.

Tragic examples of history show how the perceived neutrality of the emergency architecture of a refugee camp can be abused for crimes against humanity. In 1939, for instance, a camp just outside the village of Westerbork in eastern moors of the Netherlands was constructed by the Dutch government as a place of asylum for Jewish refugees from Germany. When Nazi Germany invaded the same camp was transformed

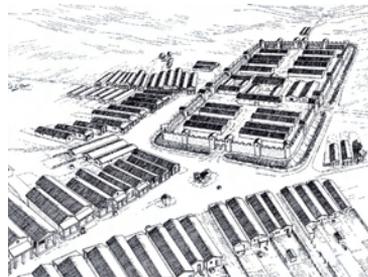


→ 019

Hofheim (Taunus). Plan of the "Steinkastell" (stone-built fort) (after Nuber, H. U. "Das Steinkastell Hofheim [Main-Taunus-Kreis]," in Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms III. 13. Internat. Limeskongreß Aalen 1983.

- 1 fortification
- 2 porta praetoria
- 3 porta principalis sinistra
- 4 porta principalis dextra
- 5 porta decumana
- 6-13 barracks
- 14 horreum
- 15 praetorium
- 16 principia
- 17 valetudinarium?
- 18 fabrica
- 19 chamber building
- 20 rectangular building
- 21-27 barracks

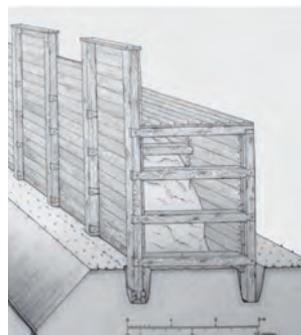
(source: Hanel, Norbert. "Military Camps, Canabae and Vici. The Archaeological Evidence", in: Erdkamp, P. (Ed.). "The Companion to the Roman Army", Oxford 2007, pages 395 – 41.)



→ 020

Reconstruction of the limes fort Zugmantel and the camp vicus (after Sommer, C. S. Kastellvicus und Kastell. Fundber.

Baden-Württemberg 13 [1988] 516 Abb. 12) (source: Hanel, Norbert. "Military Camps, Canabae and Vici. The Archaeological Evidence", in: Erdkamp, P. (Ed.). "The Companion to the Roman Army", Oxford 2007, pages 395 – 41.)



→ 021

Reconstruction of the earth-and-timber rampart of the principal base of the Classis Germanica Köln-Marienburg (Alteburg)

(source: Hanel, Norbert. "Military Camps, Canabae and Vici. The Archaeological Evidence", in: Erdkamp, P. (Ed.). "The Companion to the Roman Army", Oxford 2007, pages 395 – 41.)



→ 022

Sucevita Monastery, Moldovia

Like most monastery located at the frontier of Christianisation Sucevita monastery combines the religious and missionary functions with providing refuge and protection for nearby villagers in case of war.



The Monastery before the fire. 1892

→ 023

Monastery as a Refugee Camp, c.19

Our Lady of Grace Monastery, located in the town of Monastery, N. S. – about 25 minutes east of Antigonish – has roots deep in the history of Nova Scotia and is a historic landmark of the region. The Monastery was originally founded in 1825 by a Trappist monk from France: Fr. Vincent de Paul Merle. He called the new monastery "Petit Clairvaux" after the Cistercian monastery in France made famous by St. Bernard. It was the first Trappist foundation in North America.

In 1903 another group of Trappists sought refuge from religious persecution at Monastery. They came from France, but due to the scarcity of vocations and the easing of the persecutions in that country they returned in 1919.



→ 024

Engraving of American Civil War Refugees

Called a "nation of nomads," 175,000 to 200,000 Confederate sympathizers were on the move during the war, the most in U.S. history. Midway through the war, a Mobile, Alabama editor estimated that 400,000 persons were refugees. In Alexandria, VA, two-thirds of the population left town, afraid of the uncertainties of military occupation. Other Alexandrians were expelled for refusing to take the "Oath of Loyalty". Wealthier families chose to "refugee" in England, France and Canada for the duration of the war, but for most, their options were limited.



→ 030

Camp in Norfolk, United Kingdom

During the German bombardment of London in WWII ("The Blitz"), many Londoners were brought to safety in temporary refugee camps outside of the city. This population movement anticipates post-war planning strategies which sought to relocate Londoners in a ring of New Towns in order to make the city less vulnerable during military attacks.



→ 031

UNHCR Camps in Africa

Above: Rwandan refugee camp in eastern Zaire.
Right: Darfur refugee camp in Chad.



→ 032

Kurdish Refugee Camps in the Iraqi Province of Kurdistan

Internal population movement triggered by ethnic and religious tensions in Iraq has led to a high number of IDP camps.



through minimal additions into a transit camp for Jews awaiting deportation to the Death Camps. Another example of multiple re-appropriation is discussed by the architects SANDI HILAL, ALESSANDRO PETTI and EYAL WEIZMAN. The architecture of a site radically changing purpose and meaning as soon as it is unplugged from the military and political power structures that charged it: "*Staro Sajmiste* [near Belgrade], *the old fairground, built in the 1938, around a central circular structure according to an optical layout to showcase new technology, [was transformed] into a Nazi concentration camp during WW2. The visual order of exhibition turned into the logic of surveillance and control. After the war this site has turned into a Gypsy camp-village. The circular layout has thus been interpreted in radically different fashions. From a display mechanism, to a site of incarceration and murder, and then a site of renewed communal life...*"⁵² (HILAL, PETTI, WEIZMAN 2007)

Many newly set up refugee camps around the world reveal many of the above ambiguities, displaying not only architectural similarities to detention and prison camps, but also blurring agendas of protection and surveillance. Indeed, the complex motivations of all stakeholders involved in setting up, organising, managing and funding camps are complex and frequently clash. As will be discussed in later chapter of this dissertation, the policies of UNHCR and other humanitarian mission vis-à-vis refugees may collide with the interests of host governments whose primary interest might be to prevent the further infiltration of refugees into the depth of the country. Humanitarian bodies frequently need to engage in uneasy partnerships with host governments who need to approve of all operations or even local militias, in order to ensure their humanitarian mission can be implemented. The result is in most cases an uneasy compromise and can be, in the most extreme cases, become paradoxical: A relief operation behind barbed wires, a supposed sanctuary to protect human rights were contained refugees are denied the rights to leave the camp at free will, or engage in social or economic relations with their host areas.

⁵² source: Hilal, Sandi, Petti, Alessandro, Weizman, Eyal. "Decolonizing Architecture - Reorienting Israel's Architecture of Occupation", published online: www.decolonization.com

1.2.2 Definitions of Refugee Camps and Other Refugee Concentrations Within the Language of Global Refugee Protection

The language used by Agencies and Actors that are operationally engaged in refugee protection vastly differs from the discourse in academia – indicative of a problematic gap between research and practical operation on the ground. In contrast to the problematisation of camp in theoretical discourse, Agencies employ a technocratic language and simplified set of categories to describe refugee concentrations. This section provide an insight into how UNHCR and other international agencies differentiates between different spatial “refugee concentrations” and applies these categories to prepare refugee statistics. While the technocratic, and rigid categorisation of spatial settings is problematic (as will be discussed at the end of this section), the range of categories begins to show a wide spectrum of tools that international organisations operate with to deal with refugees awaiting durable solutions. Refugee camps are only one type. In the absence of a clear overview provided by UNHCR, I have turned to one of the leading researchers in the field, KAREN JACOBSEN who differentiates in her article “*Refugees’ Environmental Impact: The Effect of Patterns of Settlement*”⁵³ between two main categories of refugee concentrations - “self-settlement” and “assisted settlement” - which are used to structure this section. Official definitions are added wherever possible.

(1) Self-settlements (or dispersed settlement): Urban refugees and rural refugees

JACOBSEN applies the category of self-settlement to any form of dispersed, spontaneous, self-directed or unplanned refugee concentration (small clusters, families, individuals), which may emerge in a rural or urban context. Amongst all refugee populations this is the largest and, paradoxically, also least researched. UNHCR itself estimates that about half of all registered refugees live in self-settled conditions in urban areas, also referred to as “urban refugees”⁵⁴, many without direct access direct official (government or international) assistance. They share local households (often based on tribal or family connections), or set up temporary accommodation nearby, and are helped with shelter and food by local families or community organizations (JACOBSEN 1997). Her definition is close to the UNHCR definition for “dispersed settlement”: “*Refugees find accommodation within the households of families who already live in the area of refuge. The refugees either share existing accommodation or set up temporary accommodation nearby and share water, sanitation, cooking and other services of the pre-existing households.*”⁵⁵ Some displaced persons living in self-settlement or dispersed settlement conditions are recognized refugees and qualify for assistance, for instance Iraqi refugees in Damascus or Amman where UNHCR set up centrally located relief access centres.

(2) Assisted settlements

JACOBSEN applies the notion of “assisted settlements” as an umbrella term for a broad variety of different types. All types have been formally set up, enjoy official recognition, services and protection, and are intended to house refugees until a durable solution could be found. Assisted settlements may emerge in rural areas. Here the subcategories of “refugee camps” and “local settlement” are amongst the most common. In urban areas, assisted settlement may also include camp-like situations, or the housing of refugees in public building or community facilities, which are converted as temporary mass shelters. (JACOBSEN 1997) In the following, commonly used sub-categories of assisted settlements will be briefly introduced.

(2.1) Mass shelters

A frequently used strategy to accommodate refugees in urban areas is the use of public buildings or community facilities as mass shelters to house dispersed populations. The UNCHR officially defines mass shelters as follows: “*Refugees find accommodation in pre-existing facilities, for example, in schools, barracks, hotels, gymnasiums. These are normally in urban areas and are often intended as temporary or transit accommodation.*”⁵⁶ Sometimes, international humanitarian agencies even cover the rents for industrial facilities such as sheds, or leisure facilities such as stadiums. A recent example for a mass shelter was a disused publicly owned hotel, which served IDPs from Georgia’s breakaway region Abchasia and South Ossetia.

⁵³ Jacobsen, Karen. “Refugees’ Environmental Impact: The Effect of Patterns of Settlement”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.10, No.1, Oxford, 1997

⁵⁴ UNHCR’s 2007 Global Refugee Trends, estimated that half of the refugee population was residing in urban areas.

⁵⁵ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006

⁵⁶ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006

(2.2) Safe areas

In order to protect already displaced persons and those threatened of displacement the UN has invented the notion of special zones (frequently referred to as safe areas, safe regions, neutralized zones). One of the first uses of this approach was in 1993, on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Bosnian War. By resolution of the United Nations Security Council, the Srebrenica urban region was declared a “Safe Area”, but the UN force (United Nations Protection Force, UNPROFOR) was so poorly equipped and restrictively mandated that they could not prevent both conflicting parties to enter and ultimately, the massacre of Srebrenica by Serb paramilitary forces could not be prevented. A more recent plan to create “safe areas” in Darfur has also stirred controversy and intense criticism by Africa division of Human Rights Watch. The UN had negotiated that the official Sudanese government forces should protect the safety of the zone but, being itself accused of supporting the Janjaweed death squads they did not have the trust of the local population: “It’s unrealistic to think that Sudanese forces will provide security to civilians who were driven out of their homes by some of these very same forces.”⁵⁷

(2.3) Local settlements

In the early 1980s, UNRWA launched a new concept for housing refugees. The aim of “local settlements” was to create small, largely self-sustained settlements. It was most frequently used in form of “rural settlements” – agricultural enclaves or villages where refugees were allocated houses and plots of land for farming. The infrastructure of these villages was supposed to benefit the local population after the repatriation of the refugees. According to long-time UNHCR staff member REINIER THIADENS, and as agriculturalist responsible for the planning of several rural settlements in Africa, the idea of self-sufficiency as well as planned “integration in the local context until a durable solution could be found”⁵⁸ is the key difference to traditional refugee camps. According to THIADENS, the 1981 Nobel Peace Prize for UNHCR was partly awarded on the grounds of the introduction of this concept. However, THIADENS also states that the local settlement idea slowly “faded away in the late 1980s and 1990s, when the increasing pressure on land resources made host governments more reluctant to provide land. Some local settlements had negatively affected the local environment and, together with political reservations, contributed to the fact that the general acceptance of governments to receive people in settlement like conditions was getting worse.” (THIADENS). In addition, UNHCR’s new emphasis from local settlement towards repatriation and protection in the 1990s also meant that less emphasis was placed on self-reliance.

(2.4) Refugee camps and Camp Centres

In its official definition, UNHCR defines refugee camps as “a plot of land temporarily made available to host refugees fleeing from an armed conflict in temporary homes. UN Agencies, particularly UNHCR, and other humanitarian organizations provide essential services in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education. These camps are ideally located at least 50 km away from the nearest international border to deter camp raids and other attacks on its civilian occupants.”⁵⁹ This very general and technocratic definition considers refugee camps as purpose-built sites – temporary settings for the purpose of delivering more effective protection and assistance through UN agencies, host governments or NGOs. The definition is based on an ideal scenario in which camps serve as short-term safe haven, keeping displaced people together and facilitating speedy repatriation. The ideal image rarely matches the reality on the ground and the UNHCR definition is in fact a very general and unspecific umbrella term disregarding local specificities of politics, culture and place. Camps also vastly differ in size (from a few hundreds in the Communities of Peace in Colombia, 2000 for Mauretians in Senegal, to 200,000 in the camps of Mugunga and Kibumbain the Goma region of former Zaire). As this section primarily serves to position “refugee camps” amongst other tools to manage refugee concentrations, these definitional shortcomings will not be further discussed here, but addressed more fully in Part I/ chapter 2 of this dissertation.

In its statistics UNHCR often blurs refugee camps and refugee centres, defined as “locations where refugees reside or may gather to receive information, counselling, material assistance or other services.”⁶⁰ An example for camp centres as distinctly different from camps are the UNHCR distribution centres for aid for Iraqi refu-

⁵⁷ source: Human Rights Watch, Human Rights News, www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/01/darfur9286.htm.

⁵⁸ interview with Reinier Thiadens, August 26, 2008.

⁵⁹ source: UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms, Geneva, June 2006.

⁶⁰ source: UNHCR, Master Glossary of Terms, 2006.

gees in main Arab cities (here it is unclear if these refugees are counted as self-settled, see category 1 or as part of refugee centres). Here, no housing component is included. In other cases, the distinction is more blurred and UNHCR frequently refers to a broad variety of conditions as “camp/ centres”.

Global Refugee Population by Type of Concentration

The numbers and proportions of refugees in the different types of settlement are notoriously difficult to determine. In population statistics UNHCR only differentiates between broad categories of refugee concentrations such as “Camps/ Centres”, “Urban” and “Rural/ Dispersed”. Rural settlements or mass shelters for instance are not listed as separate categories and are instead included in the category “Rural/ Dispersed”, together with self-settled refugees dispersed in rural villages.⁶¹ The most comprehensive and reliable data is available from UNHCR which has stated that refugees and IDPs categorized as “persons of concern” to UNHCR reside in “Camp/ Centres”, “Urban” locations or “Rural/ dispersed” conditions (see fig. xx). According to these statistics, refugees living in camps are outnumbered by those living dispersed in urban areas. According to HENRIK PILGAARD, UNHCR staff member, this has been the result of three main factors: *“The first reason is the inclusion in UNHCR statistics of some 900,000 IDPs who reside in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. A second factor is the reclassification of Afghan refugees living in the Islamic Republic of Iran whose location has now been reported as urban, as compared to previous years where it was rural/dispersed. The third reason for an increase in urban populations of concern to UNHCR is the number of Iraqi refugees residing in Jordanian and Syrian cities. Because of the latter, over one third (34%) of all persons of concern living in urban agglomerations are residing in countries covered by UNHCR’s MENA region making it the second largest regional Bureau, after Africa (40 per cent of all urban residents) followed by countries under Europe Bureau (20%).”*⁶²

Refugee Concentrations as Dynamic, Instable Conditions

The above-mentioned types of refugee concentrations describe “idealized” conditions and are therefore difficult to apply on the ground. Refugee concentrations are locally specific and above all highly dynamic conditions and change over time. The distinctions between the definitions are blurred, as they ignore local circumstance, place and the factor time. This applies not only to JACOBSEN’s basic distinction between “assisted settlements” and “self-settlements” – the assistance regime frequently changes over time – but also to the distinctions between safe areas, mass shelter, local settlements and refugee camps. According to JACOBSEN, the change of certain variables might trigger the transition from one condition to another condition (e.g. a camp becoming a local settlement or a mass shelter becoming a camp). These variables include: possibly changing legal status, change of local environment, the addition of housing structures or the opening of access to land, administrative changes, the evolution of economic activity, changes in the protection regime, local conflicts or the sudden possibility for an immanent implementation of a durable solution.

The scholar ANNA SCHMIDT has for instance pointed out the blurring of clear distinctions between “refugee camp” and “local settlement” and criticised the simplistic language of UNHCR definitions. According to Schmidt, the following parameters and variables could be applied instead:

- Freedom of movement: The more this is restricted, the more a refugee settlement is generally seen to take on the character of a camp. Even though the cases where refugee movement outside designated areas is strictly impossible are rare, legal restriction and even lax and arbitrary enforcement have large implications for refugee livelihoods.
- Mode of assistance/economics: One may distinguish between camps based on relief handouts and food distribution with little possibility for refugees to engage in subsistence farming or other economic activities, and, on the other hand, situations in which refugees can engage in a wider range of economic activities. Measurable indicators may be plot size in camps and the range of de facto restrictions on work. In camps, generally only limited income-generating programmes are permitted, while self-settled refugees will tend to be more integrated into the local economy, be it with or without governmental permission.
- Mode of governance: This indicates the mechanisms of decision-making within or over the refugee com-

⁶¹ Some difficulties with the categorisation is highlighted by Banki who states that UNHCR classifications for camps and settlements blend rather seamlessly into its categories of “Rural” and “Urban”, for example, instructions to UNHCR field staff requesting demographic data by location simply read: “Urban” refers to asylum-seekers and refugees living in urban areas. “Camps” refers to populations living in camps or refugee centres, whereas “Rural/dispersed” concerns populations who are living in rural areas, and not in camps or centres, often dispersed amongst the local population. Refugee populations that cannot be classified by camp, urban or rural areas should also be reported in this category. Refugee centres in urban areas, for example, and rural settlements with some measure of dispersion are likely to avoid easy classification. It is partially for this reason that this study relies not only on camp and settlement statistics but on a more cumbersome, but hopefully more enlightening method of examining refugee integration rather than camp placement. (Banki, 2004).

⁶² source: email correspondence with Henrik Pilgaard, UNHCR headquarters, Geneva, October, 1, 2008.



→ 033

Urban Refugees in Khartoum

UNHCR does not have any records on the housing situation of urban refugees. Many refugees live on minimal means in squatter-like conditions scattered across the city. Others form informal concentrations or even informal camp-like situations. More than 900,000 IDPs currently reside in Khartoum.



→ 034

Tbilisi, Georgia, 2005: Former Hotel Converted into a Temporary Mass Shelter

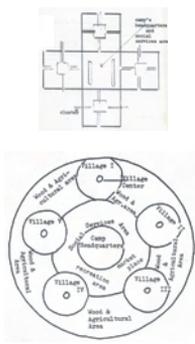
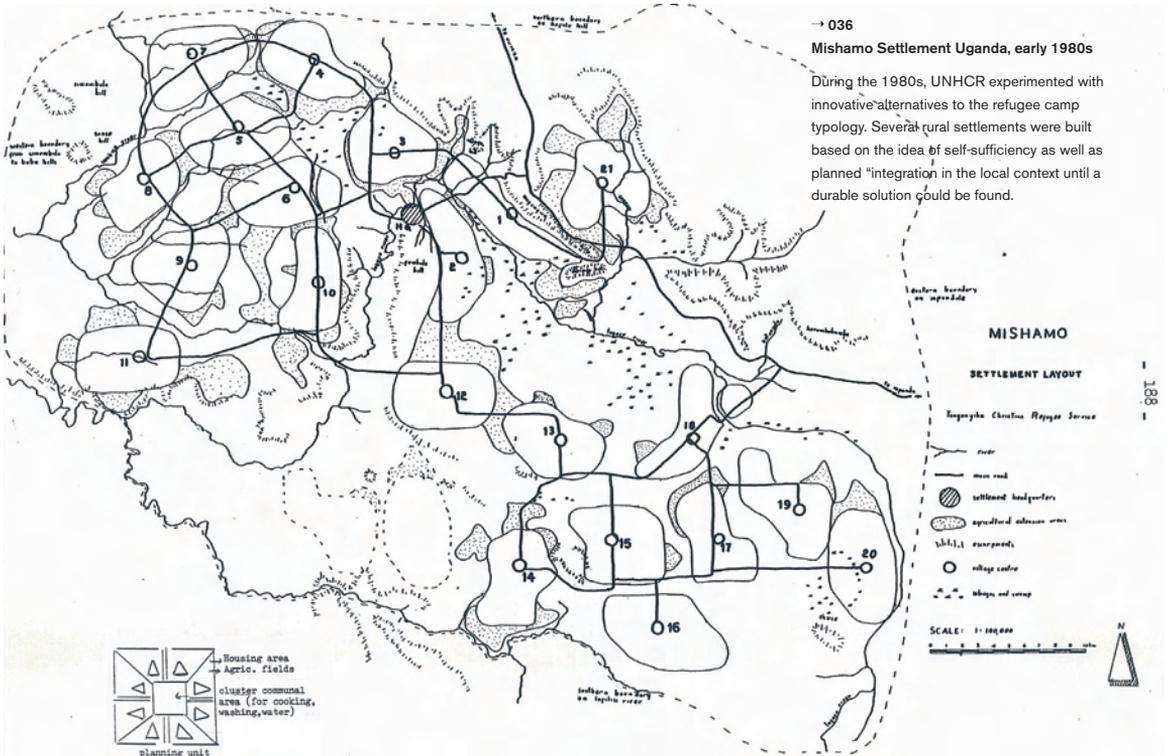
The disused publicly owned hotel served as temporary accommodation for IDPs from Georgia's breakaway region Abchasia and South Ossetia.



→ 035

UN Safe Areas

During the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, armed forces under UN flag attempted to prevent ethnic cleansing by declaring specific cities/micro-regions as safe areas. Refugees flooded into these areas. The Massacre of Srebrenica took place within one of such safe areas and the UN came under heavy attack for insufficient defence strategies and willingness to protect refugees by force. An innovative protection concept was discredited.



Location types	Figures	Percentage
Camps/ Centres	3,824,190	22%
Urban	8,464,754	48%
Rural/ dispersed	5,315,866	30%
Unknown	14,072,808	not included in calculation
Total	31,677,623	

→ 039
Population of concern to UNHCR by type of location

Source: Global Refugee Trends, 2007 (UNHCR)

munity. Camps are thus notably distinguished from self-settlements by the parameters of control: the restrictions on socioeconomic, political, and cultural freedoms that are placed on their inhabitants over and above those existing for local populations.

- Designation as temporary locations/shelter (irrespective of their actual longevity): Being considered temporary is both a characteristic of a camp and itself shapes policy responses regarding economic and social freedoms of refugees; and finally,
- The changing demography which affects population size and/or density.⁶³

As this dissertation is primarily concerned with refugee camps, not local settlements, it is important to understand that refugee camps are dynamic conditions occupied a blurry spectrum between local settlements (as more permanent conditions) and other more ad hoc conditions such as mass shelters or indeed self-settlement.

Proposal for an Alternative Camp Classification

UNHCR data collection and categorisation for refugee concentrations and, specifically for camps has been developed to serve policy and programme design on a country and regional basis. However, “camp-level” thinking, e.g. taking into account the specific conditions of site, physical constitutions, geographical context or degree of integration into their context or omitted. The “one-size-fits-all” approach already observed in camp design, is equally applied to other programmes and agencies generally lack locally sensitive solutions. Several scholars have proposed indicators and terminology that might help to map camp urbanisation more effectively, albeit with no consequence as yet. The following parameters might inform an alternative approach to camp classification:

(a) Camp classification according to development/evolution of physical constitution:

- emergency camp (construction period 0-2 years)
- consolidated camp (reaching the limit of UNHCR space provisions for household/ individual)
- saturated/congested camp (beyond the limit density/ overcrowding/ lack of sufficient open space)⁶⁴

(b) According to geographical location: Camp could be classified as located in an urban, suburban, rural or underpopulated host area.

(c) According to degree of integration (dependent on host country policy): T HOERZ (1995) has proposed to categorize camps in accordance with the level of integration into their surrounding context, a variable that is deeply dependent on host government policy: “*Completely separate existence of refugees and locals*”, “*Camps but free to trade*”, “*Camps but free to move and trade*”, “*Separate status but equal opportunities with locals*” (for example agricultural settlements), “*integration of refugees and refugee settlements*”⁶⁵

A similar categorisation was proposed by VAN DAMME (1998)⁶⁶ who placed camps in a continuum from integration/non-camps to segregation/closed camps: “*Urban refugees and integrated rural refugees*”, “*Peaceful cohabitation*”, “*Spatial separation*”, “*Spatial segregation*”

Concluding Remarks

The lack of a more change-sensitive language is indicative of the general confusion and lack of conceptual tools when encountering the transformation of transitory camps into more permanent, urbanised settings. Indeed, the discrepancy between official definition and the complex and ambiguous reality on the ground is a key theme and main focus point for this dissertation, situating, contextualising and introducing the discussion on rehabilitation of Palestinian refugee camp in Part II of this dissertation. In the following chapter 1.3 I will turn to the main focus of this dissertation: The phenomenon of camp urbanisation as one of the most striking evidences for the dynamism and instability of refuge concentrations, which highlights the shortcomings of the existing language and terminology of humanitarian agencies.

⁶³ for further discussion on the above parameters see: Schmidt, Anna, “FMO Thematic Guide: Camps Versus Settlements”, Forced Migration Online, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2000.

⁶⁴ For UNHCR standards on spatial provision for families and individuals see chapter 1.3.1.

⁶⁵ Hoerz, T., “Refugees and host environments: a review of current and related literature”, GTZ, Eschborn, 1995.

⁶⁶ Van Damme, W., “How Liberian and Sierra Leonean Refugees Settled in the Forest Region of Guinea (1990–96)”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1999.

1.3

Camp or City? The Ambiguous Reality of Urbanised Refugee Camps

- I.1.3 Camp or City? The Ambiguous Reality of Urbanised Refugee Camps
- .1 Why Camps Tend to Stay: Coming to Terms with "Protracted Refugee Situations"

1.3.1 Why Camps Tend to Stay: Coming to Terms with "Protracted Refugee Situations"

What happens when emergency camps for displaced populations stay put? What happens when none of the UNHCR prescribed durable solution – "local integration", "resettlement" or "voluntary repatriation" seems to be on the horizon? The phenomenon of camps or local settlements for refugees that simply remain where they are for an uncertain future is by no means limited to Palestinian refugee camps in the Middle East. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies defines such conditions as "*Protracted Refugee Situation (PRS)*" - a broad umbrella term for such conditions which has in recent years become extremely important and frequently used: "*A protracted refugee situation (often caused by political impasse), is defined as "one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo, [where] their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee may receive assistance, but is unable to enjoy some or all of those basic rights (freedom of movement, employment, education, etc.)."*⁶⁷ The terminology can be applied to all refugee situations disregarding of whether refugees live in organised and assisted environments such as mass shelters, local settlements, camps or refugee centres, or indeed to those living in conditions of self-settlement. According to GIL LOESCHER refugee situations become protracted if they exist for more than five years and include more than 25,000 individuals who remain without clear prospects of finding a durable solution (GIL LOESCHER et al. 2008).

From the early 2000s, a mental shift took place within international refugee policy. It became clear that "repatriation" in the place of origin (which had been the predominant doctrine in the 1990s) was not working as one had hoped. Indeed the average number of years in exile had dramatically increased: "*In 1993, the average duration of a refugee situation was 9 years. By 2004, the average length of exile was an incredible 17 years. There are now more than 30 PRSs around the world.*"⁶⁸ The proportion of major protracted situations within the total number of refugee situations (not counting IDPs) increased from 45 to 90 per cent in the same period.⁶⁹ In 2008, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) surveyed a total of 8.5m refugees in protracted situations (excluding IDPs) (→ **040, 041**). While the chart, ordered according to the number of years of the duration of the refugee crisis, shows that while Palestinian refugees are in the lead, it by no means the only long-term protracted situation in the world. As the following map shows, the main concentrations of protracted refugee situations are East Africa, the Middle East, as well as Nepal.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ source: "Protracted Refugee Situations," EC/54/SC/CRP.14 Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, UNHCR, 10 June 2004.

⁶⁸ source: Loescher, Gil et al. "The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – The Politics and Practices of Refugee Protection Into the Twenty-First Century"; Global Institutions Series, Routledge, London, 2008, page 112.

⁶⁹ The human reality of refugees in protracted situations varies widely, particularly with respect to their economic and social integration. In some cases, prospects for local integration are minimal, requiring the international community to continue to provide assistance on a daily basis; in others, refugees have become economically self-sufficient, largely because the host country has provided access to land or the labour market. Of the 6.2 million refugees in major protracted situations at the end of 2003, 73 per cent (4.5 million) had been provided with some form of assistance by UNHCR. By contrast, in only six of the 38 major protracted situations were refugees fully integrated economically, without requiring any external aid. (source: "Protracted Refugee Situations" - Report of the Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme", June 10, 2004).

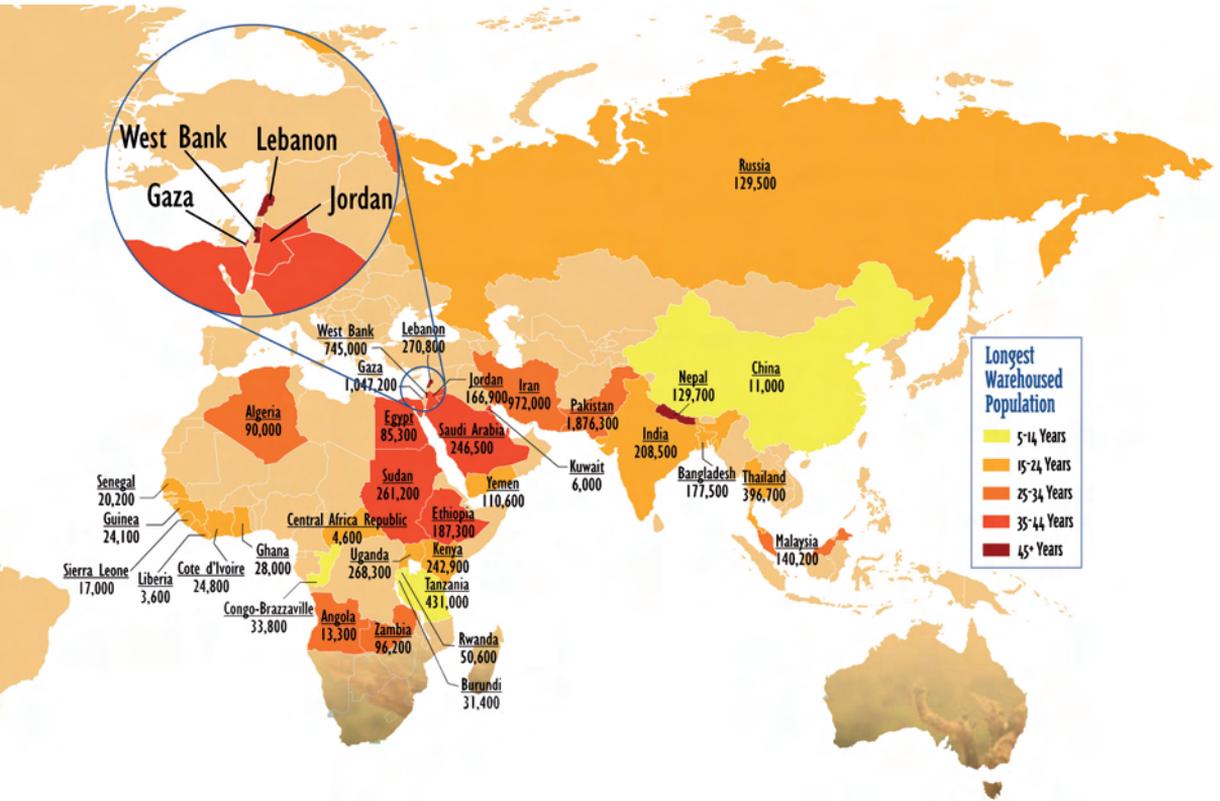
⁷⁰ The revised version of the report "Protracted Refugee Situations" of 2008 lists the following situations as among the most desperate of all protracted refugee situations:

- Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan: The first large-scale refugee movements from Afghanistan into Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran took place in 1979. These were followed by at least four distinct waves of displacement, reaching their height in the mid 1980s, when the Afghan refugee population in the two countries reached approximately six million – some 40 per cent of the Afghan population. Currently, some 3 million registered Afghans are still being hosted, some 2.14 million in Pakistan and 910,000 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: Rohingya refugees from Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State have been living in refugee camps in Bangladesh for over 16 years. There are currently around 27,000 people accommodated in two camps in the Cox's Bazaar District.
- Bosnian and Croatian refugees in Serbia: The vast majority of refugees who fled to Serbia in the early 1990s have found a durable solution, either by returning to their own countries, by locally integrating or by resettling elsewhere. Nevertheless, a substantial number of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the vicinity of 95,000, remain in Serbia.
- Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania: Large numbers of Burundian refugees have been living in Tanzania since the early 1970s. Some 220,000 of the earlier arrivals, along with their descendants, live in three settlements in the Tabora and Rukwa regions. These refugees were offered the possibility to locally integrate by the Tanzanian authorities, and so far 176,000 refugees have confirmed their wish to remain in the country. The total number of refugees from Burundi peaked after a new major influx in the 1990s. Since then, voluntary repatriation and some resettlement from the camps in north-western Tanzania have reduced the number of camp-based Burundian refugees in that part of the country, also in need of solutions, to less than 120 000.
- Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan: Sudan is host to one of the most protracted refugee situations in Africa, with an estimated 135,000 Eritreans residing in the east of the country. The overwhelming majority (some 94 per cent) arrived in the late 1960s and early 1980s. Another substantial group arrived in Sudan between 1998 and 2000. There are presently twelve "active" camps in eastern Sudan, accommodating some 95,000 people.

Why do Protracted Refugee Situations Occur?

According to LOESCHER, a multitude of cultural, social, political and economic as well as ecological dynamics are involved which include the following: Repatriation is often impossible. The original problem that caused the displacement is not solved; the violent conflict may have never ended or led to a status quo in which return is impossible). Resettlement schemes are not a sufficient option: Third country schemes such as quota refugee allowed into Western have been on a steady decline due to more restricted asylum policies. Local integration becomes increasingly difficult and unpopular with host countries due to dwindling land resources, environmental problems or local hostilities. The long standing UNHCR expert and architect LOUIS NEUMANN mentions another factor which does not directly relate to the impossibility to implement one of the three predefined durable solutions: *"Refugees quickly get used to dependency and living conditions in the camps. Health care and schooling provided by UNHCR and other agencies is in most cases by far better than in their native environments. Child death rates drop drastically and camp populations explode. Every ten years, camp populations tend to double. Why would someone who has lived in a camp, started a business or new trade want to go back to his original village and start farming again? What about all his additional new family members who do not fit into his old house?"*²¹ The fact that over time, camp refugees adopt to the new living conditions, get used to dependency, make use of new opportunities that are provided by the new surroundings weaken the ties to the place of origin. This phenomenon will be more fully discussed in the following section, which aims to discuss the difference between emergency camp and a condition in which urbanisation takes place.

²¹ source: conversation with Louis Neumann, July 22, 2008.



Duration (years)	Population	Host Country	Number
59	Palestinians i	Gaza, West Bank, & Lebanon	2,063,000
49	Tibetans	Nepal	20,500
40	Palestinians	Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait	521,500
39	Eritreans	Sudan, Ethiopia	264,300
34	Filipinos	Malaysia	70,500
32	Angolans	Zambia	40,800
32	Saharwi	Algeria	90,000
31	Congolese (Kinshasa)	Angola	13,300
28	Afghans	Iran, Pakistan	2,790,900
28	Iraqis	Iran	57,400
27	Ethiopians	Sudan	20,800
24	Sri Lankans	India	102,300
24	Sudanese	Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt	300,700
23	Myanmarese	Thailand	146,700
19	Myanmarese	India	75,000
18	Liberians	Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, et al.	85,200
18	Mauritanians	Senegal	20,200
18	Myanmarese Chin	Malaysia	25,000
16	Afghans	Russia, India	115,700
16	Bhutanese	Nepal	109,200
16	Georgians	Russia	45,000
16	Myanmarese	Bangladesh	177,500
16	Sierra Leoneans	Guinea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire	12,300
16	Somalis	Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen	418,400
14	Burundians	Tanzania	331,900
14	Myanmarese	Malaysia	44,700
13	Rwandans	Uganda	21,200
11	Congolese (Kinshasa)	Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, et al.	291,500
11	Myanmarese	Thailand	250,000
7	North Koreans	China	11,000
TOTAL			8,536,500

→ 040

Protracted Refugee Situations

Source: U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), www.refugees.org.

→ 041

Comparative Chart

The 2008, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) surveyed a total of 8.5m refugees in protracted situations (excluding IDPs): source: World Refugee Survey 2008, USCRI, [weblink: www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org). Note: counting starts from 2007, time of the survey, this does not include IDPs.

1.3.2 Measuring Camp Urbanisation on a Global Scale

There is a wealth of scholarly work on the ambiguous conditions that emerge when emergency camps endure. Contrary to the technocratic view of engineers and bureaucrats of large humanitarian organisations and governmental agencies, urban anthropologists, ethnographers or sociologists, often in collaboration with independent NGOs, have studied development processes in the field, applying a more phenomenological approach, based on local observations: A view from below. One of the most distinguished scholars is the French ethnographer MICHEL AGIER who describes the dynamic situation observed in the Kenyan Dadaab camp as follows: *“At the beginning, it all seemed quite straightforward. Emergency raised only technical operational problems. Then the social complexity of the camp began to emerge, day after day... [as refugees] get their bearings and organise themselves in space... the humanitarian mechanism for their survival becomes for them a network of relationships within which a semblance of social hierarchy arises. How in due course, the empty space begins to fill and take life, and how a kind of town takes shape without ever having been envisaged.”*²² AGIER proceeds to describe the emergence of quarters for different ethnic tribes, using different technique of extending their UNHCR tents or replace them with small huts the setting up of markets, coffee or video shops and public areas or religious buildings – interventions which, according to AGIER can be likened to MICHEL DE CERTEAU’s *“interventions of everyday life”*, which mark the resistance of new townspeople to the anonymity of urban space. AGIER describes this process as “urbanisation” and in this is supported by many scholars who investigated similar conditions. AGIER argues that this process sets in immediately after the initial trauma of violence, chaos and death, or of difficult escape is receding: *“The subject that begins forming again as soon as a context of socialisation is reborn and brings about the existence of public spaces, exchange, projects for individual and collective life.”* (AGIER 2008)

Urbanised Camps versus “Emergency Camps”

MARC-ANTOINE PEROUSE DE MONTCLOS (PEROUSE et al. 2000) investigates similar phenomena in African refugee camps has devised the following parameters to differentiate between basic “transient settlements” and the emerging urban setting:

- Urban features, relating to the population and building density, the camp layout and physical constitution and the accumulation of infrastructures (no specific figures are given)
- Trading activities with surrounding communities, an “often symbiotic relationship (PEROUSE) where locals and refugees benefit mutually (locals may benefit from humanitarian infrastructure such as hospitals or food aid often sold on by refugees cheaply, cheap labour, while refugees are able to build livelihoods).
- Sociocultural profile of refugees, which considers the camp dweller itself as the key to define and measure urbanisation; this may relate to capital generation and employment (former farmers begin to work in industrial settings), or to the culture of interaction for example pastoral people suddenly find themselves in cosmopolitan settings, changing gender relationship)

Following AGIER and PEROUSE one might state that urbanisation is a fact, occurring almost instantly after the emergency camp has been set up and evolves progressively as the refugee situation becomes protracted. However, humanitarian operations seem to be in denial about this process. The limited term “protracted refugee situations” and the omission to develop a more specific terminology sensitive to the evolving situation on the ground (considering factors such as physical/ spatial evolution, the emergence of local economies or the changing social, professional or cultural habits of camp dwellers) is indicative of an incapacity to think beyond technocratic emergency relief required in the first moment. While AGIER might argue that “emergency camps” cease to exist almost at an instance, in the official humanitarian language, camps remain “emergency camps” forever, ignoring the fact that they are undergoing radical changes on the ground requiring different kinds of help and assistant. The notion of “urbanised camps” will be further elaborated in section 1.3.3, which provides for an overview over alternative conceptual models and terms developed by scholars such as AGIER or PEROUSE to replace the inappropriate term “emergency camp”.

Technocratic Planning versus Informal Urbanisation

While local settlements are deliberately constructed as self-sufficient entities (usually on the scale of a village, rather than a town), refugee camps are planned and set up as emergency situations, regardless of the

²² Agier, Michel. “On the Margins of the World – The Refugee Experience Today”, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008

fact that urbanisation will occur almost instantly. The two only available manuals for camp design are UNHCR's "Handbook for Emergencies"⁷² and the Sphere Project's "Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response."⁷³ Both are "one-size-fits-all manuals", determining all aspects from minimum area of shelter space per person to the width of the firebreaks required within the camp. The guidelines are adaptable for any number of refugees. In most cases however, already after a short while camps tend to overcrowd, denying both dignity to its inhabitants and space to pursue livelihoods. While in some cases, this may be the reasons of additional and unexpected influx of refugees, JIM KENNEDY argues that *"this is not usually the result of unexpected additional influxes of displaced people but a consequence of flaws within the guidelines themselves."*⁷⁴ Guidelines do not take into account the urbanisation process that sets in immediately after normal camp life begins.

As the life span of a camp can never be accurately predicted planners, should take a long-term perspective. But instead of predicting for population and building growth, plot sizes and dwellings are so restrictively dimensioned that family expansion leads automatically to overcrowding and self-made extensions simply do not fit.⁷⁵ Furthermore, UNHCR's manual recommends the promotion of economic enterprises for camp residents – but does not assign space for the workshops, home-based enterprises, granaries or tool storage, which these require. Although the need for non-residential buildings is mentioned, no spatial guidelines are given for the design of schools, clinics, warehouses, administration offices or community centres.

Urbanisation therefore primarily occurs informally, "despite" planning, with refugees making do with the constraints of the technocratically implemented "diagram"-like camp. Camp design seems to be strangely out of tune with the overall development goals of organisations like UNHCR and their growing emphasis on sustainability and self-reliance. Why, critiques like KENNEDY ask, can camp-design not positively encourage development? KENNEDY demands a *"to design and calculate from the smallest components to the largest, and from the bottom up"*, a new system of calculating spatial provision in the camp which takes into account how families grow and also provides appropriately for the necessary outdoor facilities, infrastructures and growing economic activities. His most important and crucial demand is to re-conceptualize the urban layout of camps by introducing a hierarchy of spaces. The technocratic and rigid division of functions demands that communal buildings are concentrated in one spot of the camp, mostly located near the entrance. This often creates conflict on the ground: *"Those who live towards the [other] edge of the camp feel excluded and social instability may be greater. Those who live at the edges of residential communities facing directly onto the open spaces may have no transitional space between the supposedly private spaces of their homes and the public spaces surrounding the clinics, schools or administrative offices. While they may derive some benefit from being able to place goods stalls or other businesses close to these busy areas, they also suffer considerable loss of privacy and security."* (KENNEDY 2005)

The obvious alternative would be to design a better hierarchy of different interlocking spaces that help to negotiate public, semi-public and private. The inclusion of empty spaces to absorb future growth is crucial. The introduction of smaller, neighbourhood-serving public spaces would help to ensure a more even access and distance to public facilities. Most importantly, residents should have a *"greater say in their uses and form and therefore a greater commitment to them – and to the camp as a whole."* (KENNEDY 2005) The rigidity with which current refugee camps are planned and set up recalls the rational layouts of the Palestinian refugee camps in their earliest stage of 1948 (see Part II of this dissertation). At the time, the division of functions, the rational, almost technocratic layout was part of an overall paradigm of modernist city planning. This poses even more urgently the question, why camp design still follows the same criteria? While it should not be forgotten that planners of camps have to deal with many constraints such as time (in emergency situations, speed of response is crucial) or site (host governments tend to allocate the worst possible land to refugee camps), a revision of planning guidelines seems long overdue.

⁷² UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, Geneva 2000 (www.aidworkers.net/resources/unhcr-handbook.html)

⁷³ Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Geneva 2004 (www.sphereproject.org/handbook/).

⁷⁴ Kennedy, Jim. "Challenging Camp Design Guidelines", Forced Migration Review, Volume/Issue: 001/023, Oxford, 2005.

⁷⁵ According to Kennedy, "the UNHCR guidelines stipulate an area of 900,000m² for a camp for 20,000 people. This provides a recommended 45m² per person, which includes a plot for vegetable gardening. However, once the space stipulated as necessary for fire-breaks, non-residential buildings and buffer zones between shelters is taken into account, the 45m² quickly starts to disappear." (FMR, 2005)-

Factors Influencing Urbanisation Process

Due to its informal, bottom up nature camp urbanisation is extremely diverse, as well as culture and location specific. However, the following aspects generally have a significant impact on all camps and determine speed and quality of urbanisation.

(1) General factors

- Social factors: Each refugee population brings different skills, assets into exile, depending on their background and place of origin in the country of origin. Refugees may come from urban or rural backgrounds, bring experience as craftsmen, shop owners or farmers. If their experience is easily translatable to the new cultural context and locality, livelihoods can be more easily build.
- Physical/ spatial/ geographical factors: The location of the refugee camp itself has a crucial influence on urbanisation. Factors include quality of site (hilly, plain, forested, etc.), size, access to resources such as water, farmable land, forests for firewood or building material.
- Context: Urban, suburban, rural or even undeveloped contexts provide different possibilities for camp residents to find local employment, or engage in any form of social, economic or cultural exchange.
- Security factors: Is a threat of new violence immanent? General safety directly impacts on how camps dwellers can go about their daily lives, whether they are willing to “invest” in the camp.

(2) Refugee-specific factors

Indeed these factors are might influence the development of any build environment such as villages or towns and are not settlement or camp specific. The following aspects are specific to the refugee context:

- Degree of assistance: Each humanitarian relief mission depends on specific donor commitments, which may vary tremendously. Funds may or may not be available to invest infrastructure or public buildings. Even if funds are available they may not reach the camp or settlement due to geographical, political, legal or security factors or, local camp management may decide on different investment priorities.
- Political and legal factors: Each humanitarian mission depends on the agreement and cooperation of the respective host government. Restrictions imposed by host authorities frequently limit some of the refugee rights such as freedom of movement or their access to local employment market.
- Degree of local integration: Scholars such as SUSAN BANKI (2004) or KAREN JACOBSEN (2001) stress another, crucial variable which may have a deep impact on urbanisation. The degree of local integration (in a sense a result of the already mentioned factors “location/ context”, “security” and “political/ legal”). Host governments, local populations or refugee populations themselves may be reluctant to engage with cam populations. KAREN JACOBSEN’s analysis of obstacles to local integration will be more fully discussed in Part I/ chapter 2.3.

Mapping Camp Urbanisation on the Global Scale

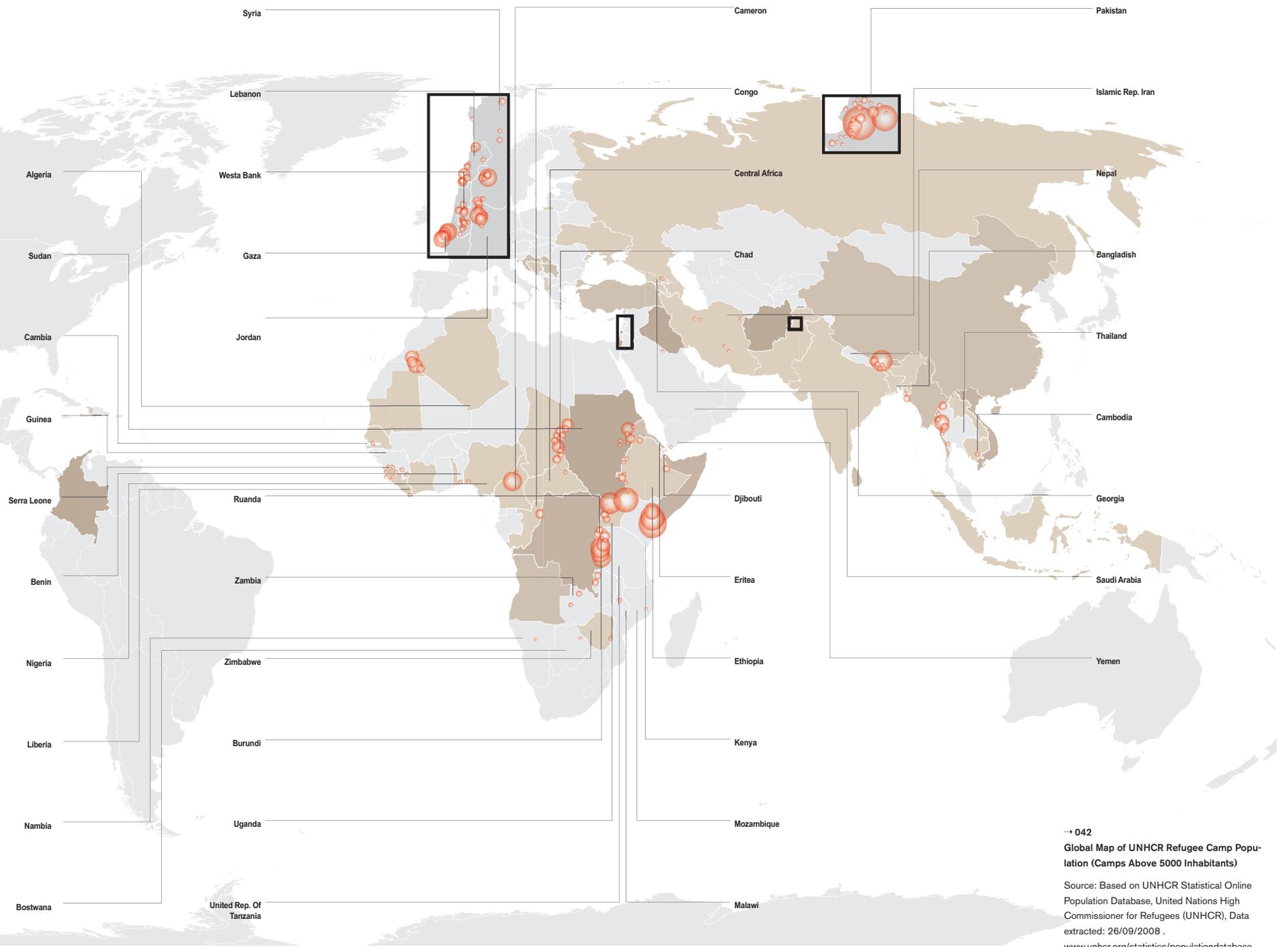
Since 2002, UNHCR has struggled to improve its central data management and monitoring system. The interim result, the 2006 publication of the “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”⁷⁷ is modestly described by the Agency itself as “*work-in-progress and should be considered as a ‘further step’ towards achieving UNHCR’s long-term vision of developing and integrating standards and indicators into all operations.*” As to be expected, data collection and annual revision in emergency situations location in mostly instable and conflictual regions around the entire globe is extremely difficult. Data has been notoriously patchy in areas with poor security or extremely dynamic situations on the ground. Data can be manipulated easily. Funding and organisational structures may not be in place to train staff or volunteers or monitor the surveying team. The resulting large error margins have contributed to a very restrictive policy of UNHCR towards share its data with academic institutions or independent NGOs. Beyond the unreliability of some data or data gaps, the goals and methodologies for data collection themselves, set by the UNHCR Geneva headquarters, have been designed to monitor the success of specific relief programmes and policies, i.e. to match a predefined “standard”.⁷⁸ If a gap between a set standard and an indicator is detected, a “gap analysis” should be conducted and measures taken to close this gap. While this approach may offer advantages in detecting creeping inequalities in refugee provision and act accordingly,

⁷⁷ source: “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006.

⁷⁸ The “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations” defines “standard” as follows: “A specific fixed point or range on the variable scale (indicator) that has to be reached or maintained to avoid occurrence of unacceptable conditions for refugees and persons of concern or unacceptable levels of performance.”

Country Name	Location	Tot. pop. end	Date establishm.	Total surface area (m2)
Algeria	Dakhla	19.961	02.01.1980	6.940.000
Algeria	L'Aiun	34.552	02.01.1980	21.497.000
Algeria	Awserd	28.061	02.01.1990	26.400.000
Algeria	27 February	7.253	..	3.809.700
Algeria	Smara	35.173	02.01.1980	18.000.000
Bangladesh	Kutupalong	10.708	14.02.1996	215.291
Bangladesh	Nayapara	16.679	18.02.1996	349.564
Benin	AGAME	4.678	28.04.2009	250.000
Botswana	DUKWI	2.685	02.01.1980	20.000
Burundi	Gihinga	2.590	..	166.000
Burundi	Gasorwe	9.609	..	284.300
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	458	15.12.2011	6.500
Cameroon	Province de l'Est et de l'Adamaoua	45.538	02.10.2010	50.000.000.000
Cameroon	Province du Nord Ouest et de l'Adamaoua	2.871	02.01.2006	10.000.000.000
Central African Rep.	Sam Ouandja	2.711	24.05.2011	620.000
Chad	Oure Cassoni	28.035	19.07.2008	4.460.000
Chad	Iridimi	18.269	22.03.2008	3.640.000
Chad	Touloum	23.131	08.02.2008	2.430.000
Chad	Amnabak	16701	24.06.2008	2.000.000
Chad	Kounoungou	13500	23.02.2008	3.640.000
Chad	Mile	16202	07.05.2008	2.530.000
Chad	Farchana	19815	18.01.2008	1.720.000
Chad	Bredjing	30077	20.05.2008	1.930.000
Chad	Treguine	15718	28.09.2008	1.270.000
Chad	Gaga	17708	04.05.2009	3.625.000
Chad	Djabal	15602	05.06.2008	1.600.000
Chad	Goz Amer	20097	25.03.2008	3.650.000
Congo	Impfondo	22.883
Djibouti	Ali-Addeh	6.376	02.04.1994	200.000
Eritrea	Emkulu	4.706	16.05.2004	194.190
Ethiopia	Bonga	7.106	02.01.1997	4.500.000
Ethiopia	Fugnido	18.725	07.01.1997	8.070.913
Ethiopia	Dimma	2.620	02.06.1996	1.880.000
Ethiopia	Sherkole	8.880	02.05.2001	6.000.000
Ethiopia	Kebribeyah	16.971	02.02.1995	1.170.015
Ethiopia	Aw-barre (Teferiber)	7.822	14.07.2011	2.081.254
Ethiopia	Shimelba	15.201	18.05.2008	904.902
Gambia	Senegal-Gambia border 54 villages	6.398
Georgia	Pankisi	1.047	02.01.2004	2.208
Guinea	Kouankan I	3.692	02.04.2005	1.800.000
Guinea	Kouankan II	3.022	..	35.000
Guinea	Laine	5.185	..	1.730.000
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Bardsir District, Kerman Province	7114	02.01.1988	510.000
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Rafsanjan District, Kerman Province	6012	02.01.1988	300.000
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Saveh	4055	..	200.000
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Tehran	2761	..	300.000
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Mohammad R. Allah/Torbat-e-Jam Camp	4927	02.07.1998	1.000.000
Kenya	Kakuma Refugee camp	60.550	1992	13.000.000
Kenya	Ifo	61.832	02.09.1995	28.000.000
Kenya	Hagadera	70.412	02.06.1996	16.000.000
Kenya	DAGAHALEY	39.626	02.03.1996	9.100.000
Liberia	Harper	700
Malawi	DZALEKA, MALAWI	8.563	..	201.000
Mozambique	Maratane, Nampula Province	4.787	03.01.2005	170.000
Namibia	Osire	6.303	02.11.1996	9.000.000
Nepal	Beldangi - I	18.855	02.05.1996	356.000
Nepal	Beldangi - II Extension	11.816	02.11.1996	340.000
Nepal	Beldangi - II	22.902	02.07.1996	470.000
Nepal	Goldhap	9.755	02.06.1996	160.000
Nepal	Timai	10.563	02.11.1995	145.000
Nepal	Sanischare	21.508	02.05.1996	400.000
Nepal	Khudunabari	13.600	02.03.1997	600.000
Nigeria	ORU	5.498	15/06/1990	116.600

Country Name	Location	Tot. pop. end	Date establishm.	Total surface area (m2)
Pakistan	Chaghi	294	Jan.-81	NA
Pakistan	Posti	211	Jan.-81	NA
Pakistan	Lejay Karez	1.275	Jan.-81	NA
Pakistan	Zar Karez	5.579	Jan.-79	..
Pakistan	Katwai	7.767	Jan.-79	..
Pakistan	Ghazgi Minara	2.433	Jan.-79	..
Pakistan	Malgagai (Muslim Bagh)	7.194	Jan.-79	..
Pakistan	Mohammad Khail	5.638	Jan-80	..
Pakistan	Saranan	24.561	Jan.-79	..
Pakistan	Surkhab	12.294	Jan-79	..
Pakistan	Azakhel	25.649	02.01.1984	70.000
Pakistan	Badaber	36.611	02.01.1984	75.000
Pakistan	Baghicha	834	02.01.1984	3.000
Pakistan	Barakai	30.262	02.01.1985	70.000
Pakistan	Gandaf	13.604	02.01.1985	3.010
Pakistan	Jalala	16.157	02.01.1984	55.000
Pakistan	Jalozai	83.543	02.01.1984	190.000
Pakistan	Kababian	14.726	02.01.1984	55.000
Pakistan	Khazana	7.647	02.01.1984	55.000
Pakistan	Khurasan	7.621	02.01.1989	45.000
Pakistan	Chakdara	17.419	03.11.1984	24.000
Pakistan	Chichana	4.348	01.01.1985	20.000
Pakistan	Doaba	8.399	07.12.1987	25.000
Pakistan	Gamkool	33.789	01.01.1985	70.000
Pakistan	Ghulam Banda	8.524	06.12.1986	24.000
Pakistan	Kata Kanri	7.116	07.12.1986	20.000
Pakistan	Koga	10.765	04.02.1986	30.000
Pakistan	Kotki	5.730	09.12.1986	40.000
Pakistan	Lakhti Banda	8.620	13.04.1986	25.000
Pakistan	Munda	13.271	02.01.1984	33.000
Pakistan	Oblan	11.563	13.04.1986	40.000
Pakistan	Padana	10.564	02.01.1985	35.000
Pakistan	Zangal Patai	4.673	07.07.1984	28.000
Pakistan	Panian	65.028	02.01.1986	223.000
Pakistan	Temer	13.919	04.02.1984	28.000
Pakistan	Thall	17.267	10.04.1986	35.000
Pakistan	T'OOOR	6.827	04.06.1984	22.000
Pakistan	Zangal Patai	7.269	07.07.1984	35.000
Rwanda	Kiziba	18.104	15.12.2011	280.000
Rwanda	Nyabiheke	8.582	15.12.2011	176.000
Rwanda	Gihembe	18.100	13.12.2011	270.000
Saudi Arabia	Rafha	78	15/06/1991	350.000
Sierra Leone	Gondama	1.312	02.07.2006	700.000
Sierra Leone	Jembe	491	26.01.2005	320.000
Sierra Leone	Largo	388	27.09.2006	480.000
Sierra Leone	Taiama	701	02.08.2006	600.000
Sierra Leone	Jimmi Bagbo	483	02.11.2005	460.000
Sierra Leone	Gerihun	400	02.03.2005	420.000
Sierra Leone	Bandajuma	298	02.06.2004	430.000
Sierra Leone	Tobanda	576	02.03.2011	750.000
Sudan	Abuda	4.005	1981	1.400.000
Sudan	Fau 5	1.423	1985	500.000
Sudan	Kashm Al Girba	9.081	1979	0
Sudan	Shagarab-I, II, III	23.304	1985	4.000.000
Sudan	Kilo-26	12.690	1979	2.500.000
Sudan	Awad El Seid, Fath El Rahman, Kilo 7	3.054	1978	1.800.000
Sudan	Um Gargour	10.104	1976	1.800.000
Sudan	Wad Sherifey	32.137	1982	4.000.000
Thailand	Tham Hin	6.141	15/05/1997	64.000
Thailand	Ban Don Yang	3.717	08.01.2003	120.000
Thailand	Ban Mae Surin	3.396	15/06/1992	1.000.000
Thailand	Ban Mai Nai Soi	19.055	15/06/1996	900.000
Thailand	Mae Ra Ma Luang	11.642	23/03/1995	1.280.000



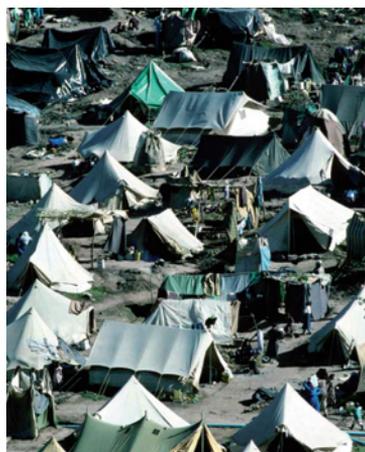
→ 042
Global Map of UNHCR Refugee Camp Population (Camps Above 5000 Inhabitants)
 Source: Based on UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Data extracted: 26/09/2008 .
www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase

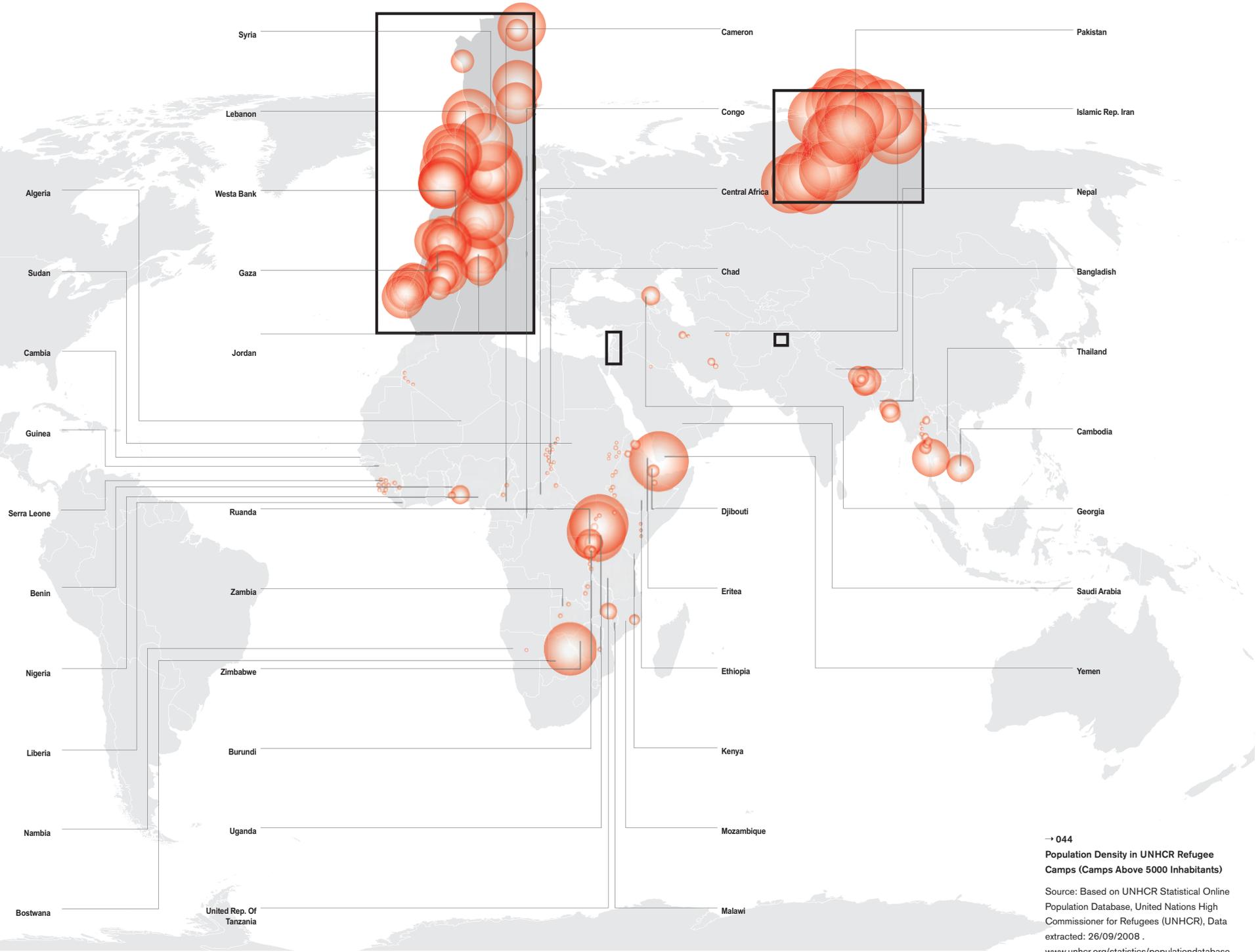
Country Name	Location	Tot. pop. end	Date establish.	Total surface area (m2)
Thailand	Mae La Oon	13.406	01/12/2003	1.280.000
Thailand	Mae La	38.267	02.01.1988	1.836.800
Thailand	Nu Po	13.382	01/01/1997	640.000
Thailand	Umpium	19.421	07/01/1999	880.000
Uganda	Kyaka	17.587	07.05.1987	81.000
Uganda	Kyangwali	19.259	..	914.800
Uganda	MADI OKOLLO	6.963	04.08.2007	25.000.000
Uganda	IKAFE	9.685	02.09.2007	22.700.000
Uganda	IMVEPI	22.065	18.06.1999	125.000.000
Uganda	RHINOCAMP	14.339	02.06.1998	225.000.000
Uganda	Adjumani	52.809	02.03.1993	27.798.360
Uganda	Kiryandongo	12.639	07.12.1968	35.000
Uganda	Nakivale	36.497	Year -1960	218.853.995
Uganda	Oruchinga	2.646	02.01.1963	8.000.000
Uganda	Palorinya	28.530	02.01.1998	7.920.790
United Rep. of Tanzania	LUGUFU	46.901	03.01.2001	10.500.000
United Rep. of Tanzania	NDUTA	33.325	12.01.2000	12.000.000
United Rep. of Tanzania	KANEMBWA	12.130	02.03.1998	18.000.000
United Rep. of Tanzania	Mtabila	48.474	03.01.1998	12.500.000
United Rep. of Tanzania	Nyarugusu	50.600	12.01.2000	30.000.000
United Rep. of Tanzania	Ngara	25.650	02.01.1997	8.280.000
Yemen	Kharaz	9.491	02.01.2005	1.500
Zambia	Mwange camp	17.911	04.10.2003	3.270.000
Zambia	MEHEBA	13.770	02.01.1975	698.000.000
Zambia	MAYUKWAYUKWA	10.272	02.01.1970	162.500.000
Zambia	Kala Camp	16.877	09.01.2004	4.000.000
Zimbabwe	Chpinge District- Manicaland Province	2.931	02.01.2002	370.665

→ 043

UNHCR Refugee Camps (Camps Above 5000 Inhabitants)

Source: Based on UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Data extracted: 26/09/2008 .
www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase





the data does not provide for a comprehensive description of the current physical/ spatial or socioeconomic situations in camps, which would be needed to come to a reliable conclusion on the state of urbanisation and the development of a more holistic approach to solve a particular camp's problems. Available data thus gives only some indication of the negative aspects of urbanisation such as overcrowding, substandard shelter quality, lack of infrastructure or environmental health.

Besides all the above-mentioned difficulties, the following section will attempt to interpret a limited set of original data obtained from UNHCR. UNHCR has developed standards and gathered indicators on country level and camp level for beneficiaries served in three different conditions: (1) In "Refugee Camp/Settlement", which have been established for more than 6 months and have at least 2,500 individuals, (2) As part of an "Urban Programme" which addresses situations "where refugee and/or asylum-seekers are settled in dispersed manner, in both urban and rural areas", and within (3) "Returnee Areas", which includes "areas geographically and administratively identifiable and in which at least 30% of the population are returnees. These operations are normally considered to last up to two years." (UNHCR Standards and Indicators) In September 2008 raw data on standards and indicators for its 152 "Refugee Camps/ Settlements" was obtained from UNHCR. The obtained list includes only camp of more than 2500 registered inhabitants. It does not include IDP camps served by UNHCR or refugee concentrations within urban conditions. The following interpretation can thus only provide a partial and incomplete insight into aspects of camp urbanisation (for an overview of Palestine refugee camps see Part II/ chapter 1.2):

• Year of establishment

The longer a camp exists, the more likely it is that physical, socioeconomic and cultural urbanisation has taken place. The oldest recorded UNHCR refugee camp is Oruchinga (1959), followed by Nakivale (1960) and Kiryandongo (1964), all located in Uganda. The Zambian camps of Mayukwayukwa (1966) and Meheba (1971) follow. Botswana's Dukwi camp was established in 1976. The Sahrawi camps of Smara, L'Aiun and Dakhla in Algeria were established in 1976. All 8 Sudanese camps recorded were established between 1976 and 1985 and all 38 camps in Pakistan between 1979 and 1985. 41 camps recorded were established in the 1990s and 39 from 2000. The average age of refugee camps is 26 years.⁷⁹

• Population size

UNHCR statistics obtained does not include Palestine camps, which will be discussed in detail in Part II of this dissertation, nor does it include IDP camps administered by UNHCR. The largest recorded refugee camp is Jalozai in Pakistan with 83,543 recorded refugees (established 1980), followed by Hagadera, Kenya with 70,412 recorded refugees. Average camp size was 15,300 refugees and the average crude birth rate was 49 annual live births per 1000 camp residents. Population size or birth rate is only of limited use when measuring camp urbanisation. However, if combined with spatial data it can provide an indication of the population density within a camp.

• Population Density

The UNHCR standard area size for a camp for 20,000 people is 900,000m², which would allow 45sqm-surface area per person. UNHCR's indicator "Average camp area per person (sqm)"⁸⁰ is calculated on the basis of overall camp and population sizes and intends to monitor whether "there is sufficient overall camp space per person. This includes having sufficient space to include all services while providing enough space for dignified living."⁸¹ According to UNHCR statistics 87 out of 152 recorded refugee camps apparently match or exceed this standard (data for 13 camps was not available), which seems to suggest that population density is not a major issue for most camps. There are, however, two fundamental flaws in this data:

⁷⁹ The average age prediction does not take into account the ages of 12 camps where data could not be obtained. It also does not include the fact that many camps do disappear. Jim Kennedy (Kennedy 2005) has therefore assumed an average life span for all camps of close to seven years. (see: Kennedy, Jim. "Challenging Camp Design Guidelines", Forced Migration Review, Volume/Issue: 001/023, Oxford, 2005).

⁸⁰ Further explanation on the indicator "Average camp area per person (m²)" is provided in UNHCR's "Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations", see indicator 52:

• The figure of 45 m² includes a small area for kitchen gardening to be undertaken.

• In a camp situation, it may be a disadvantage to have areas greatly in excess of 45m² per person available as this will mean increased distances to services such as water, hospital, education, etc.

• In the case of repatriation, consolidation of the camp or camps should be considered.

⁸¹ source: "Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations", UNHCR, Geneva, 2006.

(1) Scholars like JIM KENNEDY criticised the UNHCR standard of 45sqm as too little because “once the space stipulated as necessary for fire-breaks, non-residential buildings and buffer zones between shelters is taken into account, the 45sqm quickly starts to disappear... If a camp of 20,000 refugees grows by 4% a year then it would take nine years for the theoretical average family to grow from five members to seven members and the total population to grow to 29,605. If in year one the average land area per person in the camp follows the UNHCR guideline of 45sqm, by the end of the ninth year this area of land per person will have been reduced below the minimum to 32sqm.”⁸² (KENNEDY 2005) KENNEDY not only suggests that many camps that are currently listed as matching UNHCR standard are in fact already congested. Furthermore, KENNEDY urges consequences for the initial layout of camps: Assuming that camps will face a growing population with more diverse needs, KENNEDY proposes to allow initially at least 89sqm/ person, almost twice the UNHCR standard.

(2) The actual camp area size which has been used as a basis to calculate the “Average camp area per person (sqm)” indicator is in many cases misleading. Some camps are indeed registered with huge areas although camp refugees only live in a small portion of it. In many cases, most of the camp’s area is in fact unusable for residential purposes due to topography, soil condition, high ground water, flooding, or because it is used for agricultural purposes.⁸³

In conclusion, congestion is likely to be a much more significant issue than the UNHCR figures seem to suggest. Whenever UNHCR figures indicate high density, however, they are likely to be more reliable. The Agency for example lists 52 refugee camps (out of 152) with a camp area per person below the standard of 45sqm. Especially alarming is the average of 4sqm surface area per person in Pakistan (based on the data of 27 of the 37 mostly Afghani refugee camps, no data was collected for 10 camps), which points to alarming population density levels.

A second and perhaps more reliable indicator when determining population density is “Average dwelling floor size per person”.⁸⁴ UNHCR standard for refugee camps is defined as 4sqm per person. Unfortunately, most camps are missing data so that a global overview cannot be determined (data of 60 camps out of 152 is missing, including the data of all Pakistan camps which have been discussed above as extremely dense in terms of provision of camp surface area/ persons). While available data can highlight alarming samples, it must be assumed that not all alarming cases are covered by currently available statistics. Currently available lists include 30 camps with a dwelling floor size per person of 4sqm, which is meeting UNHCR standards but points to very dense conditions. 34 camps are listed as below standard, including camps in the following countries:

- 2 Bangladesh camps listed with 2sqm per person.
- 9 Ugandan camps with an average dwelling floor size per person of 2sqm (data is missing for the two additional camps that exist in Uganda).
- All 7 Nepal camps are listed with an average dwelling floor size per person of 3sqm.

While errors in the statistics cannot be excluded, the figures suggest alarming population density levels for at least half of all UNHCR listed refugee camps, possibly more.

⁸² source: Kennedy, Jim. “Challenging Camp Design Guidelines”, Forced Migration Review, Volume: 001/023, Oxford, 2005.

⁸³ Based on the actual figures obtained, the average size of all listed refugee camps (with more than 2500 inhabitants) would amount to a spectacular (and unrealistic) 13,8 km² (1380 ha) and an average provision of 1.2 km² per person is given.

⁸⁴ Further explanation on the indicator “Average dwelling floor size per person (m²)” is provided in UNHCR’s “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”, see indicator 54:

- This measurement is valid if all dwellings are based on a standard plan that provides a minimum space requirement per person with variation in the number of persons living in each dwelling.

- If the above approach is not possible, for example when a non-standard design is provided, a random sample survey can be carried out in the camp to assess the average shelter area per person by noting the total shelter area of all dwellings assessed and dividing this by the total number of occupants living in these dwellings.

• Shelter quality, infrastructural provision

UNHCR data includes an indicator “Percentage of households with adequate dwellings”⁸⁵, which intends “To assess if all families have shelters of an adequate nature so that they are protected against the elements, can live in a dignified manner and are subject to reduced rates of communicable disease spread.”⁸⁶ Again, data is incomplete with over one third of camp indicators missing (52 camps), including all data for Pakistan camps. 42 camps are listed as below standard. Particularly alarming are the camps in Bangladesh where only 6% of dwellings match UNHCR standards, as well as Kenya (15%), Nigeria (23%) or Gambia (27%). A further indicator, which points towards negative aspects of urbanisation is “Average quantity of water available per person per day (litres).” Here UNHCR standard is 20 litres and indicators reveal that in 65 camps the standard cannot be met (data for 11 camps is missing). Finally, 87 camps are listed as below the UNHCR standard “Percentage of families with latrines”, which seeks a 100% cover, i.e. individual access for each family to a latrine (data for 38 camps was missing).

• Employment

UNHCR is still refining survey methodologies for indicators 65 “Number of refugees with access to land for agricultural purposes” and 66 “Number of refugees engaged in agricultural production”, which could give a broader sociocultural perspective. Data was therefore not yet available. Data on indicator 67 “Percentage of asylum seekers and refugees employed or self-employed” intends “to measure percentage of refugees or asylum-seekers who have access to income to meet basic individual/ household needs, and are on the path towards self-reliance.”⁸⁷ However, data was only released with the warning that results have to be used with extreme caution. 79 camps missing and survey methodologies have not yet been completely refined. The data is, however, also useful to provide an indication of the policies of host governments allowing or preventing camp refugees to engage in the local employment sector. Those camps with very low employment levels such as 24 camps are listed as below 10% (mostly African camps such as Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Yemen, Daadab camp Kenya, Central African Republic, Burundi but also Saudi Arabia) point towards very restrictive policies. 19 camps with employment levels between 10% - 25%. 4 camps as between 25% - 50% employment. 9 camps have very high employment levels (above 80%), including 6 camps in Uganda, which seems to provide evidence to the more liberal policy of the Ugandan government (see also camp situation analysis provided in chapter 2/ section 2.2.3 Encouraged Camp Urbanisation Within Open Boundaries in Uganda).

Conclusion

The above data is only of limited use to measure the degree of urbanisation in camps and mainly points towards negative side effects of urbanisation such as congestion, the adequacy of shelters, provision of infrastructure, environmental health and so forth. As the UNHCR has stated, the “Standards and Indicator” methodology is a work in progress. It can only be hoped that in the future, additional indicators will help to more profoundly and comprehensively analyse camp urbanisation. Additional indicators on spatial/ physical features, trading activities with surrounding communities, or sociocultural profile of refugees are needed for example. The ambition to survey such data in a consistent way for all refugee camps around the globe is, however, unrealistic. An alternative approach could be though selecting exemplary camps, which would allow for a more holistic analysis of camp urbanisation. Conclusions could be drawn developing an alternative set of camp classifications, which will help to design new programmes and policies including urban rehabilitation programmes.

⁸⁵ Further explanation of what constitutes “adequate dwelling” is provided in UNHCR’s “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”, see indicator 53:

- Temporary shelter includes plastic sheeting, tents, huts, and/or incomplete buildings that have not been fully constructed or repaired. This should not be regarded as adequate after the emergency phase.
- Because of variations in climate, local building customs and cultural values or concerns, universally adequate shelters are difficult to define. Adequacy may be assessed by bearing in mind the following factors. The ideal shelter should:
 - provide a covered area that provides dignified living space with a degree of privacy;
 - have sufficient thermal comfort with ventilation for air circulation;
 - provide protection from the elements and natural hazards;
 - ensure that inhabitants, especially women or groups with special needs are not disadvantaged due to poor accommodation design. Physical safety should be a prime concern during the planning and construction.
- Assess a number of dwellings through random sampling throughout the camp and evaluate whether each family shelter is of adequate nature or not.

⁸⁶ source: “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006

⁸⁷ source: “Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations”, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006, see notes on indicator 67.

1.3.3 "Camp-City", "Virtual City", "De-Facto-Integration": Conceptual Models for Urbanised Camps between Emergency Settings, Slums and Cities

"A frozen state of transience and a lasting state of temporariness"

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN (Society Under Siege, Polity, London, 2002)

Refugee Camps within the Global Discourse on the City

Within the thriving debate on global urbanisation processes triggered by new UN statistics, refugee or IDP movement and migrations, the role of camps or settlements, or indeed urban refugees are omitted. Yet for many cities in Africa or those in the Middle East that are located close to crisis areas such as Iraq, refugee influx in recent years had caused significant changes. Iraqi refugees in Amman or Damascus for example are estimated to have added between a quarter and a third of the urban population of each city with dramatic impacts on the local economy, transport, the real estate market and so forth. According to PEROUSE urban population in crisis areas generally tends to explode during civil wars, as the city is considered more secure as the rural areas and cities. About 40% of the population of Sudan's capital of Karthoum for instance are estimated to be IDPs. (PEROUSE)⁸⁸

Although UNHCR estimated that half of the refugee population was residing in urban areas at the end of 2007⁸⁹, the agency does not compile comprehensive statistics on urban refugees and has been frequently criticised for neglecting this important group by Human Rights Watch and other watchdog organisations. No alternative statistics on urban refugee distributions and their impact on urban change could be found. However, it seems only logical that, in the context of world-wide migration to the urban centres, refugees would equally opt for cities and the opportunities for new life and livelihood they promise.

Like urban refugees who remain largely uncounted and ignored, "refugee camps", "local settlements" or IDP camps are equally "blind spots" in discussion on urbanisation. This seems strange since not only many scholars recognize the significant effect that refugee camps and settlements have on urban regions, camps themselves frequently form urbanised conglomerations of impressive scale. Large camps can include up to 200,000 (the camps of Mugunga and Kibumba in former Zaire). MICHEL AGIER states that *"in Goma [former Zaire], several camps were located around a single base of humanitarian operations, forming a network that sheltered 750,000 people... immense cities of huts in a desert of volcanic rock came into being."*⁹⁰ While some camps disappear without trace, others leave behind new infrastructure, such as roads, canalisation or public buildings, and more stay put.

In the following, I will compare "urbanised camps" to established definitions of "urban" or "slum", showing that indeed most criteria of these definitions are indeed met by camps. What is then the difference between camps and cities or slums? Why can humanitarian agencies engaged in providing services to camps, not learn from others who do the same for cities? Has the tabooing of discussing camps as cities or slums political reasons? How can a suitable terminology be developed that helps agents and societies to better recognize the specific reality of urbanised camps, and develop appropriate tools? Similar questions motivated scholars in the fields of urban anthropology, ethnography or urban geography who investigated the ambiguous state between camps and cities and proposed new terminologies which will be discussed at the end of this section.

Urbanised Camps vis a vis Established Definitions of "City Proper", "Urban", "Urban settlement"

What differentiates urbanised camps from "cities" or "slums"? Any easy answers to this question are denied by the fact that the definitions for both are contested and not universally shared. UN-HABITAT provides perhaps the most widely recognized definition of terms related to the build environment yet is careful to provide a clear and simple answer to what is a "city". The its "State of the World's Cities 1006/ 2007" report, the section "Defining 'Urban'"⁹¹ (page 5) provides a short definition of *"a city proper"*, alongside

⁸⁸ conversation with Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montlos, July 18, 2008.

⁸⁹ source: UNHCR, 2007 Global Refugee Trends.

⁹⁰ Agier, Michel. "On the Margins of the World – The Refugee Experience Today", Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008.

⁹¹ "State of the World's Cities 1006/ 2007" report, quoting an earlier source: United Nations Report: "Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (1998) and World Urbanisation Prospects", 2003 Revision; for further info also: <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/habrd/statprog.htm>.

definition for "metropolitan area" and "urban agglomeration". Here, a "city proper" is defined as "the single political jurisdiction that contains the historic centre." While it remains vague how "historical city centre" might be defined, the juridical aspect excludes refugee camps. The section however also highlights that this is not a globally accepted term and that a vast spectrum of different criteria and methods of defining urban entities such as "cities" is in use worldwide:

- 105 countries base their urban data on administrative criteria, limiting it to the boundaries of state or provincial capitals, municipalities or other local jurisdictions; 83 use this as sole method of distinguishing urban from rural.
- 100 countries define cities by population size or population density, with minimum concentrations ranging broadly, from 200 to 50,000 inhabitants; 57 use this as their sole urban criterion.
- 25 countries specify economic characteristics as significant, though not exclusive, in defining cities – typically, the proportion of the labour force employed in non-agricultural activities.
- 18 countries count the availability of urban infrastructure in their definitions, including the presence of paved streets, water supply systems, sewerage systems or electric lighting.
- 25 countries provide no definition of 'urban' at all.
- 6 countries regard their entire populations as urban."

With the exception of the first method of distinguishing urban from rural, all used methods listed here would equally apply to urbanised refugee camps. Based on the earlier, less defined UN-HABITAT definition of 1995⁹², the French scholar PÉROUSE DE MONTCLOS has also pointed out that except for the juridical difference, the various commonly used definitions for "urban settlement" seem to be potentially open to include many urbanised refugee camps. PÉROUSE points out that in the French census, for example, "urban settlement" is defined by the level of aggregation of people in the area, that is, the distance between buildings, structures, residential dwellings this was not to exceed 50 metres. Others, according to PÉROUSE define "urban settlements" through the existence of facilities and infrastructure such as roads, telephones, hospitals, schools, houses, sanitation and so on. Some foreground the socio-occupational profile of people to define "urban settlements": "The proportion of people engaged in non-agricultural activities might be expected to exceed that involved in agriculture. In the USA, for instance, the recommended proportion is two thirds."⁹³ In conclusion one might state that urbanised refugee camps have developed many qualities and features, which are commonly used to define "city" or "urban". However, a key difference remains: Camp or local settlements are under the protection/ authority of international humanitarian organisations and therefore do not have a similar juridical status as most ordinary urban entities in which some form of participation is inscribed. Following DEBORAH GANS and MATTHEW JELACIC, "the difference between camp and city resides not in its temporary status but in its suspension of its residents' rights of self-determination."⁹⁴

Urbanised Camps vis a vis Established Definitions of "Slum"

The definition of the word slum is less ambiguous. Due to the global focus on slum rehabilitation, which became a cornerstone the "Millennium Development Goals"⁹⁵ (adopted by all UN agencies and organisations including UNHCR), the UN provides a clear definition. Already in 2002, UN-HABITAT defined "slum" as a "a settlement in an urban area in which more than half of the inhabitants live in inadequate housing and lack basic services"(UN-HABITAT 2002), a definition which was later revised. The 2006 definition focuses on the household as the basic unit of analysis (since the earlier definition was not practicable for dispersed areas or those contiguous with other parts of the city:

"A slum household is a group of individuals living under the same roof in an area who lack one or more of the following five conditions:

- Durable housing: A house is considered "durable" if it is built on a non-hazardous location and has a structure permanent and adequate enough to protect its inhabitants from the extremes of climatic conditions, such as rain, heat, cold and humidity.
- Sufficient living area: a house is considered to provide a sufficient living area for the household members if not more

⁹² UN-HABITAT, "Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics", United Nations Centre for Human Settlement, New York, 1995
⁹³ source: Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine et al: Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socio-economic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya", Journal of Refugee Studies, 2000

⁹⁴ Deborah Gans and Matthew Jelacic, "The Refugee Camp: Ecological Disasters of Today, Metropolis of Tomorrow", Exhibition Catalogue, Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, 2006

⁹⁵ The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were set out in the 1990s by international conferences and summits. They were later compiled as the International Development Goals. In September 2000, the UN member states unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. (source: Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006)

than three people share the same room. (This definition may be amended according to the situation in a specific city. For example in Rio de Janeiro, living area is insufficient for both the middle classes and the slum population ins is therefore not a good indicator).

- *Access to improved water: A household is considered to have access to improved water supply if it has a sufficient amount of water for family use, at an affordable price, available to household members without being subject to extreme effort, especially on the part of women and children.*

- *Access to sanitation: A household is considered to have adequate access to sanitation if an excreta disposal system, either in the form of a private toilet or a public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people, is available to household members.*

- *Secure tenure is the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection against forced evictions. People have secure tenure when there is evidence of documentation that can be used as proof of secure tenure status or when there is either de facto or perceived protection against forced evictions.*⁹⁶

The current standards and indicators system design by UNHCR (see discussion in section 1.3.2) does not allow for a direct application of the slum definition to refugee camp situations. In addition, UNHABITAT definitions remain vague. No precise definitions of what constitutes “sufficient living area”, “improved water supply”, “adequate access to sanitation” have been drawn up. The likelihood of slums and camps producing very similar indicators if standards would be harmonized remains however very high. UNRWA data on Palestine refugee camps does provide some more specific insights into the physical condition and will be discussed in Part II/ chapter 1/ section 1.2.2.

Conceptual Models Proposed in the International Discourse

Instead of relating to established definitions of “city” or “slum”, some scholars and researchers who have studied the hybrid, paradoxical condition of urbanised camps have chosen to define their own terminology. In the following section, some of the most important conceptual terms and models will be briefly introduced and compared:

- **“Camp-City” [French: Camp-Ville] (MICHEL AGIER)**

As already stated, MICHEL AGIER argues that as soon as a relatively stable situation emerges, camps begin to transform. What starts as a process of adaptation to everyday life normality ultimately also changes the space and physical fabric of the camp. AGIER places particular emphasis on the notion in which victims with no voice slowly begin to emancipate and demand a political voice. AGIER recognizes this process as a birth process of a cosmopolitan city with “*hybrid socialisations*” which are able to upset traditional and restrictive power structures, undermined powers of clans or extended families, ultimately allowing for more individual freedom of choice, gender equality, etc. However, this emancipation from victim to subject inevitably challenges the humanitarian logic of emergency situations where “*all that matters is victims, and victims in humanitarian thinking have no social or political affiliations, and thus no voice.*” For AGIER this conflict is ultimately a conflict between camp (as a space of emergency) and city (as a space of politics): A tension between the “*subject that begins forming again as soon as a context of socialisation is reborn*” and the humanitarian regime that continues to think and act as if the initial emergency situation has never changed. AGIER sees the fact that the “*order of emergencies*” obstructs the emerging “*socialisation, relationships and identification*” as a fundamental flaw, translating into “*a reality that is ambiguous, undetermined and unfulfilled: Camp-City [which] are neither completely closed nor completely open, refugees are neither completely dead as subjects, nor completely alive.*”⁹⁷ AGIER’s observation on the obstructive lack of meaningful participation is highly relevant to Palestine refugee camps. Indeed, as will be seen in Part III of this dissertation, the conceptualisation and design of the participatory planning methodology for camp rehabilitation was driven by a concern to empower camp dwellers as de facto citizens with a right to determine the future of the camp environment.

- **“Virtual Cities” (MARC-ANTOINE PEROUSE DE MONTCLOS and PETER MWANGI KAGWANJA)**

Less political, but more urbanistic is the argument of PEROUSE and KAGWANJA who, in their long-time studies of the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in northern Kenya, observed how camps had transgressed the state of a basic transient settlement: “*Their size, their population density, their layout, their concentration of in-*

⁹⁶ source: UN-HABITAT: “State of the World’s Cities 206/ 2007 – The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability”, UN-HABITAT/ Earthscan publications, London, 2006

⁹⁷ Agier, Michel. “On the Margins of the World – The Refugee Experience Today”, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008, pages 64-65

infrastructures, their socio-occupational profile and the trading activities they have developed are evidence of urbanization." The researchers argue that Sudanese refugees in Kakuma and Somalis in Dadaab have build up an entity, which "presents the features of a virtual city." The notion is defined as a state in which a point of no return has passed and the state of it being a "basic transient settlement" has been left behind: "A complete withdrawal or sudden contraction of humanitarian aid would not automatically mean the closure of [the] camps: whether because self-sustainability would allow virtual cities to emerge as market towns, or because refugees would refuse to come back home and would become clandestine migrants."⁸⁸ Similar to AGIER, PEROUSE and KAGWANJA stress that the potential step from a virtual city to a market town could only be durable, if there is a political will from host governments to grant certain civil rights (e.g. right to free movement, employment, ownership, participation), and if the camp itself has developed "endogenous economic dynamics and an urban cultural integration" with its surroundings. In a recent conversation PEROUSE described the patterns he observed for refugee camps becoming "virtual cities":

(1) Refugee camp in undeveloped/ rural areas: Camp become the biggest agglomeration and point of attraction for local rural populations that are seeking to benefit from large-scale infrastructures and services (such as water supply), market and trading opportunities. In the case of the Dadaab refugee compound in northern Kenya (consisting of the three camp areas of Ifo, Dgahelvy and Hagadera, currently home to 300,000 refugees), the local village population doubled to more than 10,000 who now live in more urbanised conditions.

(2) Urban refugee concentrations: During civil wars, local cities tend to take in most of the displaced people who become urban squatters. The case of Karthoum where 40 percent of the urban populations are IDPs shows that this can have lasting consequences on the urban development of a city.⁸⁹

PEROUSE and KAGWANJA's concept of "Virtual City" anticipates FERNANDO MURILLO's characterization of Gaza's Palestinian refugee camps as "Refugee Cities" (see also Part II/ section 1.2.2).

• "De-Facto-Integration" (KAREN JACOBSEN)

KAREN JACOBSEN's concept for urbanised camps shifts the emphasis towards the interaction between camp population and surrounding communities as, which is for her a key factor for urbanisation. Camp situations are then transgressed if integration with the local context begins. Many self-settled refugees become unofficially integrated after they have lived in and been accepted by the community, and have attained self-sufficiency. Finally the lived everyday experience of refugees is that of being part of the local community, even though the camp continues to exist officially and their legal status continues to be insecure and temporary. JACOBSEN proposes to call this condition "de-facto-integration." Camps are "de-facto integrated" when they

- are not in physical danger (and do not live under the threat of refoulement)
- are not confined to camps or settlements, and have the right to return to their home country
- are able sustain livelihoods, through access to land or employment and can support themselves and their families
- have access to education or vocational training, health facilities, and housing
- are socially networked into the host community, so that intermarriage is common, ceremonies like weddings and funerals are attended by everyone, and there is little distinction between refugees' and hosts' standard of living.¹⁰⁰

JACOBSEN's concept is developed by SUSAN BANKI who proposes the notion "integration in the intermediate term", as an interim goal for humanitarian and development agencies (see section 2.1.1).

Conclusions and Possible Practical Implications for UNHCR and Other Humanitarian Actors

Beyond the need for humanitarian agencies to develop a new language to map camps and collect data (as discussed in section 1.2.2), the concepts proposed by AGIER, PEROUSE/ KAGWANJA and JACOBSEN could help to shift the ambiguous and hybrid state of urbanised camps into the focus of politicians, donors, and humanitarian and development agencies. All three models focus on the same phenomenon from slightly different angles but arrive at similar conclusions: The need for responsible actors to recognize the phenomenon of urbanised camps and revise their approach to urbanised camps accordingly. Ethnographer AGIER foregrounds a political and rights-based analysis demanding a recognition of the potential of "hybrid socialisations" which emerge in any camp, to encourage rather than obstruct urge for emancipation and political participation, which would have consequences on the way humanitarian aid is prioritized, delivered, ac-

⁸⁸ source: Perouse de Montclos Marc-Antoine and Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi. "Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya", Journal of Refugee Studies, 2000

⁸⁹ source: conversation with Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, July 18, 2008

¹⁰⁰ Jacobsen, Karen. "Refugees' Environmental Impact: The Effect of Patterns of Settlement", Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol.10, No.1, Oxford, 1997-

tions are implemented or camps are being managed. JACOBSEN proposed a political framework and “interim paradigm” for time between emergency and a durable solution within which such participation in political, social and economic life of the host environment could take place: “*De-facto-integration*”. PEROUSE and KAGWANJA’s more urban and developmental focus propose that “*urban planning is clearly the way to proceed ...*”, which could have consequences on all stages of a camp’s life: on the early planning of the setting up of the camp which should build in future growth and urbanisation, as well as on the consolidation and urbanised stages.

In next chapter existing policies and tools of the UNHCR will be examined in relation to the question whether they display an awareness of urbanised camps and are indeed useful as operational frameworks to deal with their needs? The discussion of recent reform efforts will be followed by an analysis of case studies of how these tools are being used in practice. What policies and tools does UNHCR have at its disposal to deal with the rising problem of protracted refugee situations? This section intends to provide a brief introduction to the background of the recent reform efforts within UNHCR. I will argue that it was the combination of external pressure on UNHCR and an internal awareness of the need to change, which triggered a paradigm shift from relief to development. The first section analysis some of the main concepts and campaigns pushing for a revision of tools. The second section will discuss newly acquired policies and strategies such as the “Framework for Durable Solutions” (2003) and some of its key elements.

I.1.3 Camp or City? The Ambiguous Reality of Urbanised Refugee Camps

.3 "Camp-City", "Virtual City", "De-Facto-Integration": Conceptual Models for Urbanised Camps between Emergency Settings, Slums and Cities

Chapter 2

Existing Policies and Tools to Address the Needs of Urbanised Refugee Camps

2.1

New Policy Trends vis-à-vis Refugee Camps

2.1.1 Mounting Pressure for Change: Recent Campaigns and Debates on Refugee Protection

The End Warehousing Refugee Campaign

Since the early 1990s, many critical voices such as BARBARA HARRELL-BOND, the author of the well-known critique *"Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism"*¹⁰¹ or ANNA SCHMIDT attacked UNHCR for its leniency in relation to protecting the human rights of refugees as well as *"its fixation with repatriation under [the High Commissioner] Sadako Ogata, which blinded the Agency against the reality of increasingly protracted refugee situations."*¹⁰² As early as 1992, HARRELL-BOND criticized the effects of traditional relief policies, which contributed to the passivity of refugees as recipients and prevented self-reliance.¹⁰³ The critique of individuals was eventually absorbed by the powerful watchdog organisation U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), whose Director of International Planning and Analysis MERRILL SMITH launched an international campaign to *"end warehousing"* with the release of the USCRI's *"World Refugee Survey 2004"*.¹⁰⁴ The campaign which has become known as *"End Warehousing of Refugees Campaign"* defined warehousing as follows: *"This is a term we and others before us use to describe the denial of human rights found in the '1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees' and other instruments to live lives as normal as possible while in exile, especially the right to earn a livelihood and freedom of movement. Warehoused refugees are typically, but not always, confined to camps or segregated settlements where they are virtually dependent on humanitarian assistance. But even refugees who are free to move are still warehoused, in effect, if they are not allowed their rights to work, practice professions, run businesses, and own property."* (World Refugee Survey 2004)

The survey includes the article *"Warehousing Refugees: A Denial of Rights, a Waste of Humanity"*¹⁰⁵ (2004) by MERRILL SMITH in which she stresses the fact that the actors of the global refugee regime had grown to disregard the fact that the 1951 Geneva Convention clearly stated that refugees should enjoy full human rights¹⁰⁶. This disregard has particularly dramatic effect in protracted refugee situations: *"The media typically limits their already meagre refugee coverage to dramatic, large-scale outflows and repatriations and only the more accessible of those. Refugees languishing year after year in inhospitable, dangerous, desolate no-man's lands-near remote and often contested borders are no one's favoured assignment or story. As a result, warehoused refugees tend to fall off the radar screen of international attention and into the Orwellian memory hole."* (SMITH 2004) Smith blames not only the lack of political will on behalf of all stakeholders such as humanitarian agencies, host governments or donors, but also ulterior motives and interests to keep refugees encamped.

Host governments and refugee leaders for instance have a *"political interests in keeping refugees geographically concentrated, dependent, and visible to press the international community to resolve the situation in the source country in their favour"* (SMITH 2004). Following SMITH, many host governments also have interests in keeping refugees on relief. They typically develop separate offices for refugee affairs—large bureaucracies isolated from other ministries but replicating their services—that depend on international agencies: *"The maintenance of these offices—like the humanitarian NGOs—depends on the continued existence of people who attract funds earmarked for refugees. The result has been the perpetuation of a population labelled refugees, left living in limbo and dependent for their survival on relief."* This view is supported by MARK MALLOCH-BROWN who, quoted by SMITH in the same article states: *"When a tight-fisted international community says to a very poor country it will provide help for refugees in camps... this evidently encourages that poor country to root out refugees who are integrated and plonk them into camps. It is probably no exaggeration to claim that without any new refugee outflows, the old donor approach might actually lead to growing refugee camp populations in many countries."*

¹⁰¹ Harrell-Bond, Barbara, Verdירה, Guglielmo. "Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism", Berghahn Books, New York/ Oxford, 2005

¹⁰² Email conversation with Barbara Harrell-Bond, July 16, 2008

¹⁰³ Harrell-Bond, Barbara, Voutira, Eftihia, Leopold, Mark. "Counting the Refugees: Gifts, Givers, Patrons and Clients", Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 5, No.3/4:205-225, 1992

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI): "World Refugee Survey 2004", published at the USCRI online platform: www.refugees.org (2004).

¹⁰⁵ Smith, Merrill. "Warehousing Refugees: A Denial of Rights, a Waste of Humanity", published at the USCRI online platform: www.refugees.org (2004).

¹⁰⁶ Merrill Smith refers to the following articles of the 1951 Geneva Convention as "Anti-Warehousing Rights": Article 3 - Non-discrimination; Article 13 - Movable and immovable property; Article 14 - Artistic rights and industrial property; Article 16 - Access to courts; Article 17 - Wage-earning employment; Article 18 - Self-Employment; Article 19 - Liberal Professions; Article 22 - Public Education; Article 23 - Public Relief; Article 26 - Freedom of Movement; Article 28 - Travel Documents

But also humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR contribute to warehousing. SMITH traces the errors back to the *“ill-fated International Conferences on Refugees in Africa in the early 1980s... focused on the relief-to-development gap but ignored the relief-to-freedom gap.”* The conferences did not include refugee input and *“evaded the central issues of refugee employment, security of status and ability to operate as an economic actor in the country of asylum”* and the extent to which governments were responsible. TOM KUHLMAN supports Smith’s critique, pointing out that *“members of the humanitarian community have a natural tendency to concentrate their attention on...new refugee emergencies and large-scale repatriation programmes.”*¹⁰⁷ (KUHLMAN 2002). He highlights the dramatic decrease of budget for self-sufficiency projects, particularly under the leadership of SADAOKO OGATA in the 1990s as an indicator of a lack of political will. This is not only UNHCR’s fault. According to HARRELL-BOND, the relief model, long discredited in development contexts, still dominates refugee assistance, because humanitarian organizations depend on funds that donor governments strictly earmark for emergencies. Accessing funding from relief budgets is also much easier and faster than getting funds from development budgets and scores of NGOs organize themselves around its requirements. Smith cites several cases in which humanitarian agencies actually moved to actively prevent self-sustainability of refugees: *“In 1961, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) attempted to shut down one of the most successful refugee self-sufficiency projects of the time, that of Tibetan carpet-making in Nepal. ICRC officials at the time told the project’s organiser, Toni Hagen, that schooling, training, production, and sales were “against the rules of the ICRC.”* (SMITH 2004)

In short, the *“End Warehousing Refugees Campaign”* demands a radical rethinking and reform of policies. Rather than focussing on relief that tends to *“treat refugees like cattle”* (SMITH 2004), the stakeholders should embrace a developmental approach which would seek self-reliance and sustainability for refugees. Rather than cost-efficiency, the campaign places human rights in the centre of the argument – a *“right’s-based approach”*, which will be further discussed in relation of UNHCR policies below. Indeed, a full enjoyment of human rights are seen as the only way to achieve self-reliance: *“The most important elements in facilitating the attainment of self-reliance are the full enjoyment of civil and socioeconomic rights (particularly crucial are the rights to freedom of movement, access to employment markets, self-employment and education).”* (SMITH 2004) Citing TOM KUHLMANN, SMITH argues that *“in fostering self-reliance, guaranteeing people’s rights is more important than providing them with material aid... we should reverse the present default assumptions regarding refugee needs: ‘It is better to plan for a protracted refugee situation than for a short-lived crisis. Only if during the first year it already appears abundantly evident that the refugees will soon be able to return home can programmes aimed at local integration be abandoned. In most cases they will not yet have begun implementation during that time.’”*

The Camp Versus Settlement Debate

The international discourse about which tools and strategies might be most appropriate and effective in refugee protection predates the *“End Warehousing Refugees Campaign”*. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to cover all main trends and arguments, the *“Camp versus Settlement Debate”* shall be briefly mentioned here. The issue of encampment of refugees has been the subject of fierce academic debate (KIBREAB 1989, CRISP and JACOBSEN 1998, HARRELL-BOND 1998, VERIDAME and HARRELL-BOND 2005). Essentially, as the debate between CRISP and JACOBSEN (1998) and BLACK (1998) shows, the question is between whether camps and settlements are often inevitable outcomes due to host government preferences (CRISP and JACOBSEN’s position) or outcomes of institutional and bureaucratic priorities and biases (Harrell-Bond 1998, Black 1998). All scholars, however, show a general bias towards settlements over camps. In her article *“FMO Thematic Guide: Camps versus Settlements”*¹⁰⁸ (2000) the scholar ANNA SCHMIDT attacks the fact that *“camp”* remains the predominant paradigm of refugee protection, despite obvious shortcomings such as socioeconomic and political restrictions that contribute to poverty, dependence and dehumanisation. Her camp critiques points to the fact that camp settings tend to prevent integration of refugees and host populations, increase dependency on relief aid, and ignore the resources and capacities of refugees themselves, as well as neglecting the repercussions of a refugee influx on the host populations. Instead, SCHMIDT advocates for a renewal of local settlements, which UNHCR had introduced for a brief period of time in the early 1980s. For SCHMIDT, a *“camp-based approach”* is synonymous with the traditional relief model, which SMITH and HARRELL-BOND describe as *“feeding refugees”*, while the *“settlement-*

¹⁰⁷ Kuhlman, Tom. “Responding to protracted refugee situations: A case study of Liberian refugees in Côte d’Ivoire,” UNHCR EPAU, July 2002

¹⁰⁸ Schmidt, Anna. “FMO Thematic Guide: Camps versus Settlements”, published in: Forced Migration Online / University of Oxford, 2000

based approach” favours participatory methods and allows for a capacity-based developmental model. In contrast to the dispersal of rural or urban refugees, organised settlements still hold the advantage of higher visibility of impact, and therefore higher chances of attracting donor interest. They allow for the monitoring of refugee needs, targeting of recipients and effective distribution of aid, especially in the short-run, while maintaining international standards. However, at the same time, their emphasis on self-reliance allows refugees to actively engage, rather than to be passive recipients of aid, to learn new skills, which will better prepare them for a durable solution.

Contradicting SCHMIDT, the scholar SARAH MEYER warns against an idealization of settlements. Having studied the effects of the “rural settlements” policy of the Ugandan government (which will be discussed in more detail in the examples discussed in chapter 2.2), MEYER argues that the remote location of settlements (away from local communities) makes integration or participation in the political, social and economic life impossible. In the case of Uganda, MEYER therefore views the settlements as an obstacle to self-reliance.¹⁰⁹

Integration in the Intermediate Term

Like SCHMIDT, the scholar SUSAN BANKI has criticized the current paradigms of refugee protection, in particular that of the camp. For BANKI, social and economic integration with the local community is key to improving refugees lives and prevent warehousing. In opposition to the traditional understanding of “local integration” as a durable solutions, she proposes a creative re-interpretation. BANKI introduces the term “integration in the intermediate term” - the ability of refugees to participate with relative freedom in the economic and communal life of the host region. In contrast to “local integration as a durable solution”, this notion does not necessarily include cultural and political participation, i.e. full citizenship. In her article “*Refugee Integration in the Intermediate Term: A Study of Nepal, Pakistan, and Kenya*”¹¹⁰ (2004) BANKI elaborates how the “*thinking about interim solutions*” could offer a practical alternative to the common fixation on durable solutions, which tends to blind humanitarian organisations to the precarious conditions of protracted refugee situations: “*While durable solutions have long been discussed as a means to resolve refugee crises, the increasing length of refugee stays suggests that refugees require solutions in the intermediate term.*” (BANKI 2004) BANKI’s notion of “*integration in the intermediate term*” will be taken up in the later discussions of scenarios for Palestinian refugee camps.

It is difficult to access the direct effect of the various conceptual critiques and campaigns by USCRI or scholars such as HARRELL-BOND, SCHMIDT or BANKI. According to MERRILL SMITH of USCRI, external pressure exercised by the “*End Warehousing Refugees Campaign*” has had an impact on UNHCR and other refugee protection agencies,¹¹¹ helping to bring about an era of reform, beginning from the early 2000s. UNHCR has begun to reflect on the inadequacy of the repatriation attempts of the 1990s and the Agency set up a “Core Group on Durable Solutions” in order to review strategies relating to durable solutions. In addition to persistent criticism from watchdog organisations such USCRI, a considerable factor may also have been pressure from the main donor countries in Europe and the US who became acutely aware that the unresolved refugee situation mounted an increasing threat, not only to local stability, but also on their own asylum regimes. If the situation could not be brought under control in the African and Asian host countries it was feared, a major refugee influx to first world countries might result.

¹⁰⁹ Source: Meyer, Sarah. “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-reliance of Refugees in Practice”. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Geneva, 2006.

¹¹⁰ Banki, Susan. “Refugee Integration in the Intermediate Term: A Study of Nepal, Pakistan, and Kenya”, New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 108, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University in cooperation with UNHCR, policy analysis unit, October 2004.

¹¹¹ In an email conversation on September 15, 2008, Merrill Smith stated: “For the 28 years that ExCom [UNHCR’s Executive Committee, representing some 80 States, is considered to constitute UNHCR’s governing body which meets every October in Geneva] mentioned the rights of refugees to work and freedom of movement only twice in its annual “Conclusions” prior to the [End Warehousing Refugees] Campaign (1975-2003): Conclusions 50(i)-(k) and 65(c), in 1988 and 1991, respectively... In the five years since the Campaign, ExCom has issued Conclusions six times affirming these rights: Conclusions 102(m) and 104(m)(i) and (ii) in 2005 and 105 in its body and subparagraphs (k) and (p) in 2007 with 12 other, vaguer allusions.... We are now are hoping for a major, rights-based Conclusion on Self-Reliance for ExCom’s 2009 session!”

2.1.2 UNHCR's Shift from a Relief-based to a Development-based Approach

This section will briefly introduce the reform efforts that begun within UNHCR since the early 2000s which led to the design of a new “*Framework for Durable Solutions*”. The section will then discuss two key elements of the Framework, which are of particular relevance to protracted and urbanised camp situations: The “*Development Assistance for Refugees*” (DAR) and the Manual for “*A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*”.

Setting up the “*Framework for Durable Solutions*”

In late 2000, UNHCR launched a global consultation process engaging States and other partners in a broad-ranging dialogue on refugee protection. The outcome is a jointly owned “*Agenda for Protection*” (2002), endorsed by UNHCR’s Executive Committee and welcomed by the United Nations General Assembly. Shortly, afterwards UNHCR launched the “*Convention Plus*”¹¹² (2003) Initiative seeking to update its mandate and bring it in line with contemporary requirements. Instead of pursuing a General Assembly vote, UNHCR’s chose to adapt the mandate via bilateral agreements with individual countries – a much more flexible and fast approach, which helped to secure important innovations such as the possibility to include IDPs in its activities. While the “*Agenda for Protection*” and the “*Convention Plus*” are concerned with UNHCR’s general Mandate and broad definition of purpose and intent, UNHCR also introduced a new operational tool set named “*Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*” (2003)¹¹³, which was to set the direction for institutional and operational reform. The document proposes specific operational guidelines and is therefore essential in understanding how the Agency begun to deal with protracted refugee situations. The document states: “*The basic criterion for a good programme is self-reliance. In protracted refugee situations however, refugees - sometimes for decades - remain dependent on humanitarian assistance. One essential key to solving such situations is political; but, in the meantime, a facilitating element of any durable solution is development.*”¹¹⁴

The “*Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*” reflects a renewed interest in refugee livelihood and self-reliance strategies (LOESCHER et al. 2008) also called “*development-based approach*”. The Agency in fact underwent a conscious attempt to revisit and revive previously developed alternative models to traditional “*care and maintenance*”, such as the local settlement programmes from the 1960s when the concept of “*integrated zonal development approach*” to refugee assistance was proposed. Another precedent emerged in the 1980s when the notion of “*Refugee Aid and Development (RAD)*” was coined, stipulating that assistance should from the onset of a refugee crisis be development-oriented, enhance refugees’ self-reliance and incorporate support to refugee hosting areas. Examples for earlier “developmental” initiatives include projects linked to the “International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa” (ICARA I and II)¹¹⁵ and the “Income-Generating Project for Afghan Refugee Hosting Areas” (IGPRA). Other examples include the assistance to Central American refugees beginning in the 1980s, the local integration of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico, and the approach used by international NGOs in South Africa to integrate Mozambican refugees. The former had been part of a larger regional initiative to find solutions to the problem of forced displacement in Central America, the CIREFCA process, which ran from 1989 until 1994. Although specific initiatives were considered successful, the two concepts (i.e. “*Integrated*”

¹¹² During the 53 session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme (ExCom) in October 2002, the High Commissioner called for the development of such tools, in the form of multilateral “special agreements”, to complement the 1951 Convention. The agreements are intended to set in place joint arrangements in areas where multilateral commitments are called for and where they are negotiable. The High Commissioner termed these tools “Convention Plus”. (source: UNHCR’s, “*Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*”, Geneva, 2003

¹¹³ The “*Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*” is a policy paper published in 2002 (published in 2003) and was prepared by the UNHCR’s specifically set up task force – the “Core Group on Durable Solutions.

¹¹⁴ source: “*Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*” (2003), page 6

¹¹⁵ After having focused on the provision of legal protection and the organization of resettlement programmes in Europe during the 1950s, UNHCR was confronted with mass refugee movements in Africa and other less-developed regions in the 1960-70s and the 1980s. Large-scale agricultural settlements on land made available by host governments (esp. in sub-Saharan Africa have been the response.) But still the humanitarian community focused on emergency relief (food, water, shelter, health care). In the early 1980s, attempts were made to suggest more durable solutions to humanitarian emergencies: Two international conferences, ICARA I (1981) and ICARA II (1984) (International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa) were organized. Whereas ICARA I still was focusing on short term relief (it was primarily a pledging conference, aimed at mobilising additional resources for refugee programmes in Africa), ICARA II stressed the importance of linking humanitarian aid and development. Both failed in attracting the required funding. According to Betts (Betts, 2004) the cause of failure was primarily a north-south polarization in expectations and interests. Nevertheless, UNHCR states, that the ICARA conferences signalled a possible shift towards a development approach, and to transition from short-term relief to longer-term development.

Zonal Development Approach" and "*Refugee Aid and Development RAD*") were later abandoned due to lack of funds, differences between host countries and donors, and increased attention within UNHCR to repatriation and reintegration as the primary choice amongst durable solutions.¹¹⁶ However, all these approaches underscored the long-standing recognition within UNHCR of the intimate links between displacement and development.

The "*Framework for Durable Solutions*" reviews all three traditional durable solutions – voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration – and proposes three programming concepts, namely:

- "*Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programme*" approach, which provides basic operational guidelines dealing primarily with conditions in which a durable solution is out of sight;
- The "*Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (4Rs)*" approach, which deals exclusively with voluntary repatriation, and
- The "*Development through Local Integration (DLI)*" approach to provide guidelines for local integration.

Although "Resettlement" as a possible durable solution is mentioned in the introduction of the document, it does not provide a specific tool for its implementation. Although this is not directly stated, it is nevertheless a clear recognition that option of resettlement has failed and is no longer pursued as a priority. Instead, the DAR guidelines represent a conceptual shift away from the focus on durable solutions towards a recognition of the reality of protracted refugee situations. In the following, one of these concepts – DAR – will be analysed in more detail due to its specific relevance and potential applicability to protracted, urbanised camp situations. In addition, a final section will be devoted to one of the most recent policy documents: The manual for "A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations" (2008), which is, like DAR, also general and applicable to all durable solutions, including protracted, urbanised camp situations.

"Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programme"

In 2005, UNHCR published a revised and extended version of the DAR programme in form of the "*Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes*."¹¹⁷ The handbook is a broad and universally applicable set of operational tools and guidelines, aiming to deliver development planning to refugees "in-waiting" for a durable solution: "*Empowerment and enhancement of productive capacities and self-reliance of refugees through Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) would lead equipped and capacitated refugees to either of the durable solutions i.e. repatriation to their country of origin, local integration in the country of asylum or resettlement to a third country.*"¹¹⁸ This is to be achieved through the application of a five-step methodology:

- initiating consultations and building consensus;
- setting up institutional mechanisms for planning, including a task force to oversee the planning process;
- conducting in-depth and participatory assessments to generate information needed to formulate the DAR Strategy and Action Plan;
- defining a strategy and detailed action plan; and,
- validating the strategy and action plan.

For the purposes of this thesis, more significant than a complete assessment of all operational guidelines outlined in the handbook and their applicability on the various situations of refugee protection, is a reflection of the significance of the handbook with regard to protracted refugee situations involving urbanised refugee camps. Does the handbook indeed reflect a change of thinking and new point of departure with regard to urbanised camps? And secondly, what new tools are recommended that could be specifically applied in the context of urbanised refugee camps?

¹¹⁶ From the mid 1990s onwards, UNHCR again was confronted with new mass emergencies and preoccupied with a series of large-scale repatriation programmes. This blinded UNHCR to the fact that large numbers of refugees throughout the world were trapped in what have now become known as protracted refugee situations (PRS). PRS often resulted in refugees ending up in a situation of dependency and marginalization. During the 1990s UNHCR's interest and involvement was very much focused on the reintegration of returnees in their countries of origin rather than self-reliance amongst refugees in countries of asylum. The focus was mainly on small scale Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to facilitate reintegration.

¹¹⁷ "Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes", prepared by Amadou Tijan Jallow (Consultant, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) and Sajjad Masood Malik (Senior Rural Development Officer, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva, First edition issued January, 2005..

¹¹⁸ see "Framework for Durable Solutions" (2002), page 24.

A more close study of the handbook does confirm that “protracted refugee situations” have been a key focus for the authors of the handbook as it states as a key intention to ensure “...that many of the millions of refugees in protracted refugee situations see improvements in their lives through the realization of Development Assistance to Refugees” when “utilizing only traditional relief-based solutions to refugee assistance (for example, care and maintenance), have proved largely inefficient and need to be complemented and if necessary replaced by new programming approaches to address the protracted nature of many refugee situations.”¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the handbook states, that “the existence of refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness, and dependency can contribute to future conflicts and instability and undermine prospects for development peace and human security.”

The fact that UNHCR no longer assumes that relief operations and political negotiations alone are sufficient to bridge the gap towards durable solutions is an explicit recognition of the reality of protracted refugee situations and the urgent need to approach such situations in a developmental way.¹²⁰ With regard to protracted and urbanised camp situations, the main situation of concern to this thesis, however, the handbook remains rather vague. Its key objective is universal applicability, regardless of whether refugee situations may be characterized as “emerging/ new”, “stable” and “breakthrough”, or whether “refugees are in an urban or rural setting; whether they are found in camp or non-camp or some other setting.”¹²¹ According to these categories, protracted and urbanised camp situation would fall under the temporal definition of “stable” and the spatial category of “camp”.

While DAR does not explicitly address protracted, urbanised camp settings the handbook reflects several significant changes in UNHCR’s general approach are directly applicable:

• Shifting From “Needs-based” to “Rights- and Community Based Approach”

In line with the external campaigns such as “End Warehousing Refugees”, the handbook clearly demonstrates a commitment to a “rights-based approach”, considering protection not only as guaranteeing the right to physical security but also a right to the restoration of human dignity, which involves supporting communities to rebuilding their social and economic structures, even if in exile.¹²² The handbook clearly confirms that a rights-based approach stands in contrast to the traditional needs-based approach of humanitarian agencies. It explains that many rights have developed from needs, but a rights-based approach adds legal and moral obligations and introduces accountability on behalf of the implementing agency. Equally, in a rights-based approach, the holders of rights are no longer seen as objects of charity (as they are in a needs-based approach): “It is founded on the principles of participation and empowering individuals and communities to promote change and enable them to exercise their rights and comply with their duties. It identifies rights-holders (women, girls, boys and men of concern) and duty-bearers (principally the State and its agents), and seeks to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to satisfy those claims. This requires an attitudinal shift in how UNHCR works with and for persons of concern: They are no longer viewed as beneficiaries of aid, but as rights-holders with legal entitlements.”¹²³ This proclaimed shift in the relationship between refugees and UNHCR clearly echoes the campaigns of USCRI and others. For the first time, UNHCR states that instead of a top-down approach to programme delivery, the Agency should be “working in partnership with persons of concern during all stages. It recognizes the resilience, capacities, skills and resources of persons of concern, builds on these to deliver protection and solutions, and supports the community’s own goals. The approach is not limited to a particular function or sector of work; it should guide all UNHCR staff and partners in their work with persons of concern. It demands that we understand and consider the political context, the receiving population, gender roles, community dynamics, and protection risks, concerns and priorities. It also requires that we recognize our role as

¹¹⁹ see handbook, section 2: The Rationale and Aims of DAR Programmes.

¹²⁰ Some of this strategic shifts underpinning the handbook were already anticipated in UNHCR’s earlier “Framework for Durable Solutions For Refugees and Persons of Concern”, 2003.

¹²¹ see handbook, Module 2, section 1: Possible DAR Planning Scenarios.

¹²² The UN’s adoption of a rights-based approach had gradually evolved since the 1997 UN Programme for Reform, which called on all UN agencies to integrate human rights into their activities within the framework of their respective mandates. The 1997 resolution is predated by intense discussion on the link between human rights and development (seen as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process), which accompanied United Nations debates for more than half a century. Already in 1986, the right to development was made explicit in the “Declaration on the Right to Development”. The Declaration on the Right to Development states that “the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.” The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 reaffirmed by consensus the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. (source: www.unhcr.ch/development/approaches.html)

¹²³ see UNHCR Handbook: “A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations” (2008), page 16.

*facilitators, our limitations in capacity and resources, the temporary nature of our presence, and the long term impact of our interventions.*¹²⁴

The handbook further recognized that the implementation of a rights-based approach is only possible through supportive policies and practices and must therefore be accompanied by programmatic interventions to increase economic and employment opportunities, creating the conditions for refugees to pursue productive livelihoods – e.g. freedom of movement, access to jobs and services (health, education, etc.), and productive resources (e.g. land). This is also demonstrated in the official aims of DAR, which, according to the handbook, include the following:

- *to empower and enhance productive capacities and self-reliance of refugees;*
- *to promote gender equality, dignity and improved quality of refugee life;*
- *to contribute to development of the host country and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and,*
- *to contribute to development of the host community and to poverty reduction efforts.*”

An adoption of a “rights-based approach” therefore opens the door to a more comprehensive, integrated approach to the improvement of refugee’s lives possible, and the communities full participation in planning and implementation processes.

• **Promotion of a Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Achieve Self-Reliance**

The handbook refers extensively to the “*Sustainable Livelihoods (SI)*” approach, which dates back to the 1980s¹²⁵ and, since, became a guiding principle for many international governmental and non-governmental agencies. UNHCR’s reference to it brings the Agency in line with policies and practice of other UN Agencies such as UN-HABITAT or UNDP. The core of the concept is to recognize that significant change such as poverty alleviation or the improvement of living conditions can only be achieved through the strengthening and developing of already available resources and potentials including individual skills (human capital), land (natural capital), savings (financial capital), equipment (physical capital), as well as formal support groups and informal networks (social capital). To connect the SI approach to refugee situations provides new conceptual tools to improve the quality of life in asylum by building on the productive capacities of refugees. The SI approach seeks to promote a better quality of life through self-reliance and therefore contributing to poverty eradication. The DAR handbook states: “*Promoting self-reliance must be based on a good understanding of how people cope and adapt to new situations, the understanding of the local social and economic context, the livelihood strategies people pursue, as well as knowledge of what has worked (or failed to work) under different settings.*” This approach opens the door to a multiplicity of programmes such as capacity building (providing refugees with the necessary education, skills and acquire assets to be productive members of society).

• **Shift Towards Integration in Local Area and Community**

The handbook promotes a shift of emphasis towards an area and community-based thinking and planning, targeting both refugees and host communities and promoting peaceful co-existence (previous approaches have often been purely beneficiary focused assistance programmes leaving out local populations). This is to include the advocacy of strategic tools for poverty eradication and local development for refugees as well refugee hosting areas and communities. Although the handbook does not mention SUSAN BANKI’s notion “*integration in the intermediate term*” directly, it effectively proposes a similar pragmatic social, economic and spatial integration of camps in their host area.

• **Recognition of Need for Enhancing Stakeholder Interaction**

The handbook advocates an inter-sectoral approach fostering stronger multilateral action connecting UNHCR with other UN Agencies, donors, refugee communities, host communities, local authorities (dis-

¹²⁴ see UNHCR Handbook: “A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations” (2008), page 14.

¹²⁵ Livelihood thinking dates back to the work of Robert Chambers in the mid-1980s. In realising that conventional development concepts did not yield the desired effects and that humankind was additionally facing an enormous population pressure, Chambers developed the idea of “Sustainable Livelihoods” with the intention to enhance the efficiency of development cooperation. His concepts constitute the basics for the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), as it was developed by the British Department for International Development (DFID). Starting from 1997, DFID integrated the approach in its program for development cooperation. According to Chambers and Conway (1992:9) “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.” (source: M. Kollmair and St. Gamper, Development Study Group, University of Zurich: “The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach” (July 2002).

tract/provincial) and other actors (eg. NGOs, CBOs, private sector). DAR also promotes the use of existing government and national structures, plans and processes as the basis for programme activities (rather than stand-alone initiatives) to assure national ownership and sustainability. This reflects a recognition of the problems with working in isolation and aims to institutionalise multi-layered partnerships and burden sharing: “*DAR programmes require political will of host governments, appropriate legal/policy frameworks and/or practices that facilitate self-reliance, partnerships (between governments- national and local - communities - refugees and hosts - humanitarian and development actors and civil society), and incorporation and prioritization of refugee concerns and those of their hosting areas in development agendas.*”¹²⁶ The recognition of a need for stronger stakeholder interaction opens the door to establishing the managerial structures that is required to launch possible rehabilitation processes and integrated planning processes for urbanised refugee camps, as well as to integrate such undertakings within local, regional and national development plans.

Possible Actions Under DAR

What possible actions does the DAR handbook envisage? Listed under the handbook's section “Adapting the Strategy to Different Settings”¹²⁷ measures that may be applied include the following:

- *Gradually integrate services to refugees with those for nationals in same areas*
- *Progressively transfer responsibilities for service delivery for care and maintenance/local settlement activities to local authorities*
- *Strengthen self-reliance activities and skills development (balancing between present life in asylum and preparation for return)*
- *Provide assistance to build capacity of local authorities, especially to integrate and manage programmes transferred*
- *Utilize local planning mechanisms to design programmes*
- *Ensure that costs associated with services are progressively absorbed by local government and ministry budgets - meanwhile make arrangements for recurrent costs - introduce cost sharing systems for refugees (based on local systems) and build the capacity of refugees and locals to access and pay for services (school fees, etc.), help raise additional funds to match additional responsibilities - these measures should not increase the burden on host countries*
- *Promote data collection of refugees' professional and demographic profiles and survey market activities and employment opportunities to match refugees to appropriate jobs and demand with goods and services*
- *Put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.”*

In summary one may state that the handbook directly responds to the numerous criticisms voices by watchdog organisations and scholars and their demand for the introduction of a developmental and right's based approach, stronger participation of the local community and the social, economic and spatial integration in the host communities. The handbook does not explicitly target protracted and urbanised camp situations but opens the door to addressing their specific problems more directly and efficiently.

The Manual for “A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations” and the “The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations”

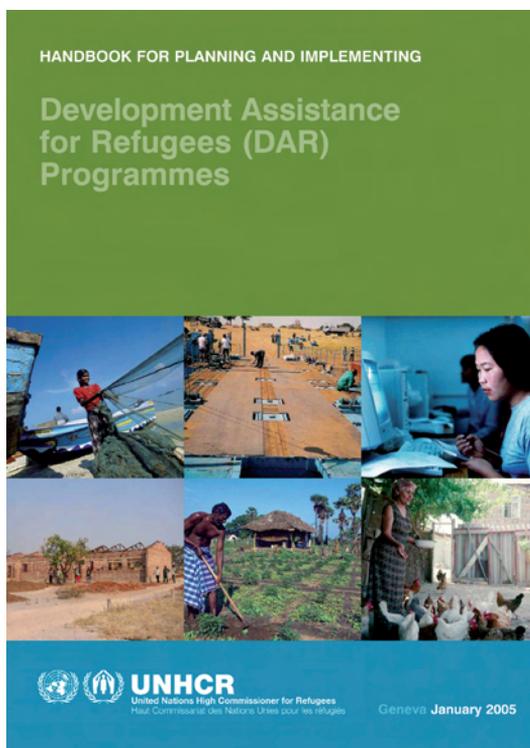
More recently, UNHCR recently published two additional manuals: “*The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*” (2006) and “*A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*” (2008). Both handbooks follow the ethics of the right's-based approach already laid out in DAR, attempting to consider beneficiaries not as “dependent victims who need to be saved and assisted” but rather as equal partners. They are “...based on the understanding that by placing people of concern at the centre of operational decision-making, and building protection strategies in partnership with them, they will be better protected, their capacities to identify, develop and sustain solutions will be strengthened, and the resources available will be used more effectively.”¹²⁸

Both handbooks develop the principles laid out in the earlier DAR handbook into concrete operational guidelines for UNHCR staff on the ground. The “*UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*” focuses in particular on how to conduct participatory assessment of needs. It specifies how to ensure balanced participation, how to structure discussions and workshops, how to synthesize the results and utilize them for programme planning. In essence, the handbook believes that through participation of the refugee community in the analysis of what is needed and in deciding on the kind of assistance to be delivered, help can be provided more effectively and with a stronger sense of local ownership.

¹²⁶ see handbook, add precise reference

¹²⁷ see handbook, Module 3, Step 4: Defining a Strategy and Action Plan/ Adapting the Strategy to Different Settings

¹²⁸ see UNHCR Handbook: “A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations” (2008)



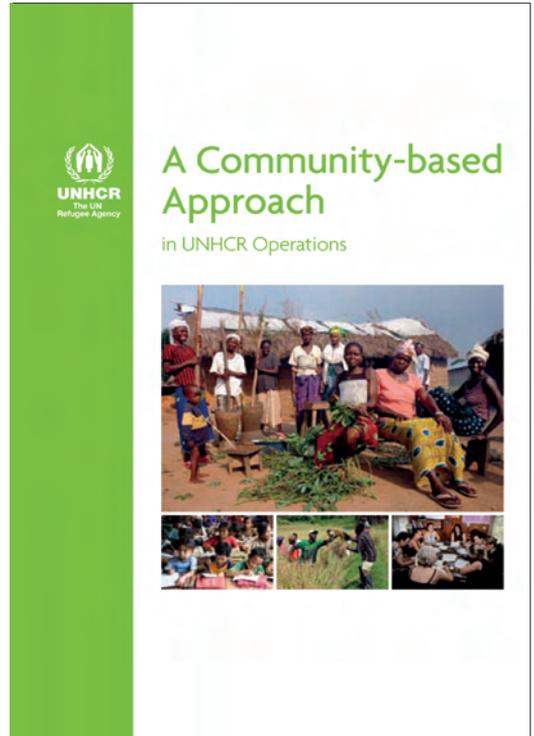
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Handbook on planning and implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) programmes

The handbook states that *"the DAR programming approach seeks to improve burden-sharing with countries and communities hosting large refugee populations, promote a better quality of life for refugees and their hosts, facilitate self-reliance for refugees and prepare them for durable solutions, and to contribute to poverty eradication in refugee-hosting areas. In doing so it aims to place refugee concerns and those of the host communities in development agendas and mobilize additional development assistance. The DAR programming approach brings together the capacities and resources of communities (refugees and hosts), governments, development and humanitarian partners to comprehensively tackle displacement, poverty and underdevelopment in refugee hosting areas. DAR programmes are therefore of benefit to all partners.*

The DAR programme concept builds upon the Agenda for Protection and incorporates principles contained in the UNDG Guidance Note on Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons (October 2004). It operationalizes the Framework for Durable Solutions and serves as a tool for the implementation of Convention Plus initiative."

Source: "Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes", prepared by Amadou Tijan Jallow (Consultant, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) and Sajjad Masood Malik (Senior Rural Development Officer, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva, First edition issued January, 2005.



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A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations, UNHCR Manual

In the introductory section of the manual its aims and objectives are being described as follows: "This manual is intended to support staff in implementing a community based approach in UNHCR operations to ensure that people of concern are placed at the centre of all decisions affecting their lives. The manual aims to:

- build a common understanding among UNHCR and partner staff of the community-based approach, its role in protection, its relationship to a rights-based approach, and the underlying principles of participation, inclusiveness and equality;
- improve staff capacity to develop a community-outreach strategy to mobilize and support community structures that represent women, girls, boys and men of all ages and backgrounds, and build community-based protection responses and sustainable solutions;

• provide practical guidance on how to implement a community based approach so that all persons of concern can participate in developing common goals and action plans for protection, including assistance and solutions, and on how to jointly monitor and evaluate and establish confidential individual case-management systems for those at heightened risk; and

• encourage the strengthening of multifunctional teams in operations and highlight the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to implement the community-based approach. There is no single blueprint for a community-based approach, since each situation of displacement is unique. UNHCR and partners will always need to conduct an in-depth analysis of each situation, with all community members participating, in order to agree on the best strategies."

(source: UNHCR Handbook: "A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations", 2008)

The manual for “A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations” further develops the practical guidelines for participatory need assessments – the section “*Situation Analysis*” includes recommendations on how to establish contact to the community, how to conduct participatory assessment, manage expectations, specify timing and resources to be allocated – as well as how to mobilize and empower the community: How to build community representation that can speak on behalf of the community in planning processes; how to conduct capacity building; how to form planning and action teams and involve the community in monitoring and evaluation.

Although none of the three handbooks discussed specifically focuses on the needs of protracted and urbanised camp situations, nor do they deal with issues of urban planning, they provide a flexible tool package which share the same working principles and assumptions as the methodology for camp improvement for Palestine camps, and will therefore serve as comparisons in the discussions of Part III of this dissertation.

2.2

Policy Application in Practice

Introductory Remarks to Case Studies

UNHCR's handbooks for policy and operational guidelines are developed and published with the broad consensus of the United Nations Member State community. However, they merely outline an intent and serve as reference point for staff. Actual applicability relies entirely on a multitude of complex local factors and circumstances. In the tense and conflictual conditions under which most refugee situations endure, refugee participation and empowerment is difficult to implement. Host government may raise reservations, conflicts with local communities or tensions within the refugee community itself may prevent the implementation of a DAR approach altogether, or only allow its partial application. Indeed, the UNHCR admits that the approach could so far only be implemented in very few cases.

The following section reviews actual experience with protracted refugee situations in camps and organized settlements. In order to allow for comparison with Palestine Refugee Camps the three chosen case studies deliberately do not include a "voluntary repatriation" or complete "local integration" scenario, but deal with the reality of protracted, urbanised camp situations without a durable solution in sight. The case studies will show how the urbanisation process can differ due to the impact of local factors such as political, security, legal, economic, social or physical. The first section discussed camps in Algeria, where the host governments and local context is extremely hostile – here, urbanisation of camps takes place under conditions of closed boundaries. The second section discusses Kenya's refugee camps where government restrictions on movement and economic exchange are in place, but are partly ignored and undermined by informal exchange and integration in the everyday. The urbanisation of camps takes place here in a condition of porous boundaries. While section one and two describe conditions in which the DAR could only be partially applied or not be applied at all, the third section describes a case study of Sudanese camps in Uganda which have been heralded as models for the application of DAR development strategies. Here it will be critically examined how policies and tools applied can affect the urbanisation process on the ground positively or negatively.

2.2.1 Camp Urbanisation Within Closed Camp Boundaries (Algeria)

Background to Refugee Crisis

The Saharawis come from Western Sahara, a territory on the north-west coast of Africa bordered by Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria. Upon the withdrawal of the colonial power Spain in 1976, Morocco and Mauritania both made claims to the territory (Mauritania renounced these claims in 1979). The indigenous Saharawi population declared Western Sahara as an independent country and, in 1975, began to fight what it perceived as Moroccan occupation. In the fighting, approximately 150,000-200,000 of Saharawi civilians fled occupation across the border to south-western Algeria to temporary camps established in 1976. In 1991, The UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in an attempt to settle the issue. At the same time, a ceasefire went into effect. However, the referendum has been stalled, and attempts to find a sustainable political solution have failed.

Situation Today

The failure of the UN mission means that, more than thirty years after their foundation, the Saharawi camps remain and an entirely new generation has been born and raised in the camps. The protracted period in exile, coupled with harsh geographical and climatic conditions where the camps are located, make the refugees totally dependent on international humanitarian assistance from NGOs and the UNHCR. The refugee population, currently at 165,000, is spread between three refugee camps near the Algerian town of Tindouf (El Aaiun, Awserd, Smara), a separate base nearby used by the Saharawi government in exile (Rabouni) and an extremely remote additional camp, 220km southeast Dakhla). All camps remain strictly isolated, and are separated from town and villages by large strips of unpopulated desert.

Although the current camps and even the local economy of Tindouf are totally unsuitable for supporting a refugee population of 165,000, any idea of temporary scattering to more fertile areas is unmentionable. A further move away from the Western Saharan border would be viewed as a concession to the Moroccan army and is rejected by the elderly traditional leaderships, which embodies a rigid political agenda, which is needlessly detrimental to the well-being of their own vulnerable refugee population. The Algerian government shares this perspective out of opposition to Morocco's territorial claims and rejects any attempts to change location or image of the camps and the the camp-based "Sahrawi government-in-exile" concentrates on accumulating resources for the war effort against Morocco.

Measuring Camp Urbanisation

Applying the three indicators for urbanisation established by Perouse and Kagwanja¹²⁹ – urban features (including population and building density), trading activities with surrounding communities and, socio-economic profile (see section 1.3.2), the following can be concluded. As described in RANDA FARAH'S article "*Western Sahara and Palestine: Shared Refugee Experiences*"¹³⁰ the Sahrawi camps "*resemble cities subdivided in districts, named after towns and areas in Western Sahara. Over time most tents have been replaced by brick homes. The adobe huts have basic furniture, blankets and kitchen utensils. Despite the lack of public electricity in the camps, some families have acquired TV sets powered by solar energy on order to access the outside world.*" Beyond the physical urbanisation, the socioeconomic profile of refugees has changed. Headed by the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the refugees of Western Sahara are efficiently and highly organised, have democratic institutions and processes and a high level of participation in decision-making. The Polisario has attempted to modernize the camps' society, placing emphasis especially on education, the eradication of tribalism and the emancipation of women.¹³¹ Laws and institutions guarantee social equality, including women's rights, provide free education and health services and the right and duty to work. In general, the level of democratisation encountered in the camps is, according to FARAH, unmatched elsewhere in the Arab world. Although FARAH describes that "*there are a few shops in the camps selling goods brought from Algeria, Mauretania and elsewhere*" and that "*through informal economic trade networks, the seeds of a cash economy and market emerge in the camps*", the camps remain socially and economically al-

129 source: Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine et al." Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socio-economic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya", Journal of Refugee Studies, 2000

130 Farah, Randa. "Western Sahara and Palestine: Shared Refugee Experiences", in: Forced Migration Review, 16, 2003

131 The role of women in camps was enhanced by their shouldering of the main responsibility for the refugee camps and government bureaucracy, as virtually the entire male population was enrolled in the Polisario army in the war years.



→ 048
Country Map of Western Algeria with Sahrawi Camps

The refugee population, currently at 165,000, is spread between three refugee camps near the Algerian town of Tindouf (El Aaiun, Awserd, Smara), a separate base nearby used by the Saharawi government in exile (Rabouni) and an extremely remote additional camp, 220km southeast Dakhla). (source: www.unhcr.com)

→ 047
Sahrawi Camp Near Tindouf

The aerial photo of a Sahrawi camp shows the development of extended buildings clustered around a shared courtyard which is protected from desert standstoms. (source: googleearth.com)

→ 049
Sahrawi Camps
 Source: www.sandblast-arts.org



UNHCR policy goals as laid out in the DAR approach	Tools applied	Hurdles/ obstacles	Effect on camps
Community-based Approach to Development (also referred to as "rights-based approach")	Participatory management structures for aid distribution and programme design; capacity building	full internal cooperation for local participation; severe restrictions on other human rights, such as employment or movement	Enhancing of local democratic representations, and local institutions and initiatives
Achieving self-reliance through sustainable livelihood building	none	Geographical remoteness and political restrictions (externally imposed and self-imposed) limit interaction	Extreme poverty and unemployment; almost no economic relations or social exchange; full dependence on international aid
Integrated area and community based planning	none	Remote location and political status of camps as de facto "self-ruled enclave"	Highly artificial environment completely sustained by international aid; almost no work opportunities outside the camps
Enhanced stakeholder Interaction	none	Politically motivated rejection to cooperate with local communities (externally imposed and self-imposed)	Stakeholder relationships are limited to humanitarian organisations

→ 050

Analysis Chart of Applied Policies



→ 051

Smara Camp, Near Tindouf

The camp's fabric is an amalgamation of relief tents and mud brick dwellings constructed by refugee families themselves.

most completely isolated from the Algerian host communities. Integration virtually does not exist. In summary it can be stated that although physical features of urbanisation exist and urban institutions and forms of interaction exist, the urbanisation process takes place in a highly artificial, segregated environment and is only sustained by foreign humanitarian aid.

Application of Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR)?

UNHCR is currently supporting 90,000 of the most vulnerable refugees of the Sahrawi camp. Food, drinking water and materials for tents and clothing are brought in by car by international aid agencies such as the UNHCR, ECHO, Oxfam and WFP, and the Algerian Red Crescent. Humanitarian aid and new participatory management procedures contribute to the emergence of social and economic variance among refugees. The high degree of inclusion in management and planning of distributing aid has been made possible through the cooperation of the Polisario front veterans who advocate democratic principles and gender balance. Construction works or teaching is mainly conducted by local staff. The UNHCR's "Country Operations Plan" for Algeria¹³² (2007) states that *"Women are actively involved in camp management issues and have integrated every sector of life including administration, health, education, etc. Women are in charge of the monthly distribution of food rations and non-food items (blankets, tents, clothes, gas cylinders and hygienic products). They are therefore responsible for the reception, handling and distribution of all basic humanitarian assistance provided within the camps... UNHCR's projects will continue to promote women's empowerment through acquisition of professional skills, which will further their role within the camps and upon return to their country of origin, in the fields of agriculture, use of computers, sewing, solar energy."*

As RANDA FARAH describes, the situation for the Western Sahara refugees is highly protracted. The professionalized warriors of the Polisario front would see any changes in the status quo as a concession to their enemies and therefore reject local integration. At the same time, Algeria and the Arab world *"seems to have abandoned them and forgotten about their existence."* (FARAH 2003) DAR methodologies have not been applied due to self-imposed objections and externally imposed restrictions, both seeking to defend the status quo. Although urbanisation has taken place not only on the physical/spatial level but also in the economic/social/cultural sense, full dependence on international aid remains. The refugee situation (already lasting over 30 years) is in a dead-end state, furthermore because repatriation is not in sight.

2.2.2 Informal Camp Urbanisation Within Porous Camp Boundaries (Kenya)

Background to Refugee Crisis

Kenya is host to a number of refugee populations. The largest populations are Somalis, Sudanese and Ethiopian refugees: Nearly 100,000 Somali refugees arrived in Kenya in 1991, and hundreds of thousands followed in the next several years, flooding the country with its first massive refugee population. Somalis fled the political situation created by the fall of the Siad Barre regime, and, from the outset, arrived by different modes of transport and experienced different refugee conditions (HORST 2003). In 2001, the Somali refugees in Kenya were estimated between 150,000 and 200,000. Refugees from Sudan began to arrive in 1992. Recently, repatriation efforts and renewed fighting have caused the Sudanese refugee numbers to rise and fall. At the close of 2001, 70,000 were estimated. While a small number of Ethiopian refugees had been in Kenya since the mid-80s, 10,000 entered in 1991, and 70,000 in 1992. Since then, Ethiopian refugees have declined and in 2001 there were an estimated 14,000 in Kenya.

Current Situation

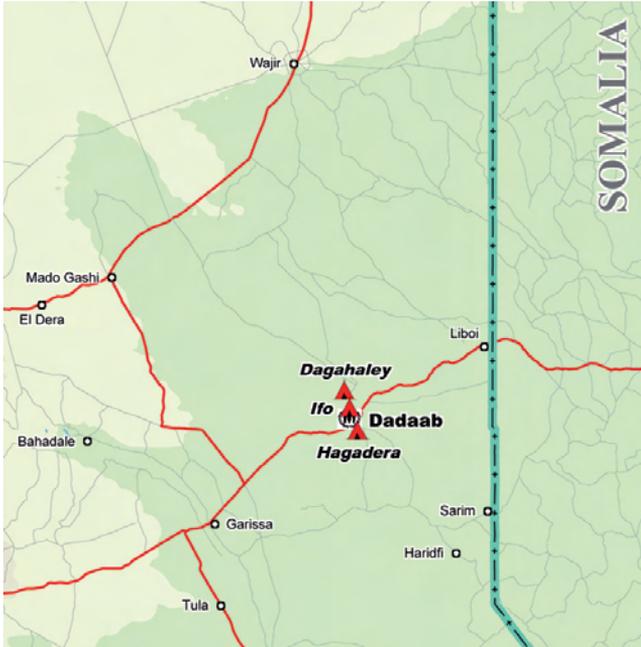
In 2001, according to the USCR, 33% of Ethiopians, 65% of Somalis, and 100% of Sudanese were residing in camps. These percentages offer a general sense of the range of levels of integration. Clearly, many Ethiopians, some Somalis, and few Sudanese have integrated in Kenya, but the broad overall majority of refugees in the country continues to live in mixed camps. Camp dwellers, unlike those refugees living outside, are exposed to a regime of tight restrictions by the Kenyan government. They can only leave their respective camps with a permit and there is no official opportunity for economic livelihood outside the confines of the camp. Camp refugees receive all education and health inputs from UNHCR, and while some of the camps provide a small bit of land for subsistence farming, this is neither enough to make a living nor to be seen as a move toward self-sufficiency. This tight regime is one of the reasons why many refugees have opted not to register as refugees and obtain assistance, which would require them to live in camps. The disadvantage of being „outside the legal system“ seem to outweigh the advantages of living with the local population and participate informally in the economy.¹³³ As SUSAN BANKI (2004) notes, *“the very fact that the Kenyan authorities cannot track them both provides them with a modicum of cover to engage in the shadow economy at the same time that they are limited in pursuing any activities requiring legal status, such as provision of services, transportation, etc.”*¹³⁴

Measuring Camp Urbanisation

According to MARC-ANTOINE PEROUSE DE MONTCLOS et al. (2000), refugees in Kenya confined in camps since the 1990s became “urban dwellers in the making”. Located in the semi-arid areas of Northern Kenya, away from the main economic activities and urban centres, the Kakuma camp and the vast Dadaab complex (Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley) with over 300,000 refugees - the first mainly inhabited by Sudanese, the second by Somalis - resemble de facto urban centres. At Dadaab, most refugees have already arrived more than a decade ago. Prior to the establishment of the camp, the region of Dadaab was largely nomadic and pastoralist, with small village populations. At Kakuma the local population is now about 40,000 (up from 5,000) and in Dadaab 10,000 (from 5,000), many of whom have settled in relation to the wells, bore holes and other infrastructure of the refugee camps. These settlers are either former pastoralists attracted by the constant supply of water and food for their herds, or traders capitalizing on the new market. The local Turkana population is generally worse off. Indeed, food distribution in Kakuma creates a magnet for Turkana pastoralists (particularly women and children) keen to benefit from small-scale labour, petty trading and even begging. According to PEROUSE et al.: *“The areas attracted local populace and pastoralist communities from the surroundings, because of the camps' side effects such as the advantage of water sources, infrastruc-*

¹³³ The scholar Cindy Horst comments on the sudden shift in Kenyan policy towards refugees: “Historically, Kenya was well-known for its generous refugee policies, allowing nearly all its refugees to integrate easily. Prior to the massive influxes in the early 1990s, integration of small numbers of refugees from Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda was an accepted fact. It was only with increasing sizeable refugee populations that Kenya turned to the UNHCR for support: The shift in responsibility for the care of the refugees from the government to the international community had the positive effect of attracting external funds. On the negative side, however, the laissez faire policy before 1991 had provided few obstacles to local integration of the refugees... The refugees had the right to work, to education and freedom of movement. When the UNHCR took over, none of these positive aspects were preserved.” (Horst, Cindy. “Vital Links in Social Security: Somali Refugees in the Dadaab Camps, Kenya”, published by <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi>, 2003).

¹³⁴ Banki, Susan. “Refugee Integration in the Intermediate Term: A Study of Nepal, Pakistan, and Kenya”, New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 108, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University in cooperation with UNHCR, policy analysis unit, Boston, October 2004.



→ 053
Dadaab Camp Complex

Located in the semi-arid areas of Northern Kenya, away from the main economic activities and urban centres, the vast Dadaab camp complex (Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley) houses over 300,000 refugees. (source: www.unhcr.com)

→ 052
Dadaab Camp in Kenya (near border with Somalia)

The aerial photo of the camp area shows UNHCR camp facilities, a distinct structure of camp neighbourhoods (with plantation around perimeter to protect houses from desert storms, as well as farming areas. (source: googleearth.com)



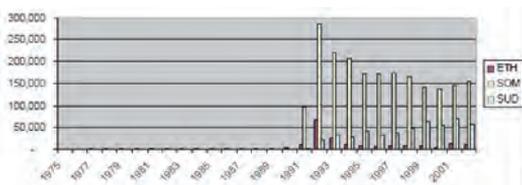
→ 054
Kenyan Refugee Camps

Source: Hyndman, Jennifer. Managing Displacement – Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism", University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000

UNHCR policy goals as laid out in the DAR approach	Tools applied	Hurdles/ obstacles	Effect on camps
Community-based approach to development (also referred to as "rights-based approach")	UNHCR and local officials lobbied with the Kenyan government to issue movement passes (only partial success); some efforts have been made to introduce participatory approaches to programme planning	Severe restrictions imposed by Kenyan host government on right to free movement, right to seek employment, right to legal protection or to live outside camps, etc.	Restrictions on human rights have greatly exacerbated poverty; lack of freedom to leave the camp have increased congestion inside the camps
Achieving self-reliance through sustainable livelihood building	Capacity building and training programmes have been criticized to focus on "skills upon return", rather than marketable skills within the camp such as production of low cost items; food-for-work - including, for instance, skills development and environmental improvement have been more successful; GTZ initiated greenbelts to allow for micro-agriculture for Somali Bantu farmers	Refugees recognized by UNHCR are not eligible for work permits and it was unlawful for them to engage in economic activity; refugees face heavy fines if they are caught living outside camp areas; with reduced employment opportunities, refugees are left with no other option than to sell part of their food rations to obtain non-food items	Official programmes have shown little effect to alleviate general poverty, however, informal (against the government restrictions) trading links with local populations have provided the main source of livelihood building and income generation
Integrated area and community based planning	GTZ initiated greenbelts around Dadaab camp to stop arid winds	The official policy of strict separation between camps and surroundings imposed by Kenyan government limited scope of the project	Environmental damage caused by refugees is intensified by lack of integration in local water and waste water cycles, causing tensions with impoverished local Turkana populations
Enhanced stakeholder Interaction	No official interaction with local community	Kenyan government policy seeks to limit official contact	Informal interaction

→ 055

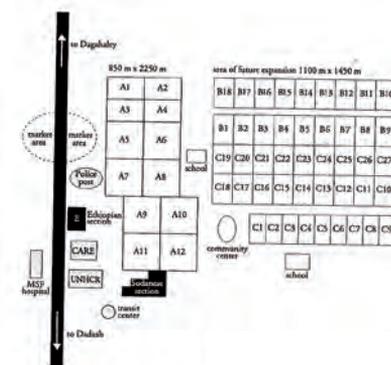
Analysis Chart of Applied Policies



→ 056

Refugee Influx into the Dadaab Complex

Refugee in.migration since 1975:
 Red: Ethiopian refugees
 Yellow: Somali refugees
 Blue: Sudanese refugees



→ 057

Location Plan of Ifo Camp

Source: Hyndman, Jennifer. Managing Displacement – Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism", University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000

*ture and purchase food at low prices and so on. So even if not intended by government and aid organizations, the population became mixed.*¹²⁵ DEBORAH GANS and MATTHEW JELACIC citing describe how “...the indigenous settlements that have grown up around Hagadera remained when at one point the camp itself had been dismantled, like a ring of suburbs awaiting the rebirth of their host city. Hence the camp has been an agent in regional shifts from a nomadic herding toward an agrarian society and from an unsettled toward an urbanized landscape.”¹³⁶

While the refugees are officially confined to the fenced compounds and have no civic rights, the informal familial reach of the refugees extends through the town and its immediate desolate landscape, where many of the refugees have been resettled, and it has instigated many informal networks such as the ‘mubatu’ bus routes, run by Kenyan Somalis but involve refugee investors, far reaching trade connections, and phone/communication networks across all of Kenya and beyond. According to PÉROUSE (2000), the informal trading networks of the camps supply the surrounding areas as far away as the refugees’ countries of origin: “Whatever is distributed (food, clothes, etc.) can be sold, so that the native population also benefits from the humanitarian aid. The presence of refugees stimulates trade and creates new jobs, by attracting humanitarian aid. Refugees show a high degree of competitiveness. Different way of capital generation can be distinguished: Family sources of funding, credit from traders, sale of food rations, loans by NGOs...” The “Joint WFP/UNHCR Evaluation of Kenyan Refugee Programme” report also confirms that “In Dadaab in particular, a large number of Kenyans act as ‘middlemen’ for trade in food commodities between the camps and regional towns. In Kakuma, Turkana people will purchase small quantities of rations from refugees, then sell them at the local markets.”¹³⁷ In summary, it can be concluded that, despite official restrictions, the informal social and economic integration processes have greatly boosted the urbanisation process towards de facto market towns and important regional centres.

Application of Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR)?

Apart from UNHCR (since 1991), a vast number of international NGOs work in the Kenyan refugee camps, such as CARE, Save the Children or Relief International, providing emergency relief, rehabilitation, development assistance, community services and education programs, construction of water facilities, primary health care, small-scale enterprise development, local institution building, primary school education, and even some agriculture activities. However, UNHCR itself characterized the situation as follows: “The refugee programme in Kenya has for nine years been characterised in terms of protracted relief with little possibility of breaking the mould of dependency... Traditionally, refugee self-reliance is contingent upon external economic opportunities, e.g. integration, trading, mobility, employment. In Kakuma and Dadaab camps, enforced containment and the lack of durable solutions forced the evaluation team to examine the extent to which an internal economy might be viable.”¹³⁸ This is undoubtedly owed to the very restrictive Kenyan government policies, particularly against Somali refugees. An implementation of a full DAR approach has not been possible. Some positive exceptions include CARE and LWF in Kakuma and Dadaab, which “have encouraged skills development and income generating activities, some of which have an external market value. In Dadaab, loans are given to some refugees setting up business in the market, which in turn relates to the ‘export’ of food items. It is estimated that up to 20 percent of WFP food items are sold by refugees so as to obtain other essential commodities.”

In the light of the impossibility to launch official DAR programmes (which require the consent of the Kenyan government), urbanisation has been sustained by a combination of international aid and informal networks, trade connections in spite of government restrictions. According to BANKI, however, real integration only can take place outside the camps, that means, only refugees that managed to live (however illegally) dispersed among the native population can be partially integrated. In Kenya, refugees who live outside of the camps are those individuals with the resources to do so, regardless of their country of origin. Social factors influence the ability of the individual refugee to access the resources they need to integrate. Many Somalis and Ethiopians refugees for example resisted moving to camps, underwent status of determination and never turned up in the camps.

¹²⁵ source: Perouse de Montclos Marc-Antoine and Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi. “Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socio-economic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya”, Journal of Refugee Studies, 2000.

¹²⁶ source: Deborah Gans and Matthew Jelacic, “The Refugee Camp: Ecological Disasters of Today, Metropolis of Tomorrow”, Exhibition Catalogue, Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, 2006.

¹²⁷ UNHCR and WFP: “Summary Report of Joint WFP/UNHCR Evaluation of Kenyan Refugee Programme”, PRO 4961.04 “Assistance to Somali and Sudanese Refugees in Kenya”

¹²⁸ UNHCR and WFP: “Summary Report of Joint WFP/UNHCR Evaluation of Kenyan Refugee Programme”, PRO 4961.04 “Assistance to Somali and Sudanese Refugees in Kenya”

2.2.3 Encouraged Camp Urbanisation Within Open Camp Boundaries (Uganda)

Background to Sudanese Refugee Crisis in Uganda

Uganda is hosting a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries in conflict or transition. The majority of the refugees in the country are Southern Sudanese (150,300) hosted in Northern Uganda – a protracted situation, dating back to 1989 and 1993 when the majority of the refugees arrived from Southern Sudan. Apart from Sudanese, there are also refugees from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and smaller groups from Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Current Situation

Although the Sudanese refugee situation is generally considered to be protracted, there has been some movement in recent years. Firstly, refugee settlements in the Northern districts have experienced significant security threats since the mid 1990s due to the internal conflicts in Uganda,¹³⁹ which led to some internal migration within Uganda. Secondly, there is still an inflow of newly arriving Sudanese refugees and from 2004 to 2006, 18,000 new Sudanese refugees arrived in Uganda. However, in light of the recent peace agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in 2005, repatriation for the majority of the refugees is in sight. The Government of Uganda is generally known to implement a liberal refugee policy. It allocates land to refugees in designated "settlements" for agriculture to enable refugees to become self-sufficient. Refugees freely access education, health and other facilities built by the Government. The "refugee settlements", however, are usually located in rural, isolated areas such as the northern Nile region, where plots of land are allocated to the refugees in an effort to make them 'self reliant', that is, to be able to produce food and not require full food rations. UNHCR and local partners provide community services, health care and water and sanitation to refugees as long as they are resident in these settlements. Food rations are provided through the World Food Programme. Not all, however, is as harmonious as may seem. Not only insufficient protection of refugee settlements has been criticized. The settlements are in isolated rural situations and refugees remain excluded from political, economic and social life in Uganda. Uganda's government has also been called upon to lift the tight restrictions that prevent refugees from owning property. Critics have pointed out the paradox of official sanctioning of a self-reliance strategy while imposing severe restrictions on refugees to invest in assets.¹⁴⁰

Measuring Camp Urbanisation

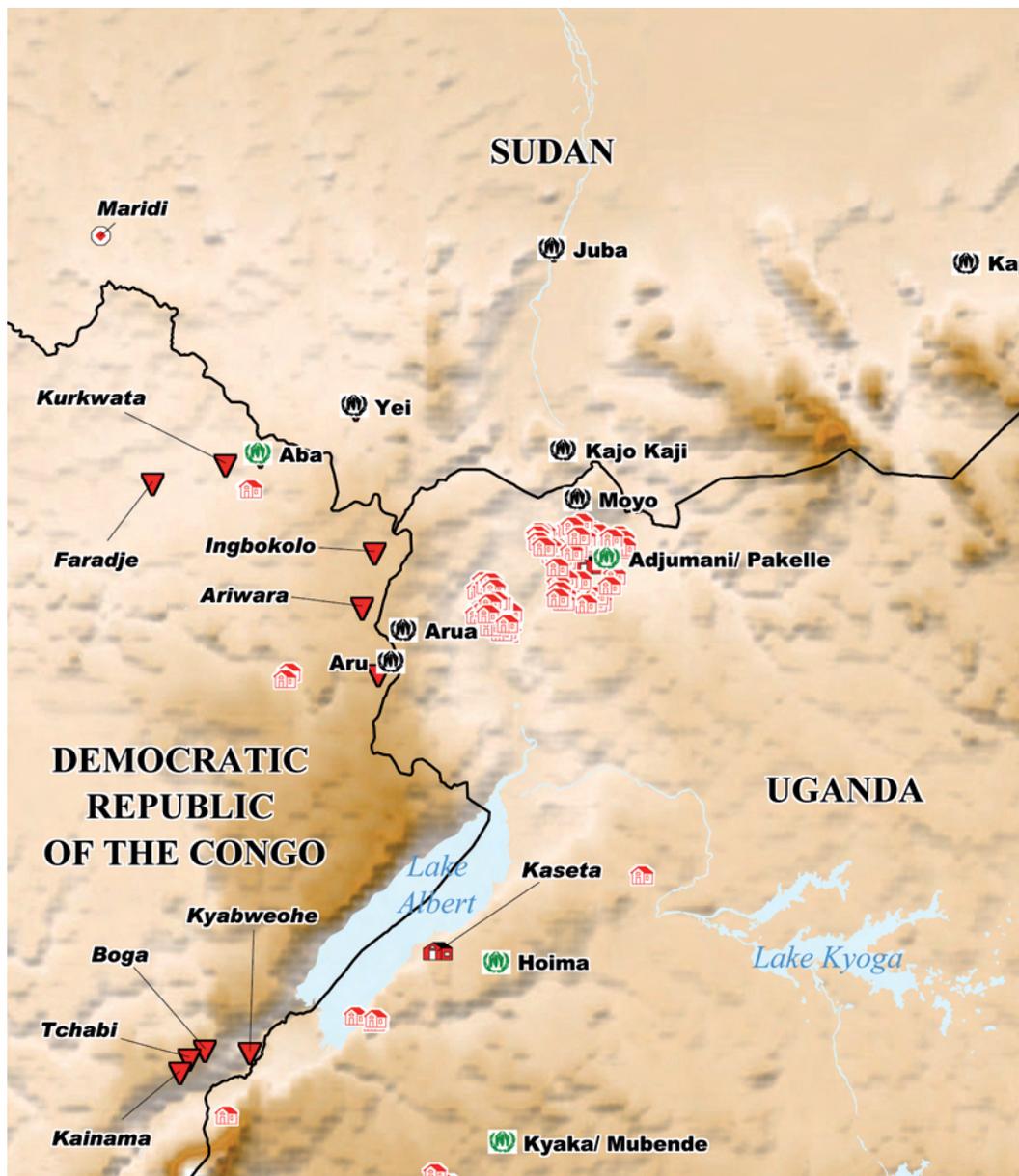
Due to their initial layout as rural settlement, Ugandan camps have not developed the physical or population densities or urban features as Kenyan or Algerian camps. Their physical texture is similar to that of local villages. Also in their socioeconomic profile, refugees have not changed much and remained a farming community. Although most settlements were, like Dadaab in Kenya, constructed in under populated areas, they lack critical mass to become attractive as local and regional centres. Despite relatively liberal policies of the Ugandan government, the remote location prevents substantial social or economic integration.

Application of Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR)?

The northern Ugandan camps have been praised as a model and important precedent for introducing a DAR approach. The *"Handbook for Planning and Implementing (DAR) Programme"* (2005) indeed cites Uganda and Zambia as the only case studies in which DAR was introduced. According to UNHCR, DAR builds on the earlier experience of implementing a *"Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS)"* since the late 1990s. SRS was a joint strategy by the Government of Uganda and UNHCR with the goal *"to improve the standard of living of the people of refugee hosting districts, including the refugees" with the following objectives: (1) To empower refugees and nationals in the areas to the extent that they will be able to support themselves; (2) To establish mechanisms that will ensure integration of services for the refugees with those of the nationals.*" Although SRS was initially for three districts, the Government later adopted it as the main policy framework for refugee assistance. The SRS's ultimate goal was to integrate services to refugees in the eight key sectors of assistance: health; education; community services; agricultural production; income generation; environmental protection; water and sanitation; and infrastructure.

¹³⁹ Security threats included, most notably, the attacks on Achol-Pii refugee settlement in 2002, when 24,000 refugees fled after 100 refugees were killed by Lord's Resistance Army [LRA].

¹⁴⁰ source: Meyer, Sarah. "The 'Refugee Aid and Development' Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-reliance of Refugees in Practice", UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Geneva, 2006.



→ 058

Location Map of Rural Settlements in Northern Uganda

Most of Uganda's "refugee settlements" are located in rural, isolated areas such as the northern Nile region.

(source: www.unhcr.com)

UNHCR policy goals as laid out in the DAR approach	Tools applied	Hurdles/ obstacles	Effect on camps
Community-based approach to development (also referred to as "rights-based approach")	Introduction of Refugee Welfare Councils RWCs and district systems (mirroring Ugandan decentralised Local Council system) to allow for participation in programme planning.	Rights to work and to move freely, or to participate in the political system of Uganda are rather theoretically – bureaucratic procedures hinder in practice.	Little progress on important decisions, which could improve refugee's lives such as negotiating land use disputes or additional land allocation.
Achieving self-reliance through sustainable livelihood building	As part of the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS), refugees are housed in rural settlements and are allocated farm land with the explicit aim to achieve self-reliance. Food aid and some other assistance have been drastically reduced.	Rural settlements are located in isolated rural conditions; land resources are restricted and difficult to farm; refugees are explicitly banned from buying land or anything that might make their stay more permanent.	Refugees experiences SRS and integration as a loss of services and some scholars argue that the effects on their economic situation has been significant.
Integrated area and community based planning	Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) targeting refugees and locals; aims to fully integrate refugees in the following sectors: education; community services; agricultural production; income generation; environmental protection; water and sanitation; and infrastructure.	The SRS strategy has been criticized as being "misused" as an instrument for local development: the government welcomes aid distribution, infrastructure construction or other assistance by the international community but agencies are aware that "when the government puts refugees into an area, you know there are problems there, they just want development there."	Positive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of aid provision strengthened local service provision and ensured that refugee aid delivery does not develop redundant systems, but contributes to local development • Integration helped to defuse tension between refugees and locals, Negative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration is perceived to be to the disadvantage of the refugees who are "exploited" as means to gain international aid
Enhanced stakeholder Interaction	Integration in national regional and local development plans; fostering contacts between Refugee Welfare Councils and Local Councils (non-refugee).	Although compared to other camp situations, the RWC system is unique, most decisions continue to be directly negotiated between UNHCR and the Ugandan Government.	RWC are perceived as lacking power and therefore lack respect from the refugee community.

When UNHCR announced the transition from SRS to a DAR programme in 2004, it stated that it intends to build *“upon the SRS but also seeking to avoid the pitfalls of the latter (e.g. poor engagement of development partners, limited integration into national development plans and district planning and budgeting systems, weak local capacity and poor connections with UNHCR country programme).”*¹⁴¹ Many authors, however, such as SARAH MEYER (2006) or SARAH DRYDEN-PETERSON and LUCY HOVIL (2004) have scrutinized the actual results of the SRS/ DAR policies and have identified some fundamental flaws. Above all, DRYDEN-PETERSON and HOVIL write, *“the success of the SRS is contingent upon two factors: first, that the SRS should be implemented under a new Refugee Bill that addresses such issues as freedom of movement, taxation, trade and employment opportunities, and temporary access to land; second, that it should operate in an environment that is secure from armed conflict.”* To date, neither of these factors has been resolved: *“Uganda has, thus far, failed to pass new refugee legislation, and refugees and surrounding populations continue to be attacked by rebel groups, most notably the Lords Resistance Army (LRA).”*⁵² In addition to these two factors, the SRS also acknowledges the marginalization of the West Nile region as being a further limiting factor.¹⁴² SARAH MEYER (2006) notes that SRS/ DAR was implemented within a context of significant structural constraints, such as insufficient food security, access to non-food items, ability to pay school fees and access to quality medical services: *“This is a result of a flawed conceptualisation of self-reliance that must be re-examined, given it is at the centre of the RAD approach... SRS in Uganda has created an association between the RAD approach and ‘pull back’ of UNHCR, such that refugees’ perceptions of self-reliance is certainly not as empowering.”* MEYER also points to hidden agendas on behalf of the Ugandan government in their support for SRS/ DAR: *“The ‘recognition’ of the developmental benefits of refugees in Uganda has been as instruments of development for marginalised rural areas in Uganda, rather than conceptualisation of refugees as ‘agents for development,’ able to participate in and integrate with local development processes. In light of these findings, the linkages proposed between improved protection and the RAD approach should be analysed, while the ‘empowerment’ discourse of the SRS, and the RAD approach it is embedded in, should be questioned... As one staff member in Imvepi commented, ‘when the government puts refugees into an area, you know there are problems there, they just want development there.’”*¹⁴³

However, in her critique SARAH MEYER goes even further and questions the use of the settlement system altogether by pointing towards their constraints on self-reliance in the material sense, and the political marginalisation entailed by the settlement structure. According to MEYER, *“refugees are supposed to farm the same plot of land the entire time they remain in the settlement. Many refugees reported being unable to produce crops given that their land was exhausted after ten years of farming. Refugees are largely unable to move plots of land or buy land, and as such experience significant constraints on their livelihoods. Therefore, the way in which the SRS implemented a practice of self-reliance within the settlement system is questionable.”* (CF. KAISER et al. 2005) Moreover, the settlements provide a circumscribed space for political involvement of refugees, separating them from local government and district structures, and structured interventions from external actors. One Ugandan Community Development Worker at base-camp of Imvepi stated that despite the integration of community services into the district, *“the settlement is a separate institution”* (Interview, 20/9/05), and interaction between the district and settlement was extremely limited. Given this, the settlement system is both a *“complex system of control and marginalisation from formal political participation”*, as well as *“an instrument that acts to segregate refugees, and also a constraint on self-reliance activities.”* (MEYER 2004) In conclusion it could be stated that despite some positive effects of the SRS/ DAR approach, the “official” UNHCR discourse hides some significant flaws. The necessity of developing and implementing new ways of addressing protracted refugee situations is indisputable. But on the ground, UNHCR staff is helpless in the face of host government restrictions and, according to some critiques cited above, also lacks awareness of the problems that emerged. It is a stated aim of DAR to convince governments that refugees should not be considered to be a “burden” to local society but that they can have a multiplier effect, by expanding the capacity and productivity of the hosting area. The Ugandan government sees refugees as a means to develop under utilized land and pursued this by allocating land to the refugees or allowing economic participation. But UNHCR lack the political will to use its leverage to insist that all aspects of DAR – including full protection of human rights, participation, empowerment – are fully met.

¹⁴¹ source: UNHCR, “Handbook for Planning and Implementing DAR”, 2005.

¹⁴² Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, Hovil, Lucy. “A Remaining Hope for Durable Solutions: Local Integration of Refugees and Their Hosts in the Case of Uganda”, Journal “Refugee”, Vol 22, No 1, 2004.

¹⁴³ source: Meyer, Sarah. “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-reliance of Refugees in Practice”, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Geneva, 2006.

2.3

Conclusion and Reasons for Limited Application of New Tools

The three case studies give an insight into the spectrum of protracted camp situations around in Africa. Similar examples could be found in Asia or the Middle East. All case studies confirm that conditions on the ground are specific and complex and make a smooth application of a single policy set that was developed for a globally operating agency difficult if not impossible. Moreover, the Ugandan case study revealed several flaws in concept and application. Despite the fact that UNHCR already launched the “*Framework for Durable Solutions*” in 2003 and the DAR handbook in 2005, Agency staff admits that the effect of the new policy guidelines on the ground has been very limited. Only two examples, Uganda and Zambia, were given as cases where an attempt to implement DAR was made. The analysis of why DAR has not been more successfully and frequently applied reveals that hurdles and obstacles are not only imposed by the host governments, but can also be imposed by the local population, by the refugees themselves or emerge from within the humanitarian regime such as UNHCR and other NGOs itself. The following brief summary will provide an overview of the main reasons that trigger obstacles and hurdles, and which would need to be addressed if UNHCR’s reform efforts should lead to practical improvement on the ground:

(1) Obstacles and hurdles by host governments

The basic assumption of the Development Assistance for Refugees DAR approach remains that protracted refugee situations could be tackled “if refugees were given the chance to make a positive contribution to their host country during their enforced exile”, an objective that could be achieved through “*a new strategy to shift the focus from provision of care and maintenance assistance to empowerment of refugees to attain self-reliance.*”¹⁴⁴ (MEYER 2004) Many host government however reject this logic and prefer keeping refugees artificially warehoused. Reasons include the following:

- Host governments might be implicated in the conflicts that caused the refugee crisis or attempt to use refugees for their own political campaigns
 - In most cases, host governments themselves have autocratic and instable political regimes and fear that if refugees will mix with local population civil unrest might result
 - Stronger local participation of refugees might mobilize local populations to demand more political rights as well.
 - Refugee influx, particularly if large in numbers, often causes fears of upsetting sensitive social and ethnic balance in the host country
 - Refugees are still perceived to be a burden on local economy or natural resources
- Even if host governments do accept the assumptions that refugees can make a positive contribution to the host countries, host governments might only allow for a partial implementation of DAR, which is demonstrated by the case of Uganda (for instance allowing self-reliance without granting other rights such as right to free movement or to employment, etc.).

(2) Obstacles and hurdles by local populations

Even if on the governmental level, integration might be promoted, local populations might resist. Many of the above reasons listed for host governments also apply to local communities:

- Refugees might be of another ethnic group or tribe considered hostile - JACOBSEN (2001) speaks of a “fear of inundation might occur, particularly in situations where the refugees differ from locals in significant ways”
- refugees might be considered undesired competitors in the local job market or as consuming local economic or environmental resources

(3) Obstacles and hurdles by refugee communities

Resistance towards integration might also come from refugees themselves as the Algerian case study showed:

- Refugees might fear to lose their right of return/ repatriation and their political leaders might have political interests in keeping refugees geographically concentrated, dependent, and visible to press the international community to resolve the situation in the source country in their favour.
- Refugees might perceive integration as a loss of humanitarian support and reject any attempt of the humanitarian agencies to “withdraw from their responsibilities”
- Refugee populations generally include high proportions of vulnerable groups, which are not economically

¹⁴⁴ source: Meyer, Sarah. “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-reliance of Refugees in Practice”. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Geneva, 2006

active and therefore do not fit into most self-reliance programmes

- Refugees from urban areas who are settled in rural areas often have difficulty adapting and might fear the interaction with the local community

(4) Obstacles and hurdles within the humanitarian protection regime

As the case study of the Uganda camps showed, the official rhetoric of participation, empowerment, self-reliance included in the DAR approach and other humanitarian guidelines has been characterised as flawed, underdeveloped and too abstract to be implemented on the ground. As MEYER (2004) writes: *“The DAR approach has been more rhetorical than practical. One of the underpinnings of the RAD approach, self-reliance, can in fact undermine refugee protection and create obstacles to refugee empowerment. It has largely been assumed that the outcomes of a RAD approach will necessarily be to the benefit of refugees. The findings of [the] research [on Uganda] challenge this assumption.”* There is clearly a need for a refinement of the operational guidelines as well as for a stronger political will to use the agency’s international clout and leverage (mainly due to its link and influence on major donor countries) to defend all, not just a convenient few, of the DAR principles. Beyond the “leniency” of humanitarian agencies on the ground, many bureaucratic, managerial and organisational hurdles are to be addressed. Local staff may not have internalized the new working principles with which UNHCR intends to deliver services such as participation, partnership or accountability. Last but not least, UNHCR needs to improve donor communication and secure more sustained support for developmental projects. In general, donor countries’ assistance for local integration in poor host countries, has been minuscule: *“In 2003, the United States spent \$147 million on long-term care and maintenance projects, but only \$480,000 on local integration—a single project in Europe.”*¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Smith, Merrill. “Warehousing Refugees: A Denial of Rights, a Waste of Humanity”, published at the USCRI online platform: www.refugees.org (2004).

Part II
Palestine Camp
Cities:
*Case Studies of
Urbanised Refugee
Camps In the
Near East*

Chapter 1

Introduction to Palestine Camp Cities

1.1

The Palestine Refugee Crisis

1.1.1 Historical Origin and Evolution of the Palestine Refugee Crisis

The Nakba

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1917, the larger political and cultural framework of a hybrid and multicultural Middle East had evaporated. Administered by the victorious powers of the First World War, Britain and France, the region was carved up into Mandate areas with the land west of the Jordan river becoming the British Mandate of Palestine (1920-1948). Fuelled by the British Mandate's (1920-1948) ambiguous promises to deliver a European style nation state, Jews and Arabs were drawn into a struggle for hegemony and nationalism build around ethnicity soon overshadowed older communitarian bonds. The late 1920s and 1930s oversaw a steady decline of stability and rising tensions eventually leading to a de facto civil war.

Unable to deliver a solution to the full scale ethnic conflict in Palestine, the British eventually deferred to the newly set up United Nations and prepared for full scale withdrawal. On November 29 1947 the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was adopted (Resolution 181) which designated Palestine to become a confederation between a Jewish and Arab controlled areas and an internationalised Jerusalem-Bethlehem area as a *corpus separatum*. The plan failed. Violence evolved into a full-scale war after the British withdrawal in May 1948. News of violence and massacres spread quickly and soon, about three quarters of a million Arab Palestinians¹⁴⁶ were on the move to escape into safety. Refugees clung as closely to their ancestral lands as they could. Residents of the southern Mandate area mostly fled into the southern West Bank or the Gaza strip, those living in the north, into southern Lebanon or Syria. Most refugees, however, fled to the Kingdom of Jordan (former British Mandate territory of Transjordan). Approximately 100,000 Arab Palestinians stayed behind and were later integrated as a minority within the newly set up State of Israel. The events of 1948 are generally referred to as Nakba, which means 'catastrophe' in Arabic.

Despite negotiating efforts by the hastily set up umbrella structure of the UN Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) to allow speedy repatriation and General Assembly resolutions passed to reinforce the right of refugees to return to their homeland and properties¹⁴⁷, Israeli leaders allowed only a marginal numbers to return. Instead, all efforts were undertaken to make the Palestinian's departure irreversible. A key benchmark in this effort was the passing of a series of Laws referred to as the "Absentees' property laws" which sought to transfer the newly gained Jewish control over refugee's assets (land and buildings) into permanent ownership.¹⁴⁸ In Israeli public perception the redistribution of vast tracks of these lands to Jewish refugees arriving from Europe or Arab states soon afterwards legitimized the seizure as compensation to lost Jewish assets in the Arab world. From a Palestinian point of view the seizure amounts to an illegal land grab and represents Israel's attempt to close the door on Palestinian refugee return for good. The UN brokered ceasefire and the establishment of an UN administered armistice line (The Green Line) meant an end to Palestinian hopes for imminent return. The Nakba of 1948 did not remain the only trigger for Palestinian displacement and dispersion amongst Middle Eastern countries. A second wave of refugees from Gaza and the West Bank followed after the Six Day War in 1967 when Israel annexed Jordanian East Jerusalem and begun its enduring occupation Gaza and the West Bank.

The Most Protracted Refugee Situation in the World

Sixty years after the Nakba the Palestinian refugee crisis is not resolved. In UNHCR terminology, the Palestinian refugee crisis would be by far the longest enduring humanitarian mission and the most protracted refugee situation worldwide. Due to demographic growth onto the 4th generation, the registered refugee population as soared to 4.6m (it is estimated that an additional 1.5m descendants of displaced Palestinians have

¹⁴⁶ Exact numbers of refugees displaced by the Nakba have always been a cause of dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. According to UNRWA's website, the official figure in 1950 was 914,000, but later corrected to about 850,000 when double registrations were eliminated. According to the Israeli historian Benny Morris, "between 600,000 to 760,000 Palestinian Arabs departed their homes" (source: Morris, Benny, "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004). Equally contested is the debate about the circumstances in which Arab Palestinians, which has been discussed in highly politicised terms, varying between systematic "ethnic cleansing" and "voluntary escape" in the more nationalist Israeli discourse. For further reading see Morris (2004), or www.badiil.org.

¹⁴⁷ The right of return will be more fully discussed in section 1.1.2 in relation to UNRWA's mandate for Palestine refugees.

¹⁴⁸ The British historian Robert Fisk estimates that up to 70% of the land of the current State of Israel ...Definition of Absentee/ also present absentees: a person who, at any time during the period between the 29th November, 1947 and the 19th May, 1948 was not present at the property. (internationally not recognized).

never bothered to register).¹⁴⁹ Palestine refugees make up a staggering 18% of the total number of refugees in the world. With no peace settlement of the refugee crisis in sight, this figure is likely to rise and Palestinians continue to be a nation of refugees making up more than half of the world's eight to ten million Palestinians.

At a closer look, however, only approximately one third of the total of 4.6m registered refugees has actually ever lived in camps. In 1953, UNRWA recorded a total registered population of 870,158 of which just above 300,000 or 34.7% lived in camps. In 2000, this ratio remained almost the same with 3,737,494 total recorded and 1,211,480 or 32.4% living in camps (→ **071, 071**).¹⁵⁰ With two thirds of refugees "integrated" in the cities and towns of the West Bank Gaza, and the Arab host countries Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, some have argued that it is only a matter of time that the refugee issue will "resolve itself" naturally, or, as will be discussed in section 1.1.3, has only been artificially prolonged by organisations such as the UN, or the interests of the Arab host countries in their struggle against Israel or their will to monitor and control Palestinians on their territory. In a highly charged and politicised contexts, multiple forms of instrumentalisation of refugee issues are to be expected (some of them will be discussed in brief later), and, like in the case of the Saharawi camps in Algeria, it is true that some camp refugees simply refuse to leave the camp as a gesture of defiance and resistance vis a vis the struggle for the right of return. However, in 2008 it seems more certain than ever that Palestinian refugee crisis is unlikely to "peter out" or, more cynically, that it could be resolved by ceasing humanitarian aid and in this way forcing refugees out of the camps to become "normal citizens". Not only do most of the approximately 1-4m current camp residents lack credible alternatives to continued camp life - the multiple reasons for political, legal, socioeconomic or cultural hurdles and obstacles will be introduced in section 1.1.3 as well as in the case studies of chapter 2 - but this argument would also plainly ignore the important role camps have always played (and are likely to continue to play) in the national struggle.

Role of Palestine refugee camps in the Palestinian national struggle

As the scholar JULIE PETEET put it: "*Palestinian refugee camps are contradictory places: sites of grim despair, but also of hope and creativity. Within these cramped spaces, refugees have crafted new worlds of meaning and visions of the possible in politics.*"¹⁵¹ On a national level, Palestinians always considered camps as "exterritorial entities" whose temporary status is of political and symbolic importance in the international campaign for the right of return to their places of origin in present day Israel and in the campaign for an independent Palestinian state. Camps continue to play a crucial role in identity formation of the Palestinians as a suffering and threatened nation, waiting for international recognition and justice. The intense international involvement and media focus has also ensured that the message of the camps has been broadcasted across the globe, rarely however, communicating real insights into camp lives. Beyond their symbolic significance, camps have also very practically served as ground to orchestrate military campaigns, including those against the Jordanian regime in the late 1960s or within the Lebanese civil war from the 1970s in which camps became PLO controlled stateless within the state. Civil unrest, which triggered the first intifada (1987-1993), also begun in refugee camps and later spread across non-camp environments in the West Bank and Gaza. Camps also played a role in the armed resistance including suicide attacks on Israeli civilians, which marked the second intifada from 2000 and were main targets for retaliation.

However, as will be seen in chapter Part III/ chapter 1.1, the relationship between new Palestinian political elites and non-camp dwellers has become more complex since the Oslo peace process which introduced limited Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza. Tired of decades of struggle and suffering, some Palestinians have begun to think of camps as liability which stand in the way towards a more normal life in a compromise state of limited borders. On the whole however, Palestinian solidarity with camp refugees however remains strong and, if few believe in the possibility of a full implementation of the right of return, demand at least recognition of the refugee plight and compensation for their losses and suffering.

¹⁴⁹ The Palestinian refugee organisation Badil even estimates higher figures: "It is estimated that there were more than 7 million Palestinian refugees and displaced persons at the beginning of 2003. This includes Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 and registered for assistance with the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (3.97 million); Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 but not registered for assistance (1.54 million); Palestinian refugees displaced for the first time in 1967 (753,000); 1948 internally displaced Palestinians (274,000); and, 1967 internally displaced Palestinians (150,000)." (source: www.badil.org).

¹⁵⁰ source: UNRWA's statistical bulletin 2000, Table II: Registered Palestine Refugees in Camps and as a percentage of the Total Registered Refugees, 1953 -2000.

¹⁵¹ source: Peteet, Julie. "Landscapes of Hope and Despair - Palestinian Refugee Camps", University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2005.



→ 060, 061, 062

From Tent Cities to Camp Cities

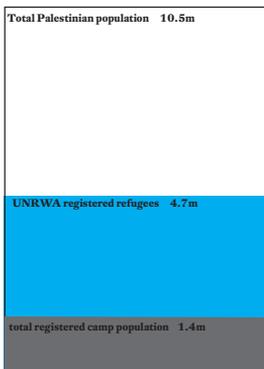
Over 60 years, Palestine camps have transformed into dense urbanised settings.

→ 063

Palestinian Diaspora Concentrations Across the Middle East

source: based on data from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps> (2008).

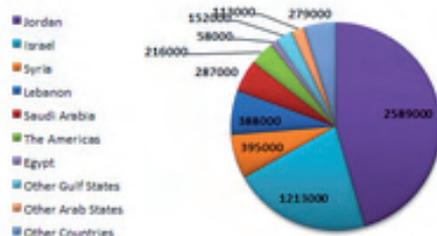




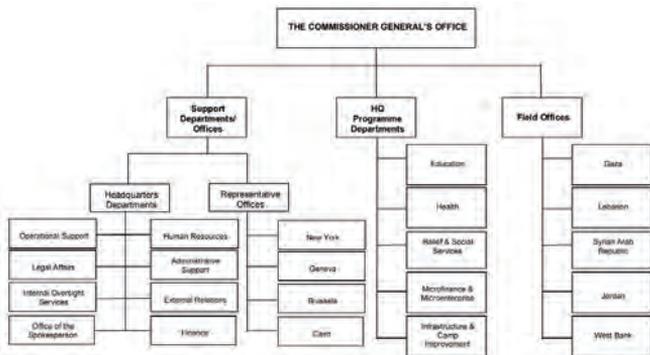
→ 065
 Palestinian Diaspora Concentrations Across the Middle East

Country or region	Population
West Bank and Gaza Strip	3,760,000
Jordan	2,700,000
Israel	1,318,000
Syria	434,9
Lebanon	405,43
Chile	300
Saudi Arabia	327
The Americas	225
Egypt	44,2
Kuwait	40
Other Gulf states	159
Other Arab states	153
Other countries	308
TOTAL	10,574,521

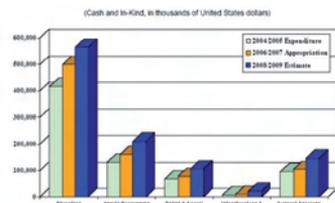
→ 064
 Relation of Camp Dwellers, Registered Refugees and Total Palestinian Population



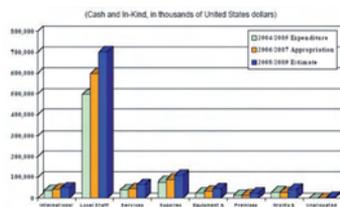
→ 066
 Palestinian People Living Outside West Bank and the Gaza Strip
 (source: www.unrwa.org)



→ 067
 UNRWA Organigramme
 (source: www.unrwa.org)



→ 068
 UNRWA Regular Budget Requirements by Programme
 (source: www.unrwa.org)



→ 069
 UNRWA Regular Budget by Category of Expenditure
 (source: www.unrwa.org)

1.1.2 The Mandate of UNRWA, Organisational Profile and Its Relation to Local Stakeholders

During the first years of the Palestinian refugee crisis refugees received emergency relief aid from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international and local voluntary organisations. In 1949/50, the United Nations set up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a temporary agency to aid refugees until a political settlement and solution to the refugee crisis could be found. When UNRWA took over from ICRC's on May 1 1950, it was supposed to last for a mere three years. Yet 60 years on the Palestine refugee crisis continues to exist and so does UNRWA. Despite the fact that UNRWA's Mandate still requires renewal every three years¹⁵², on the ground the Agency acts as a de facto permanent institution, which according to UNRWA's official website currently employs some 29,000 staff (99% of UNRWA's employees are locally-recruited Palestinians), runs a vast network of administrative and service installations, owns assets and one of the largest non-governmental employer in the region. If all locally appointed staff are counted, the Agency is indeed not only the oldest, but also the largest, and most expansive UN agency. It is far larger than the other two United Nations sponsored humanitarian relief agencies, UNICEF and UNHCR.¹⁵³ Legally, UNRWA is a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly. Its Commissioner-General, currently KAREN KONING ABU ZAYD, reports directly to the General Assembly by way of the Fifth Committee (Political and Desalinization), and enjoys wide autonomy in terms of internal budgetary spending, programming and staffing. This section will discuss how UNRWA's Mandate, organisational profile, mode of operation and relation to stakeholders conditions the Agency in the way it delivers services to Palestine refugees. In the following chapter 1.2, the discussion will shift to the 58 refugee camps UNRWA serves and introduce UNRWA camps as some of the most urbanised and congested refugee camps worldwide.

UNRWA's Mandate

Already in December 1949, the UN general assembly passed resolution 302 (IV), which effectively created UNRWA. It mandated UNRWA "to carry out direct relief and works programmes in collaboration with local governments," and to "consult with the Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available."¹⁵⁴ Almost exactly one year earlier, the UN General Assembly had already passed another, the none-binding resolution 194, which recommended that "Palestinian and Jewish refugees should be permitted to return [to areas from which they were displaced] under the condition that they be willing to live in peace with their neighbours." The text of its Article 11 resolves "that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours 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..." (Wikipedia) In Palestinian and the wider Arab society, resolution 194 has generally become known as the "right of return", which has become a cornerstone of the Palestinian refugee plight and, in the opinion of many, synonymous with the only durable solution for the refugee crisis: "repatriation". Although UNRWA's Mandate is not directly related to resolution 194, and the Agency is not mandated to actively seek a durable solution, it is a widespread popular interpretation that UNRWA should exist until the day in which the "right of return" will be implemented.

Who does UNRWA serve? UNRWA is mandated to provide services to individuals who have pertained an UNRWA-registered refugee status¹⁵⁵: "For operational purposes, UNRWA has defined Palestine refugee as any person whose 'normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. Palestine refugees eligible for UNRWA assistance, are mainly persons who fulfil the above definition and descendants of fathers fulfilling the definition."¹⁵⁶ Due to natu-

¹⁵² UNRWA's current mandate runs till 30 June, 2011, see: www.un.org/unrwa/overview/qa.html.

¹⁵³ In 2002 UNHCR had 268 offices in 114 countries. UNHCR employs 5,523 people world wide, and the ratio of staff to clients is: 1 per 3,582. UNRWA's ratio is 1 per 83 clients. UNHCR has 510 NGOs working as implementing partners (July 2002). UNRWA has none. (UNHCR FY 2002 documents) UNHCR budget (2002) for about 2 million Afghan refugees and Iraqi Kurds in Iran (similar number of refugees aided by UNRWA) was \$25,555 million compared, with UNRWA's \$400 million. Source: Interaction activity report, December 2002 (www.interaction.org).

¹⁵⁴ see: www.un.org/unrwa/overview/qa.html.

¹⁵⁵ UNRWA's definition was meant solely to determine eligibility for UNRWA assistance. Under General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of December 11, 1948, other persons may be eligible for repatriation and/ or compensation but are not necessarily eligible for relief under the UNRWA's working definition. Thus a person who is not, or who has ceased to be, regarded by UNRWA as a refugee for the purpose of receiving relief, may still qualify as a refugee by the common definition.

¹⁵⁶ source: www.unrwa.org.

ral population increase has become a crucial factor and swelled UNRWA registered refugee numbers from 860,000 in 1951 to now 4.6 million in 2008¹⁵⁷, residing in UNRWA's areas of operation in the West Bank, the Gaza strip, Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic only.¹⁵⁸ UNRWA provides services to registered refugees regardless of whether they live in on of the 58 official refugee camps.

UNRWA's mandate is, compared to that of UNHCR and other agencies, unique and has been subject of intense and highly politicized debates, for the following reasons:

- UNRWA is the only agency that serves one refugee group only and enjoys a much higher per capita funding than the average UNHCR mission.
- UNRWA's mandate is based on a unique definition of refugee – an operational definition which was passed more than a year before the Geneva Convention. In particular the explicit statement that descendants of refugees are included (in the 1951 Geneva Convention definition no descendants are mentioned) was heavily attacked by Israel who argued that demographic growth has distorted refugee numbers. However, common practice according to the UNHCR “Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status” is that *“if the head of a family meets the criteria of the definition, his dependants are normally granted refugee status according to the principle of family unity.”*¹⁵⁹ In the case of both the UNRWA and UNHCR, actual provision of assistance to a refugee is contingent on a perceived need.
- UNRWA is mandated to provide the Palestine refugees with humanitarian assistance, whereas UNHCR has the mandate to provide international “protection” to refugees and to seek “durable solutions”. Both, the lack of a “protection component” or mandate to actively engage in finding solutions has been criticised by Palestinian organisations and some UNRWA staff members. In their view, this renders the Agency passive and helpless vis a vis many human rights abuses in the field and leaves refugees without voice in peace negotiations. In order to maintain its required neutrality, a key strategy for the Agency has been to carefully and persistently emphasize that it does not run any camps, has no policing powers or administrative role, but simply provides services to the camp. In this way, the Agency could deny responsibility for violent protest that erupted in the West Bank and Gaza camps during the first and second intifada and fend off accusations of complicity and partiality.
- The Mandate remains extremely vague on how relief should be provided or what works programmes may consist of. This is seen as a “curse” by some and “advantage” by others: On the one hand the Agency is exposed to constant accusations to have overstepped or not-fulfilled its Mandate, on the other hand the vagueness has provided essential flexibility on the ground in emergency situations or in response to changing requirements and needs of the refugees.

Structure and Mode of Operation (→ 067)

Today, UNRWA's headquarters are still officially split between Gaza City (Gaza Strip) and Amman (Jordan), with some HQ functions also performed from the Jerusalem field office. However, the de facto civil war in the Gaza strip has reduced UNRWA's HQ presence there to a minimum and most staff was relocated to Amman.¹⁶⁰ In addition to its headquarters, UNRWA maintains a large network of country-based offices named “Field Offices”, which handle its UNRWA's service operations on the ground. These field offices are located in Amman (Jordan), Beirut (Lebanon), Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic), East Jerusalem (West Bank), and Gaza City (Gaza Strip). Field Offices are led by Directors of Operation (also called Field Director) who receive their budgets from the HQ, but are largely independent to design the specific organisational structure within which to deliver services and decide on spending priorities. Theoretically, all HQ departments should be mirrored in the field. The fact that Field Offices enjoy widespread independence and, indeed, have to operate in very different contexts and conditions, contributes to the fact that UNRWA is not a completely streamlined organisation as far as its departmental structures and services provision is concerned. The complexity is increased by the fact that the field departments that actually de-

¹⁵⁷ source: www.un.org/unrwa/overview/qa.html.

¹⁵⁸ There have been times when UNRWA's assistance has been extended to persons who do not fall within the standard definition of a Palestine refugee. For instance, in 1988, from the outbreak of the first Intifada and based on the urging of the UNGA, UNRWA pledged to provide “as far as practicable, humanitarian assistance on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure, to non-refugees in the occupied territories who are in serious need”. During the second Intifada in the West Bank and Gaza, which began in 2000, UNRWA also provided some food assistance to non-refugees suffering from Israeli closures in isolated areas of the West Bank. (source: www.un.org/unrwa/overview/qa.html).

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR: “Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status”, Geneva, 1979 (reedited 1992).

¹⁶⁰ UNRWA's headquarter moved several times in its history: Between 1950 and 1978 it was located in Beirut, Lebanon and later moved to Vienna. Only from 1996 UNRWA moved HQ to the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

liver serves report to both HQ and the Field Directors (HQ is responsible for overall strategy and monitoring while Field Directors allocate funds and need to approve all activities). In the following, a brief overview of the main programmes, their responsibilities and their services offered to refugees:

• **Education Programme**

UNRWA's delivery of free basic education to almost half a million enrolled pupils makes the Agency the largest single provider of such a service anywhere in the world. Indeed, the majority of UNRWA's budget is spent on employing more than 17,000 teaching staff. UNRWA maintains 663 schools and follows the curricula of the respective host country. In addition, UNRWA operates eight vocational and technical training centres and three teacher training colleges that have places for around 6,200 students. UNRWA currently struggles with budget shortages to meet the growing demand of the fast growing refugee population. Children under the age of 18 make up 38.8% of the total refugee population, a proportion, which is set to rise.¹⁶¹ Many schools are double shift and classrooms are crowded with 50 or more pupils. Despite this, UNRWA's school system is popular and high performing, arguably outdoing most of the available state school in the different host countries.

• **Relief and Social Services Programme (RSS)**

RSS is made up of two components: Relief Services organizes *“direct material and financial aid for those refugee families without a male adult medically fit to earn an income and without other identifiable means of financial support sufficient to cover food, shelter and other basic needs.”* This includes services to families in special hardship (*“Special Hardship Programme”*), food aid, cash assistance or emergency relief. In the early 1990s, a new function was added to the old Relief Programme. Social Services was set up to *“encourage self-reliance in the refugee community through poverty alleviation schemes, and community-based, locally-managed institutions and services concerned with women and development, the rehabilitation and integration of refugees with disabilities, and youth activities and leadership training.”*¹⁶²

• **Health Programme**

UNRWA has built a network of 127 clinics, which handle almost 9 million consultations per year and are open to camp dwellers and other registered refugees. The Health Programme also includes environmental health services such as sewage disposal, the provision of safe drinking water and disposal of refuse. Large-scale projects have been carried out in camps since 1989, but many still have inadequate infrastructure, including open sewers. As part of current reform and restructuring, environmental health will eventually be included in the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (see below).

• **Microenterprise and Microfinance Programme (MMP)**

MMP was launched in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1991, as a response to the deteriorating economic conditions, high unemployment and rising poverty following the first intifada (1987-1993). MMP's award winning commercial, self-sustaining loans open to the refugee and non-refugee community, has also furthered the cause of self-reliance and placed a special emphasis on assisting female entrepreneurs. Since its inception the MMP has awarded 49,000 loans worth a total of over \$69 million. It is the only programme in UNRWA that aims to be self-sufficient, which was achieved from January 1, 1998. Despite its high performance, however, the programme was criticised for its high loan policies (due to high risk factors), which fail to include the poorest amongst refugees.

• **Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department (ICID)/ FECISO Offices**

The most recent addition to UNRWA's programmes is the *“Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department ICID”* (since 2007), which evolved from the previous Department of Operational Technical Services. Its objectives are: *“1) To improve the quality of life for camp residents living in substandard habitat by means of integrated social and physical action which promotes environmentally and socially sustainable neighbourhoods in accordance with strategic camp development plans. 2) To promote an appealing and healthy urban environment for Palestine refugees through the provision of well maintained water, wastewater and electricity infrastructure along with universally accessible road and footpath networks. 3) To ensure that all UNRWA facilities are efficiently planned, designed, constructed and maintained in order to meet the physical infrastructure needs of both Palestine*

¹⁶¹ source: domino.un.org/pdfs/GF2008_2009.pdf.
¹⁶² source: www.unrwa.org.

refugees and the Agency.¹⁶³ The background and context that led to the establishment of ICID will be discussed in more detail in Part II/ chapter 1.2. The establishment process is still incomplete in the five fields of UNRWA's operation where the older FECSO programmes are still operating. In addition, funding for the programmes is still largely unresolved and ICID still runs largely on special donor funds earmarked for specific projects.

In addition, UNRWA runs many specially funded and field specific emergency operations, which range from job creation, to psychosocial programmes. For a more detailed discussion on UNRWA's services to the camps see also chapter 2.3 of this dissertation.

UNRWA's Budget and Funding (→ 068, 069)

Like other humanitarian missions, UNRWA only receives a small core fund Depends entirely on donor support. Most important donors include the US, the EU, Canada, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden. In its early years, UNRWA spent 70 per cent of its budget on food rations and schools. As UNRWA services continued to expand, the share of food rations declined. Now the majority of UNRWA's budget is spent on the education programme, reflecting the different needs of refugees and exploding refugee numbers. The Agency also spends a considerable portion of its budget on health and relief and social services.¹⁶⁴ The budget is split into a general fund for core services and additional project-based funds, which require specific donor commitment. In 2003 UNRWA's annual budget totalled almost \$440 million. The Agency's 2007 General Fund budget is \$506 million.¹⁶⁵ UNRWA's biennium regular budget for 2008 and 2009 is just under \$1.1billion, excluding an emergency appeal over an additional \$262 million.¹⁶⁶ Over recent years, the Agency has been forced to implement austerity measures due to lack of funds: financial contributions have not increased sufficiently to keep pace with inflation and a rising refugee population. This has resulted in a perceived reduction in services. The average annual spending per refugee has fallen from about \$200 in 1975 to around \$110 today. While UNRWA's budget has been constantly on the rise, it has not kept up with the even faster natural population increase of Palestine refugees.

Relationship to Host Governments

Similar to UNHCR operations around the world, UNRWA's is deeply dependent and conditioned by its relations with the four respective host authorities (Lebanese Government, Syrian government, Jordanian government) and the Palestinian Authority that fulfils the functions of a host authority for Gaza and the West Bank. While internal operations run in autonomy from the host authorities, host authority approval is essential for most important decisions, such as providing a legal basis for UNRWA's operation in the field, providing a legal basis for the setting up of official camps (host governments can change the camp boundaries or relocate the camp altogether as happened in Syria on several occasions), providing a school curriculum for UNRWA's schools, or approving the appointment of key posts. Each host government has set up a different structure for dealing with UNRWA and Palestine refugees:

- West Bank/ Gaza: The Palestinian Authority as an acting host government has not assumed responsibility of the resident refugees who formally continue to be linked to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation PLO and its Department of Refugee Affairs (DORA). DORA involvement in refugee camp or refugee affairs however is weak and rather representational.
- Jordan: As a function of Jordan's Foreign Office, a Department for Palestinian Affairs (DPA) takes a much more active role vis a vis Palestinian refugees. It is the primary partner for UNRWA, but also entertains direct relations to camp communities. It runs its own programmes such as infrastructural improvement in the camps which are frequently badly coordinated with UNRWA.¹⁶⁷
- Syria: Syria's General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR) takes an equally keen interest in Palestinian refugee camps and wider refugee affairs. GAPAR maintains offices in all camps, assumes responsibility for refugee registration, and some relief assistance. In camps, it assumes a very controlling role and can reject virtually all programme decisions of UNRWA.
- Lebanon: The Department of Affairs of the Palestinian Refugees as an office within the Ministry of Inte-

¹⁶³ source: Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to the UN General Assembly, 6 August 2007 (see domino.un.org)
¹⁶⁴ www.un.org/unrwa/overview/qa.html.

¹⁶⁵ source: www.unrwa.org.

¹⁶⁶ For 2008/ 2009 UNRWA intends to spend a total budget of 1,093,252,000 (see General Fund Appeal 2008/ 2009) which will split as follows: Education 52%, Health 19%, Relief and Social Services 10%, Support Services 13%, Other 6%

¹⁶⁷ For further information see: www.dpa.gov.jo/menuindex2.html

rior of the Lebanese government is the primary partner for UNRWA. The interaction between UNRWA and the Lebanese government has traditionally been very problematic due to the problematic implication of refugees in the civil war and subsequent crises. The Lebanese government maintains its controversial restrictions on employment, property ownership and other right.

Criticisms and Controversies

UNRWA remains one of the most controversial UN Agency and a full discussion of the numerous debates that have evolved around UNRWA cannot be discussed in full here. Beyond the debates around the Mandate which were discussed earlier, the following controversies deserve to be briefly mentioned here:

• “A Palestinian organisation”

Many critics have rhetorically asked if UNRWA can fulfil its obligation to remain a “neutral, international organisation” when only 200 international staff (mostly senior management) work with more almost 29,000 local staff, mostly Palestinian refugees themselves. These regular critiques include hard line Israeli politicians, the media or right wing think tanks, accusing the UN of providing through its international management staff a fig leave for an organisation which has long been “captured” by the Palestinians. Others, such as Israeli right wing historian SHMUEL KATZ accused UNRWA of being driven by a “*vested interest [...] to keep itself in being and to expand*”, and accuses it of perpetrating “*fraud and deception*”¹⁶⁸ by artificially prolonging the Palestinian refugee crisis. At the height of the second intifada, tensions between Israel and UNRWA were boiling and came to a height with the “stretcher crisis” when Israel accused UNRWA of having transported a Qassam Rocket in one of their ambulances. Israel’s UN envoy directly demanded the removal of then Commissioner-General PETER HANSEN (1996-2005) who would “*consistently adopted a trenchant anti-Israel line*”¹⁶⁹, which resulted in apparently biased and exaggerated reporting against Israel. While the Qassam Rocket accusations were later revealed to be unfounded, Israel managed to seek the later removal of the deeply unpopular HANSEN in 2005.

• “An Agent of the West”

Being exposed to constant scrutiny and criticism from Israel and its supporters, UNRWA is equally criticised by Palestinian and Arab organisations for being too lenient vis a vis human rights abused in the Occupied Territories or, even harsher, to be a tool in the hands of a “*Zionist and imperialist conspiracy to liquidate the Palestinian question*”¹⁷⁰ by abolishing the right of return. These accusations mostly appear in relation to the question of camp rehabilitation, which will be discussed in detail in Part III/ chapter 1.1. In addition, the fact that the USA are UNRWA’s largest donor fuels the suspicion of activists and refugee community members that the Agency is in fact guided by US/ Israel interests.

• Bureaucratisation and “Non-Territorial Government”

All sides have raised criticism against the UNRWA’s perceived bureaucratic structure. The Palestinian side has accused UNRWA of an authoritarian approach to service delivery. High overhead costs have been put in question. Well-paid staff has been accused of “*living on behalf of the impoverished refugees*.” Well known think tanks and NGOs such as the Palestinian Badil have repeatedly questioned the Agency’s role and even called for steps for the phasing out of UNRWA and handing over of responsibility to the Palestinian authority. Others have pointed out that the vast presence in Gaza and the West Bank has contributed to the fact that the PA has not been able to gain ground. Israel and some Western governments have also accused UNRWA of being an unaccountable “*Non-Territorial Government*” and major obstacle to peace building.

UNRWA’s need to guard itself against criticism from all sides – the unfortunate position of “sitting between two chairs” - has undoubtedly limited the Agency’s ability to launch internal reform, develop more strategic tools and programmes or assume a more proactive and vocal role in situations of emergency. Above all, UNRWA remains keen to maintain the status quo, and carry on quietly with operations on the ground. For further discussion on UNRWA’s new reform efforts to improve its operations in particular vis a vis refugee camps see Part III/ chapter 1.2.

¹⁶⁸ Katz, Shmuel (1973) *Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine*, p.36.

¹⁶⁹ source: Shamir, Shlomo and Harel, Amos. “Israel’s UN envoy to demand removal of UNRWA chief”, *Haaretz Newspaper*, Tel Aviv, 03/10/2004.

¹⁷⁰ source: Khashan, Hilal. “Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon: Behind the Debate”, published in *Palestinian Refugee Research Net PRRN*, April 1994 (www.arts.mcgill.ca/mepp/PRRN).

1.1

Regional Overview: Camp Cities in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank and the Gaza Strip Refugee Crisis

1.2.1 Legal Status, Location and Population Sizes

Methodological Difficulties

This section intends to provide a broad overview of the legal status, the location and the degree of urbanisation of Palestinian refugee camps across the Middle East. However, available data for all Middle Eastern refugee camps is very limited and relevant external research concentrates mainly on specific camps. UNRWA has so far developed no central database and data survey have largely been conducted and gathered on a programme and field basis. At the same time, the new “Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme” ICID is only in the process to develop new data surveys which might take several years. The field-work conducted in 2006 and 2007 in three exemplary West Bank refugee camps rectifies this lack and will be discussed in detail in chapter 2. For this section, which intends to provide an overview on Palestine refugee camps in the entire Middle East, only official data available through UNRWA could be used.

Camp Refugees versus Non-camp Refugees

The official figures of camp dwellers is just over 1.36m or just under 30% of the total registered refugee population. Throughout history and despite the constantly growing refugee population, the 2/3 non-camp versus 1/3 camp population ration roughly remained the same. The relation between camp dwellers and non-camp dwellers however varies considerably between the different fields as is indicated in (→ 071) (reasons for these variations will be discussed under “Measuring Urbanisation”, later on in this section). In reality, the actual population residing in camps may be, in some cases, slightly lower as some residents continue to be registered as camp dwellers when in actuality they reside in their own properties outside of the official boundaries. In other cases, non-refugee populations (including none-Palestinian) have chosen camps as an affordable place of residence which may add to the actual population.

Legal Status of Refugee Camps

The establishment of emergency camps for Palestine refugees begun immediately after 1948 when the Red Cross and other relief organisations set up safe havens and air distribution centres for dispersed groups of refugees.¹⁷¹ After the establishment of UNRWA, most of these locations became officially established refugee camps. Despite some cases in which camp locations were shifted at the request of host governments (e.g. Syria) or camp boundaries were slightly enlarged, the locations and size of the camps have remained largely static since the early 1950s to the present day. According to sociologist ADWAN TALEB (2006) who analysed the legal status of camp land in the case of the West Bank, “there are mistaken notions and lack of information among researchers regarding the legal basis and status of the lands upon which the refugee camps were established in the West Bank, such as the idea that UNRWA leased the land from the landowners, or from the Jordanian Government; or the idea that the camp lands was leased for 99 years by the government or by the UNRWA.”¹⁷² TALEB cites the agreement between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the UNRWA, signed on 14 March 1951 as the main legal basis clarifying the status of the land in what is today West Bank and Jordan field.¹⁷³ TALEB states that “According to article 4 of this agreement, the government would provide the lands to establish the camps, and place them at UNRWA’s disposal. Furthermore, the agreement stated that the payment of rent for the camp lands is the government’s and not UNRWA’s responsibility and the responsibility for provision of camp sites and for resolving all questions arising out of their procurement shall rest with the Government.” Similar agreements formed the legal basis in for camps in other countries. This means that UNRWA’s recognized refugee camps are situated on land allocated and designated by the host governments. UNRWA does not rent or own the land. At the same time, UNRWA has the right to transfer its “right of use” of the camp lands to the refugees. This also means that neither UNRWA nor camp refugees actually “own” assets within the boundaries of the camp, but have the right to “use” the land for residence or servicing refugees. In legal terms, the land thus still belongs to the original owners, which was either public or private.

¹⁷¹ For a more detailed discussion on the various factors that influenced location and layout of the camps see section 2.1.2.

¹⁷² source: Taleb, Adwan. “Real Estate Sector inside the Refugee Camps in West Bank”, Report Commissioned by the UNRWA-SIAAL cooperation project, 2006/2007.

¹⁷³ Agreement between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and UNRWA, signed on 14.03.1951. Al-jaridah al-rasmiah li al-mamlaka al-ordoniah al-hashimiah (The Jordanian Official Gazette), 704.1951, Appendix no. 1 to the issue 1061, pp. 943-945.

Location and Sizes of Refugee Camps

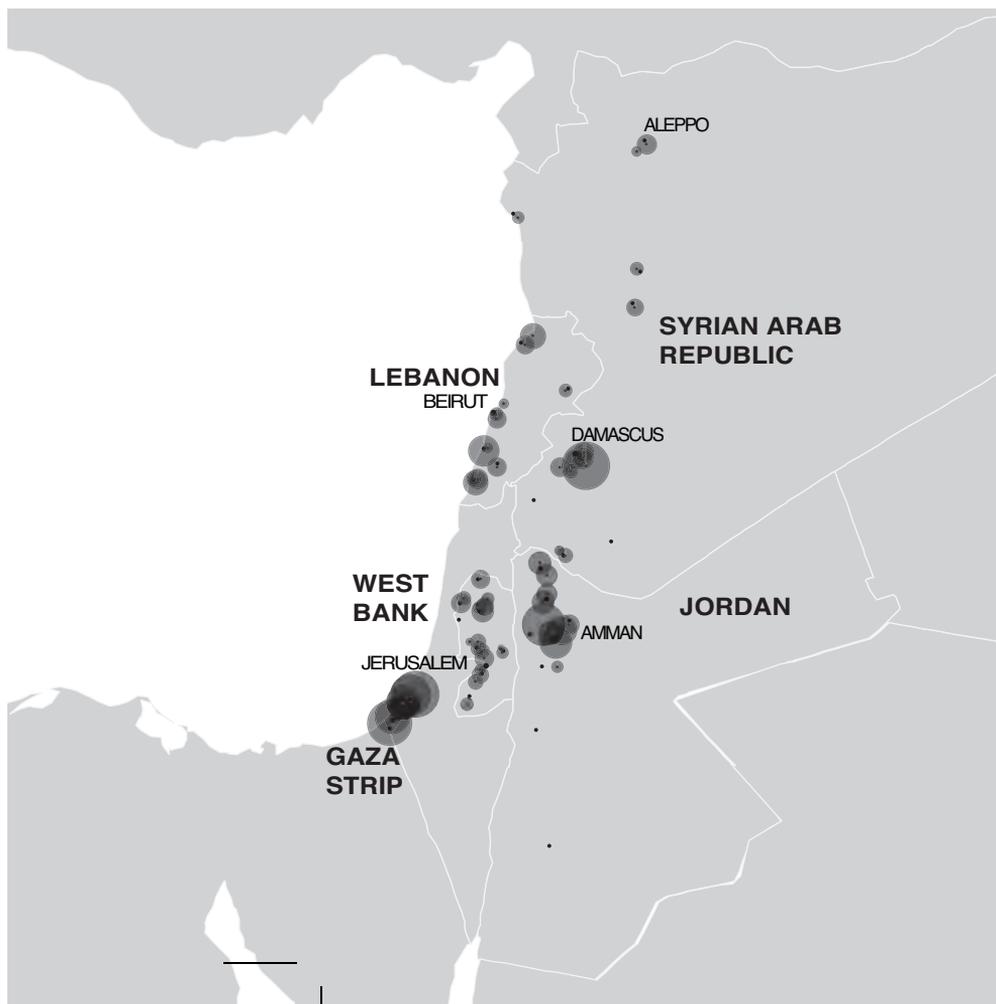
Today, UNRWA is responsible to deliver services to 58 official camps located in five different “fields of operations” Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Not included in this counts are several refugee concentrations that did not receive official camp status such as Yarmouk in Damascus. Since there were no significant changes since 1948 (with the exception of 10 camps that were established after the 1967 Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza), the reasons for the location of the camps reflects the political, socioeconomic context of the late 1940s as well as the transport network that was in place at the time. The following factors contributed to the placement:

- Most Palestine refugees fled across the nearest border of their hometown or village. Refugees from the northern regions of Palestine for instance fled mostly to Syria or Lebanon, those from the South to the Gaza strip.
- Larger cities certainly were more attractive destination points for refugees, promising international and local aid and possible work opportunities.
- Infrastructural links such as train lines or roads were important trajectories for refugee movement (for example the Neirab camp near Aleppo is said to have been set up for incoming refugees who left the train at the last stop before the Turkish border).

Apart from these circumstances and consequences of strategic decision-making on behalf of the refugee community itself, concerns of host governments are also likely to have played a part. Governments had a keen interest to avoid too large refugee concentrations (therefore advocating dispersal in more and smaller camps) and preferred to locate camps closer to cities, not only to provide better services but also in order to guarantee better “policing”. In addition, a variety of local factors, such as availability of land, local infrastructure, the attitudes of local communities would have played a role in setting up camps, some of which will be discussed in the case study of three West Bank camps in chapter 2.

In June 30, 2008, UNRWA recorded 1,363,469m registered to live in camps (→ **071, 071**). Many camps cluster within larger metropolitan regions such as the Gaza Strip (8 camps with almost 0.5m camp dwellers, almost 40% of the entire population), the Amman conurbation with 5 camps with over 230,000 camp dwellers or Damascus conurbation (5 camps and the unrecognized concentration of Yarmouk with 183,000 registered persons). Larger cities such as Beirut (3 camps with 25,000), Tyre (3 camps with 58,000), Jerusalem/ Ramallah conurbation (7 camps with 63,000 camp dwellers), or Nablus (3 camps with 45,000) have also large camp concentrations. Altogether, over three quarters of all camp refugees live clusters located within urban conurbations. This does not take into account the vast majority of non-camp refugees that, in part, also receive services from UNRWA and are mostly concentrated in larger cities in the region.

Camp sizes vary considerably between just 615 (Mar Elias camp, Lebanon) and over 106,000 (Jabalia camp, Gaza Strip). The largest recorded refugee concentration is Yamouk (112,000) in Damascus, which has never been recognized as an official refugee camp but receives UNRWA services. Palestine camps therefore display a similar variety of sizes as UNHCR registered refugee camps, but on the whole, tend to be bigger (compare to Part I/ chapter 1.3/ section 1.3.2).



→ 070
Registered Population per Camp



Field of Operations	Registered Refugees	Official Camps	Registered Families in Camps	Registered Refugees in Camps	Percentage of Reg. Refugees Living in Camps
Jordan	1,930,703	10	66,59	335,31	17.04.08
Lebanon	416,61	12	53,75	220,81	53
Syria	456,98	9	28,19	123,65	27
West Bank	754,26	19	41,53	191,41	25.4
Gaza Strip	1,059,584	8	97	492,3	46.5
Agency total	4,618,141	58	287,05	1,363,469	29.5

Note: Beyond the 58 official refugee camps, the map includes large refugee concentrations. source: www.unrwa.org (2008)

→ 071
Registered Population per Field source: Figures as of 30 June 2008 (www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html)

Host Country	Camp Name	Reg. Population	Camp Area (ha)	Density Reg.Ref./ha	Crude Birth Rate	
Jordan	Irbid	23.1	24.4	1,014.7	3.3	
	Husun	20.1	77.4	3.10	3.3	
	Suf	18.1	18.2	388.6	3.3	
	Jerash	22.1	15.3	307.1	3.3	
	Zarqa	17.1	17.1	1,018.6	3.3	
	Marka	12.2	91.7	26.4	3.3	
	Baqa'a	30.3	19.5	8.10	3.3	
	Jabal al Hussein	28.1	9.2	20.12	3.3	
	Amman New Camp	18.2	48.8	1,037.1	3.3	
	Talbieh	5.1	12.1	469.8	3.3	
	Syria	Neirab	17.1	14.8	1,235.1	2.4
		Ein el Tal*	3.1	15.1	270.6	2.4
		Latakia*	5.1	21.1	288.8	2.4
Hama		6.1	5.1	1,306.2	2.4	
Homs		12.1	14.1	908.5	2.4	
Yarmouk*		21.4	29.7	533.4	2.4	
Jaramana		15.7	2.1	6,582.3	2.4	
Sbeineh		18.1	2.7	7,104.4	2.4	
Qabr Essit		19.1	2.3	7.1	2.4	
Khan Eshieh		16.1	9.3	249.1	2.4	
Khan Dannoun		8.1	11.1	21.1	2.4	
Dera'a		8.1	3.9	2,448.2	2.4	
Dera'a (Emergency)*		3.1	3.9	1,116.4	2.4	
Lebanon		Nahr el Bared	30.1	19.8	1,579.9	2.3
		Baddawi	14.1	19.1	797.4	2.3
		Wavel	6.1	4.3	1,765.4	2.3
		Dbayeh	3.1	8.4	481.6	2.3
	Shatila	7.1	3.1	2,115.3	2.3	
	Mar Elias	7.9	0.5	1,140.7	2.3	
	Burj Barajneh	14.1	10.4	1,508.4	2.3	
	Ein El Hilweh	13.2	30.1	1,526.9	2.3	
	Mia Mia	3.1	5.4	845.5	2.3	
	El Buss	8.1	7.1	1,188.5	2.3	
	Burj Shemali	18.1	13.5	1,417.1	2.3	
	Rashidieh	28.1	24.8	1,181.9	2.3	
	Gaza	Jabalia	15.4	15.5	785.6	2.3
		Beach	20.3	86.2	934.7	2.3
Nuseirat		26.2	20.4	529.1	2.3	
Bureji		28.1	11.3	419.8	2.3	
Maghazi		22.1	52.3	442.8	2.3	
Deir El-Balah		19.1	20.2	1,000.7	2.3	
Khan Younis		1.3	29.4	512.8	2.3	
Rafah		6.4	9.4	974.1	2.3	
West Bank	Jenin	14.1	37.5	422.8	3.1	
	Nur Shams	7.1	21.8	412.8	3.1	
	Tulkarem	16.1	18.2	14.9	3.1	
	Fara'a	6.1	25.5	295.7	3.1	
	Camp No. 1	5.1	4.5	31.12	3.1	
	Askar	14.1	20.9	15.1	3.1	
	Balata	21.1	25.2	907.1	3.1	
	Deir Ammar	1.1	16.2	144.1	3.1	
	Jalazone	9.1	25.2	435.2	3.1	
	Amari	9.1	9.6	1,080.9	3.1	
	Ein El Sultan	31.12	27.3	20.1	3.1	
	Qalandiya	9.1	27.1	384.3	3.1	
	Aqabat Jaber	5.1	18.6	36.8	3.1	
	Shu'fat	9.1	20.3	527.9	3.1	
	Aida	3.1	7.1	664.1	3.1	
	Beit Jbreen	1.1	2.8	733.6	3.1	
	Deheishe	11.1	32.8	390.4	3.1	
Arroub	9.1	42.7	240.0	3.1		
Fawwar	6.1	27.4	288.8	3.1		

→ 072

Registered Population, Camp Area, Population Density and Crude Birth Rate per Camp

source: Figures as of 30 June 2008 (www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.htm)

1.2.2 Measuring Camp Urbanisation

Like UNHCR, UNRWA lacks standards and indicators that acknowledge or measure the extent of urbanisation (compare to discussion on UNHCR refugee camps in Part I/ chapter 1.3/ section 1.3.2). Data is non-existent, at best patchy and, to make things worse, scattered across different departments and programmes on headquarters and field levels. The fact that the strong internal fragmentation within UNRWA and lack of internal cooperation has so far prevented the creation of a centralized data management system. In the following brief overview, the three indicators of *PEROUSE* and *KAGWANJA*¹⁷⁴ introduced earlier – urban features (including population and building density), trading activities with surrounding communities, socioeconomic profile – will be discussed, based on the scarce and somewhat inconsistent information that does exist. The main source of reference is the 2007 survey “The Living Conditions of the Palestine Refugees Registered With UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – A Synthesis Report.”¹⁷⁵ An internal interim report of the above study released in August 2006, which focuses on issues of housing has also been used.

(1) “Urbanisation” measured in relation to the presence of “urban features”

• Urban features

To any visitor will be “surprised” when visiting any of the 58 Palestinian refugee camps for the first time. Instead of tent cities or makeshift dwelling, one finds a dense fabric of reinforced concrete houses - urban ghettos, which are often indistinguishable from their surroundings. Camps have blurred with their surroundings to such an extent that the precise location of a camp boundary is often impossible to detect. As far as the urban fabric is concerned, camps do not differ in significant ways from the informal urban growth areas of Middle Eastern cities. But also other features are “city”-like. Along the camps’ main streets, one finds commercial areas, schools, public facilities and mosques. UNRWA has constructed school compounds, health centres and community-based organisations (CBOs). Many camp communities have added their own institutions. The intuitive judgement is that all camps, without exception, are heavily urbanised and although UNRWA lacks many data for all camps, the three case studies introduced in chapter 2 will provide concrete evidence in support.

• Population density (→ 073- 079)

UNRWA accumulated precise data on camp boundaries, camp areas and camp population registered to each camp. However, the gap between registered population and actual population living within the camp borders might be significant. UNRWA does not take into account the arrival of persons not of concern to the Agency, which can in fact lead to an increased actual population level, particularly when camps are located in urban areas. These vary from region to region. Kurdish and Iraqi refugee or other impoverished communities make up almost half of Shatila’s actual camp population in Lebanon as renting from refugees tends to be more affordable than renting outside camps. Similar, but not quite as extreme conditions apparently also occur in Amman or Damascus camps as refugees act like land owners and team up with local real estate developers. In the West Bank, large Bedouin populations are reported in the Jericho camps. Actual camp population could also be significantly lower. As the West Bank survey (→ 201) shows, some registered refugees have long chosen to live outside of the camp’s boundaries but remain registered and continue to use UNRWA services.

Bearing in mind the possibility of an error margin, statistics obtained from UNRWA’s Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Unit at HQ Amman suggest that Palestine refugee camps are with an average population density of 108,300 registered refugees/sqkm (or 1,083 registered refugees/ hectare) amongst the densest inhabited urban areas in the world. Comparable informal neighbourhoods with self-built reinforced concrete structures such as Favelas in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo tend to have an average population

¹⁷⁴ source: Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine et al. “Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2000.

¹⁷⁵ source: Bocce, Riccardo. Brunner, Marthis. Al-Husseini, Jalal. Lapeyre, Frederic. Zureik, Elia. “The Living Conditions of the Palestine Refugees Registered With UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – A Synthesis Report”, prepared by the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (Institute Universitaire d’Etudes du Développement IUED) University of Geneva, the Institute of Development Studies at the Université Catholique de Louvain, and Data Doxa (Geneva), commissioned by UNRWA, published in 2007.

density of 500-700 person/hectares. The densest camps listed far exceed the population density of the densest administrative units in the world (→ **075**), many of them using high rise building typologies. Nine out of 63 refugee camps¹⁷⁶ and large refugee concentrations reveal a higher density than 1,500 registered refugees/ hectare.

Of all fields, Syria is worst off with an average population density of registered refugees about more than twice as high as Gaza, West Bank or Jordan, although some of the statistics provided by UNRWA simply seems unrealistic. Nine out of 12 camps in Lebanon exceed population density of 1,000 registered refugees/ hectare by far, while the standard deviation remains comparable to that of Jordan, Gaza and West Bank. West Bank and Jordan show the lowest average densities (→ **074**) also shows that the highly densely populated camps are relatively often smaller camps: Camp No1 (1,473 registered refugees/ hectare) and BeitJebreen (1,027 registered refugees/ hectare) in West Bank have registered refugee populations below 7,000 inhabitants.

Contributing factors that influence the different population densities in the different fields may include the following:

- Urban patterns, or the integration of camps in larger cities such as Damascus or Beirut in contrast to the mostly rural camps of the West Bank. In larger cities, camps become destinations for job and opportunity seeking refugees.
- The IUED survey teams states that “the legislation of land and he status of refugees in the host country” has a crucial effect on camp density. This includes for instance imposed restrictions hindering mobility and re-settlement opportunities outside camps such as in Syria or Lebanon where Palestinian refugees do not have the legal right to own property. Both countries also provide less land for the expansion of camps.
- Closely linked to the above, the relation between refugees in camps and refugees outside camps varies in accordance with host government policy. More refugees in Lebanon (53%) live in camps if compared to the regional average of 29.5%. This is clearly the result of the strict Lebanese policies not granting the right to land ownership to Palestinians and discriminating policies with regard to access to the local employment market.

• Building density

Building density can only be determined for a few camps where special surveys have been conducted in recent years. These include all 19 West Bank camps, Syria’s Neirab camp and Lebanon’s Nahr el Bared camp. An important indicator is the Floor Space Index FSI¹⁷⁷ and built up area.¹⁷⁸ Data is most complete for the West Bank, which, however, does not provide for a sufficient indication for building densities in other regions. The comparison of building densities above seems to suggest that, in fact, building densities in Lebanon and Syria are likely to be much higher. The highest built-up area percentages for West Bank camps have been measured in Camp No 1 (72%), Tulkarem, Askar and Balata (68%) as well as Amari (66%). Here horizontal growth has reduced the open area (streets, lanes, public spaces, private open spaces) dramatically and only allows for minimal access and circulation. The Floor Space Index is highest in West Bank in Shu’fat (1.89), Camp No 1 (1.71), Tulkarem (1.57), Amari (1.51) and Askar (1.44). These figures suggest high density but leaving some development potential through increasing verticalization. However, as will be seen in the three case studies discussed in chapter 2, building density is not even throughout the camp and some areas have already reached alarming levels of 2.58 for example in Amari. All these indicators will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter 2 when providing a full urban analysis of three West Bank case study camps.

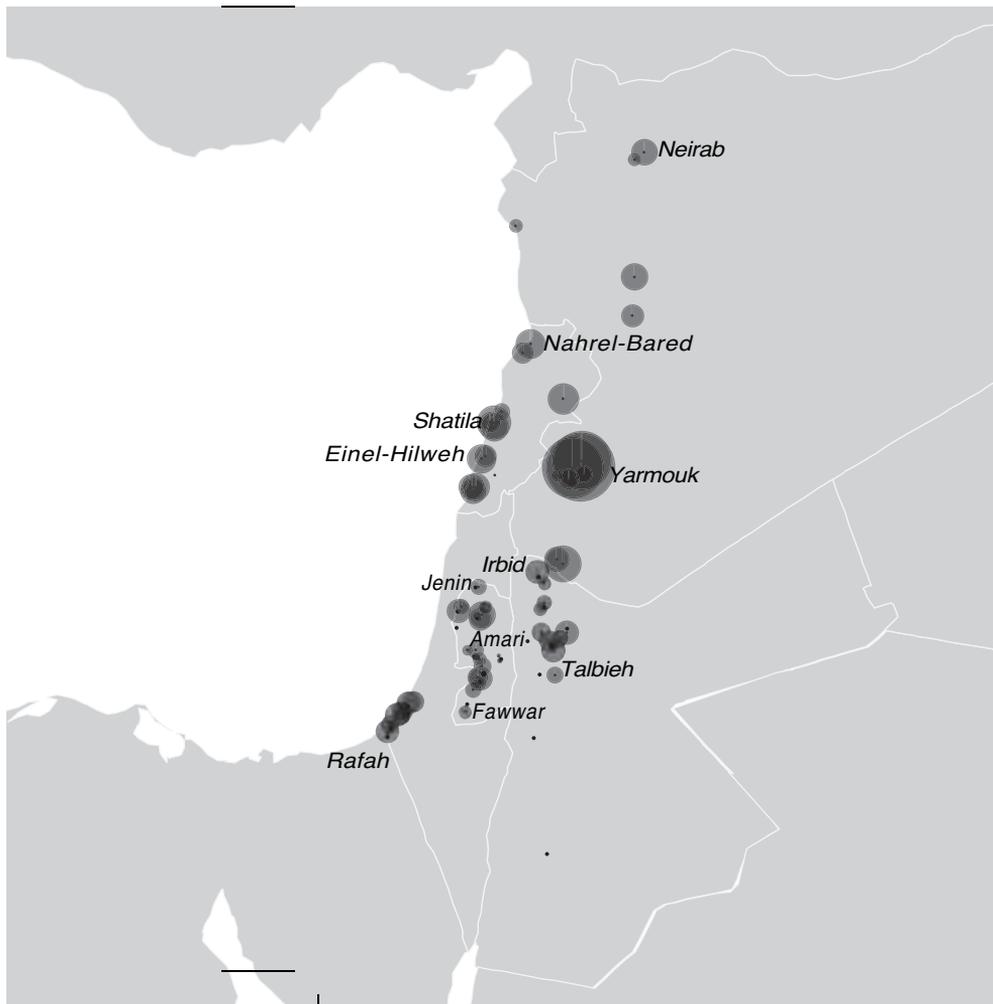
• In-House-Crowding

The IUED survey on living conditions conducted a sample survey across all five regions to determine levels of in-house crowding. The report states that “crowding is measured both by the occupancy per room and by the floor area per capita. Levels of house occupancy are considered normal when no more than three household members

¹⁷⁶ Based on the figures provided by UNRWA, the population density for the three Syrian camps should be even higher: Jaramana (6582 persons/ ha), Sbeineh (7104 persons/ ha) and Qabr Essit (8957 person/ ha). The author assumes that these densities are simply unrealistic given the building typology prevalent in camps.

¹⁷⁷ Definition of Floor Space Index (FSI): built-up area multiplied by average number of levels, divided by total area within UNRWA’s official boundaries.

¹⁷⁸ Definition of Built-up area within UNRWA’s official boundaries (OFEK survey 2006), excluding public and private open spaces.



→ 073

Population density (persons per hectare)



source: www.unrwa.org (2008). The density calculation is based on registered persons. UNRWA has no records of exact figures of camp residents. Firstly, the registered refugee numbers do not take into account that fact that many refugees have left the camp to reside outside its boundaries but continue to be registered. Secondly, the figures do not take into account the influx of none-registered persons, which, in the case of Shatila camp can amount up to 40% of the actual camp population.

Field Registered Refugees/ Hectare

Jordan	636
Syria	2,442 (The camps of Jaramana, Sbeineh and Qabr Essit with extreme, probably exaggerated levels of density pull the average upwards.)
Lebanon	1,295
Gaza	699
West Bank	541

→ 074

Average Population Density in Camps (registered refugees/hectare)

Administrative Unit Pers./ sqkm

Huanpu District, Shanghai	126,542
St. Anthony Parish, Macao	98,776
Tondo District, Manila	64,796
St. Lazarus Parish, Macao	52,370
Distrito II, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat	51,658
Kwun Tong District, Hong Kong	51,104

→ 075

Comparison to the world's densest administrative Units

(source: local surveys by UN-HABITAT)



→ 076

Shatila, Lebanon

Completely destroyed in the Lebanese Civil War in the 1980s, the centrally located Beirut camp has been rebuilt. In the absence of a guiding plan, the camp has now become one of the densest camps of all Palestine camps. An estimate 50 per cent of the inhabitants living within UNRWA's official camp boundary are said to be non-Palestinian. Due to the central location and comparatively cheap housing, other refugee groups and urban poor renting houses from Palestinian refugees.



→ 077

Neirab, Syria

World War II army barracks situated just outside Aleppo were partitioned up to house arriving refugees. Neirab camp has now spread beyond the original barracks and camp area to a total surface area of an estimated 370,000m² and is home to 18,016 registered refugees¹. A critical situation in Neirab has been reached due to the poor living conditions and high population density. Overcrowding is a major problem aggravated by the lack of available land adjacent to the camp thus prohibiting any further horizontal expansion. In order to seek a solution to the problems of Neirab, especially the old army barracks which are now in a critical condition, UNRWA launched the Neirab Camp Rehabilitation Project.



→ 078

Talbiyeh, Jordan

Talbiyeh is one of the smallest camps. About 4000 persons live inside the camp boundary. A further 3 thousand have migrated out and purchased property in close proximity to the camp. Although less dense than other camps, Talbiyeh has been declared a priority camp for rehabilitation, due to the widespread presence of zinc roofs and asbestos sheeting.

	Male	Female	All
Jordan	69	16	44
Lebanon	69	18	44
Syria	69	17	44
West Bank	58	11	34
Gaza	48	6	29

→ 079

Percent Employment-to-population Ratio**by Gender and Field of Operation:**

source: Bocce, Riccardo et al. "The Living Conditions of the Palestine Refugees Registered With UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – A Synthesis Report", prepared by IUED/ University of Geneva, Université Catholique de Louvain, and Data Doxa, commissioned by UNRWA, 2007, page 35.

	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria	Gaza	West Bank
A. Host Society	\$183	\$501	\$103	\$77	\$93
B. Refugees (incl. UNRWA assist.)	\$91	\$127	\$68	\$73	\$109
Ratio A/B	2	3.9	1.5	1.1	09

→ 080

Comparison of Monthly per Capita Income Between Host Countries and Refugees

source: Bocce, Riccardo et al. "The Living Conditions of the Palestine Refugees Registered With UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – A Synthesis Report", prepared by IUED/ University of Geneva, Université Catholique de Louvain, and Data Doxa, commissioned by UNRWA, 2007, page 31.

Field / Status	Lowest	Rather Low	Middle Group	Rather High	Highest	Total
Jordan none camp	16	9	31	21	23	100
Jordan camp	30	14	28	19	9	100
Syria none-camp	15	20	21	21	14	100
Syria camp	20	25	19	19	16	100
Lebanon none-camp	15	14	18	26	27	100
Lebanon camp	22	21	24	19	14	100
Gaza none-camp	18	22	19	21	20	100
Gaza camp	18	20	21	21	20	100

→ 081

Comparison of Income Groups per Host Country

Source: UNRWA, Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme, 2008.

*share a room, including bedrooms and living rooms.*¹⁷⁹ IUED thus directly borrow UN-HABITAT's definition of slum (see Part I/ chapter 1/ section 1.3.3). The survey reinforces the above findings that camp conditions are particularly problematic in Lebanon where 71% of households and in Syria where 73% of households fall into the category of overcrowding. Jordan however has also a very high overcrowding rate of 70% of households. Gaza is lower with 64% and West Bank has a comparatively lower level of overcrowding of 46%. If UN-HABITAT terminology would be applied, the vast majority of Palestine camp refugees are therefore likely to live in slum conditions.

(2) "Urbanisation" measured in relation to socioeconomic profiles of camp refugees

Data on socioeconomic profile is incomplete and reliable indicators that could measure the level of interaction and exchange between camp dwellers and their non-refugee neighbours (level of integration) is not available. Based on available indicators a brief socioeconomic profile will be drawn up in the following:

• Education

Investment in children's education is considered a high priority amongst the refugee community. As already stated in the previous section 1.1.2, UNRWA provides a free basic education service to refugee children that is unique in the world. Although UNRWA's average student/ teacher ratio or percentage of double shift schools does not compare favourably to the host government system, UNRWA schools generally enjoy a good reputation. Illiteracy has been almost eliminated and drop out ratios are often better than in host government schools. UNRWA is taking a lead role in encouraging gender balance. The IUED survey has shown that young women between the ages of 21 – 29 are in fact doing better than men in terms of pursuing a higher education carrier. In Jordan 32% of females attend higher education courses compared to 20% of men. In Syria the gap is wider (17% to 12%), likewise in Lebanon (12% to 9%), West Bank (22% to 16%). Only in Gaza 28% of males were reported to attend higher education classes versus 27% of females.

• Labour force participation and employment

While the IUED survey finds male labour force participation levels of 75% comparable to that of non-refugee males. Women on the other hand participate below the World Bank defined average of 28% for the North Africa/ Middle East region. A reason for this might be that domestic labour is generally not taken into account. As to be expected, the type of employment has radically shifted within the six decades of camp life. The agricultural sector is only relevant to a small minority of camp residents who mostly work in the construction sector, industries or commerce. With the exception of Lebanon where Palestinians are excluded from many employment types, refugees on the whole work in similar jobs as their non-refugee neighbours of cities and towns. Equally the employment rates (proportion of employed to the working age population) is a reliable indicator of economic well-being. The IUED survey shows that the employment rate is very low in West Bank (34%) and Gaza Strip (29%) and on average higher in the other host countries (44%) but do not differ from the national unemployment data available in those countries. The low levels are mostly owed to low levels of female participation in the employment sector as shown in (→ 079).

• Poverty levels

On the whole, refugees are poorer than their non-refugee neighbours. Figure (→ 080) shows the gap in each host country according to the IUED survey results. This gap might be in fact bigger if refugees would not have access to humanitarian assistance programmes, which, on average, contributes to one-third of the household income. As the table shows, the gap is highest in Lebanon where refugees are excluded from broad sections of the labour market. According to the survey, refugees are in fact slightly better off than their non-refugee neighbours in West Bank.

Most importantly, statistics show that camps are particular centres of poverty. Figure (→ 081) shows the difference between camp refugees and refugees living outside camps. The proportion of refugees residences located outside camps gradually increases as households have higher income and vice-versa. If confirms

¹⁷⁹ source: Bocce, Riccardo et al. "The Living Conditions of the Palestine Refugees Registered With UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – A Synthesis Report", prepared by IUED/ University of Geneva, Université Catholique de Louvain, and Data Doxa, commissioned by UNRWA, 2007, page 92.

the assumption that refugees seek higher living standards outside camps when afforded, or that refugees living outside camps have more job opportunities at a better pay.

Conclusion

While the above indicators fail to provide sufficiently broad evidence for the relationship between camps and host environments or the degree of integration of refugees in their host society, they suggest that, on the whole, camp dwellers do not differ from their urban non-refugee neighbours in their pursuit of education or employment. Particularly camps could be considered as “slum”-like urban areas. Further evidence and surveys would be needed to directly compare camps to the rapidly growing informal housing sector in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. It is likely that camp dwellers face the same problems and opportunities as poor urban migrants.

At the same time, camps remain unique in some key aspects. (1) The presence of UNRWA and the presence of (and dependence on) humanitarian assistance; (2) The varying policies of exclusion of Palestine refugees which differ between each host country and affect the way refugees integrate in their host society significantly. The regime of exclusion is strongest in Lebanon where Palestinians are not only excluded from political representation but also of large sections of the labour market and cannot own property. In Syria, Palestinians cannot obtain citizenship, participate in national or local elections or officially own property while there are no significant restrictions on the participation in the labour market. Jordan is the most liberal of the host countries where many refugees in fact hold Jordanian citizenship. Differences between refugees and non-refugees in West Bank and Gaza can be found in their socioeconomic profile and ability/willingness to participate in local elections.

The terms and concepts developed by MICHEL AGIER (“*Camp-City*”) or PEROUSE et al. (“*Virtual City*”) therefore accurately applies to Palestine camps. The Brazilian scholar FERNANDO MURILLO in fact introduced the notion of “*Refugee Cities*”¹⁸⁰ specifically to characterize Gazan refugee camps, largely pointing to the same ambiguous status between city and camp.

180 source: Murillo, Fernando. “Refugee City”: Between Global Human Rights and Community Self Regulations”, (report submitted to UNRWA), IDES Research Programme Director, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Buenos Aires, 2006

Chapter 2

Situation Analysis of Three Urbanised Refugee Camps: Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar

2.1

Introduction to Case Studies

2.1.1 Research Objectives, Methodology and Structure of Analysis and Interpretation

Research Objectives

The situation analysis was guided by the following objectives:

- To identify both common and unique characteristics that have emerged in the process of urbanisation in the three case study camps of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar.
- To build an awareness of refugee camps as complex and specific urban environments - spatial and social structures, internal rules and patterns, assets, as well as problems and needs - interacting with their specific urban, suburban or rural context
- To apply to a refugee camp context analytical tools that have been developed and tested in the analysis of informal urban settlements in the developing world. The situation analysis makes use of a wide range of indicators commonly applied to analysis of the physical, spatial, and programmatic structure of dense and impoverished urban environments.
- To draw operational conclusions about how comprehensive camp improvement could be delivered: Analytical passages are followed by practical conclusions that outline the breadth of activities that could be undertaken and provide analytical concepts, parameters, and benchmarks that can guide the formulation of strategic planning concepts and the design of physical-spatial improvement measures.

The Selection of Three Case Study Camps

In order to allow for a maximum of comparability of field work results and ensure full accessibility within the given time and budgetary constraints, it was decided to limit the situation analysis to one of the five regions: the West Bank. The selection of which West Bank refugee camps to include in this survey was determined by the motivation to cover, as much as possible, the spectrum of camp conditions in the West Bank. Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar camps were chosen for the following reasons:

• Location and Context

The three camps represent a range of typical locations for West Bank camps. Amari is fully embedded within the densely built up urban conurbation of Al-Bireh, Ramallah and Bitunia; Deheishe is situated within the fast developing suburban sprawl of Bethlehem/ Beit Jala; and Fawwar represents an isolated rural camp.

• Spatial and Physical Constitution

While the urban texture within all three camps is varied, Amari's overall level of congestion and verticalisation is one of the highest in the West Bank and is considerably higher than that of Deheishe. Fawwar's density is among the lowest in the West Bank, and the camp still has access to some spatial resources to absorb growth within and around the camp's official boundary.

• Degree of Community Mobilisation

While Deheishe has developed a remarkable and diverse institutional landscape inside the camp, largely driven by a powerful Local Committee connected to an international network of donors and possessing a high degree of resolve and independence from UNRWA. In contrast to the exceptional case of Deheishe, Amari is more representative of the everyday reality in most camps. While some institutions – such as its Youth Centre – stand out as pro-active, the camp has generated far fewer institutions, and the overall impact of self-motivated initiative on the daily reality of the camp is considerably lower, less visible, and less effective. Fawwar, for its part, is struggling with very basic infrastructural problems. Despite some recent successes, which includes a new building for the Local Committee, Fawwar has been the least effective of the three camps in developing a diversified institutional network.

• Self-Esteem of Camp Residents vis a vis Neighbouring Communities

The pride and self-confidence of the Deheishians stands in stark contrast to the much lower self-esteem detected in interviews with Amari refugees and the sense of “being forgotten” in isolated Fawwar.

• Accessibility

In the context of road-blocks and other travel restrictions, all three camps were reasonably accessible to conduct field work.

Research Methodology and Sources

Limited time and resources meant that the situation analysis was limited to key issues that were felt to be particularly relevant to the question of holistic camp rehabilitation – indicators and criteria that help to measure the degree of urbanisation of the camps. The field work combines qualitative and quantitative research, which included the following sources:

a.) Quantitative Data

Sources relating to chapter 2.2 Spatial-physical analysis:

- A new aerial survey, including aerial photographs and digital plans, was conducted for all 19 West Bank refugee camps in December 2006.
- Archival maps from the FECSO archive (UNRWA Field Office, Jerusalem) were digitalized and systematically analysed for the first time.
- Land Use Survey, conducted by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project, mapping the different types of land use (at street level) in each of the three case study camps.
- One area in each of the three camps was chosen for a micro study, in which physical and spatial characteristics of houses were mapped.

Sources relating to chapter 2.3 Sociocultural analysis:

- Survey of camp institutions of Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar, conducted by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project, taking into consideration all organisations, including UNRWA services, the LCs, CBOs, NGOs, other civil society organisations and grass-roots initiatives, as well as religious organisations and family/ clan related organisations such as *dirawween*.

b.) Qualitative Research

In addition to the empirical evidence, a series of interviews with UNRWA staff, community members, and representatives of external bodies were conducted. Additional sources included reports and documentation gathered by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project, such as:

- Group discussions with community representatives,
- Group discussions with UNRWA staff members, community representatives and external consultants within the framework of three workshops
- Interviews with other stakeholders such as representatives of neighbouring municipalities, PNA ministries, and representatives of the PLO
- Unpublished research papers by leading Palestinian researchers, commissioned within the framework of the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation (2006-2007)

Structure of Analysis and Interpretation

The situation analysis is structured into three parts. The first part provide for a general introduction to the case studies, including an overview of the main stages of the camps' historical evolution from the tent compounds of 1948 until the congested and heavily urbanised camp cities of the present day.

The second part, chapter 2.2 Spatial-physical analysis, deals is the urban fabric and its current physical and spatial order. The first section investigates land use and the differentiation of the camp's territory into zones of distinguishable programmatic character. It applies to refugee camps, for the first time, the analytical tool of zoning plans, regularly used in European urban contexts. Section 2.2.2 applies internationally used indicators such as building and population density to propose a definition of a "*maximum carrying capacity*." This will help prevent critical over-densification, a break-down of technical infrastructure, and extreme risks (such as structural collapse, etc.). Section 2.2.3 discusses the effects of densification on the built fabric itself, including structural risks, but also the unique physical and spatial characteristics of built structures accumulated over almost six decades. Section 2.2.4 addresses access and circulation, another key indicator of congestion, while the final section, 2.2.5 discusses the spatial conditions that have emerged at camp peripheries, along UNRWA's increasingly blurred official boundary and beyond. Here camps are discussed as contextual systems with a multitude of spatial and physical links.

The third part, chapter 2.3 Sociocultural Analysis, offers holistic understanding of the camp as a sociocultural environment. What forms of communal self-organisation and mobilisation beyond UNRWA exist in West Bank camps? It is crucial to understand the complex patterns of familial networks, civic, political and

religious institutions. What are the successes and failures of these structures and how do they envisage the future of the camp? How can existing local initiative become truly the driving engine behind camp improvement? How does the relationship between the community, UNRWA and other stakeholders need to change so that notions of “empowerment” and “participation” can become more than lip-service paid to donors, obscuring yet another externally imposed and paternalistic exercise. The chapter begins with a brief reflection on the relations between UNRWA, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), and other camp institutions (section 2.3.1). Has UNRWA in the past managed to influence community mobilisation in a positive way? What can be learnt from past mistakes? What preconceptions and expectations will the agency face when it launches its new initiative of community-driven planning? The next section 2.3.2 focuses on what is felt to be one of the most crucial community-run institutions and potential lead partner in camp improvement: the Local Committee (LC). It traces the emergence of the Local Committees in the West Bank following the first intifada and critically assesses the different roles currently assumed by the LCs in Amari, Deheishe and Faw war camps. Section 2.3.3 analyses more broadly the landscape of camp institutions based on a detailed survey conducted in the three camps. What community organisations exist and how do they function? Do existing community organisations effectively represent communal interests including those of marginalized groups? Section 2.3.4 addresses issues of camp identity and asks whether traditional camp quarters and blocks provide a formative spatial setting for sub-identities within the camp. Section 2.3.5 “Gender Roles in the Domestic Environment and Camp Life” focuses on the participation of women in camp life and their role in the domestic environment. The last two sections 2.3.6 and 2.3.7 deal with conflict patterns and resolution models within the camp, and between the camp community and neighbouring villages and municipalities.

2.1.2 Introduction to West Bank Case Studies: Amari, Deheishe, Fawwar Refugee Camps

The following section provides a short introduction to the three selected case studies (→ 082 - 089):

(1) Amari Refugee Camp

Amari camp has a registered refugee population of 10,377 persons¹⁸¹ and is situated inside the municipal borders of Al-Bireh, only a short distance from the centre of Ramallah. The camp is therefore located in the centre of one of the largest urban conglomerations in the West Bank: Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Bitunia. This is at the same time the fastest growing and most important economic, political, and cultural hub in the West Bank today. Although the camp appears to be ideally positioned to take advantage of jobs, diverse cultural life, and the presence of many international NGOs, many of the camp residents interviewed feel ostracized by this context, unable to compete with the many migrant workers for jobs and somewhat alienated by the upper- and middle-class urban lifestyle that surrounds them. In recent years, tensions between camp residents and neighbours have on occasion erupted in violence. In one instance Amari youth staged violent demonstrations in Ramallah following the death of a youth who was killed by police, and in another instance, an arrest led to the damage of property such as street lights, restaurants, and shops. In both incidents, anger directed at the Palestinian Authority (PA) quickly morphed into anger at the perceived symbols of the PA and the surrounding city's social corruption. All this has contributed to the camp's predominantly negative image as a dangerous environment and has led to a tendency to unjustifiably stigmatize its inhabitants as being thuggish and prone to petty theft. (The fact that the camp has been built on what is now prime real estate also contributes to some negative feelings of neighbouring residents and land owners).

The tensions with the neighbouring communities have evidently contributed to the development of a negative self-image among Amari's residents and increased their sense of living in a refugee ghetto. The reasons for this condition of perceived social isolation are of course more manifold and complex. Some aspects should be highlighted here. Amari, unlike suburban Deheishe, has not managed to develop a positive camp identity, nor has it shown the resolve and initiative to overcome its daily problems. UNRWA's Camp Service Officer (CSO) for Amari stressed that one of the reasons for this may lie in the fact that refugees originally arrived from many diverse locations including both towns (like Ramleh and Lyd) as well as over 40 villages from the coastal central plain. The camp suffered for decades because of the internal cultural differences between townspeople (*maddani*) and villagers (*fallahin*). Later, new arrivals from Gaza and the Jerusalem areas as well as internal migration, inter-marriage and out-migration (all of which will be discussed in the following situation analysis), have diluted this conflict since the early 1980s, but a residue remains. The social researcher PENNY JOHNSON (2007)¹⁸² pointed out that the fragmentation of the social structure is also perceived by some residents positively, since clan power is limited and results in more freedom of choice of place to live or lifestyles for individuals or nuclear families. Furthermore, residents mentioned a drug problem involving some youth in the camp, although it was impossible to research this issue more thoroughly. It is likely that some camp residents are involved in drug trafficking. Internal conflicts occasionally erupt and, under the auspices of the Local Committee, a "reconciliation committee" had to be formed as a mediating platform. Despite this positive initiative, however, the Local Committee remains a weak force in most areas and has not initiated camp improvement projects. Its meetings take place only once a month.

There are of course positive exceptions, especially the role of the camp's much stronger Youth Centre (YC), one of the most active in the West Bank. The YC has a large and active membership and houses many activities including a guest house and a successful football team, known throughout Palestine. Indeed, the sociologist JAMIL HILAL (2007) has stressed the link between the perceived "weakness" of the Local Committee and the "strength" of the YC, which succeeds in "*attracting the talents and energy of the most active and innovative of the community, and is of interest to and receives the patronage of the major political organizations.*"¹⁸³ HILAL also points out that camp residents managed to elect their own member to the Legislative Council in 2006 (a former YC activist), a considerable achievement only matched in Deheishe.

¹⁸¹ source: UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin/ Q4 2006.

¹⁸² source: Interview with Penny Johnson, September 4, 2007.

¹⁸³ source: Hilal, Jamil. "On the Making of Local Leadership in Refugee Camps", research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2006.

The camp's spatial-physical setting has generated extremely high density and congestion levels. (It is more than twice as dense as Fawwar in terms of population per area.) Due to its inner-city location and built-up surroundings, neither formal nor informal expansion is possible. This was not always the case. From the early 1980s many refugees were able to buy plots close to the camp, creating a ring of informal expansion around it (and including the new neighbourhood of Umm al-Sharayit to the west). This growth led to the fact that today about 40% of the registered camp population lives outside Amari's official UNRWA boundaries. However, this "out-migration" of the most able and affluent also led to an increasing economic segregation. Soaring land prices since 1994 have meanwhile forestalled the option of migrating out for those who remained.

Relieving Amari's congestion problems is therefore the most urgent challenge for the camp. Intense construction activities throughout the 1990s led to a verticalisation and further densification of the camp. Private spaces were created at the expense of open public spaces, streets, and other qualitative aspects such as natural ventilation, natural light, and access. Although these problems are characteristic of most West Bank camps, Amari (together with Shu'fat and Camp No. 1, both located in the West Bank) seems to be at the extreme end of the spectrum. The space of the camp has reached, even overstepped, the saturation point. Amari Camp is characterized by its desperate need of strategic planning to answer its many pressing problems. Informal expansion has reached its limits and can no longer answer residents' spatial needs. At the same time, community development programmes can provide carefully introduced external help to re-energize and mobilize its social structures, build up a more diverse institutional landscape, and address the many qualitative insufficiencies of camp life. It can also help residents enter the employment market and help to find answers to problems of general poverty and unemployment. The fact that the CSO was unable to attract labourers for a recent job creation programme despite acute unemployment levels is an alarming insight into the mixture of frustration, passivity, and lack of confidence that grips some camp residents.

(2) Deheishe Refugee Camp

In 1948, refugees from 45 villages in the Jerusalem and Hebron areas settled at the intersection of the Jerusalem-Hebron Road (Road 60) and the former main road towards Bethlehem, which meanders up into the hills bracing the valley. In the first decades of its existence the camp remained isolated. The first intifada marked a crucial turning point in the camp's history. While Amari also acquired a political reputation, Deheishe became one of the most resilient and politically active communities in the West Bank. Political factions became a strong presence, including Fateh and left-wing parties such as the Popular Front, which is still strong today. Located in front of a thoroughfare used by many Israeli settlers, the camp was particularly subject to a cycle of stone-throwing, assaults, raids, and curfews. The Israeli army responded with the construction of a high barbed-wire fence that surrounded the camp completely and blocked all but one entrance. As a lasting consequence of this period, the Bethlehem Road lost its original function and become an internal camp road.

The most significant change in the camp's development is in fact linked to the 1994 creation of the Oslo territories, which enabled a new degree of limited Palestinian sovereignty, including planning. As a consequence, the desolate landscape around Deheishe underwent a remarkably rapid urban development. Although residents of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and other villages and camps also invested in this development, Deheishians took the lead. Similar to Amari's earlier informal expansion during the 1980s, the 12,804 registered refugees of Deheishe¹⁸⁴ now invested in new homes outside of the camp, while retaining a strong social and cultural connection. Eventually the new city of Doha – which still carries the informal title "refugee city" – was formed. Equally dramatic changes occurred internally. A young generation of activists (mostly members of the camp's former Youth Centre) returned from prison, highly motivated to initiate projects and improve the camp. The new institution of the Local Committee became a key vehicle for their ambition and today remains to a great extent under its control. Deheishe also played a key role in facilitating the formation of Local Committees for the entire West Bank by hosting a series of meetings between the PLO and refugee representatives, which resulted in a strategic document generally referred to as the "Deheishe Declaration 1997." JAMIL HILAL described Deheishe's Local Committee as "*playing a dominant role*

¹⁸⁴ source: UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin/ Q4 2006.

*in the life of the camp, as a provider and organizer of services that are not provided by UNRWA, and as an empowering body to camp residents and as a body building and encouraging the building of networks with the outside.*¹⁸⁵ (Hilal 2007)

Largely driven by the Local Committee, which often provided support and funds, a unique landscape of “civil society” institutions emerged in the 1990s, perhaps unique to all Palestinian refugee camps in general. Attracted by the “fame” Deheishe acquired during its activism in the first intifada, international donors were eager to support the camp. The large Finiq Centre (which includes a large meeting hall for social occasions and a theatre, workshops rooms, and a fitness studio) and the adjacent garden complex, with its multipurpose functions, are not only popular spots in the camp but are used by many residents of the neighbouring towns. Other improvements include paving streets, launching employment programmes, and establishing and maintaining links with international agencies and donors. Not all camp residents support the Local Committee, however. Some question the lack of democratic accountability, and others – particularly the estimated 20%-30% of camp residents who voted for Hamas in the recent 2006 PLC elections – take issue with the Local Committee’s strong political ties to Fateh. Compared to other camps, however, the overall sense of a shared camp identity prevails. In the words of the CSO, “*Like any other Palestinian community, the camp has a mixture of authority players, where political convictions, traditional values, and familial loyalties all intersect and combine to affect decision-making in the camp.*” However, there is “*a dominant sense of belonging that brings the Deheishians together and motivate them to work for the good of the camp... Deheishe Camp also managed to become a recognized attraction point in the area. Many visitors and tourists visit the camp. We have tourist groups visiting the camp on a daily basis.*”¹⁸⁶ After the Finiq Centre, the cultural centre Ibdā’a deserves to be mentioned as one such attractor. The centre houses a theatre, a roof-level café with a panoramic view over the camp, internet facilities, and club rooms for the camp’s very successful youth basketball team.

Visiting the camp today, the spirit of pride and self-initiative can still be felt despite the hardships that have followed the second intifada and the unemployment that has resulted from the construction of the Separation Wall. The camp is profiting from the comparatively well functioning and culturally active urban region of Bethlehem/ Beit Jalla/ Beit Sahour. With the Israeli imposition of a ban on free Palestinian access to Jerusalem, many businesses had to relocate, and the section of the Jerusalem-Hebron Road in front of Deheishe has become a thriving business area. Although all West Bank camps have gone through a process of urbanisation and diversification of functions, Deheishe has gone furthest in developing a local economy and civil society institutions. The main reason for including Deheishe among the case studies was therefore the valuable lessons and potential it provides to function as a model. Whereas in other camps, UNRWA’s “camp development” programmes raise suspicion and fear of “normalisation”, in Deheishe, camp improvement is practised by camp residents themselves. This more optimistic reading does not mean that the camp is without pressing problems that also require UNRWA’s help. Central camp areas are similar in congestion levels to those of Amari, and poverty, unemployment, and gender discrimination are widespread. Unlike Amari, the camp does not need help in community mobilisation and institution building. However, Deheishe’s relation to neighbouring towns and villages is tense due to unresolved land ownership and competition of resources. Such problems and growing pains can only be solved within a larger strategic development framework.

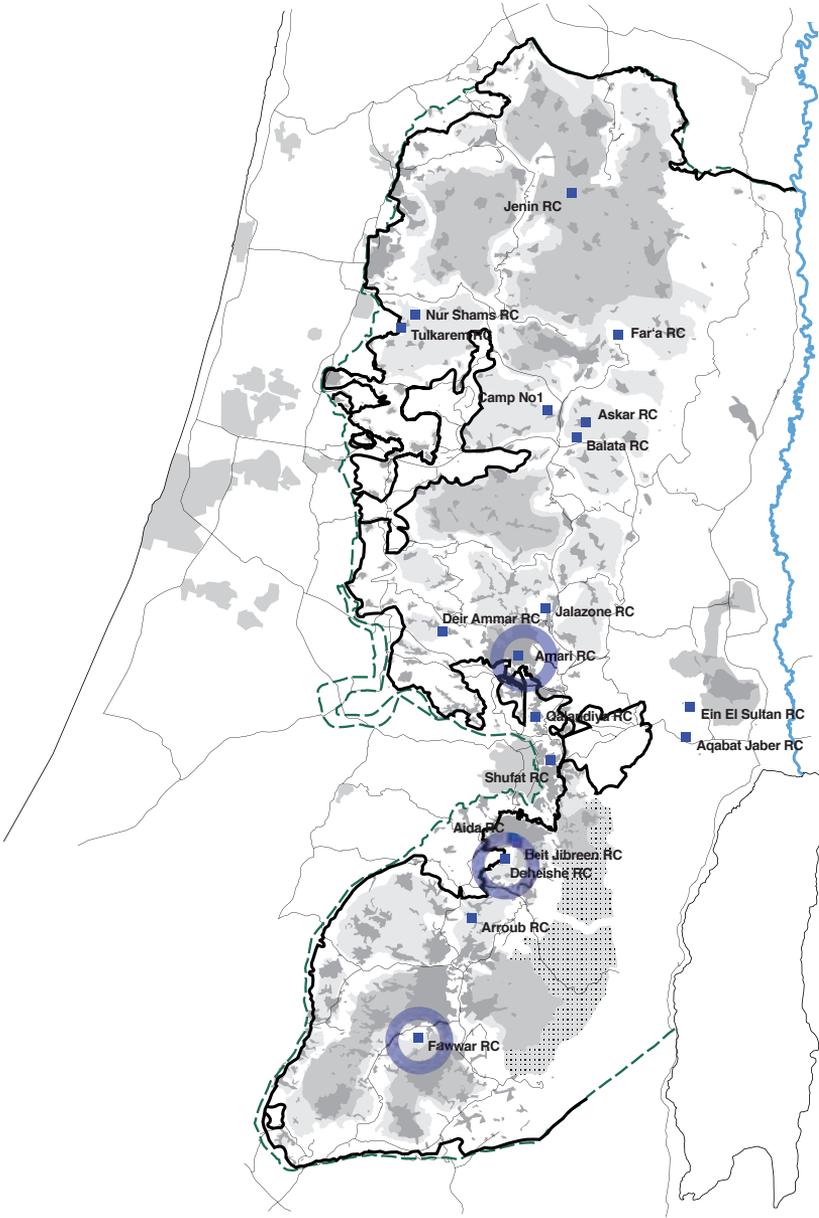
(3) Fawwar Refugee Camp

The most striking difference between Fawwar (registered refugee population 7,912 persons¹⁸⁷) and the other two camps (Deheishe and Amari) is its remote rural location. Isolation is not only physical but also characterises its relationship to the Palestinian Authority (PA). While most West Bank camps are located within Zone A (an area with limited Palestinian sovereignty), Fawwar is located in an Zone B enclave close to Zone C (which is subject to Israeli planning and security control) and the settlement of Haggai. The social researcher PENNY JOHNSON (2007) writes that “*the abdication, or absence, of the Palestinian Authority, most notably in the clan conflict of 2006, which was ‘solved’ by the mediation of religious and tribal elders from out-*

¹⁸⁵ source: Hilal, Jamil. “On the Making of Local Leadership in Refugee Camps”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2006.

¹⁸⁶ source: interview with Mustafa Khalil Younis, Deheishe CSO, interview November 7, 2006.

¹⁸⁷ source: UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin/ Q4 2006.



→ 082

West Bank Refugee Camp Locations (Including Oslo Areas and Separation Wall)

Legend

Green Line (Israel-Jordan Armistice Line 1948-1967)

Separation Wall (2003-2007)

Refugee Camps

Pilot camps for UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project

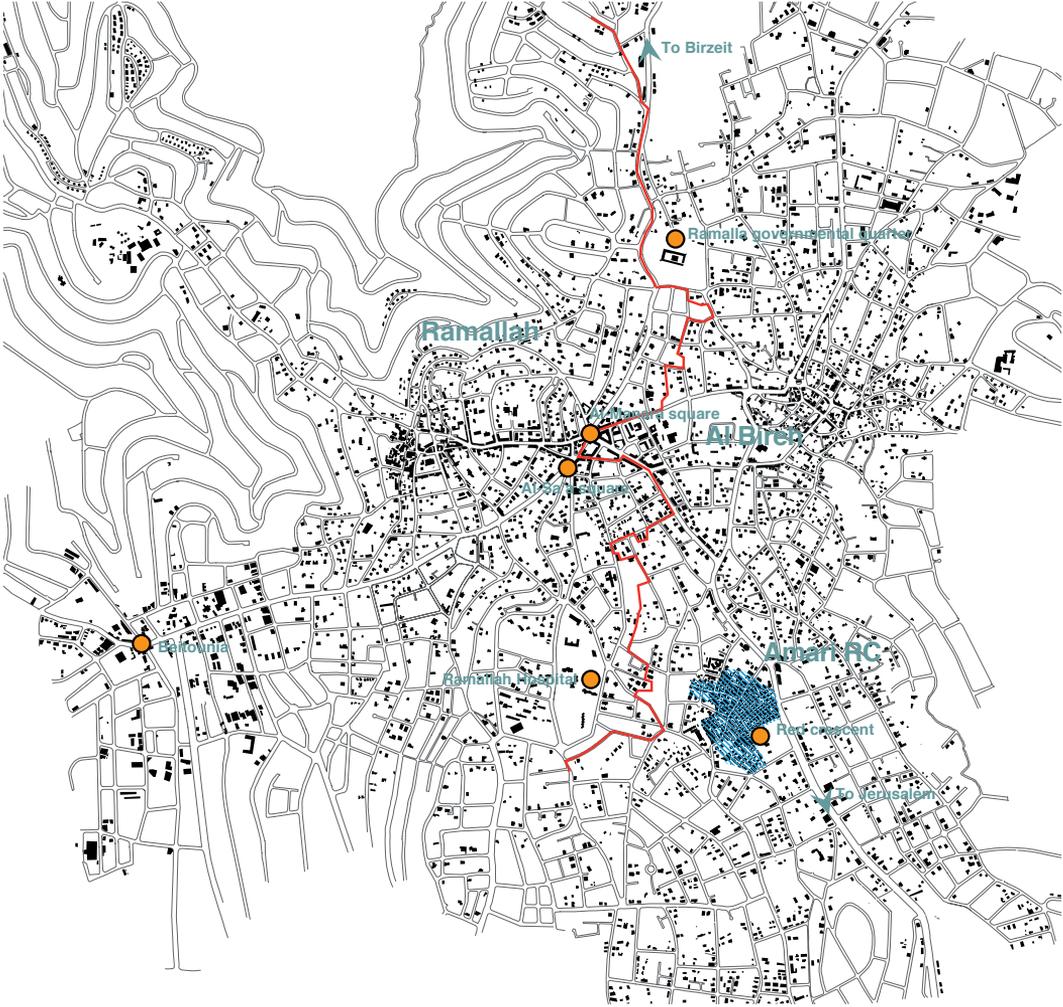
Refugee camp	area ¹ Dunum (ha)	regist. pop. ²	est. act. pop. ³	pop. density ⁴ Persons /ha	build. area ⁵ Percentage	built-up area ⁶ Percentage	open area ⁷ Percentage	FSI ⁸
Nablus camps								
1	Jenin	374.6 (37.5)	11,000	11,550	308.3			
2	Nur Shams	210.8 (21.8)	8,324	8,465	401.7	74.24 %	45.46 %	54.54 % 1.14
3	Tulkarem	182.0 (18.2)	10,761	11,223	616.7	73.50 %	68.45 %	31.55 % 1.57
4	Far'a	254.8 (25.5)	6,000	6,163	241.9	74.24 %	38.88 %	61.12 % 0.62
5	Camp No.1	45.1 (4.5)	5,663	5,766	1279.0	96.60 %	72.46 %	27.54 % 1.71
6	Askar	209.0 (20.9)	13,500	13,871	663.5	78.13 %	68.81 %	31.19 % 1.44
7	Balata	252.4 (25.2)	18,000	22,196	879.3	76.33 %	68.92 %	31.08 % 1.31
Jerusalem camps								
8	Deir Ammar	161.9 (16.2)	1,320	1,471	90.9	70.11 %	27.73 %	72.27 % 0.77
9	Jalazone	252.4 (25.2)	10,000	12,020	476.1	72.50 %	46.34 %	53.66 % 1.34
10	Amari	95.6 (9.6)	10,377	6,115	639.8	77.56 %	66.78 %	33.22 % 1.51
11	Qalandiya	279.7 (28.0)	10,757	11,502	411.3	78.99 %	39.66 %	60.34 % 1.13
12	Shu'fat	203. (20.3)	11,000	15,500	762.1	70.73 %	56.89 %	43.11 % 1.89
Jericho camps								
13	Ein El Sultan	870.4 (87.0)	1,500	2,160	24.8	87.61 %	17.63 %	82.37 % 0.31
14	Aqabat Jaber	1,700.5 (170.0)	5,767	6,367	37.4	81.22 %	14.72 %	85.28 % 0.24
Hebron camps								
15	Aida	70.5 (7.1)	4000	4,070	577.1	79.73 %	48.91 %	51.09 % 1.17
16	Beit Jibreen	27.7 (2.8)	1900	1,920	692.7	86.30 %	62.37 %	37.63 % 1.41
17	Deheishe	327.7 (32.8)	12804	10,020	305.7	76.88 %	42.83 %	57.17 % 1.20
18	Arroub	426.5 (42.7)	7000	7,155	167.8	82.04 %	29.35 %	70.65 % 0.77
19	Fawwar	274.0 (27.4)	7912	7,030	256.6	75.37 %	37.62 %	62.38 % 0.93
West Bank average								
	327.3 (32.7)	8294	8661	484.8	78.45 %	47.43 %	52.57 %	1.14

→ 083

Comparison of Key Density Indicators for West Bank Refugee Camps

- 1 Total area within UNRWA's official boundaries in 2006, units: Dunum (hectares)
- 2 Total of UNRWA registered population for a specific camp code (source: UNRWA registration office, 2006)
- 3 Estimated actual population residing inside UNRWA's official boundaries (estimate by CSO, 2006)
- 4 Population density based on the total area within UNRWA's official boundaries and the estimated actual population inside those boundaries
- 5 Building area within UNRWA's official boundaries (OFEK survey 2006): houses plus private open spaces (courtyards and gardens)
- 6 Built-up area within UNRWA's official boundaries (OFEK survey 2006), excluding public and private open spaces
- 7 Open spaces (including all public and private open spaces inside UNRWA's official boundaries)
- 8 Floor Space Index (FSI): built-up area multiplied by average number of levels, divided by total area within UNRWA's official boundaries

(Source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



→ 084

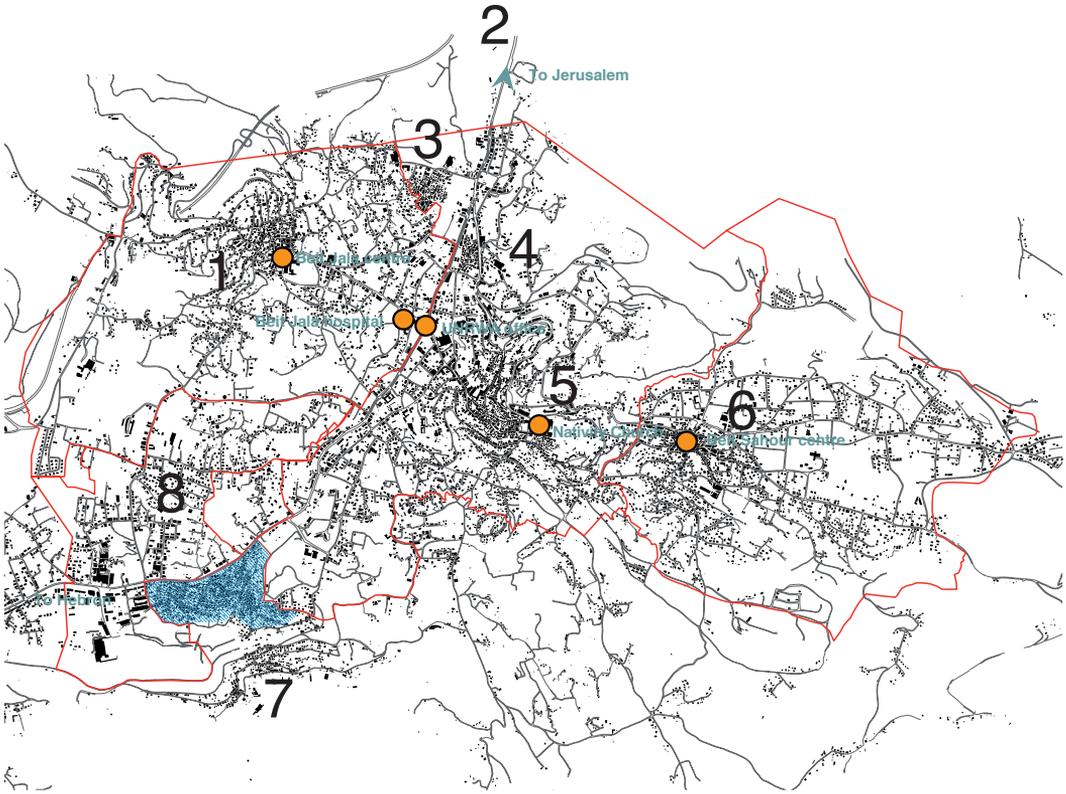
Amari Camp - Urban Location Plan



→ 085

Amari Camp (December 2006) – Aerial View

Source: OFEK aerial survey of West Bank
refugee camps 2006, commissioned by the
Pilot Research Project UNRWA/ University
of Stuttgart



→ 086

Deheishe Camp – Urban Location Plan

Legend

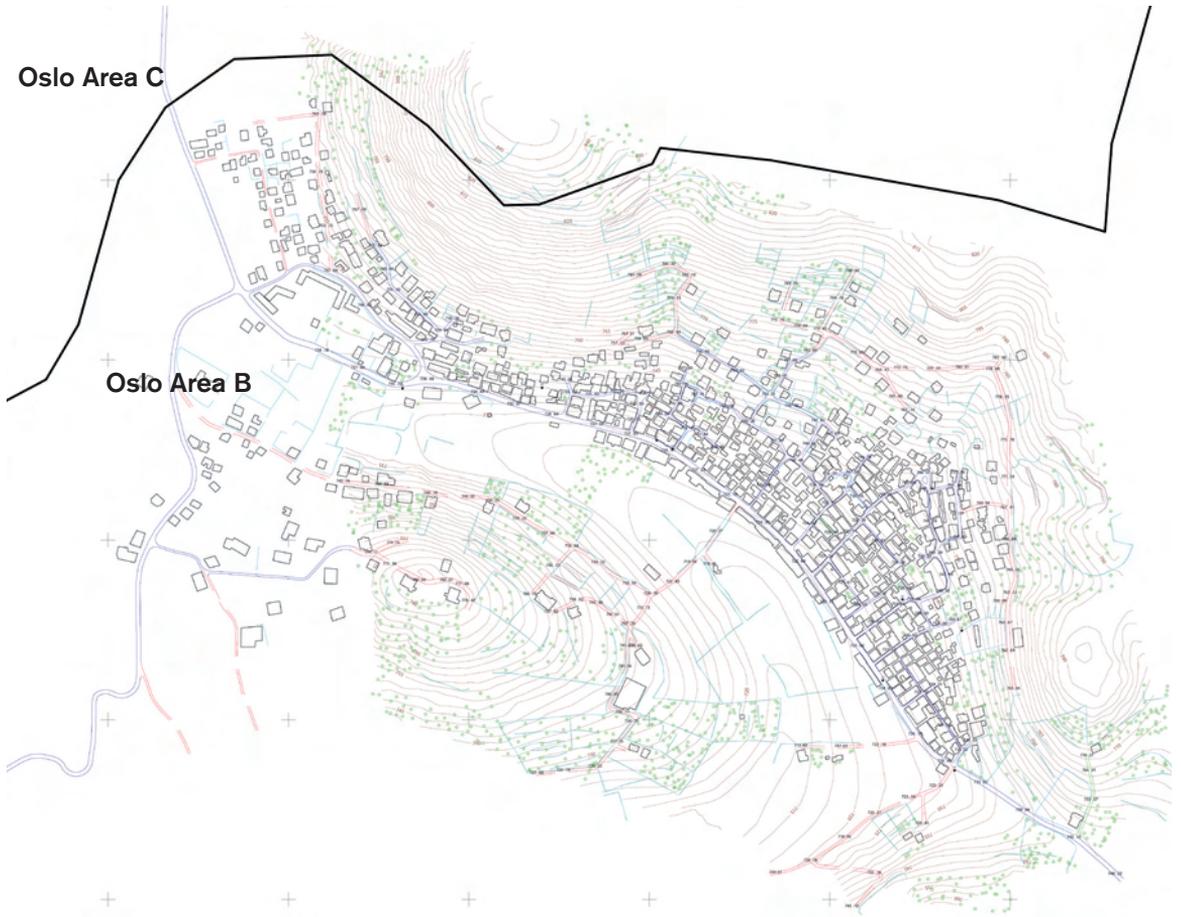
-  Deheishe Camp municipal boundaries
- 1 Beit Jalla
- 2 East Jerusalem
- 3 Aida refugee camps
- 4 Beit Jibreen refugee camps
- 5 Bethlehem
- 6 Beit Sahour
- 7 Artas
- 8 Doha



→ 087

Deheishe Camp (December 2006) – Aerial View

Source: OFEK aerial survey of West Bank refugee camps 2006, commissioned by the Pilot Research Project UNRWA/ University of Stuttgart



→ 088

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Location Plan with Oslo Boundary

Legend

— Oslo boundary

Definition of Oslo Boundaries B, C:

Oslo Area B: Palestinian civil control/ Israeli security control

Oslo Area C: Israeli civil control/ Israeli security control

Source: Palestinian Authority Ministry of Local Governance, 2008



→ 089

Fawwar Camp (December 2006) – Aerial View

Source: OFEK aerial survey of West Bank refugee camps 2006, commissioned by the Pilot Research Project UNRWA/ University of Stuttgart

side the camp ... is matched by the unbridled presence of the Israeli army, which not only hinders mobility outside Fawwar camp but shrinks public life inside the camp, particularly for youth. The entrance is a military watch tower that can close access to the camp at any given moment."¹⁸⁸ Two clans fought over control of a tiny lane within the camp in 2005, which led to four casualties including one CSO and the possibly permanent evacuation of 200 family members.

Strong internal structures – such as the Local Committee in Deheishe and the Youth Centre in Amari – usually guarantee internal stability. The deadly escalation of the 2005 conflict in Fawwar suggests that the camp lacks an equivalent. JAMIL HILAL (2007) observed: “*In Fawwar, political organizations clearly do not seem in full control, and a sort of ‘semi-clan’ formations are vying for influence, diminishing the role of both the Popular Committee and the Youth Club.*” As Fawwar recovers from the aftershock of the killings and the negative image it acquired as a result, there are some positive signs of change. The Local Committee has become very active by acquiring a building (a house formerly used by now-evacuated clan members), renovating it and equipping it with a computer lab and a permanently staffed office. After years of passivity, the camp community seems to be becoming more pro-active. Instead of institution building and cultural activities that mark Deheishe, however, the primary focus of Fawwar’s Local Committee’s work has been to improve basic infrastructure – the camp’s standard being amongst the worst of all West Bank camps. An Electricity Committee was formed to lobby for funds to increase the generator’s limited capacity. (At present electricity is rationed on an hourly basis.) Yet it is still unclear how the long-term political stalemate in the camp between Fateh and Hamas can be overcome. At present Hamas is not actively involved in the Local Committee, which (like most West Bank institutions) is associated with Fateh.

A traditional mentality is predominant amongst the members of Fawwar’s refugee community. Unlike Amari and Deheishe, the camp community has remained closed and conservative, especially for women, and there is little exposure to urban lifestyles. Some residents work in agriculture, keep animals in their shelters, and cultivate small gardens for family consumption. Unemployment is amongst the highest in all West Bank camps. More than other camps, Fawwar’s residents had depended on low-skilled construction jobs inside Israel and now cannot find substitute employment inside the West Bank. Compared to Deheishe and Amari, Fawwar is the least urbanised camp with the weakest economic sector. An opportunity for business expansion might be exploited in the main road, which – after the closure of rural access roads by the Israeli military – has become the only passageway for tens of thousands of Palestinian villagers and townspeople in the south West Bank region. So far, however, very few shops have opened along this road. Camp residents still feel uneasy about the intrusion of “strangers” into their camp. Despite obvious disadvantages, Fawwar’s isolated location could also be understood as an asset, allowing for the possibility of almost unrestricted expansion – a unique advantage over most West Bank camps.

¹⁸⁸ source: Johnson, Penny. “Public Spaces and Public Life: Amari, Deheishe, Fawwar”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2007.

2.1.3 Historical Evolution (1948-2008): Main Steps in the Transition from Emergency Settlements to Camp Cities

Palestine refugee camps are, perhaps surprisingly, spaces of tradition and continuity. Despite the fact that camps have been set up as temporary “waiting rooms”, they have developed a very distinct sense of their own specific histories, traditions, and customs. The tightly knit community creates a sense of intimate belonging and keeps the knowledge of the history of spaces, buildings, and people extremely alive. The urban fabric has evolved very slowly, with camp residents living with, making do, and building constantly on what already exists. While poverty and sheer pragmatism are probably the main reasons for hanging onto what already exists, for some, the old 1950s shelters assume an almost symbolic status, linking their present life to the place their ancestors lost in the Nakba. The act of keeping the old shelter then becomes an act of resisting “normalisation” of an exceptional condition.

Based on the three case studies of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar, this section provides an overview of the main stages that mark the sixty-year-long growth of West Bank refugee camps. It was considered important to trace the camps’ main evolutionary steps since I became acutely aware that the present spatial logic of camps can only be understood with a more historic perspective, which includes the analysis of the earliest organisational principles and their gradual transformation. Four main stages of change can describe the unique developmental process from tents to today’s extremely dense urban neighbourhoods. Given the limited scope and resources available, as well as the general lack of consistent records, this section is but a brief introduction. As such it highlights the need for more thorough research in this area.

(1) Stage 1:

The Formation of the Spatial and Social Order in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar (1948–1955)

Setting up Refugee Camps

The transition from refugees’ dispersal and nomadic movement to the crystallisation of fixed camps took place over a period of ten years. During the chaos of these initial years, international organisations were overwhelmed and action was primarily reactive. At first the Red Cross was simply providing tents in a more or less spontaneous fashion to dispersed refugees in areas where larger clusters of them had settled. This in turn attracted more refugees, drawn by the promise of direct access to emergency relief and protection (by international aid organisations) from sometimes hostile indigenous populations. No record or evidence of a master plan or emergency scheme can be found to explain the peculiar distribution of camps throughout the West Bank. Instead, it can be assumed that in the case of Fawwar and Deheishe (as well as many other West Bank camps), refugees themselves determined the location of first settlement. Some decisive local factors were the availability of water (Fawwar), the proximity to a road (Deheishe, Fawwar), and the attitudes of neighbouring villagers (some of whom were more welcoming than others). In the case of Amari, the choice of the camp area was probably determined by a collective agreement between municipalities and private landowners for dealing with the continual influx of refugees into the cities of Al-Bireh and Ramallah. Here, refugees had initially settled in several different locations, some of which – such as the unrecognized camps of Qaddura or Saqayef Al Amari (next to Amari Camp) – are still recognizable. Other West Bank camps, such as Jenin and Nur Shams, suggest a stronger involvement on the part of the Jordanian government. In Jenin, the first camp was established on an abandoned British garrison and railway area of the Al-Hijaz railway “Haifa-Jenin” (*Waqf-land*). Nur Shams derived its name from a former British prison whose abandoned grounds it appropriated. The placement of camp locations in the West Bank seems to have mirrored that of all other areas. It was partly determined by local initiative (by refugees or local elite), partly consisting of pragmatically appropriating abandoned British (or, in Syria, French) military facilities.

In the absence of a coordinated regional emergency scheme during the years after 1948, it is likely that the final capacity of each camp was determined not by a master plan but by a number of local factors. Apart from the actual size of the available land, it was presumably the refugee community’s own wish to re-produce pre-Nakba social-spatial relations. This determined the consolidation of clusters into camps of such varying sizes. During the initial chaotic 24 months, refugees attempted to re-group in pre-1948 social structures (family or *hamule* networks or based on place of origin), especially since traditional family networks were considered the best guarantee of stability, continuity, and support. Dispersed individuals and smaller

families then chose to migrate to those camps where family relations or groups from the same place of origin were already present. The development of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar camps shows how this slow process of consolidation evolved from initial settlement clusters to more established “safe havens”, and eventually into camps.

In terms of land ownership, the three case study camps represent very different conditions. In the case of Amari, refugees settled on fields belonging to different private owners (→ 091), located not far from the centres of the towns of Ramallah and Al-Bireh. In Fawwar the entire territory belonged to one family from a neighbouring village. In Deheishe land ownership is more complex. According to researcher ADWAN TALEB (2007)¹⁸⁹, most of the land was classified as “*enemy property*” already under Jordanian rule (*while some 10% had been classified as commonly owned [masha’a]*). According to local sources, the land belonged to Germany and was expropriated under British rule, hence Jordan continued to classify the land as enemy property. Other source stated that some land may have had Jewish owners. Neither claim could be verified.

The Formation of Camp Quarters (hara)

“Most of the refugees came from mid Palestinian cities such as Lyd, Ramleh, Jaffa, and villages such as Shousha, Na’ani, Saidoun, Saris, Deir Tarief, Lifta, and Almalha. In 1948, the refugees clustered into groups according to their places of origins. These initially unintended natural groupings created eight quarters in the camp, each named after its inhabitants’ original place.”¹⁹⁰

Similar statements were collected from other elderly camp residents and CSOs of other West Bank camps, where one can assume similar principles were at work. Traditional social relations determined internal spatial organisation. Upon arrival in a specific camp, refugees grouped themselves according to their place of origin as well as family structures, re-configuring their village and/ or family *hosh* organisations. Again the principle of traditional family support networks was considered the principal safety net in moments of hardship and crisis. Previously existing social and spatial relations were reproduced as accurately as possible, which led to family clusters on a micro scale and the formation of camp quarters as larger organisational entities. The following sections summarize the organisational logic of camp quarters.

Strong and Weak Quarters

The first available records are archival plans for the distribution of tents and self-built shelters, which UNRWA inherited from the Red Cross in 1950.¹⁹¹ An analysis of these plans reveals the fact that land distribution inside the camps was uneven. The first record of Amari (→ 097), for example, already shows very different densities, with a more spacious cluster of Lydd and Lifta refugees and a very dense Na’ani cluster. This uneven density is still visible today. In the cases of Deheishe and Fawwar, records are less clear, as plans only show the position of stone structures. (The only indication for much larger number of tent shelters is only given in terms of numbers.) But even here clusters of different densities can be detected. The camps’ uneven formation suggests the presence of a complex, integrated, and differentiated social/ spatial order. This seems to contradict the egalitarian policies of humanitarian organisations (equal land distribution, etc.) and therefore indirectly confirms the presence of quarters.

The main factors that in all likelihood led to uneven land distribution (and the formation of less dense and more dense quarters) are linked to the power relations among the different clans, families, and villages of origin. Following this assumption, roomier quarters may be equated with “strength” in terms of social status and power and denser quarters with “weakness”.¹⁹² It seems common knowledge in Amari Camp, for instance, that members of the Lifta clan (who, incidentally, also owned some of the property in the camp) had excellent local networks in Ramallah and Al-Bireh. It can be assumed that these power relations were significant in securing better positioned and more spacious territories, in this case around the camp perimeter. Families from Lydd and Dir Tarif were also numerous and powerful and thus able to set up their own quarters. The fragmented smaller families of Na’ani or Ramleh, on the other hand, did not constitute a large tribal network and remained in the dense centre of the camp. Further research may well reveal addi-

¹⁸⁹ For a full description of the legal relationship among UNRWA, host governments, and private landowners, see: Taleb, Adwan. “Real Estate Sector inside the Refugee Camps in West Bank”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2007.

¹⁹⁰ source: interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

¹⁹¹ source: archival plans, FECSO archives, UNRWA field office Jerusalem.

¹⁹² In the same interview cited before, Ghaleb Al Bess the CSO of Amari confirmed this assumption but asked not to be recorded

tional factors influencing uneven land distribution, such as allegiances with prominent families (e.g. HUSSEINI versus NASHASHIBI in the Jerusalem area). In addition, families or villages supporting the Jordanian regime may have been awarded more land than those who opposed it. Finally, order of arrival could also have influenced the internal distribution of spaces within the camps.

The sociologist ROSEMARY SAYIGH (2006) detects a similar phenomenon in Lebanese camps: *“Early camp photographs, whether of tents or huts, suggest uniformity of space allowance. But this might be an appearance only.”*¹⁹³ Analysing the spatial organisation of Wihdat camp (Amman), HANA JABER notes, *“For the moment, we do not have a map of the camp at the time of its establishment. Nor do we have information as to the criteria adopted by UNRWA in choosing which families to admit, nor their initial distribution in the camp’s interior.”*¹⁹⁴ Probably this process differed between different fields of UNRWA operations, and perhaps even between different camps in the same host country. But it is likely that pre-1948 socioeconomic differences were translated into space allocation. SAYIGH writes that *“in Hayy Kweikat in Bourj al-Barajneh Camp, where I lived on and off in the early 1970s, the space occupied by the man who had been the village’s largest land-owner was two or three times larger than that of neighbouring families. It may be also that the size and importance of villages was linked to their position and space allocation within camps. In Bourj Barajneh, the quarter of the largest village, Kabri, is to be found at the eastern edge of the camp, closest to the suburb of the same name, and to UNRWA’s original ration distribution centre. In Shateela, the homes of people from the single largest village, Majd al-Kroom, were clustered near the Director’s office and the UNRWA Feeding Centre, both of which were headed by men from this village. Though it’s hard to substantiate this because there are so few people left who remember the first settlement, I suspect that there was a relationship between village size, position in the camp, and family status.”* (SAYIGH 2006)

Another reason for the uneven densities in the camp may relate to the general chaos of the early years following the Nakba: *“The overcrowded section in the camp is the Na’ani Quarter, because the people in this quarter started to collect their relatives and other families from Na’ani village. All the people that came from Na’ani chose to live here in this quarter. As for the Deir Tariief quarter, as you can see, it is less dense than that of Na’ani because, when the refugees were forced to leave Deir Tariief, some of them settled in Deir Ammar, since it was on their way and closer to their village than Ramallah. Others settled in Jalazoun, and others chose to settle in Amari.”*¹⁹⁵ (interview with GHALEB AL BESS 2006) According to this statement, uneven densities between quarters were also a product of uncertainty about how many refugees would eventually arrive in Amari. Initially, the camp territory was loosely divided up between different clans/ families. A process of *“filling up”* ensued as new refugees arrived and settled in close proximity to their own clans or fellow villagers. This took place over several years and was impossible to predict. Some clusters, such as Na’ani, later to become a “mixed” quarter, quickly becoming crowded, while other clusters like those of the Lifta clan remained comparatively more spacious.

Consolidation of Quarters and their Boundaries

It was during this early stage in the camps’ histories that emerging social clusters became publicly recognized and known as quarters (*hara*) or blocks. Research has shown that in the cases of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar, quarter formation was similarly structured. Amari and Deheishe each formed eight quarters, while Fawwar formed nine (→ 230 - 232). Beyond the fact that quarters obviously carried specific names, they shared the following characteristics:

- Clear spatial definitions: Previously existing streets, parcellation lines, and field paths often formed natural borders between the quarters. In both Deheishe and Amari, an existing street became the central spine around which quarters were formed. Camp residents used and appropriated existing infrastructures and developed them in a pragmatic, almost organic way.
- Representative structures reflecting the social order of the quarters: Each quarter was represented by a leader responsible for speaking on behalf of the clan or place of origin mediating in cases of conflict. This role was usually assumed by a village elder (*kabeer alqariyah*) or influential and respected family head (*kabeer alaileh*), depending on the particular circumstances. Quarters often developed *dawaween* (clubs for

¹⁹³ Sayigh, Rosemary. “The Home as a Microcosm to Understand Community Structures”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2006.

¹⁹⁴ Jaber, Hana: „Le camp de Wihdat à la croisée des territoires”, in: Bocco, Riccardo, Destremau, Blandine and Hannover, Jean. „Palestine, Palestiniens: Territoire national, espaces communautaires”, Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain CERMOC, Beirut, 1997.

¹⁹⁵ source: interview with Ghalib Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

men from the same clan or place of origin) and/or other charitable societies, for formal meetings and hosting visitors. For fragmented and dispersed individuals and families, Amari's single mixed quarter (carrying the name of the village Na'ani) became a substitute for the *hamule* and provided protection and new identity. The streets of the quarter were also used for festivities such as *sahare* nights (celebrations before weddings) or funerals.

- Closed social and cultural boundaries: Especially in Amari, social interrelations between camp residents reproduced the traditional mutual suspicion between villagers (*fallahin*) and townspeople (*maddani*). In other West Bank camps such as Jenin, tensions also existed among these and bedouin groups. Crowded Amari was not able to accommodate the cultural differences between the urban lifestyle and more tribal customs. The tension generated by this "forced marriage" was described by Amari's CSO: "*In the early years of life in camp, one could easily sense the tension and cultural segregation. Amari's refugees came from different Palestinian cities and villages with different cultures. The camp brought together Palestinians from both rural and urban areas. Palestinians from the town of Lyd found themselves sharing the same spaces with farmers from the small villages of Saris, Na'ani, and Almalha. Refugees from Lyd and Ramleh felt superior and more sophisticated than the rural refugees. The cultural division dominated and affected camp life until the early 1980s. New generations were born in the camps, and this gradually diminished the social differences and cultural segregation.*"¹⁹⁶ (interview with GHALEB AL BESS 2006)

Until the 1980s most quarters remained closed to one another. Inter-marriage among refugees from different backgrounds continued to be frowned upon. Not all camps suffered the same degree of segregation, however. Deheishe, for instance, was composed mainly of *fallahin* who had escaped areas not far from nearby Bethlehem and therefore did not find themselves in a totally unfamiliar environment. According to ABU KHALIL AL-LAHAM, Deheisheans organized and integrated themselves in their new surroundings with no small success: "*It is important to understand the social background of the Deheishe refugees, the refugees' connection with Bethlehem district, and the consequences of this relation on the camp and the district as well... Deheishe refugees, actually most of Bethlehem district refugees came from Palestinian villages located along the Arroub Mountain chain. Most of the refugees worked as farmers and shared a similar social life within the rural area of the Arroub Mountain chain. This similarity of social background and places of origin helped the refugees start their new life in the camp. Many refugees were also familiar with Bethlehem district (Bethlehem, Beit Jalla, and Beit Sahour). As a known urban centre close to these agricultural villages, Bethlehem district used to be a marketplace where farmers used to sell and trade their crops. This affected the social life in the camp later on. The refugees were not totally estranged from the Bethlehem district culture. The camp life did not carry any sign of cultural division as the case in Amari. As I said, most of the refugees here shared the simple life of rural villages, whereas in Amari the refugees came from different social and cultural layers.*"¹⁹⁷

More thorough studies may well reveal a relationship between the conflicts in Amari and other camps and relations among villages and towns that existed before 1948. (In many cases, villagers that had lived side by side before 1948 faced each other again within the same refugee camp.)

Spatial Order within Quarters

Early archival plans also show that within quarters a spatial/ social micro order of family clusters emerged. Members of a particular family (often multi-generational) would group together, reproducing small-scale *hosh*-like clusters based on villages or cities of origin, which would form a sub-ordering system within the quarter. Such spatial mini-clusters were formed initially through the circular or block-like arrangements of Red Cross tents. Within the next years such clusters were reinforced through the addition of self-built mud or stone structures to protect against the harsh winter climate. Most of these self-financed structures had tin roofs and varied in size and quality according to the family's financial means. Often family compounds included small-scale fields or grazing areas and were bounded by low walls constructed from found material such as field stones.

This spatial-social order of family clusters and quarters was deeply inscribed into the public consciousness of the camp residents and remains so today, although it has been exposed to a dynamic process that has significantly altered its role in everyday life. In some ways, the spatial order that characterised camp life in the

¹⁹⁶ source: interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

¹⁹⁷ source: interview with Abu Khalil Al-Laham, community leader and PLC member, August 8, 2006.

first decades is comparable to the spatial order of a typical city centre within the Islamic cultural context. It relied on an equally strong spatial ordering system of “*hosh*” (courtyard shared by extended family), “*hara*” (quarter but also sometimes describing a clan; called “*mahalla*” in Central Asia), and the notion of belonging to the city as a whole. The organisation of old city centres such as Nablus, Hebron, and Aleppo is still based on this principle.

The Role of UNRWA in the Early Planning of Camps

Curiously, UNRWA’s archival plans make no reference to the quarters. Indeed, no official UNRWA records could be found confirming the existence of quarters. Clearly the agency attributed little significance to their existence, which leaves many questions unanswered. Did UNRWA make any attempts to enforce a more even distribution of land? Did the agency have the will – or power – to enforce such rules? ROSEMARY SAYIGH (2006) writes: *“We still do not know enough about how the first camps were set up. Particularly interesting is the question of whether UNRWA officials responsible for this operation encouraged, or simply allowed, the clustering of people from the same village in quarters within camps. The political and cultural effects of such ‘re-gathering’ of villages had an importance that increased as the implementation of Resolution 194 became ever more distant. More could be said about the effects of village ‘re-gathering’, but I’ll restrict myself here to one: that while embodying the humiliation of refugeedom, the camps also came to hold a quite contrary meaning and values, as spatial substitute for the lost land of Palestine, to be preserved and defended. Because camp populations were in great majority rural in origin, peasant culture was valued and reproduced, however debated against ‘modernity’, however modified and ‘nationalised’. This shared subjective meaning of camps as representing the ‘watan’ forms a bond between constituent homes, and helps explain, for example, the extraordinary degree of mutual help shown by families under siege.”*

(2) Stage 2:

Consolidation: Formal Planning versus Informal Growth (1955–1967)

In the mid 1950s UNRWA launched the first large-scale shelter building programme, which aimed to replace the Red Cross tents with standardized shelter units. This first and only attempt to formally plan the entire camp layout followed the same post-war rational modernist planning principles that were tested and implemented in European cities and in military camps. Several archival documents exist from different planning stages of this programme and suggest that planning progressed over several years. For Amari, two plans were found at UNRWA’s FECSO (Jerusalem) archive: the planning of a first block from 1955 and a later plan from 1957 (→ 098), covering the entire area of the camp. A similar plan for Deheishe dated 1957 (→ 114) was also retrieved. No documents of Fawwar from this period have been located.

Underlying Principles of UNRWA’s Shelter Building Programme

All plans were evidently drafted by the same engineering office and are based on the following principles:

- **Tabula Rasa:**

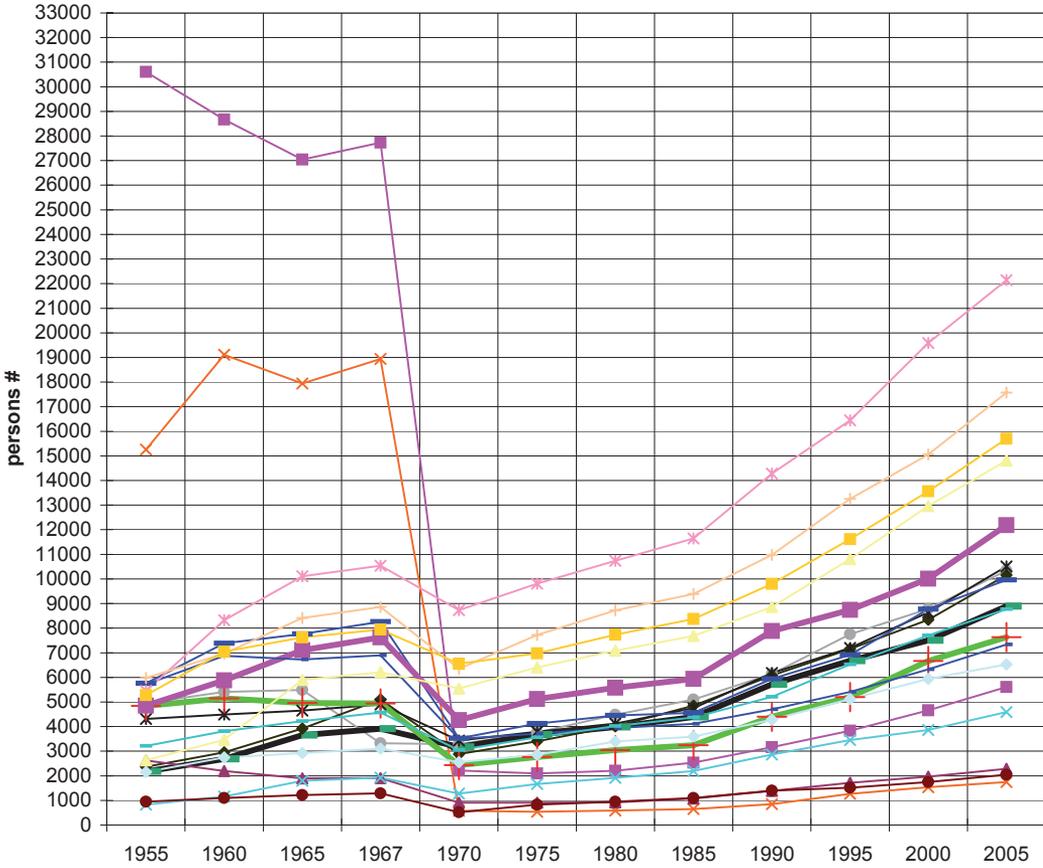
The new planning scheme disregarded how social and spatial orders such as streets, quarters, and family clusters had evolved and proposed a radical re-planning based on complete demolition of existing fabric.

- **Division of Functions:**

The rational layout was based on strict divisions of zones (a distinct zone for UNRWA services, zones for shelter buildings, a zone for water collection points, and public toilets, all served by a strictly hierarchical access road system).

- **Superimposition of a Formal Grid:**

All shelters were to be arranged according to a superimposed grid, divided into clearly demarcated blocks, consisting of approximately twenty individual plots and surrounded by wide streets and large open spaces. In Amari, the grid is arbitrarily derived from the directionality of the boundary between the camp and a neighbouring plot to the south. Deheishe’s hilly terrain led to a grid that follows the topographical bend in the valley. In both plans, little respect was paid to previously existing infrastructures, such as pathways and property lines, nor indeed were the many self-built structures taken into account. Although in Amari the original road remained, in Deheishe the plan completely ignored the old and at the time still very important path that meanders up the hill towards Bethlehem.



→ 090

Comparing Population Trends in West Bank Refugee Camps

Legend

- Deheishe Jaber Persons
- × Ein Sultan Persons
- Shufat Persons
- Amari Persons
- ◆ Kalandia Persons
- ▲ Deir Ammar Persons
- ✱ Jalazone Persons
- + Fawwar Persons
- Arroub Persons
- Dheisheh Persons
- × Ayda Persons
- Far'a Persons
- Camp No. 1 Persons
- Askar Persons
- ▲ Balata Persons
- ✱ Tulkarem Persons
- + Nur Shams Persons
- Jenin Persons

Refugee Camp	Private	Govern.	Waqf	Enemy Property
1 Far'a	100%	0%	0%	0%
2 Camp No.1	100%	0%	0%	0%
3 Askar	100%	0%	0%	0%
4 Balata	100%	0%	0%	0%
5 Tulkarem	100%	0%	0%	0%
6 Nur Shams	53.64%	40.90%	5.46%	0%
7 Jenin	86.32%	5.81%	7.75%	0.12%
8 Shu'fat	95.16%	0%	0%	4.84%
9 Amari	100%	0%	0%	0%
10 Qalandiya	12.99%	2.37%	0%	84.64%
11 Deir Ammar	91.18%	0%	8.82%	0%
12 Jalazone	99.31%	0.69%	0%	0%
13 Aqabat Jaber	100%	0%	0%	0%
14 Ein El Sultan	99.94%	0.06%	0%	0%
15 Fawwar	100%	0%	0%	0%
16 Arroub	77.95%	21.91%	0%	0.14%
17 Deheishe	0%	10.24%	0%	89.76%
18 Aida	100%	0%	0%	0%
19 Beit Jibreen	100%	0%	0%	0%



→ 092

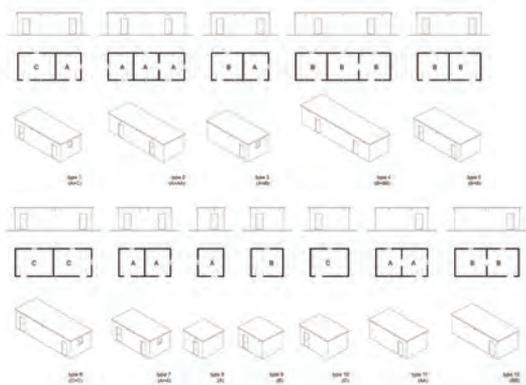
Balata Camp 1949

An early photograph of Balata Refugee Camp near the city of Nablus.

→ 091

Comparison of Original 1948 Ownership Status of West Bank Camp Lands

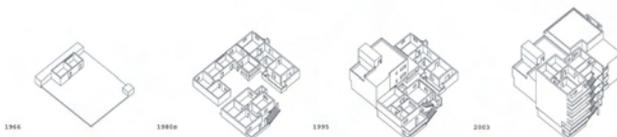
Source: A. Taleb, "Real Estate Sector Inside the Refugee Camps", UNRWA-commissioned report, 2007.



→ 093

UNRWA Shelter Typology

Shelter types used in UNRWA's 1950s shelter construction programme.



→ 095

Shu'fat Shelter Growth

Reconstruction of the evolution of a shelter based on interviews with residents (September 2003)



→ 094

From Tent to UNRWA Shelter

In the 1950s, UNRWA launched a large-scale shelter construction programme to replace the Red Cross tents of 1948.



→ 096

Verticalisation

An abandoned UNRWA shelter from the 1950s remains between 6 and seven storey buildings.



→ 097

Amari Camp (1955) – Tents and Huts

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary (since 1950)
- Red Cross/ UNRWA tents
- self-built huts
- mosque
- existing buildings outside camp boundary
- UNRWA installations

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



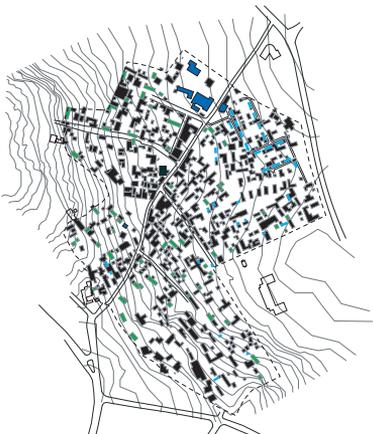
→ 098

Amari Camp (1957) – UNRWA's Shelter Building Plan

Legend

- planned shelters and plot layout in accordance with 1950s shelter building programme
- existing UNRWA installations

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



→ 099

Amari Camp (1972) – Horizontal Growth

Legend

- shelter constructed in the position proposed by UNRWA's 1957 planning scheme

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



→ 100 - 105

Amari Camp – Comparative Views (1987 - 2007)



→ 106

Amari Camp (1988) – Densification

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary (since 1950)
- shelters/ buildings
- mosque
- UNRWA installations
- trees

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



→ 107

Amari Camp (1997) – Verticalisation

Source: based on archival plan, PCBS Ramallah



→108

Amari Camp (2005) – Saturation

Source: based on camp survey conducted by FECSO (UNRWA WBFO), 2005/2006



→ 109
Amari Camp – 1957
3D Visualisation of Historical Evolution



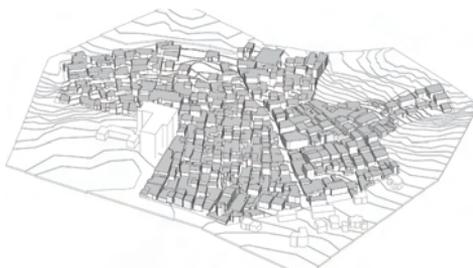
→ 110
Amari Camp – 1972



→ 111
Amari Camp – 1988



→ 112
Amari Camp – 1997



→ 113
Amari Camp – 2005



→ 114

Deheishe Camp (1957) – UNRWA's Shelter Building Plan

Legend

- - camp boundary
- self-built huts
- mosque
- planned shelters and plot layout in accordance with 1950s shelter building programme
- UNRWA installations

Source: based on archival plan, FECSSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



→ 115

Deheishe Camp (1997) – Densification

Source: based on archival plan, PCBS Ramallah



→ 116

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Saturation

Source: OFEK Aerial Survey of WB refugee camps, commissioned with funds of the pilot research project



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



Source: UNRWA photo archive, Gaza



→ 117 - 122

Deheishe Camp – Comparative Views (1987 - 2007)

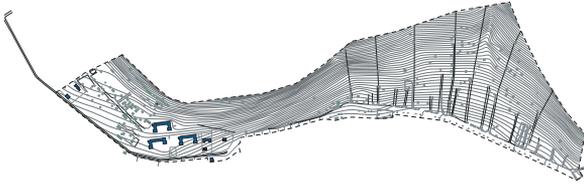
→123

Fawwar Camp (1950) – Tents and Huts

Legend

- camp boundary
- self-built huts
- UNRWA installations

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



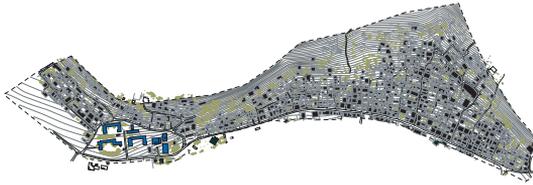
→ 124

Fawwar Camp (1988) – Horizontal Growth

Legend

- camp boundary
- trees
- shelters/ buildings
- mosque
- UNRWA installations

Source: based on archival plan, FECSO archive, UNRWA WBFO



→125

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Densification

Source: OFEK Aerial Survey of WB refugee camps, commissioned with funds of the pilot research project





→ 126 - 130
Fawwar Camp – Comparative Views (1987 - 2007)

→ 131

Amari Camp (1955) – Camp Quarters

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- Deir Tarif
- Salouseh
- Lifta
- Lydd
- Malha
- Naani
- Salameh
- mix (Naani, Lydd, Ramleh)
- mix (Naani, Ramleh)

Source: Amari CSO, 2006

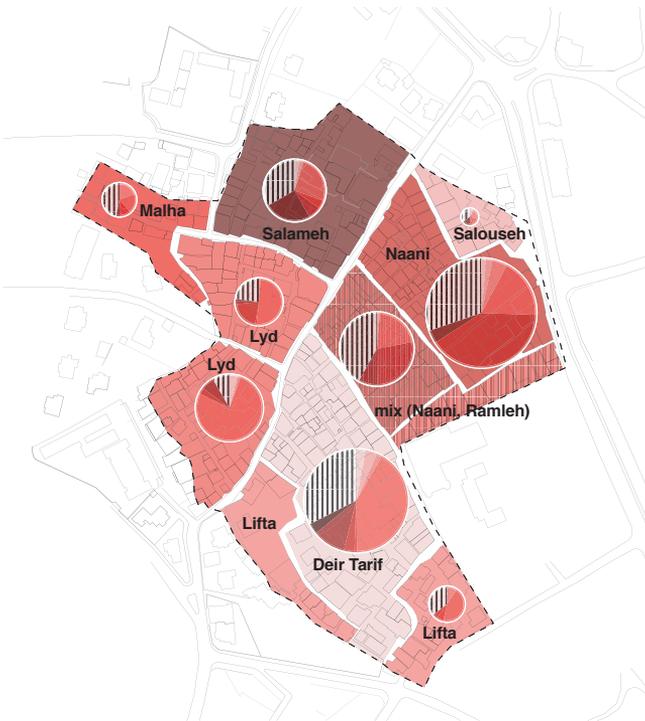
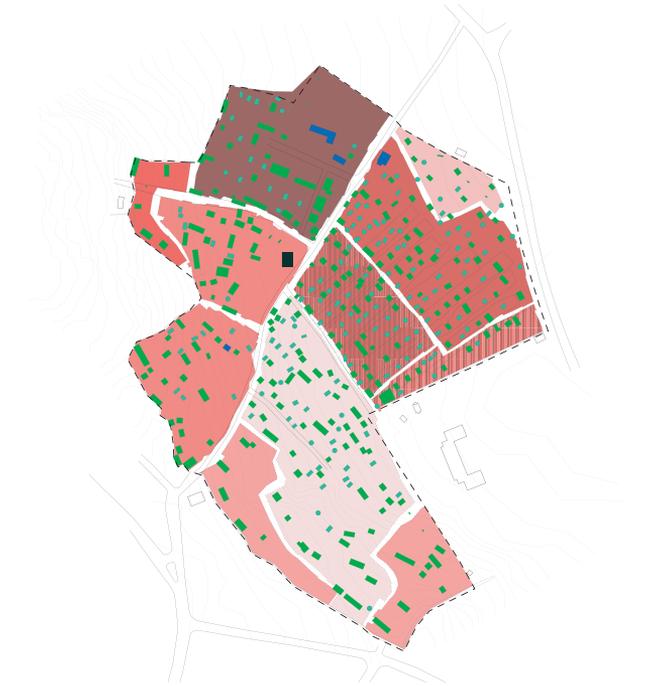
→ 132

Amari Camp (2006) – Quarter Population Versus Place of Origin

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- Deir Tarif
- Jaffa
- Lifta
- Lydd
- Malha
- Naani
- ramlah
- Salameh
- mix

Source: Amari CSO, 2006



• Standardized Shelter Units:

The intention was to replace all tents and self-built mud and stone shelters with single-storey standardized shelter units (of approximately 20 square metres each, or about one room per family of up to five members, two rooms for families with more than five members), built from light-weight materials, such as hollow concrete blocks. The shelters were to follow the standard UNRWA typology of A, B, and C (→ 093).

Realpolitik on the Ground

Later records, such as the 1972 Amari plan (→ 099), suggest that the UNRWA schemes for both Deheishe and Amari, as well as similar plans for other camps, were not fully implemented. This is especially clear in the case of Amari, where there is almost no trace of directionality or grid layout in the camp today. For Deheishe, some parts of the camp, particularly the central part, follow the grid layout, while in other parts the layout of the buildings bears no trace of it. Particularly striking is the fact that the ancient pathway meandering towards Bethlehem remains today in exactly the same location as when it was mapped on the 1957 plan. It is most likely that the shelter building schemes were more or less shelved, either due to a lack of funds or to resistance encountered within the camp community (for example political objections to normalisation that would undermine the Right of Return). Implementation of the scheme would also have meant demolishing most of the self-built structures in times of extreme hardship, while the shelter units planned by UNRWA would have been significantly smaller than the tents and emergency shelters combined. As the camp community already developed a sense of “ownership” over such entirely self-financed structures, their demolition would have been extremely unpopular and probably only possible through costly compensation. It seems most likely that refugees used their entitlement to UNRWA’s shelter units but decided themselves where to place them. A comparison of the 1957 and 1978 archival plans for Amari suggests that such units were simply placed next to the tents and self-built structures, thereby consolidating rather than replacing the pattern of family *hoshes* and leading to a horizontal densification of the camp territory.

The partial failure of the shelter-building programme in the case of Amari and Deheishe suggests a significant precedent from which present planning schemes might be able to draw some important lessons. The more informal forces of everyday life within the camps collided with a planning bureaucracy that was oblivious to existing realities. The outcome of this collision suggests that, despite the relatively authoritarian and unchallenged rule of UNRWA at the time, grass roots power was not only present but in some cases was even stronger than external planning regimes. The informally evolved spatial and social orders inside the camps, including the system of quarters, proved effective and began to be consolidated. Unfortunately, records of discussions held during the planning or evaluation phases of the shelter building programmes have not been kept in UNRWA’s Jerusalem archive. UNRWA’s shelter building grid was implemented in other West Bank refugee camps such as Balata, Jalazone, and (later) Shu’fat and can still be seen today.

(3) Stage 3:

Internal Social/ Spatial Re-organisation and Horizontal Growth (1967–1987)

The beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967 had an ambiguous effect on life in the West Bank refugee camps. In the Jericho camps, up to 80% of the population fled and was not allowed to return. In the West Bank itself, between 5% and 30% of each camp’s population fled the advancing Israeli forces and were later denied the right to re-enter Israeli occupied territory. This meant that many families were separated and refugees found themselves starting again with nothing in Jordan. On the other hand, the geopolitical change also created some surprising new opportunities for the impoverished population that remained.

Internal Re-organisation, Horizontal Growth, and Densification

The departure of parts of the population created new spaces for the remaining residents of the crowded camps. Abandoned shelters and plots were quickly absorbed by needy refugees within the camp and helped to ease some of the serious overcrowding. UNRWA was partially involved in this re-distribution, but it is widely assumed that many shelters were also sold.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, the early period of Israeli occupation

¹⁹⁸ For a detailed discussion of the emerging real estate market, see: Taleb, Adwan. “Real Estate Sector inside the Refugee Camps in West Bank”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2007.

was characterised by relative improvement in socioeconomic conditions. In the early 1970s, the Israeli employment market slowly opened to Palestinians who found low-skilled jobs mainly in the building and construction industries. In addition, an increasing number of young refugees who had been through UNRWA's educational system found work as migrant labourers in other Arab states, for example in the Gulf region. These new employment opportunities were enthusiastically embraced by a second generation of refugees (born in the camps) eager to meet the financial requirements of marrying and starting independent households. Earnings were quickly re-invested in constructing additional shelter spaces (according to custom the husband is expected to be able to provide for his new family before marriage), and the camps experienced their first significant construction booms, which led to a period of "horizontal" expansion. The hybrid structures of UNRWA shelters and earlier mud or stone huts were extended with additional rooms and basic services such as outside kitchenettes or toilets. In some instances, UNRWA shelters were demolished entirely and replaced by larger concrete structures. Consequently, the low-density fabric of shelter clusters surrounded by gardens and utility spaces was gradually transformed into a homogeneous single-storey carpet, punctuated by the few remaining gardens. The previously wide streets and open spaces shrank or gradually disappeared. At the time, UNRWA strictly prohibited the construction of second or third storeys, which led to a further acceleration of horizontal growth.

Informal Extensions outside the UNRWA Camp Boundaries and Increasing Segregation

Although socioeconomic conditions generally improved for the entire camp population, some families managed to exploit new opportunities more effectively than others, depending on available skills and education and the readiness and ability to work under tough conditions. The first process of economic segregation therefore also marks the post-1970 period. Segregation took effect within the camp as newly earned money was invested in upgrading and extending shelters. As space became rare again, some refugees chose to invest in a new life and status outside the camp, and a first period of significant "out-migration" began. In the case of Amari, more than 300 of the more affluent families bought relatively cheap land outside of the camp and began to construct new houses, some the size of villas, amongst the non-refugee Palestinian communities. They also rented apartments, as affordable apartments could easily be found at the time. This move freed up some more space inside the camp in addition to spaces abandoned by 1967 refugees and generated significant internal mobility. In many cases, refugees were able to enlarge their plots by buying the neighbouring shelter. The "out-migration" fundamentally transformed the camp's spatial setting as well as its relation with the surrounding urban or rural context. The new areas outside of the UNRWA camp boundaries will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.5 "Camp Borders, Overspill, and Informal Extensions". See also (→ 210, 211).

The Choice of Some Individuals to Leave the Camp

Some economically successful refugees also chose to suspend their refugee status and cut off all connection to the camps and UNRWA. They adopted an urban lifestyle in cities like Ramallah and Jerusalem, or they migrated abroad. The second and third generations of refugees that had gone through UNRWA's education system provided a highly able and sought-after work force in the Gulf. Many were able to acquire scholarships or take advantage of work opportunities in the Gulf, Europe, or the US while continuing to support their families in the camps.

The Emergence of a New Social and Spatial Order in the Camps

Internal mobility and migration had profound effects on the camps' social order and culture. Various transitions could be identified:

• The Transition from Closed to Open Quarters:

As camp residents began to move more freely inside the camp and new households were set up regardless of quarter "belonging", the internal spatial logic of coherent quarters gradually lost importance – a process that could be described as the slow erosion of established boundaries within the camp. Traditional rivalries between families (or between villagers and townfolk) typical in camps such as Amari declined, and inter-marriage became more acceptable.

• The Transition from Cluster to Block:

During the process of horizontal growth, the morphology of the camp changed dramatically as increasingly solid blocks began to emerge from independent clusters. The streets and lanes that had marked the borders of the quarters from the beginning now became indistinguishable from the lanes and alleys surrounding the blocks. Slowly a spatial order emerged based on blocks rather than quarters. Camp blocks can

be distinguished according to size as well as internal densities and structure. (For more thorough discussion of the different block types, see section 2.2.3 “Block and House: Growth, Spatial Organisation, Risks”)

• **The Transition from Growth of Camp Identity:**

Over the decades, the camp became a primary source of identification, and reference points grew for its residents. In the early stages, identification with the camp evolved around the experience of facing and defending the community against external threats and conflicts with hostile neighbours. Particularly in the conservative, rural, and closely-knit cultural environment of the West Bank, indigenous Palestinians often felt threatened by the presence of refugees. In addition, camps were highly policed zones, and their inhabitants were subjected to various forms of intimidation. The new economic opportunities of the 1970s accelerated the formation of camp identity, making it easier for second- and third-generation refugees to set up their own households, and living conditions were improved. The construction of new and more modern family “homes” also facilitated a new and more positive identity as members of a camp community rather than of a particular familiar or tribal network. Growing political mobilisation, which led to the first intifada, also served to generate more self-confidence amongst refugees. (For a detailed discussion of community mobilisation, see chapter 2.3)

• **Rise of Informal Real Estate Markets in the Camps:**

The internal reorganisation was facilitated by new practices of buying, selling, swapping, and renting shelters. According to UNRWA’s regulations, this practice is considered “informal” or “illegal”, as it contradicts the legal basis of the terms of temporary expropriation of the camp territory. However, neither UNRWA nor other authorities were able to exercise control over this development and quickly chose to turn a blind eye to it.¹⁹²

(4) Stage 4:

Verticalisation (1987–2006)

The last stage of camp evolution is extremely complex, and the discussion here can only focus on selected aspects that have changed and continue to change the fabric of the camps and form the background of urgency that has triggered UNRWA’s camp improvement initiative. A more detailed discussion of other equally relevant aspects will be conducted in other chapters. (For diversification and urbanisation, see section 2.2.1; for politicisation and the emergence of camp institutions, see chapter 2.3)

Verticalisation

The years of the first intifada marked a radical turning point in the lives of Palestinian refugees. The politicisation of camp life and the formation of Popular (or Local) Committees are discussed in more detail in section 2.3.2. A significant by-product of this new sense of “refugee emancipation” was also the diminishing of UNRWA’s control over informal construction inside the camps. Although rules strictly prohibited the construction of second and third storeys, refugees began to ignore these rules and – in the context of the general political unrest, hardship, and instability – UNRWA was unable to enforce them. An unprecedented construction boom set in that continued throughout the 1990s. For all West Bank camps (although to different degrees) a period of verticalisation began. Amongst the three case study camps, this was most pronounced in Amari. In 1990 UNRWA formally consented to the construction of second storeys. Although after 1991 only two storeys were officially allowed, refugees expanded beyond this. UNRWA continues to refuse to take responsibility for construction beyond the second storey. From 1995 to 1996 UNRWA did not challenge verticalisation but simply asked refugees to sign release forms that would relieve the agency of responsibility in the case of building collapse.

¹⁹² For a more detailed discussion of the status of ownership of shelters and the rise of the real estate market, see: Taleb, Adwan. “Real Estate Sector inside the Refugee Camps in West Bank”, research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2007.

Congestion

The birth and maturation of the third and fourth generations of refugees resulted in a sharp demographic increase. At the same time, the preceding construction boom had long since exhausted all spatial resources consisting of open and abandoned spaces inside the camp boundaries. The limits of horizontal expansions had been reached. The decline of employment and rise in political instability during the years of the intifada meant that fewer people were able to afford to “buy” a new life outside of the camp. This situation did not change during the re-establishment of relative stability during the Oslo years. The return of many Diaspora Palestinians and relative peace triggered an unprecedented construction boom and led to a surge in land prices. The socioeconomic gap between Ramallah/ Al-Bireh residents and the residents of Amari Camp, for instance, became wider, and it became unaffordable for most residents to buy land or property outside the camp perimeters.

Economic Collapse

With the beginning of the second intifada, the Palestinian economy collapsed once again, and job opportunities in Israel were eventually cut off completely after Israel constructed the Separation Wall. Unemployment and poverty levels surged. In addition, frequent curfews and the increase of road closures significantly impacted refugees’ daily life. Almost all spatial resources created by verticalisation during the construction boom of the 1990s had also been exhausted. Structural dangers increased dramatically with the construction of fourth, fifth, and even sixth stories. Today camps are approaching full saturation. At the same time, and in spite of the general economic crisis, rent and property prices in the surrounding urban areas continue to rise (to approximately \$300 monthly rent per apartment in a refugee camp), and land (at approximately \$100,000 per plot) has become too expensive for most refugees to afford. Camp residents are “trapped”, struggling to afford life inside the camps but unable to leave. UNRWA has not developed a strategy to accommodate natural growth in the coming years.

To summarize, the current situation is characterized by:

- **Saturation and the Threat of Physical Collapse:**

The limits of vertical and horizontal expansion have almost been reached. Yet demographic growth continues dramatically. Most structures inside the camp will not be able to withstand further verticalisation, and many buildings already show signs of structural damage (see section 2.2.3 “Block and House: Growth, Spatial Organisation, Risks”)

- **Uneven Distribution of Density:**

The intense construction of the last 15 years has had a polarizing effect on the fabric of the camp, making inequality acute. While some areas were able to absorb the growth, others (particularly those that were dense from the outset) have developed drastic levels of congestion (see section 2.2.2 “Building and Population Density”).

- **Quantity at the Expense of Quality and Safety:**

The horizontal and vertical growth of private shelters shrank access lanes, streets, and open communal spaces to the bare minimum. In emergency situations, most camp areas are inaccessible to fire engines, ambulances, etc. Daily life is characterised by health risks such as lack of ventilation, and natural light (see section 2.2.3 “Block and House: Growth, Spatial Organisation, Risks”)

- **Danger of Socioeconomic Collapse:**

The almost complete loss of employment opportunities in Israel because of the Separation Wall has led to a dramatic increase in poverty. The international boycott of the PA and economic collapse has meant that traditional multi-generational family support systems have regained importance and are once again the prime mechanism of survival.

2.2

Spatial-physical Analysis

2.2.1 Land Use and Zoning

The following section is an interpretation of new land use surveys that were conducted by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project 200, providing hitherto unavailable insight into the current levels of diversification and urbanisation. I will discuss the most clearly identifiable land use categories, focusing on their spatial characteristics and dispositions within the camps. All categories are spatially defined in a zoning plan, followed by a short discussion of the most pressing issues and needs, but also potentials from an urban planning point of view.

(1) The UNRWA Campus

The most striking feature in each of the camps is the presence of the UNRWA compound. It is immediately recognizable through its standardized white-washed architecture and the presence of UN symbols, most notably its flag. Although most compounds evolved over time, many buildings can be traced back to the foundation years of the camp. The location of the compound has largely remained fixed. New additions and extensions may have altered its shape or led to expansions, in Amari's case, disjointed from the main compound. In most cases, the compound is split into two zones. One zone for UNRWA's core service functions: This includes UNRWA's camp administration offices for the Camp Service Officer (CSO) and his staff – with offices, parking, and meeting rooms – the Distribution Centre, and the Health Centre. Other centres, such as the Women's Programme Centre, Rehabilitation Centre, and Youth Centre (see figs. X, X, X), were mostly constructed within the campus, since they only later became independent community based organisations (CBOs). The second zone mostly includes the UNRWA run schools. Generally each refugee camp has at least one Girls' School and one Boys' School. In the case of Fawwar and Deheishe, the two compounds are joined together, whereas in Amari, two separate school compounds were constructed in the 1980s beyond the camp's boundaries.

Problems and Constraints

UNRWA compounds have come under considerable strain over the years. In all three case studies, the compounds are crowded and cannot accommodate their expanded functions, especially in Amari, which has one of the smallest compounds among the West Bank camps. In the medium term, solutions will need to be found for providing new spaces outside their present boundaries. This is especially pressing for Amari and to a certain extent Deheishe and should be considered in strategic plans for these camps. A second challenge for UNRWA's camp improvement programme is to develop more imaginative solutions for connecting the UNRWA compounds to the rest of the camps. Despite the obvious security advantages of perimeter walls and barbed wire security (camps are often exposed to Israeli military raids or might be subjected to theft of UNRWA property), this strict separation sends out a message of authoritarian "divide and rule". The compound's forbidding architecture also contradicts UNRWA's commitment to community participation and the advocacy of rights that have become cornerstones of UNRWA's latest reform efforts.

The gradual transition of Women's Programme Centres, Rehabilitation Centres, and Youth Centres from UNRWA-controlled organisations to community-controlled CBOs presents an important precedent of integration. In all three camps, these transitions led to a slow erosion of the campus' boundaries. This development received further impetus in Deheishe, where a new cluster of civil society institutions – like the Finiq and Ibd'a cultural centres – were built in close proximity to the CBOs. Should UNRWA's mandate change in the future, this process of integration could pave the way for municipal style "self-rule" or at least a more significant participation of refugees in the organisation of camp services.

Potentials

Integration can take a number of forms. It might include imaginative architectural interventions along walls and buildings, new openings, new access points, and outdoor programmes for camp residents. These need not be expensive and would deliver the following benefits:

²⁰⁰ Land use surveys were conducted in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar camps between December 2005 and December 2006 and formed an important basis for the strategic planning pilot 2006/ 2007. The author of this dissertation led a team of local researchers including Sami Mura, Rami Rishmawi and Salam Khourym within the framework of the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation.

- They would build up a new image of UNRWA as a service provider, which works together with civil society institutions in the camp
- They would give an impetus to the development of urban centres. In both Amari and Deheishe, the UNRWA campuses are situated in close proximity to the main civil service institutions and business concentrations, which would benefit from an opening of the campuses.
- They would boost living standards and cultural life in the camp. Many UNRWA institutions such as schools and their adjacent athletic grounds remained closed after school hours, although there is demand for facilities for after-school gatherings and cultural activities.²⁰¹

(2) Residential Zones

Camps slowly developed from a clear structure into mono-functional shelter zones and from emergency relief zones into diversified urban settings. This process is most discernible in the homogeneous shelter clusters have evolved to accommodate all aspects of everyday needs. These zones have now become differentiated by the development of commercial clusters and areas with social and cultural functions. In this land-use analysis, only the areas still dominated by residential programmes have been defined as “residential zones”. For the purposes of this case study I have defined “residential zones” as dominated by private residential functions. Such areas include:

- Private open spaces (courtyards, gardens, and abandoned plots)
- Small scale agricultural or farming plots and gardens, inside buildings, yards, and rooftop terraces
- Small isolated shops, businesses, and workshops that mostly serve camp quarters

Residential zones constitute 57% of the total area of Amari, 57% of Deheishe, and 49% of Fawwar. These statistics show that residential zones still dominate all three camps. Intense overcrowding and structural risks indicate that these are likely to remain the zones with the most urgent planning needs.

In both Amari and Deheishe, a commercial corridor divides the residential areas into two large sub-areas on either side of the main street. In Fawwar, the main street skirts the camp along its southern border. Further subdivisions are formed through secondary streets, creating a spatial subdivision that almost precisely corresponds to the traditional quarter structure. (The camps’ division into sub-areas, neighbourhoods, quarters, and blocks is discussed in detail in section the following section 2.2.2 “Building and Population Density”). This spatial structure could be used as the basis for an improvement project, e.g. introducing playgrounds, public open spaces for recreation and festivities, or parking lots. In the following sections, the residential zones will be discussed in more detail, address their internal spatial/ social structure, their building and population density, structural risks, and access problems.

(3) Mixed-Use Zones and Commercial Activities

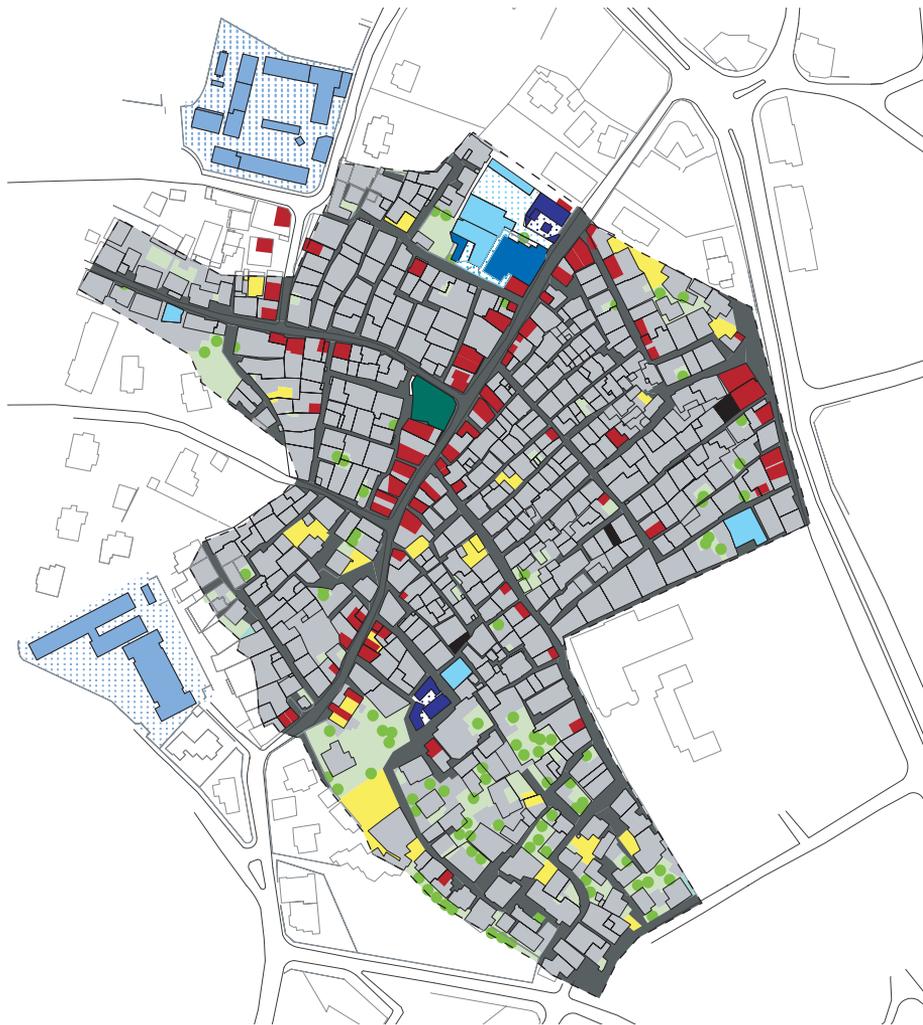
The presence of businesses and other commercial activities in refugee camps is one of the clearest indications of urbanisation. A recent study of the evolution of businesses in Deheishe conducted by JOSE DIBELLA in cooperation with UNRWA’s West Bank Research Office (2007)²⁰² has shown that 77% of businesses were set up after 1994 (→ 145). This indicates that urbanisation is part of the camp’s more recent history. Surprisingly, the study also revealed that 52% of the total businesses have been set up quite recently, in the period between 2001 and 2006.

This acceleration of entrepreneurialism in Deheishe coincides with other dramatic changes that have occurred since the outbreak of the second intifada. These include:

- Loss of jobs in Israel due to the Separation Wall and reduction of work permits: Many camp residents, forced to find alternative employment, started up businesses in the camp.
- Reorganisation of the Palestinian economy: The closing off of Jerusalem to West Bankers meant that busi-

²⁰¹ In this context, it would be vital to question, modify, or entirely revoke Agreement 301c between UNRWA and the United States, which was designed to prevent UNRWA facilities from being used by militant groups. The agreement was drafted during the height of the second intifada and made the use of UNRWA facilities by community groups strictly dependent on 24/7 security presence and microscopic monitoring. Since UNRWA cannot afford the cost of permanent security on all premises, the agreement has virtually stopped all extra-curricular activities in schools, offices, and other UNRWA facilities.

²⁰² Source: DiBella, J. M., “Mapping and Profiling Entrepreneurial Activity at Al Deheishe refugee camp in the West Bank”, Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori di Pavia, 2007.



→ 133

Amari Camp (2007) - Land Use

Legend

- | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| -- | UNRWA's official camp boundary | □ (light green) | open space maintained by NGOs |
| ■ (dark blue) | UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries | ■ (dark green) | mosques |
| □ (dotted) | UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries | ■ (red) | businesses |
| ■ (blue) | UNRWA installations outside camp boundaries | ■ (grey) | residential use |
| □ (dotted) | UNRWA open space outside camp boundaries | ■ (black) | vacant building |
| ■ (dark blue) | community-based organisations (CBOs) | ■ (light green) | private areas (unpaved including gardens) |
| □ (dotted) | open spaces maintained by CBOs | ■ (yellow) | private areas (paved) |
| ■ (light blue) | non-governmental institutions (NGOs) | ■ (green) | green (trees) |
| | | ■ (dark grey) | streets, lanes, pathways |



→ 134

Amari Camp (2007) – Zoning Plan

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- zone of UNRWA installations
- zone of institutions (CBOs, NGOs, mosques, cemetery)
- mixed use zone (businesses and residential functions)
- residential zone
- public zone (streets, public squares and parks)



→ 135

Amari Camp (2007) – Residential Zone

Legend

- residential area
- businesses
- vacant shelters
- private areas (unpaved)
- private areas (paved)
- green



→ 136

Amari Camp – Public Zone

Legend

- major streets
- secondary streets
- lanes



→ 137

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Land Use

Legend

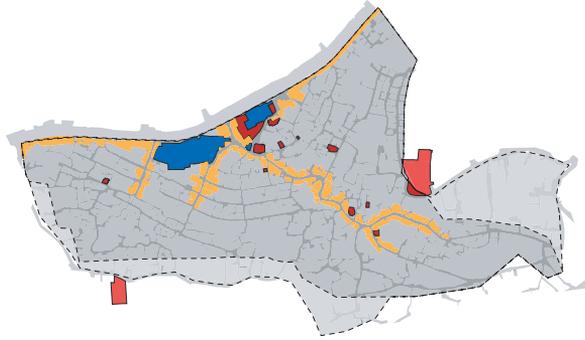
- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries
- UNRWA installations outside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space outside camp boundaries
- community-based organisations (CBOs)
- ▨ open spaces maintained by CBOs
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs)
- ▨ open space maintained by NGOs
- mosques
- businesses
- residential use
- vacant building
- private areas (unpaved including gardens)
- private areas (paved)
- green (trees)
- streets, lanes, pathways

→ 138

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Zoning Plan

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- zone of UNRWA installations
- zone of institutions (CBOs, NGOs, mosques, cemetery)
- mixed use zone (businesses and residential functions)
- residential zone
- public zone (streets, public squares and parks)



→ 139

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Residential Zone

Legend

- residential area
- businesses
- vacant shelters
- private areas (unpaved)
- private areas (paved)
- green



→ 140

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Public Zone

Legend

- major streets
- secondary streets
- lanes





→ 141

Fawwar Camp (2007) – Land Use

Legend

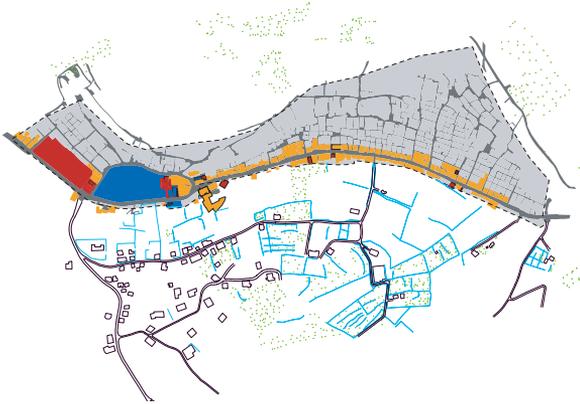
- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries
- UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries
- UNRWA installations outside camp boundaries
- UNRWA open space outside camp boundaries
- community-based organisations (CBOs)
- open spaces maintained by CBOs
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs)
- open space maintained by NGOs
- mosques
- businesses
- residential use
- vacant building
- private areas (unpaved including gardens)
- private areas (paved)
- green (trees)
- streets, lanes, pathways

→ 142

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Zoning Plan

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- zone of UNRWA installations
- zone of institutions (CBOs, NGOs, mosques, cemetery)
- mixed use zone (businesses and residential functions)
- residential zone
- public zone (streets, public squares and parks)



→ 143

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Residential Zone

Legend

- residential area
- businesses
- vacant shelters
- private areas (unpaved)
- private areas (paved)
- green

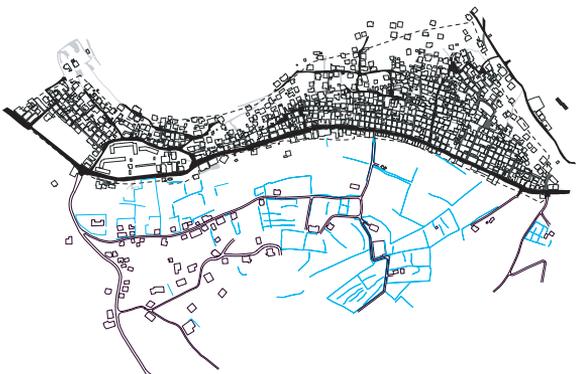


→ 144

Fawwar Camp – Public Zone

Legend

- major streets
- secondary streets
- lanes



Start-up Period of Business in Deheishe	%
1967-1986	15%
1987-1993	8%
1994-2000	25%
2001-2006	52%

→ 145

Business Survey, Deheishe Camp, 2007

Source: DiBella, J. M., "Mapping and Profiling Entrepreneurial Activity at Al Deheishe refugee camp in the West Bank", Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori di Pavia, 2007.

Camp	Total No.	Traders	Service Providers
Amari1	82	57	18
Deheishe2	107	83	24
Fawwar1	101	77	18

→ 146

Comparative Business Mapping Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar (2005-2007)

Source: DiBella, J. M., "Mapping and Profiling Entrepreneurial Activity at Al Deheishe refugee camp in the West Bank", Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori di Pavia, 2007.

Indicator	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
Total Camp Area ¹	106.2 (10.6)	333.426 (33.3)	274 (27.4)
Public Areas ²	20%	20%	19%
Residential Use ³	57%	57%	49%
Mixed Use ⁴	11%	16%	18%
NGOs, CBOs	3%	4%	4%
UNRWA ⁵	9%	3%	10%

→ 147

Comparison of Zones Amari, Deheishe, Fawwar

- 1 Area in Dunums (hectares) within UNRWA's official boundaries according to survey plans.
 In order to give a more realistic impression of daily life in the case study camps, both UNRWA school compounds (boys and girls), which are situated outside the boundaries were included in the calculations.
- 2 Public areas include all roads, public open spaces or parks.
- 3 Gross residential use areas (including private open spaces).
- 4 Gross mixed use areas, defined by a high percentage of commercial uses mixed with residential uses.
- 5 UNRWA installations such as schools, administrative area/ offices, etc.

nesses were forced to relocate. The Bethlehem/ Beit Jala/ Beit Sahour region and the Ramallah/ Al-Bireh/ Bitunia regions have experienced unprecedented growth, which began with the establishment of the PA and has now received renewed impetus. Deheishe's location in a region of relative economic growth has encouraged camp residents to invest in businesses more than in the other two camps. The Deheishe/ Doha section of the Hebron Road running right in front of the camp has become a flourishing business zone. Although DiBELLA (2007) states that 73.8% of all customers of Deheishe-run businesses are still camp dwellers, the tendency is towards more economic interaction between the camp and its neighbours.

Understanding the full economic impact on camps of recent geopolitical changes requires more research. However, what can be stated here is that in terms of total numbers of businesses, the three case study camps have a similar business profile. However, the breakdown of business profiles suggests that the local economies in Amari and Deheishe, both located in well functioning urban regions, are more geared towards external interaction than Fawwar, which is located in an isolated rural area (→ 146).

From Dispersed Businesses to Clusters and Zones

The trend towards interaction with the outside is also confirmed by a more spatial reading of recent changes. DiBELLA (2007) has shown that the process of recent growth of the commercial sector in Deheishe did not simply mean that more businesses were added. The growth is connected to a spatial logic: *"A comparison with a map provided by PCBS [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics], which marked business locations during the census of 1997, clearly showed that most of the businesses located outside of the main access roads into the camp have disappeared in the last ten years, and the new ones have clustered in main access roads..."*²⁰³

In Deheishe, emerging business clusters can be found in three areas: (1) along the Jerusalem-Hebron Road, which marks the northern boundary of the camp; (2) along the historical road towards Bethlehem, which meanders through the centre of the camp and is considered to be its main entrance; (3) along a second internal camp road that enters the camp near the UNRWA school compound and faces the Doha municipality building across the road. As DiBELLA (2007) points out: *"Even if no official or strategic urban plan that authorizes or controls the location of new activities inside the camp currently exists, the camp business sector behaves like the market in an urban environment, where certain areas have a higher value because of their vicinity to main roads and other places with normal and constant influx of people during daytime hours."* Up until the 1980s, camp businesses served local needs almost exclusively and were therefore located in the centres of the various camp quarters. The new "location-factor", which now persuades businessmen to invest within the three main business clusters, suggests a new entrepreneurial spirit fuelled by the attempt to attract more customers from other camp quarters and from outside. This development gives a new face to the camp. The change could not be more extreme. The camp, surrounded by forbidding fencing set up by Israel's military to secure control over the road during the first intifada, used to hide its social and commercial life deep inside the maze of the urban fabric. Following the withdrawal of the army and the onset of regional development, Deheishe now boasts a bustling and inviting entrepreneurial facade, offering trade and services. This process of change could be described as one of exteriorisation.

A similar development can be observed in Amari. Here three clusters have emerged: (1) along the central road bisecting the camp; (2) along the northern entry road into the camp; and (3) along the "facade" of the camp towards the Jerusalem-Ramallah Road, with its car dealerships, garages, and furniture stores. In Fawwar, paradoxically, military road closures affecting thousands of southern West Bankers have provided new business opportunities for the camp. Its main access road has been transformed from a simple camp access road to a through road used by tens of thousands of the region's villagers and townspeople. While the road is still in appalling condition, it has the potential to develop into an economic zone serving the camp as well as passing traffic.

More research is necessary to understand whether the trend towards exteriorisation also impacts the complex network of micro-businesses. Hundreds of women in the camps work from home, with businesses that include hairdressing, other cosmetic services, and sewing. Micro-businesses which once only served a small local customer clientele, usually family relations, are now transforming into small enterprises.

²⁰³

source: J. M. DiBella, "Mapping and Profiling Entrepreneurial Activity at Deheishe Refugee Camp in the West Bank", op cit., 2007.

Contrary to DiBELLA's study, I have deliberately refrained from defining these emerging commercial clusters strictly as "commercial zones". Businesses tend to be set up on ground-floor levels of structures, with residential areas above. Streets have not yet developed continual commercial facades. Business and residential facades often alternate. If business development continues to grow, it is possible that purely commercial zones might emerge, but for now this remains speculation. Camp improvement, however, will need to address the needs of the current mixed zones in order to help their consolidation and future growth as a means to stop soaring unemployment. Camp improvement activities might include:

- Planning for better vehicle access and possible parking facilities for major business clusters in order to attract more outside customers. By creating more inviting entrances into Amari and Deheishe, pedestrian traffic might provide opportunities for business expansion.
- Planning new commercial zones for outside customers.
- Joining forces with Local Committees and other camp organisations to establish business organisations. DiBELLA (2007) mentions the need to set up a local business association that could coordinate and support internal business activities and lobby on their behalf.
- Ensuring that regional planning initiatives strengthen the interest of its business community. The case of the GTZ-sponsored master plan for Ramallah, Bitunia, and Al-Bireh so far does not include the camps, and no formal link or joint discussion platform has been set up address this. Plans for the development of the Anton mountain range to the south and east of Deheishe are being drafted by Doha municipality and include the planning of a new access road. Here, relations between Doha and Deheishe are well developed, but no concerted effort has been made to consider the full potential of this plan for the development of the camp's business sector.

(4) Zone of Institutions

"Centre" is a dynamic notion in refugee camps. Over the past six decades, camp centres have radically transformed several times. A detailed overview of this transformation process goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. To illustrate the changes, we will contrast what constituted "centrality" in the first decades of the camp with the way the term is used by camp residents today. Early plans of all three camps reveal that "centre" would have been understood as the centrally located access point to collective water and food supplies, as well as to public washing facilities. Following an almost generic pattern, facilities were located in a central, large open space, easily accessible by foot from all parts of the camp. Archival plans of Amari (→ 097, 098) show a central open space along the main camp road between the mosque and the water distribution centre and indicates latrines. In Deheishe, water tanks and UNRWA's distribution centre were located in the northern section of the main internal camp road close to the mosque (→ 114, 115). Although those plans give no indication of the presence of public washing facilities and latrines, it can be assumed that they would have been positioned in the same area. In Fawwar, the first archival record shows public washing facilities and latrines along a large, widened section of the main road. These "centres" remain defined in utilitarian terms, in contrast to the camp quarters, which played a more symbolic role as centres for the clans or village communities that resided in them.

Formation of Urban Centres

Today these central open spaces have completely disappeared, consumed by the intense building activities that began in the 1970s. During the gradual modernisation of the camp's infrastructure, moreover, these spaces had lost their function. New water supply systems, for instance, began to connect to individual shelters. Public latrines were replaced by private toilets incorporated into or added to the shelters. In the case of Balata Camp it is reported that the camp's central zone became a vibrant open market in the 1970s but was later covered by private buildings. (It is likely, but not confirmed, that similar commercial activities took place in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar.)

New infrastructures and the physical transformation that followed meant that the initial utilitarian understanding of "centre" was lost. This dissertation proposes that the gradual dominance of a new collective "camp identity" (as opposed to the initial loyalty to "quarter" or "family") generated the formation of a new communal "centres" best expressed by the clustering of civil society institutions, often on the same site. Can the present role of centres be compared to other urban settings in which public institutions mark symbolic and cultural "centres" that serve to locate identity and belonging? Can/should a camp improvement project facilitate the development of such public centres, and if so, how?

Deheishe Takes the Lead

Most Deheishians, when asked about on the location of the camp's "centre" today, referred to the cluster of CBOs, NGOs, and the mosque bisected by the main internal road and hub of commercial activity. Here, major commercial, cultural, religious, and administrative functions (the UNRWA campus is located right next to it) are brought together into what has become an urban centre. Deheishe's institutions in this area have a unique richness and diversity and include the Ibd'a Cultural Centre, the National Committee Centre, the Karameh Centre, and the Future Vision Centre. These, as well as the more vibrant commercial activities, give Deheishe a lead over Fawwar and Amari. The clustering of institutions in one central area is so pronounced that one can speak of a continuous communal or public zone that has been marked in the zoning plan. Due to the crowded conditions, two important institutions initiated by the Local Committee had to be constructed outside the camp boundaries: the multi-purpose Finiq Centre²⁰⁴ on Anton Mountain and the Nur Shams Maternity hospital to the south. This led to a slight spatial fragmentation of the central cluster of communal programmes and should be evaluated in the strategic planning exercise.

Dispersal and Fragmentation in Fawwar

In Amari and Fawwar, civil society institutions play a less significant role. Far fewer institutions have been formed since the 1990s, and their comparatively dispersed locations have did not generated the same kind of synergy that they have in Deheishe. Fawwar's narrow site forced UNRWA to construct its main service and school campus at the entrance of the camp, a fair distance from the main residential areas. This "split" can still be felt, as camp residents complain about the lengthy walk to school, the Youth Centre, and the Women's Programme Centre. In addition, the camp entrance is felt to be exposed to the nearby Israeli checkpoint and occasional military incursions. New NGOs formed in the camp chose to locate themselves closer to main centre of civic life. In 2004, the Local Committee acquired a building in the camp's most densely built-up area, close to the main road (→ 223). Other important camp institutions such as the Electricity Society and the Labour Committee also chose locations along the main road.

CBOs (such as the Women's Programme Centre and the Rehabilitation Centre) remain in their old buildings on the UNRWA campus, however, separated from each other by the two schools. In effect, Fawwar's communal programmes remain split between the two zones. A single identifiable cluster combining main communal functions did not emerge as it did in Deheishe, a fact that undoubtedly contributes to the lack of a sense of a camp "centre". Commercial programmes play a more significant role. When asked about the notion of "centre", Fawwar's residents mostly refer to the main road where the majority of the camp's businesses are located. In this context they do not fail to mention the heavy through-traffic that has resulted from a series of military road closures in the area, the danger that results from it for children and pedestrians, or the road's extremely poor condition. Camp development needs to address this condition and find imaginative solutions not only to the road-related problems but also devise a strategic vision integrating the UNRWA/ CBO campus with the main body of the camp.

Amari's Central Zone

In the much smaller and denser Amari Camp, the main street forms the camp's only significant public space. Some 60% of the camp's businesses are located here, including five out of the camp's six cafes/ restaurants. The street combines the two most significant clusters of communal activity: the mosque (and mosque related societies) and the UNRWA campus, which includes NGOs and CBOs at the eastern entrance of the camp. The mosque is the camp's most iconic and visible landmark. It serves as a point of orientation and has lent its name to the main street, which is now commonly known as "Mosque Street". The building has been extended numerous times through the addition of facilities such as meeting spaces, workshops for women and youth, kitchens, and washing facilities. However, the numerous programmes and activities it offers do not serve the entire population. In the highly fraught context of Palestinian politics, with its increased factional tensions, the mosque is increasingly seen as a Hamas stronghold primarily serving its own constituency. This is possibly even more pronounced in Deheishe and Fawwar, where there are even stronger rivalries among Fateh, other political parties, and Hamas. In these camps, however, the location of the mosque is less prominent and does not function as a spatial centre as it does in Amari. The secular (Fateh controlled) counterpart to Amari's mosque is its Youth Centre, which now occupies a significant part of

²⁰⁴ Perhaps unique in the West Bank is the fact that outsiders (non-refugee Palestinians or international tourists) also frequent Deheishe's civil society institutions and enter the camp on a regular basis to use the Ibd'a cafe or Finiq's conference facilities, for example.

UNRWA's campus and is generally considered to be the camp's most powerful institution. Initiated and controlled by UNRWA until the Israeli military closed it during the first intifada, it re-opened in the 1990s on the same premises. The centre offers meeting facilities and houses the camp's famous football club. Recently, the courtyard was transformed into an athletic field, and a new hostel was constructed along its eastern perimeter. Adjacent to the Youth Centre are the Women's Programme Centre and Children's Centre. Despite their close proximity to each other, as well as to the main road, all three institutions have so far failed to develop attractive public facades, with the exception of the large but neglected canopy of the Children's Centre. Internal walls and fences form unnecessary obstacles, dissecting and fragmenting what could be an attractive series of internal passages and public gardens. The improvement and careful development of this zone has perhaps the most development potential in an otherwise congested camp and should be explored further.

(5) Public Zones

The lack of outdoor public spaces in all three camps means that the public zones tend to be street networks or the small gaps resulting from house demolitions. These patterns are the result of a complex evolutionary process. In all three case study camps, the main streets were historical roads that existed well before the establishment of the camps. The street pattern within the camp territory is a superimposition of several layers: the traditional pre-camp lot subdivisions, including field paths; the Red Cross initiated camp grid of 1948; and the 1950s efforts by UNRWA to re-plan the camps. This complex pattern was then exposed to considerable development pressure. Much of the horizontal expansion of the houses took place at the expense of public streets, reducing many of them to extremely narrow alleys. This unplanned growth also contributed to the irregular width of the streets, creating oddly shaped niches, road widenings, and bottlenecks.

The street patterns of all three camps share a similar hierarchy. Three road categories can clearly be distinguished: the main street, secondary (or trunk-) streets, and small alleys leading to individual houses, sometimes forming cul-de-sacs. This hierarchy seems to have the potential of being strengthened and rationalized. It could be used to provide access to potential future camp activities such as new shops and other commercial establishments, schools, and civic and religious institutions. At present, however, the street pattern is extremely problematic in terms of providing access to individual houses and parking spaces to serve increasing commercial activities and the rising number of private vehicles. Most importantly, new access or evacuation routes are critical for emergency services. (For a detailed discussion of the individual street patterns and access systems of all three case study camps including their potentials and present risks, see section 2.2.4 "Infrastructure, Access, and Circulation").

Despite the congestion of the camp's streets and lanes, they still harbour important social functions that traditionally take place under the open sky: *"Our houses in the camp offer little or no room for social gatherings. Most funerals take place in the camp's streets, as do wedding celebrations. There is a desperate need for public spaces in the camp. Not everybody can afford to hold his wedding in Finiq. Besides it is a tradition for the sahra night (the night before the wedding) to take a place in the camp."*²⁰⁵ Another resident of Deheishe describes such gatherings: *"When held in the camp, wedding festivities take place in the camp's streets, where the marrying couple sits on a wooden platform surrounded by relatives and friends in the middle of the camp. Usually the festivities take place in a main street in the camp (the closest to the groom's house); no cars are allowed at the time of the celebration. As for mourning and burial ceremonies, people usually hold them in their houses and the adjacent streets. No cars are allowed in that area for three consecutive days."*²⁰⁶ Both statements confirm that beyond the functional criteria of access and passage, external open spaces play a crucial role in the camp's public life and culture. Crowded streets and passing traffic collide with the interest of children, youth, and the elderly, who use streets as everyday social spaces. An improvement of these qualitative aspects by extending the public zone could have a significant impact on the perceived quality of life in the camp and should be considered a for camp improvement priority.

²⁰⁵ source: Interview with Abu Diab Al Zaghari, Deheishe, August 22, 2006.

²⁰⁶ source: Interview with Mustafa Adawi, Deheishe, August 21, 2006.

(6) Conclusions and Recommendations

A comparison of the zoning plans for Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar (→ 134, 138, 142 and 147) reveals significant similarities:

- All camps have undergone a process of urbanisation, indicated by differentiation into different functional zones of comparable size. Most pronounced is the emergence of mixed-use zones and NGOs.
- The outdoor public space in all three camps is drastically limited. Even essential functions, such as access and public circulation, are threatened by this extreme degree of congestion.

Close study of the zones themselves reveals striking differences between all three camps:

- The size of the UNRWA campus varies considerably, with Deheishe being the smallest. Amari appears to be much larger, but the area calculated takes into account the two large school campuses outside UNRWA's official camp boundaries. In Fawwar, the opposite seems to be the case: the large area taken up by campus seems to prevent a possible expansion of the residential zone, which only covers 49% of the camp area. (The residential zones in Deheishe and Amari cover 57%).
- A further significant difference is in the area size of the mixed use zone. Here Amari (11%) seems to lag behind Deheishe (16%) and Fawwar (18%). Despite the urban location of Amari, there has been less business growth than in the other two camps. This might be explained by the fact that Amari's relation to the surrounding cities is more problematic than in Deheishe, reducing the entrepreneurial possibilities for the inhabitants. In Fawwar, more businesses may have developed as a result of the isolated location of the camp, which meant that the inhabitants have little alternatives but to shop in the camp. Measured by the number of businesses and size of mixed zone, Deheishe and Fawwar therefore seem to be more urbanised.
- A third difference also seems to support the conclusion that urbanisation has taken place at different speeds: Measured by the quantity and strength of civil society institutions such as NGOs, Deheishe is by far the most urbanized of the three camps. Not including UNRWA services, CBOs and mosque related functions, Deheishe has 19 institutions, leaving Amari (7) and Fawwar (8) far behind. This fact does not register in the actual area taken up by the NGOs, which is almost similar in all three camps (Building and population density will be discussed in section 2.2.2 "Building and Population Density" and therefore not considered as an indicator for urbanisation in this section).

More broadly speaking, the zoning plan could be a vital tool for camps to coordinate their growing urban functions, demand of housing, urban infrastructure, and services. This should be carefully coordinated with the surrounding urban centres or agglomerations (see also section 2.2.5 Camp Borders, Overspill, and Informal Extensions). The results of the land use analysis indicates that UNRWA would need to approach each of the existing zones with different tools and strategies. The current diversification of the camp's territories should be accepted as a strategic asset for future stabilization, growth, and development. The zoning plan could also be a vital tool for the participatory need assessment exercise, involving representatives of the camp communities. The inherent abstraction of the zoning plan into five easily understandable categories should help camp residents and UNRWA staff alike to re-consider and re-evaluate the present reality of their own camp in comparison to the other two case studies. At the same time, zoning is a spatial ordering device, which can serve as a basis for the needs and asset mappings and provide a starting point for planning.

A comparison of the plan also generates specific questions with regard to strategic rehabilitation:

- Can the UNRWA compound be better connected to the camp and camp life?
- Can the cluster(s) of UNRWA installations, CBOs, NGOs form a communal public zone? Can existing functions be better connected to form external public spaces that allow for more synergy between the camp institutions as well as additional activities?
- Can/ should camp institutions develop more effective public facades?
- How can the percentage of external public spaces be extended in order to provide for public activities and sufficient access?
- Do camps need additional commercial areas?

2.2.2 Building and Population Density

The regional overview provided in section 1.2.2 already introduced and discussed indicators of population and building density based on rather limited data available for all Palestine camps across the Middle East. The case studies of Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar has produced data in a detail which is unique and provides a much more refined insight into the living conditions in Palestine camps. Guiding questions for the following section are: Is density distributed evenly across the camp? What evidence can be found for the hypothesis that camps can be considered urban slums? Is there a saturation point beyond which the infrastructural and social networks of the camps collapse? What can be done to provide relief and prevent such an infrastructural breakdown?

(1) Population Density

The average population density of the 19 West Bank refugee camps of 536 registered refugees/hectare is almost half that of all 58 official Palestine refugee camps of 1,102 registered refugee/hectare (→ 083). As already explained in section 1.2.2 official population data does not take into account the actual population levels within the camp boundaries. A survey with all local camp survey officers conducted during the UN-RWA-Stuttgart cooperation project revealed in fact a significant gap with estimated actual camp population much lower than the official figures.²⁰⁷ Assuming that CSO data will be more accurate, the average population density even drops to 484.8 persons/hectare. Based on CSO data, the most densely populated West Bank camps are Camp No1 (1,279 persons/hectare), Balata (879.3 persons/hectare) and Shu'fat (762.1 persons/hectare). Even though West Bank camps do not seem to reach the same population densities as camps in other fields, they are compared to the density of a European city such as Paris (90 persons/hectare), the average density of informal slum neighbourhoods such as Favelas in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo (500-700 persons/hectare) or the densest administrative units recorded by UN-HABITAT (→ 075).

The three camps investigated in detail reveal in fact a comparatively low average population density with Amari, being the most congested of the three with 639.8 persons/hectare, followed by Deheishe with 305.7 persons/hectare, and lastly Fawwar with 256.6 persons/hectare). The differences in population densities in the three camps points towards the importance of location. Amari's population quadrupled from 2,179 in 1955 to 8,891 in 2005. This is probably the result of the camp's location inside Al-Bireh and very close to Ramallah – an ideal position within an area of economic growth and relative stability. Over the same period, Deheishe grew 2.5 times from 4,847 in 1955 to 12,185 in 2005, which is in keeping with the more stable employment opportunities afforded by the Bethlehem/ Jerusalem region. Fawwar, the most isolated and rural of the camps, grew at the slowest pace, from 4,835 to 7,632 in the same fifty-year period, a growth rate of 1.5.

These growth rates are in line with the general growth of camp populations and continue to rise. In the current economic and political crisis in the West Bank – following the second intifada and the construction of the Separation Wall – fewer camp residents will have the opportunity to move out of the camp or buy or rent property in neighbouring towns and villages. If the rate of out-migration slows down, the effective population growth in the camps will increase dramatically, helped by very high birth rates.

(2) Building Density

The UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation generated new data sets²⁰⁸, which can be used to determine building density in a detailed way, applying internationally used density indicators, including building area and built-up area, percentage of open space, and the Floor Space Index FSI (→ 151). Comparing the density figures for the three camps reveals dramatic differences: Amari emerges as the densest camp by far, while

²⁰⁷ The fact that in West Bank, estimated actual populations are lower than UNRWA'S official registration data should not generally lead to the conclusion that the same is the case for other fields. Camps in the Amman, Damascus and Beirut conurbations are attractive locations for refugees and non-refugees alike. Camps in fact might be denser here due to the influx of other refugee groups or no-refugee urban poor.

²⁰⁸ Data sets generated by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation which have been used in this section include a comprehensive new aerial survey for all West Bank refugee camps, which produced orthophotos (aerial photographs that have been geometrically corrected - "orthorectified" - such that the scale of the photograph is uniform, meaning that the photo can be considered equivalent to a map) and detailed photogrammetric maps (photogrammetry is a remote sensing technology applied here to translate orthophotos into digitalized maps).

Fawwar is the least congested, with a percentage of open space twice that of Amari. The discrepancy between Fawwar's building area (70.5%) and its net built-up area (38.1%) shows that a large portion of its open space is in fact private (including courtyards, gardens, and small fields adjacent to the houses). In Amari, the difference between the building area value and the built-up area value is almost negligible, indicating the dramatic lack of private open space. Compared to other West Bank camps, Amari belongs within the densest third of all West Bank camps; Deheishe is placed approximately in the middle; and Fawwar is among the 30% of camps with lowest building densities.

Degree of Verticalisation

Building area and open spaces measure horizontal expansion and densification. The West Bank camp survey provided "z-values" for the highest points of all structures in the camps, making it possible to estimate the number of floors and calculate the FSI – based on the average ratio of vertical expansion of all housing units divided over the area – for all West Bank camps. The results back up the findings of building area and built-up area, which identified Amari as the densest camp; Amari's FSI (1.74) is almost double that of Fawwar. Compared to other West Bank camps, Amari's average FSI (1.51) is the fourth highest after Shu'fat Camp (1.89), Camp No.1 (1.71) and Tulkarem (1.57), while Fawwar is below the average with an FSI of 0.93.

A different result emerges if the degree of verticalisation is measured in absolute terms: Deheishe's buildings are more built up than Amari's in terms of their height and number of floors. More of the houses in Deheishe (63%) have two or three levels compared to Fawwar (61%) and Amari (56%). Only one quarter of Deheishe's structures remain single storey, compared to 35% in Amari and Fawwar. Deheishe also has the greatest number of buildings of four or more levels (11%), compared to Amari (9%) or Fawwar (4%), (→ 152 - 155). Why, if Deheishe's houses are more vertically developed, is Amari the denser camp? The likely reason for this apparent paradox is that Deheishe has preserved far more open space. In Amari, with its higher population density and greater degree of horizontal expansion, public and private external spaces have been reduced to a bare minimum.

Range of Building Densities

In order to determine the range of local building densities inside the three camps, six blocks, including one micro-study block, were selected in each camp to sample a wide spectrum of density conditions. The average (medium) density values for each of the blocks suggests (rather than providing definitive proof of) maximum levels (peaks) of congestion as well as low levels of building density. In individual houses within the blocks, density reached even higher values, while other houses were abandoned. Figure (→ 159) shows the six blocks numbered according to their density, with "Block 1" having the highest density and "Block 4" with the lowest density. The in-depth micro-study blocks allowed for the most precise studies of Plot Coverage Ratio and FSI. While all three camps have blocks with comparatively low FSI ratios (0.7 – 0.8), Amari's peak building density is highest, with an FSI of 2.58, while Deheishe's only reached 1.48. All camps have some blocks with a Plot Coverage Ratio of more than 95%, while others are between 30% and 40%. In conclusion, densification does not take place evenly but has peaks and lows inside the camp area.

Distribution of Building Density

The block study also revealed that blocks with lower densities are generally located on the camp's periphery while the highest building densities can be found in the more central areas. A more precise measure of local high and low densities can be achieved by directly using the "z-values" of buildings. An analysis of the building height maps for Fawwar and Deheishe shows a greater concentration of built-up structures in the camp centres, particularly along the camp's main roads. Here congestion clearly forces residents to add additional storeys, a process that began in the late 1980s (see section 2.1.3). Most structures, however, remain between three and four storeys, which might indicate the difficulties of extending existing, historically evolved building clusters. A different picture emerges at the peripheries of both camps. Here, newer single buildings and apartment houses tend to be built with three to five storeys from the start, on better foundations and using better construction methods.

Amari's much smaller area does not show the same difference between centre and periphery. With the exception of the more spacious Lifta quarter to the south-west, the fabric of the camp is almost evenly dense, with single or clusters of higher buildings in between the mass of mostly three- to four- storey dwellings. It is difficult to detect a territorial logic to these higher buildings. It is therefore much more likely that verti-



→ 148
Amari Camp (2006) – Built-up area
(figure-ground plan)



→ 149
Deheishe Camp (2006) – Built-up area



→ 150
Fawwar Camp (2006) – Built-up Area

Density Indicator	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
Area in Dunums (ha) ¹	93 (9.3)	309 (30.9)	273 (27.3)
Building area ²	77.6 %	76.7 %	70.5 %
Built-up area ³	66.8 %	42.8 %	38.1 %
Open spaces ⁴	33.2 %	57.2 %	61.9 %
Floor Space Index ⁵	1.74	1.24	1.00

→ 151

Comparison of Building Densities in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar

- 1 Total area within UNRWA's official boundary in 2006 (Dunums/ ha)
- 2 Building area within UNRWA's official boundaries (OFEK survey 2006): sum of all private pots (houses, courtyards and gardens)
- 3 Built-up area within UNRWA's official boundaries (OFEK survey 2006), excluding public and private open spaces (footprint of all buildings)
- 4 Open spaces (including all public and private open spaces inside UNRWA's official boundaries)
- 5 Floor Space Index (FSI): built-up area multiplied by average number of levels, divided by building area within UNRWA's official boundaries



→ 152
Amari Camp (2006) – Building Heights

- Legend
- UNRWA's official camp boundary
 - 1 floor
 - 2 floors
 - 3 floors
 - 4 floors
 - 5 floors



→ 153
Deheishe Camp (2006) – Building Heights



→ 154
Fawwar Camp (2006) – Building Heights

Height Indicator	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
Built-up area 1 level ¹	22,696 m2	36,666 m2	36,761 m ²
Built-up area 2 levels ¹	22,919 m2	53,134 m2	35,452 m ²
Built-up area 3 levels ¹	12,805 m2	35,475 m2	27,850 m ²
Built-up area 4 levels ¹	5,041 m2	12,963 m2	4,092 m ²
Built-up area 5+ levels ¹	366 m2	2291 m2	316 m ²
Percentage of houses 1 level ²	35%	26%	35%
Percentage of houses 2 levels ²	36%	38%	34%
Percentage of houses 3 levels ²	20%	25%	27%
Percentage of houses 4 levels ²	8%	9%	4%
Percentage of houses 5+ levels ²	1%	2%	0%

→ 155

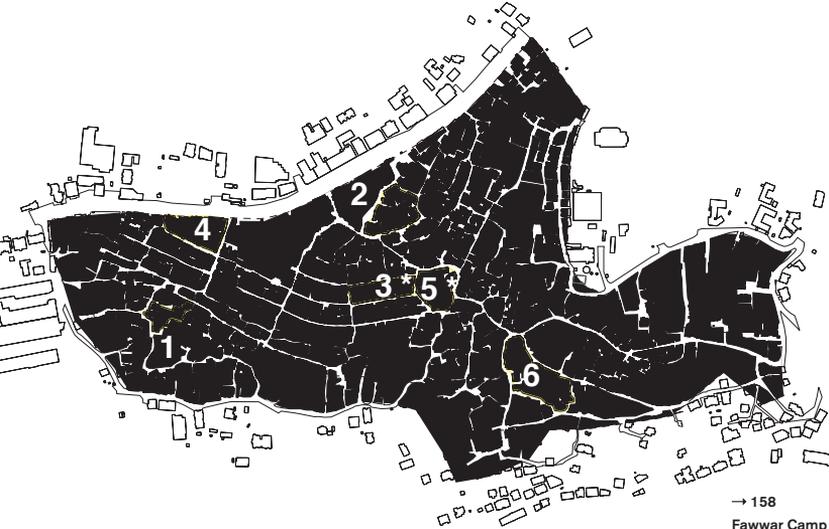
Building Heights in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar

- 1 Value for built up area (not including public and private open spaces)
- 2 House numbers are estimates since the precise boundaries between houses cannot be determined through an aerial survey with absolute certainty.

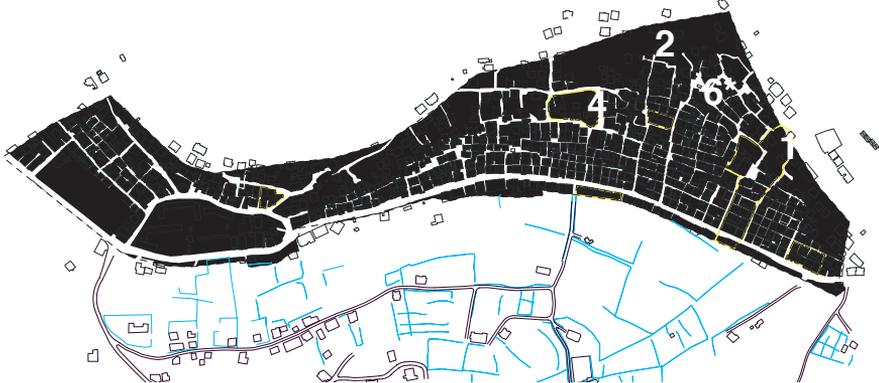


→ 156
Amari Camp (200& – Blocks and Density Study

- Legend
- - UNRWA's official camp boundary
 - camp blocks
 - case study blocks
 - * micro study



→ 157
Deheishe Camp (2006) – Blocks



→ 158
Fawwar Camp (2006) – Blocks

Amari refugee camp

Density Indicator	B 1	B 2	B 31	B 4	B 5	B 6
Plot Coverage Ratio ²	95.0%	97.4%	94.3%	97.1%	99.6%	46.0%
Floor Space Index ³	2.58	2.21	2.15	1.83	1.71	0.79

Deheishe refugee camp

Density Indicator	B 1	B 2	B 31	B 4	B 51	B 6
Plot Coverage Ratio ²	56.6%	61.3%	98.2%	59.7%	97.1%	39.1%
Floor Space Index ³	1.49	1.28	1.25	1.15	1.06	0.77

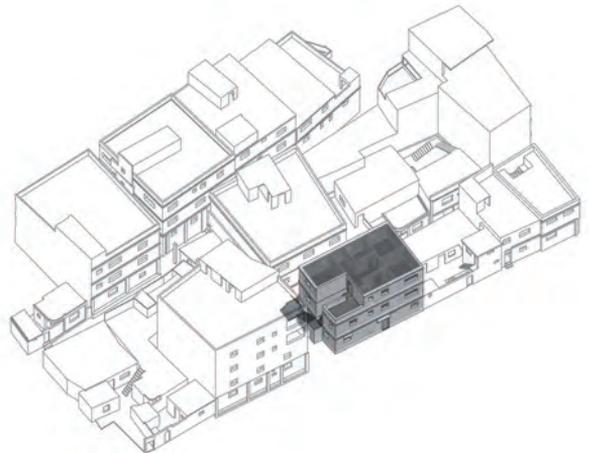
Fawwar refugee camp

Density Indicator	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5	B 61
Plot Coverage Ratio ²	85.5%	77.8%	61.4%	58.5%	44.0%	78.6%
Floor Space Index ³	2.25	2.05	1.71	1.22	0.76	0.81

→ 159

Range of Building Densities

- 1 Micro study block
- 2 Plot Coverage Ratio (also: site occupancy index, or in German: GRZ) for each block was calculated by subtracting private open spaces from the area of the block. A block has been defined as an area of joined dwellings, separated by public lanes or streets (see map) resulting in a gross value.
- 3 Floor Space Index (FSI) was calculated by creating an estimated sum of covered space on all levels (external wall measurements) within a block and divide it by the total plot area.



→ 160

Micro study block, Amari Camp



→ 161

Verticalisation in Amari Camp

A 1950 UNRWA shelter is roofed over by a four storey building. The preservation of original 1950s structures has practical as well as symbolic reasons.

Density Indicator	Amari Block	Deheis.Block	Fawwar Block
Total number of persons ¹	195	290	244
Total area of micro study	2,149.00 m ²	6,776.11 m ²	11,516.52 m ²
Total living area (gross) ²	4,304.53 m ²	7,448.83 m ²	8,200.71 m ²
Total living area (net) ³	2,772.69 m ²	4,374.23 m ²	3,525.57 m ²
Av. living space/ person ⁴	14.22 m ²	15.08 m ²	14.45 m ²
Av. living space/ hh ⁵	81.55 m ²	74.14 m ²	81.99 m ²
Av. person/ hh ⁶	5.74	4.92	5.67
Av. pers./ bedroom ⁷	2.19	2.03	2.62
Av. pers./ bathroom ⁸	3.48	3.92	4.14
hh without own bathroom	20.95 %	19.00 %	21.00 %

→ 162

The Provision of Private Space Inside Refugee Camps

- 1 Persons reported to reside within the block in 2006.
- 2 Sum of all indoor space (gross value measured by external walls), indicating potential for future internal expansion.
- 3 Sum of all indoor space used for residential purposes (net value, excluding spaces used for commerce, animals, storage as well as spaces under construction and vacant spaces).
- 4 Average residential space available to each resident (based on net values).
- 5 Average residential space available for each household (hh) (based on net values).
- 6 Average number of persons per household.
- 7 Average number of persons per bedroom within all households in the micro-study block.
- 8 Average number of persons using one bathroom (per household)..

Deviation from UNRWA ¹	Amari Block	Deheis.Block	Fawwar Block
50% or less	3 %	0 %	0 %
50% – 100%	21 %	21 %	18 %
100% – 150%	47 %	42 %	40 %
150% or more	29 %	37 %	42 %

→ 163

Relation to UNRWA Standards

- 1 Deviation from UNRWA standards: According to UNRWA's technical instructions, space allocations are based on the size of the family. The shelter space which each refugee or refugee family is entitled to amounts to the following:
 - 1-2 Persons: 1 room + Kitchen + Sanitary Facilities+ 15% (for circulation & flexibility) = 32.2m²
 - 3-5 Persons: 2 rooms + Kitchen + Sanitary Facilities+15% (for circulation & flexibility) = 46m²
 - 6 + Persons: 3 rooms + Kitchen + Sanitary Facilities + 15% (for circulation & flexibility) = 59.8m²

These calculations are based on: Room size 14m² for the first room (main room); 12m² for the second & third rooms (secondary rooms); kitchen 9m²; sanitary facilities 5m² & 6m² in case of a three-room-shelter.

calisation depends on the economic means of individual families. Low and high buildings face each other from one plot to the next, generating a very polarized vertical landscape. The emerging structural risks of growing verticalisation and the limits of vertical growth will be discussed in section 2.2.3.

(3) How Density Affects Quality of Life

There are no universal standards or rational criteria for measuring living standards and quality of life. Both concepts need to be contextualized and embedded into their particular cultural context. In the Middle East, for example, the dense quarters and *kasbah* structures of traditional city centres are still culturally acceptable to many, although middle classes tend to migrate to more suburban neighbourhoods. Density conditions in refugee camps are in some ways comparable to those of traditional Middle Eastern cities in terms of limited access to green areas and public open spaces. Despite their high overall density, camps often provide generous internal space for individual families.

The Provision of Private Space in Refugee Camps

So far, UNRWA has assembled only fragmented data on the allocation of private space within family dwellings. Only two cases are known to the research team in which existing private living space has been systematically calculated. The first case is the reconstruction of the centre of Jenin Camp after its destruction by the Israeli military in 2002, which was based on an estimate of existing house sizes. Here planners assumed an average of 104sqm for houses that stood on “ground zero” and 99sqm on average for all dwellings affected by military destruction. The second opportunity was provided by the planning for the Neirab Rehabilitation Project in Syria. Here, an average house size of 67sqm was estimated. All other UNRWA space calculations focus on Special Hardship Cases (SHC) for especially needy refugee families.

The perhaps surprising amplexness in the amount of private space is the result of continuous private investment by refugee families and is well beyond UNRWA standards. Does the same apply to West Bank refugee camps? A number of micro-study blocks were investigated in order to generate new quantifiable data. This included one dense central block in each of the three camps, which provided a detailed insight into population density, building density, and living standards. The results of this micro study (→ **162, 163**) only provide a sample, however, and are not representative of the entire camp.

The findings are as follows:

- All three micro-study blocks show almost equal average living area, household size, and room allocation.
- The results reveal an average net living space per household of 74sqm to 82sqm, i.e., what UNRWA estimated for the camps of Neirab and Jenin. The average space available per person is roughly 14.5sqm.
- Surprisingly, Amari (which has been identified earlier as the densest camp) has a 7sqm higher average living space per household than Deheishe. A likely explanation is Amari’s much higher building density.
- The difference between building area and built-up area is considerable in all camps. This indicates that only a portion of the available internal space is used for residential purposes (in Amari approx. 70%, in Deheishe 63%, and in Fawwar 45%). A high degree of the space is either used for storage or left vacant as a spatial resource anticipating family growth in future generations.

How do the findings compare to the space allocation criteria developed by UNRWA? Figure → **162** shows how households within the micro-study blocks deviate from UNRWA defined criteria. The result of this comparison is that in Amari 76%, in Deheishe 79% and in Fawwar 82% of households match or exceed UNRWA set criteria. As in Neirab and Jenin, the actual space available for each household in the investigated blocks is less dramatic than one might expect.

Affect on Overall Quality of Life

Bearing in mind that these findings are not representative of all West Bank camps and do not take into account special cases of extreme overcrowding, one could speculate that the most urgent density problem inside the West Bank camps is not one of private space allocation but rather a lack of external public space. During the horizontal and vertical expansion of the camps, public space was absorbed by private dwellings and became internalized. The internal spatial reserves (Amari 30%, Deheishe 37%, and Fawwar 55%) also indicated that not all internal space is used efficiently, and that there are some spatial reserves inside the dwellings. The decrease in overall quality of life resulting from creating private space at the expense of public space can be measured according to indicators, including access to external public space for each

household, natural ventilation, natural lighting, vehicular and pedestrian access. (Some of these indicators will be more thoroughly discussed in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4)

(4) Conclusions and Recommendations

The micro study findings suggest that West Bank camp dwellers live in slightly better conditions than residents of dense urban areas defined as slums by UN-HABITAT (e.g. the definition of a slum as more than three people sleeping in one bedroom) and certainly above current UNRWA criteria for shelter construction. However, compared to examples of urban environments in the region that are considered cultural norms, the three case study camps show that refugees have access to less external public space than what is considered normal. Moreover, density and congestion is likely to be significantly higher in refugee camps of other regions. What Can Be Done?

• Address the Most Urgent Need: External Public Space

The micro-study block analysis and UNRWA generated data on Jenin and Neirab Camps (Syria) suggest that, on average, camp dwellings provide sufficient private space to most refugee families. UNRWA has already developed effective tools such as the shelter rehabilitation programme and the Special Hardship Cases (SHC) programme, which could be refined to target more effectively those households and shelters that fall below this average. For the majority of the camp population, however, the most pressing need at the moment is not the lack of private living space but a lack of outdoor public space, which seriously affects the overall quality of life. Not only does this affect the elderly and children in particular, but it also impacts women and youth, since they are less able – or are culturally inhibited from – leaving the camps on a regular basis. Existing programmes do not engage in strategic planning for the entire camp. One of the key challenges for camp improvement therefore is to provide for this need. Additional external space can only be provided at the expense of private space. Progress can only be made if the community itself prioritizes this issue and agrees to negotiate the conflict between private and public interests.

• Setting a Density Limit/ Max. Carrying Capacity

It can be assumed that demographic growth and the process of densification and verticalisation that accompanies it will continue. The building boom of the 1990s seems to have created internal spatial reserves that may be able to accommodate some of the immediate population increase, but these resources will be exhausted before long. Estimating each camp's "maximum carrying capacity is therefore necessary in order to prevent critical over-densification, a break-down of technical infrastructure, and extreme risks such as collapsing houses, etc. This "densification limit" should be defined in terms of persons per hectare, limited open space (measured by Plot Coverage Ratio or GRZ), maximum building mass (measured by Floor Space Index or GFZ), and maximum building height. The "densification limit" is a vital part of the more general definition of a "saturation point" for camps. Many local factors such as camp size, building typology, ratio between built-over area and open space, width of access streets context, social constitution, and so forth, also contribute to this definition. In the context of the largely self-built, evolving blocks typical for refugee camps with extremely narrow access lanes and a shrinking percentage of internal courtyards the "Densification Limit" and "Maximum Carrying Capacity" could be defined with a maximum Plot Coverage Ratio of 75% (net value) and an FSI of 3.0. Only with a new and extended access and open space system, an FSI of 4 to 5 might be acceptable, assuming wide roads or adjacent open spaces.

• Provide Opportunities for Expansion

To set limits for internal densification and verticalisation means necessarily providing opportunities for settling and building outside of the camps. Preferably this would include the addition of new camp areas in such a way that both old and new form a spatial and functional unity, in order to strengthen the refugee community as a whole and to avoid an increasing social segregation between the poorer and the better off sections of the community. Deheishe and especially Fawwar have access to spatial resources in their immediate surroundings and have already embarked on a process of informal expansion (see section 2.2.5). Strategic planning within the context of camp improvement could steer this already existing organic process in a more strategic way. Although Amari's residents have also purchased houses outside the camp boundaries, the densely built-up urban surroundings of Al-Bireh and Ramallah set a natural limit to this expansion. Here, alternative strategies such as high-rise buildings or re-settling parts of the camp population should be considered.

2.2.3 **Block and House: Growth, Spatial Organisation, Risks**

This section investigates the micro-scale of the building block and individual houses within the three case study camps, including issues such as rules of growth, internal social and spatial organisation, and the risks that result from informal construction practices. The analysis aims to provide a better qualitative understanding of the existing conditions in camp dwellings and contribute to knowledge that will aid the much-needed revision of standards and guidelines for shelter construction and rehabilitation programmes. 99 individual shelter units located in three micro-study blocks were investigated – one in each of the case-study camps. The following analysis is based on this fieldwork only and therefore provides a qualitative (rather than quantitative) insight into housing conditions in the camps. More representative figures would require a full-scale housing survey.

(1) The Growing House

Construction inside refugee camps is not unlike the growth pattern of houses in most Palestinian villages or towns. Dwellings are dynamic systems that can expand horizontally and vertically according to their inhabitants' needs. Most buildings in the camps are therefore "growing houses" – buildings that have undergone or are currently undergoing a process of expansion. Each generation adds to the existing structure whatever additional rooms are needed. For economic considerations, existing elements are only demolished when absolutely necessary. In most cases, refugees have preferred to accept the existing structures, adding new elements next to or above them. This pragmatic, need-based, and open approach in fact characterizes most village and city dwellings as well. Complementing the discussion of section 2.1.3, which addressed broader socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors that have conditioned six decades of growth in the camps, this section will focus on the housing units themselves. Based on the micro-study survey and qualitative interviews with the residents, the process of growth has been reconstructed based on sample units (→ 164). Several common "rules" can be identified that influenced the various stages of transformation, beginning in the 1970s.

Spatial Rules

- **Courtyard (*hosh*) Formation:** The first decades of the camps were characterised by a period of horizontal growth, fuelled by the gradual accumulation of single-storey, mostly one-room units (e.g., bedrooms, kitchens, toilets) within the constraint of a given plot. In some cases, the structures were joined forming "U-" or "L-"shaped units; in other cases they remained disconnected. The resulting formation resembles a traditional courtyard arrangement typical in the Middle Eastern region. The courtyard (*hosh*) remained unroofed and served as the centre of social activity, housework, and internal circulation. It also included gardens for small-scale urban agriculture. In many cases, smaller sections of the courtyard were roofed-over, forming kitchens used by the extended family of the house.
- **Vertical Expansion and Internalisation of the Courtyard:** Once the spatial resources for horizontal expansion were used up, families began to expand vertically. In all five samples, this led to the internalisation of the courtyard to form an internal living area. On larger plots, or in cases of less demand, courtyards also remained open, but outdoor private spaces increasingly disappeared or dramatically shrank in size (as shown in the morphological analysis in section 2.1.3; see also figure → 181 in this section). This is particularly true of the last decades.
- **Further Verticalisation:** The samples (→ 145) show that this process of verticalisation did not stop but continued to the third, and for some even fourth, floors. Steps of growth can involve the construction of an entire storey or the construction of single rooms, creating roof terraces and external access possibilities.

Structural Principles

Two main construction methods are being used:

- **Vertical Extension of Existing Structural Systems:** Due to lack of funds, construction often proceeds by simply adding additional storeys onto existing load-bearing walls, columns, and foundations. This practice has led to some of the worst and most problematic structures, many of which are in acute danger of collapse.
- **"Roofing Over":** In order to preserve the existing fabric, many refugees chose to construct independent foundations and structural posts next to the old shelter walls, which would then carry a multi-storey building. Because new posts were mostly planned beyond the existing perimeter walls, this habit led to a dramatic decrease in the width of access lanes and streets and often also resulted in conflicts with neighbours.

(2) The Growing Block

The reconstruction of the evolution of the entire micro-study block shows the urban effects of the accumulation of similar growth patterns. The sequence of drawings (→ 165,) shows that in the 1970s, the fabric of the camp was still porous, punctured by many outdoor spaces (courtyards and gardens). Many of the original 1950s UNRWA shelters still remained. In the late 1980s, the process of verticalisation began sporadically, with the majority of houses remaining single-storey. In the later 1990s and in recent years, verticalisation has gathered pace. The block has been transformed from a loosely connected tissue into an increasingly solid unit. Some units, however, have remained single-storey. The Amari micro-study block is typical of the polarised urban fabric of the camps: Highly developed and dense structures stand side-by-side with the original UNRWA shelters.

Block Sizes

Comparing the three case study camps, an interesting difference in the block size emerges. Fawwar's blocks are the smallest, averaging around 3 to 5 units joined together, Amari follows with 10 to 20 units, while Deheishe's blocks are on average even larger, with 20 units forming a block in the centre of the camp and up to 30 to 40 units at its periphery. The likely reason for these findings is that block size is one indicator for the degree of densification. Over time, the area for public circulation shrank in order to accommodate horizontal expansion. Many lanes have either disappeared altogether, have been turned into internal courtyards or internal lanes, or have become cul-de-sacs. Fawwar's block is by a large margin the least dense of the micro-study blocks. The net built-up area is only 38.1% compared to Amari's 66.8%. Its population density is also the smallest, with 256.6 pers./ha compared to 639.8 pers./ha in Amari (see section 2.2.2). The pressure to expand shelter units into the surrounding public zone is thus less intense in Fawwar than in the other two camps.

Internal Spatial Organisation

The study of internal block structures reveals three different spatial typologies: the solid block, the "doughnut" block, and the solitary block.

- Solid Block: Especially in Amari, but to some extent also in the centres of Deheishe and Fawwar, almost the entire surface of the block has been built up. Peak densities reach 95% of the ground surface area. Almost no internal courtyards or gardens have remained. In Amari, the majority of blocks are solid blocks.
- Buildings Surrounding Internal Courtyards ("Doughnut"): In some blocks, buildings form a continuous facade along the street while the centre of the block contains private external spaces (both paved and unpaved). This typology is more common in Deheishe and Fawwar, which are less dense than Amari.
- Block Formed by Solitary Buildings: A third block typology is formed largely by garden walls and perimeter fences. Buildings or building clusters are positioned inside these more generous private garden spaces. This block typology can be found at the periphery of Deheishe and Fawwar, and in some exceptional cases, in Amari's Lifta quarter. The typology is close to the semi-urban texture of Palestinian cities and villages.

(3) Internal Social Organisation

Each unit and block was also analysed in terms of its internal demographic structure (household compositions, and relations between inhabitants), see (→ 167), which shows a very similar household size and structure among all three micro studies. The comparison of internal social and demographic structures in the investigated housing units shows that 35% to 44% of the buildings investigated are exclusively inhabited by extended families (→ 186 - 188). This continues the tradition of close relatives sharing a dwelling or *hosh*. In most cases, the perceived ownership of these "extended family houses" goes back to the earliest days of the refugee camp. An additional 2% to 11% of the buildings are inhabited by extended families but also include a household unit rented out to none-relatives (→ 167). All other inhabited buildings could be considered "apartment houses" in that their inhabitants are not related to each other. This suggests that the traditional custom of living with the extended family is gradually yielding to more modern forms of living.

Family Relations and Place of Origin within Blocks:

Bearing in mind that only three micro-study blocks were investigated and that much more research is necessary for truly representative statistics, the available results reveal interesting variations in the importance of kinship and place of origin. In the Deheishe and Fawwar micro-study blocks, most inhabitants share the same villages of origin or come from villages that were located close to each other. (For Deheishe,

this was the Jerusalem region; for Fawwar, the Bersheba region). This mirrors the relatively homogeneous social composition of both camps. While in the Deheishe block, no single family clearly dominates, the Fawwar block shows that kinship can still be a very important factor within the social composition of a block. (Here, the Abu Awad family comprises 11 of the block's 30 buildings). The Amari block, in contrast, showed no clear social structure relating to kinship or place of origin. The block is a "mixed block", mirroring the camp's diverse social composition (→ **186**).

(4) Internal Functions, Spatial Programmes, and Spatial Composition of Buildings

The survey shows that the average living space (space actually used for residential purposes) available to each household unit is between 74sqm and 822 (→ **168**), significantly exceeding UNRWA's defined minimum living space entitlement of 46sqm (for 3-5 persons) and 59.8sqm (for 6 or more persons). (The compatibility with UNRWA standards is also discussed in section 2.2.2 and shown in → **162**). The surprisingly generous average living space is the result of decades of private investment made by the refugee families themselves into the houses. As discussed in section 2.2.2, an additional 30% of space (Amari), 37% (Deheishe), and 55% (Fawwar) is on average available in addition to the living space, either for commercial functions, keeping animals, storage, or as a reserve to accommodate future needs. The average percentage of vacant or unused space per house reveals a surprise: Amari, the densest and most crowded of the three camps leads in the amount of vacant space with an average of 25.57% per unit, compared to Deheishe (10.39%) and Fawwar (12.81%). Clearly, families have invested in their houses in order to provide for the needs of future generations. Equally similar is the spatial structure of the households, which are comprised of an average of four rooms, more than half used as bedrooms (→ **168**).

The analysis of the internal spatial structure and the use pattern also reveals very similar patterns among the three camps (→ **168**). The average sizes of bedrooms, living rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and circulation areas do not vary significantly from camp to camp. The only significant difference is in the size of courtyards, which in Fawwar is an average of more than six times that of Amari, reflecting the overall difference in building density between the camps. For similar reasons it could be assumed that the total floor area of the units is larger in Fawwar than in the other camps.

Spatial and Programmatic Typologies of Refugee Houses

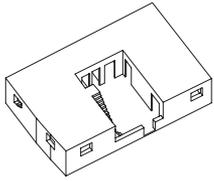
The analysis of the internal spatial programmes reveals several characteristics that seem to differentiate refugee houses from ordinary urban or village dwellings in the region. The following five typological elements were defined: Private open spaces (courtyards and gardens), rooftop terraces, internal living rooms, *diwaween* (formal salons), and areas with none-residential functions.

• Private Open Space (Courtyards and Gardens)

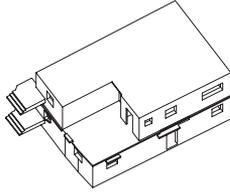
Yards (*hoshes*) and gardens have already been described as a common feature of almost all refugee houses during the early decades of the camps. Due to the increasing densification of the camps, however, many courtyards disappeared. This can be most clearly seen in Amari, where only 26% of the units investigated still have access to an external private space. In Deheishe (78%) and in Fawwar (63%), most houses still retain this feature, although the blocks investigated were in all cases located in the densest parts of the camps. The survey shows that these spaces are still used in various ways for domestic activities such as washing and drying and storage as well as for urban agriculture, animal breeding and, to a lesser extent, commercial functions (→ **171**). Following traditional custom, external spaces are also still used to receive guests or for social occasions.

• Rooftop Terrace

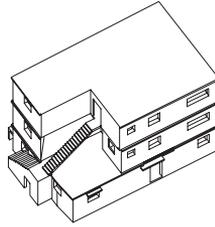
With growing densification at the expense of external private external space, rooftop terraces have provided a urban substitute. It is therefore not surprising that more than 83% of all units in Amari have access to roof terraces, which have acquired central importance in domestic life. In a dense camp with poor natural lighting and ventilation on the lower floors, roof terraces are a key asset. Of the families interviewed in the Amari micro-study block, 32% stated that the terrace is used for formal social occasions such as receiving guests, a function previously provided by the ground-level external courtyard, (→ **183, 184**).



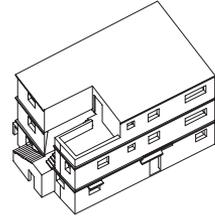
1970



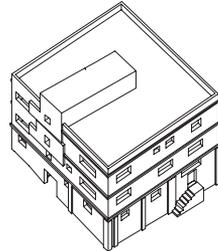
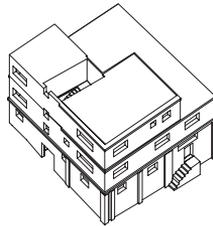
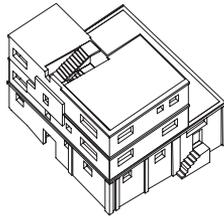
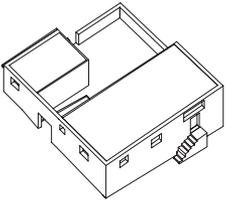
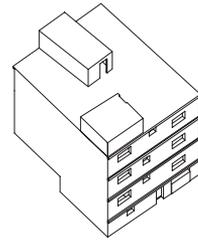
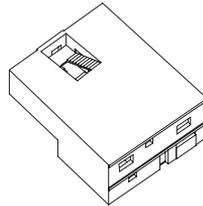
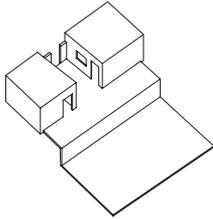
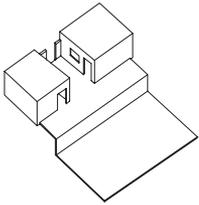
1990



1995

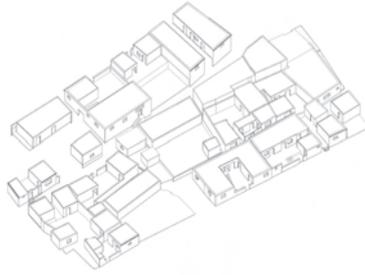


2005

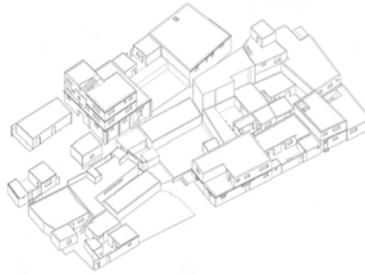


→ 164

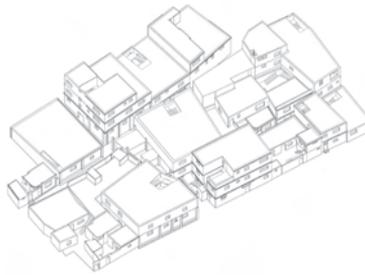
3D Evolution of Units in Amari Camp



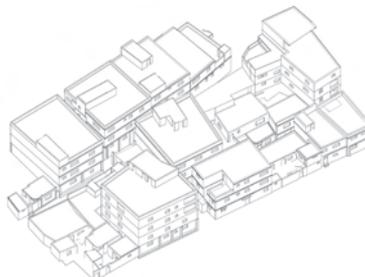
Amari block A 1970



Amari block A 1990



Amari block A 1995



Amari block A 2005

→ 165
3d Block Evolution Amari Camp

Indicator	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Av. No. of Pers./House	10.83	7.25	9.04
Av. No. of Pers./ Household	5.74	4.92	5.67

→ 166

Internal Social Organisation of Micro-Study Block

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Ext. Family Houses ¹	44 %	35 %	36 %
Ext. Family Houses with Tenants ²	11 %	2 %	4 %
Rented Houses	6 %	10 %	0 %
Shared Living Area Used by Diff.Hhs	11 %	28 %	11 %
Salon/ Diwan	68 %	46 %	88 %

→ 167

Family Relations Within Houses

- 1 Percentage of houses that are exclusively inhabited by relatives, e.g., within one multi-generational family structure.
- 2 Percentage of houses dominated by one multi-generational family but also including non-related paying tenants.

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Av. Living Space/ Household ¹	81.55 m ²	74.14 m ²	81.99 m ²
Av. Room No./ Household ²	4.38	3.75	4
Av. Bedroom No./ Household	2.62	2.42	2.16

→ 168

Spatial Structure of Households

- 1 Average indoor space of all household units within the micro-study block (net value) .
- 2 All rooms for residential purposes (including bathrooms, kitchens, living rooms, salons, etc.), excluding vacant rooms and commercial spaces.

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Av. Total Floor Area/ House ¹	239.14 m ²	181.68 m ²	273.76 m ²
Av. Bedroom Size	13.24 m ²	13.26 m ²	16.62 m ²
Av. Living Room Size	15.20 m ²	17.78 m ²	22.04 m ²
Av. Diwan/ Salon2 Size	15.63 m ²	18.02 m ²	23.14 m ²
Av. Bathroom Size	3.87 m ²	3.06 m ²	3.57 m ²
Av. Kitchen Size	13.60 m ²	14.86 m ²	13.34 m ²
Av. Circulation/ Stairs Area	28.00 m ²	21.89 m ²	27.93 m ²
Av. Courtyard Size	30.30 m ²	65.84 m ²	194.36 m ²
Av. Size of Roof Terrace	70.32 m ²	52.58 m ²	75.84 m ²
Houses with Salon/ Diwan ²	50 %	44 %	78 %
Vacant/ Unused Spaces ³	25.57 %	10.39 %	12.81 %
Ext. Courtyard/ Garden ³	26.00 %	78.00 %	63.00 %
Roof Terrace3	83.33 %	54.80 %	63.00 %

→ 169

Internal Use Patterns

- 1 Average gross indoor space of all housing units within the studied block.
- 2 Room exclusively used for formal receptions, festivities.
- 3 Per housing unit.

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Washing/ Drying ¹	100 %	48 %	71 %
Receptions/ Parties ¹	100 %	68 %	76 %
Storage ¹	67 %	39 %	47 %
Commercial ¹	33 %	13 %	12 %
Animals/Gardening ¹	33 %	47 %	47 %

→ 170

Internal Social Organisation of Micro-Study Block

- 1 100 % = all courtyards within one micro-study block.

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Houses with Animals ¹	11 %	10 %	30 %
Commercial Uses	6 %	20 %	19 %
Gardening ²	6 %	43 %	33 %

→ 171

None-Residential Functions

- Percentage of houses within the micro-study block that accommodate animals, commercial uses, or family agriculture.
- Percentage of houses with small-scale agriculture (vegetables or fruit trees for family consumption).

Indicator	Amari Block	Deheishe Block	Fawwar Block
Rated as Poor ¹	21 %	28 %	23 %
Rated as Moderate ¹	15 %	21 %	17 %
Rated as Acceptable ¹	3 %	21 %	0 %
Rated as Very Good ¹	49 %	26 %	47 %
Rated as Excellent ¹	12 %	4 %	13 %

→ 172

Structural Risks of the Growing House

- Poor: Housing unit in dangerous structural condition and unfit for residential purposes (e.g., exposed reinforcement bars, collapse or near-collapse of parts of the building).
- Moderate: Housing unit shows signs of structural disintegration that might lead to a dangerous condition if not repaired (e.g., large leaks and poor construction practices like discontinuous concrete slabs).
- Acceptable: Housing unit is sound but has shortcomings in finish or building quality (e.g., leaking surfaces, lack of plaster, significant lack of natural ventilation or lighting).
- Very Good: Housing unit has only minor problems such as leaks, unfinished construction, or minor lack of natural ventilation or lighting.
- Excellent: Housing unit is fully sufficient in terms of structural quality and quality of life it provides.

Indicator	Amari Block	Deheis. Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
No. of Rooms without Natural light ¹	39	47	33
Rep. Lack of Priv. Outdoor Space ²	93 %	57 %	60 %
Rep. Lack of Indoor Space ²	33 %	54 %	48 %
Rep. Lack of Natural Ventilation ²	56 %	54 %	52 %
Major Structural Fault ²	16.67 %	37.50 %	42 %

→ 173

Living Conditions

- Within entire micro-study block.
- Reported per household.



→174
Private Open Space

Dwelling in Amari block (2005): Unit 6



→ 175
Private Open Space

Dwelling in Amari block (2005): Unit 18

Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Washing/ Drying ¹	100 %	48 %	71 %
Receptions/ Parties ¹	100 %	68 %	76 %
Storage ¹	67 %	39 %	47 %
Commercial ¹	33 %	13 %	12 %
Animals/ Gardening ¹	33 %	47 %	47 %

→ 176
Private Open Spaces
(Courtyards and Gardens)

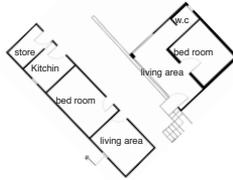
Survey on use patterns of private courtyards and gardens in a Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar sample block



→ 177
Leftover Open Space
Deheishe block: Unit 11

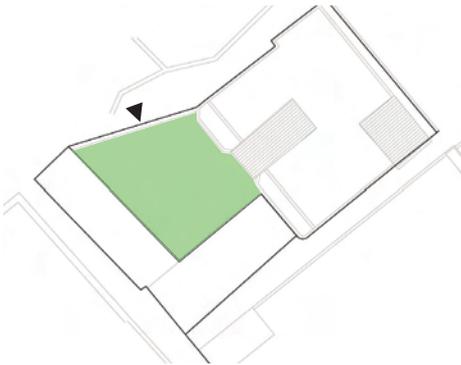


→ 178
Leftover Open Space
Deheishe block: Unit 12



→ 179
Shared Courtyard

Fawwar block: Unit 15

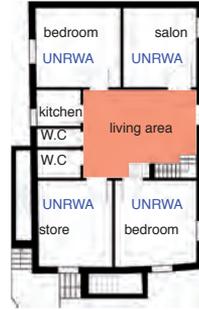


→ 180
Shared Courtyard

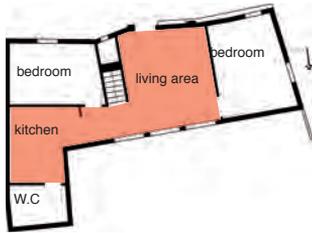
Fawwar block: Unit 24



Amari block: Unit 4



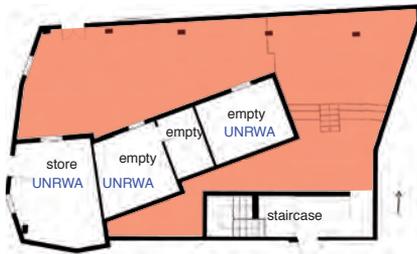
Amari block: Unit 10



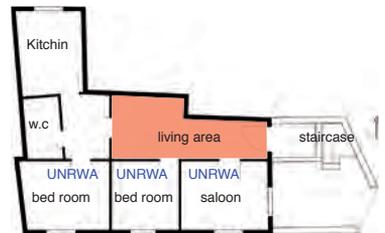
Amari block: Unit 16



Amari block: Unit 17



Deheishe block: Unit 1



Fawwar block; Unit 28

→ 181
 The Transformation of Open Courtyards into
 Internal Living Areas



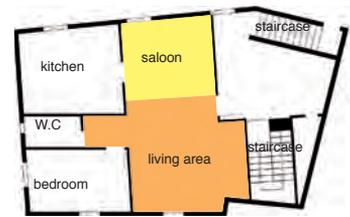
Amari block: Unit 1 f3



Amari block: Unit 9 f1



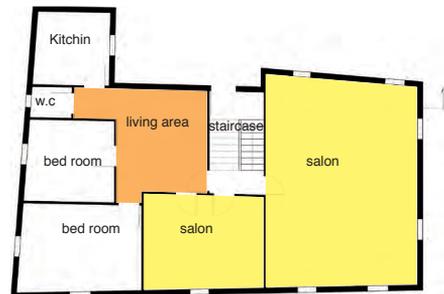
Deheishe block: Unit 3 f1



Deheishe block: Unit 7 f1



Deheishe block: Unit 33 f1



Fawwar block: Unit 7

→ 182

Comparison Between the "Salon" (also Frequently Referred to as Diwan) and the Common Living Area



Amari block: Unit 4



Amari block: Unit 7



Amari block: Unit 9



Deheishe block: Unit 4



Deheishe block: Unit 6



Deheishe block: Unit 24

→ 183
 Rooftop Terrace Samples.

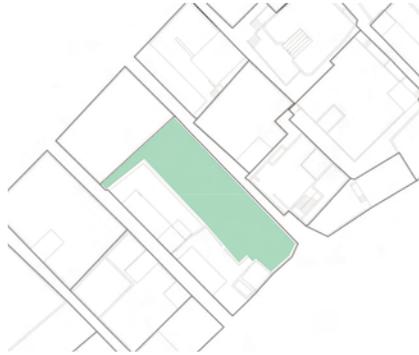
Use/ Programme	Amari Block	Deheishe Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Washing/ Drying ¹	75 %	41 %	71 %
Receptions/ Parties ¹	31 %	8 %	12 %
Storage ¹	6 %	46 %	47 %
Commercial ¹	0 %	0 %	0 %
Animals / Gardens ¹	6 %	4 %	62 %

→ 184
 Rooftop Terraces

¹ 100 % = all roof terraces within one micro-study block.



Deheishe block: Unit 5



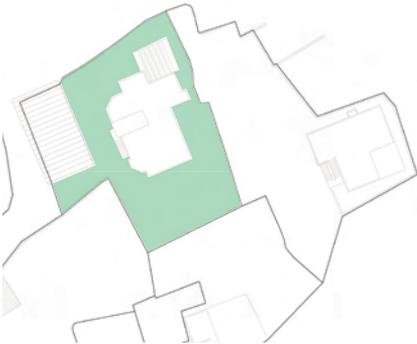
Fawwar block: Unit 9



Fawwar block: Unit 26



Fawwar block: Unit 28



Fawwar block: Unit 29



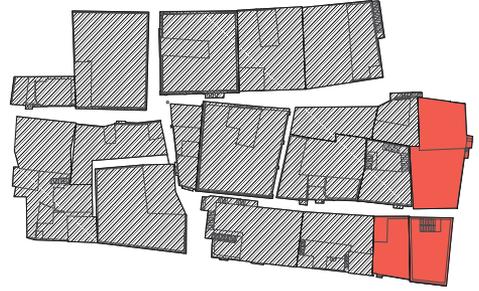
Fawwar block: Unit 30

→ 185
Leftover Spaces

→ 186

Social Structure and Family Relations within
Amari Block (2005)

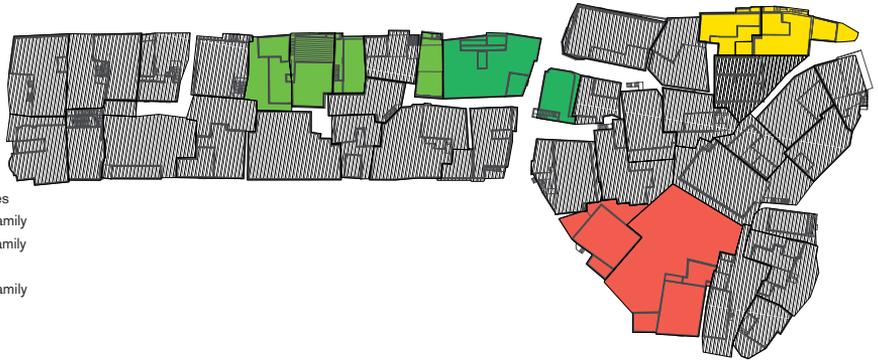
- ▨ mixed families
- Brash family



→ 187

Social Structure and Family Relations within
Deheishe Block (2005)

- ▨ mixed families
- Abu-Awad family
- Abu-Kubsi family
- Awad family
- Shawabka family



→ 188

Social Structure and Family Relations within
Fawwar Block (2005)

- ▨ mixed families
- Abu-Awad family
- Abu-Rabi' family
- Danaba family
- Maharmeh family
- Sabaiha family
- Shawabka family



• **Internal Living Room**

The analysis of typical ground-floor plans (→ 174 - 182) earlier in this section had shown that in many cases the original external courtyard (*hosh*) was converted into a central interior living and circulation area that connects all functions of the house. This living area often serves as an additional bedroom at night. The room's shape is a direct result of a gradual process of subtraction, as more and more rooms were added into the plot (→ 182). Many houses thus do not require corridors or other circulation spaces (with the exception of staircases), which makes the spatial arrangement very efficient.

• **Formal Salon**

Many houses have access to a formal living area, the salon, which is sometimes also referred to as a *diwan*. Although the room is on average the same size as the living area, it is reserved for receiving guests and other important social occasions. It is a status symbol, furnished with sofas and low tables, usually providing seating arrangements for up to 15-20 people. In houses inhabited by extended families, the salon is often part of the ground-floor apartment inhabited by the head of the household. Thus, it is a shared space used by the all households within the unit (→ 182).

• **Non-Residential Functions**

None-residential uses (indoor and outdoor) recorded in the survey included commercial functions (workshops and shops) on the ground floor, animal husbandry (especially in the Fawwar micro-study block), usually on the ground floor or the roof terrace, and small-scale urban agriculture such as cultivating vegetables, fruit trees, and vines.

(5) **Structural Risks to the Built Fabric**

A recent study by JALAL AL-DABBEK²⁰⁹, a renowned seismic expert from Najah University, assessed the seismic risks and probability of damage to the urban fabric of the camps. The camp fabric is an amalgamation of three main building types: UNRWA shelters, expanded houses, and new apartment buildings.

• **The “UNRWA Shelter”**

Some of the original UNRWA shelters from the agency's 1950s shelter building programme, including small-scale, single-storey extensions, remain in the camps. They are generally in a bad state of repair but pose few significant structural risks. It is likely that, as the camp population is rising, most remaining single-storey structures will disappear or be incorporated into vertical structures.

• **“Growing House”**

With very few exceptions, architects are generally not involved in house expansion. Engineers are sometimes consulted, but in most cases, a family relation or trusted individual experienced in construction plans and implements the job, as many camp residents acquired experience working in the construction sector in Israel. This semi-professional or unprofessional way of working often creates problems. The ever-expanding dwellings often combine elements of two or more structural systems, such as stone or brick masonry, reinforced concrete beam-column-slab system (joist system), reinforced concrete-braced (in-fill) frame structures, reinforced concrete shear-wall structures, or load-bearing wall structures. However, due to bad construction practices, most structures in camps are “*more or less a brick wall with columns and beams, mostly designed to work separately and to resist vertical loads only.*” (AL-DABBEK 2007)

Due to the high density in refugee camps, most structures are joined to neighbouring buildings. As densification became extreme, individual shelters merged to form blocks that behave to some extent as unified structural systems. The structural vulnerability of one building can therefore affect neighbouring buildings. Where should improvement measures be concentrated, given limited funds? Can the disconnected shelter units within a block be “glued” together to form one structural system according to the principle “one house supports the other”? The buckling problem in particular could perhaps be tackled this way. Can a few houses in each block be “secured” in order to support the other houses? Can “stability cores” be added within the block – e.g., houses filled with concrete?

²⁰⁹ source: Al-Dabbeek, Jalal. “Seismic Vulnerability of Buildings and Lifelines in Palestinian Refugee Camps”, UNRWA commissioned report, February 2007.

• New Apartment Houses

The fabric of camps is increasingly punctuated with brand new structures that were built in a single process rather than by means of gradual expansion. These houses usually follow the same model to be found in Palestinian villages and towns. They have either replaced old shelters, are erected in between them, or are built on newly developed land at the camp periphery or outside its boundaries. In many cases, the houses include unfinished parts internally (a spatial reserve for future use). These houses generally pose fewer structural risks, since new foundations are laid with an eventual vertical expansion of up to 6 to 10 storeys in mind. Often the building quality and finish is comparable to dwellings outside camps.

The Structural Risks of “Growing Houses”

Based on visual analysis within the micro-study blocks, ratings were attributed to the housing units surveyed (→ 172), in accordance with the following criteria:

- Poor: Housing unit in dangerous structural condition and unfit for residential purposes (e.g., exposed reinforcement bars, collapse or near-collapse of parts of the building).
- Moderate: Housing unit shows signs of structural disintegration that might lead to a dangerous condition if not repaired (e.g., large leaks and poor construction practices like discontinuous concrete slabs).
- Acceptable: Housing unit is sound but has shortcomings in finish or building quality (e.g., leaking surfaces, lack of plaster, significant lack of natural ventilation or lighting).
- Very Good: Housing unit has only minor problems such as leaks, unfinished construction, or minor lack of natural ventilation or lighting.
- Excellent: Housing unit is fully sufficient in terms of structural quality and quality of life it provides.

On average, between 25% and 30% of the houses were determined to be in a substandard structural condition, presenting a risk to their inhabitants' wellbeing. Typical structural insufficiencies and poor construction practices identified by AL-DABBEK in his report include:

“*Irregularity of vertical structural elements*

- *Lack of uniformity of joints between horizontal and vertical elements*
- *Poor quality material*
- *Lack of structural continuity in both “vertical and horizontal” directions*
- *Poor interactions (bonds) between structural and non-structural elements*
- *Soft storeys (the building includes one floor that is structurally weaker than the others)*
- *Changing configurations of column sections on different levels*
- *Cantilever systems lacking proper connections for non-structural elements*
- *Irregular setback on different levels*
- *Lack of structural and seismic joints*
- *Flexible roof covering*
- *Lack of continuity of vertical element reinforcements*
- *Lack of reinforcement around opening*
- *Absence of vertical structural elements*
- *Lack of confinement (lateral reinforcement)*
- *Construction of brick walls (and parapet walls) without confinement by structural elements (i.e., lack of frames or joist frames).” (AL-DABBEK 2007)*

Poor construction practices are not a unique characteristic of refugee camps. The region's deteriorating economic situation forces many inhabitants to “cut corners”. This, combined with a lack of clearly communicated building standards and construction controls, contributes to a widespread problem in building quality. In camps, however, conditions are made worse by the extreme congestion. Individual houses are often barely distinguishable from their neighbouring structures. In many cases it is impossible to differentiate between the structural system of a particular housing unit and that of a block. The risk posed by one poor structure is therefore often extended to the entire block. A particular structure often cannot be replaced or renovated without addressing the entire block, which makes measures more expensive and leads to difficult and time consuming negotiating processes. An additional risk to residents, particularly to children and the elderly, is the widespread habit of phasing the construction process according to available budgets and urgency of needs. This leads to situations in which staircases are left without threads, railings, or other finishes for years. Perimeter walls on roof terraces are insufficiently secured, and large gaps in floors are left open despite the presence of small children.

Vulnerability in Emergency Situations

The collapse of structures is extremely rare despite the poor quality of many houses. There is, however, a high probability of natural disasters occurring in the area. The most likely scenario is that of an earthquake. (The Jordan–Dead Sea Rift is the region’s major fault system, the result of motion between the Arabian and African plates.) *“Despite the serious consequence that might arise from such major earthquakes, the possibility of related disasters may have disappeared from the minds of people, and anti-seismic design principles in civil engineering are not always properly considered. Knowledge of the further earthquake potential of a region is essential to e.g. planners, decision makers civil engineers, and the insurance industry.”* (AL-DABBEK 2007)

Refugee camps are particularly vulnerable to the impact of earthquakes. AL-DABBEK lists as a main factor the *“high vulnerability to earthquake damages and losses as a direct result of high percentage of weak buildings that do not comply with seismic resistant requirements. This situation was created by the following major factors: (a) bad construction practices and common fatal design mistakes of the buildings (soft storey, short column, lack of verticality, and continuity of vertical structural elements, i.e., very high eccentricity and bad quality of material and workmanship, etc.); (b) lack of a national code for seismic design and construction; (c) absence of national legislative laws and regulations for protection against earthquakes; and (d) absence of effective mechanisms for control of application (design and construction) and enforcement of regulations.”* AL-DABBEK continues: *“Considering the structural situation of the buildings and the infrastructure in Amari Camp and based on the general investigation of the refugee camps in the West Bank, it is expected [that] failures and heavy damages to buildings and infrastructure in all refugee camps [will result] if subjected to a moderate to relatively strong earthquake (M = 6 to 6.5). It should be noted that most of the refugee camps in Palestine are similar in the level of risk and vulnerability of the buildings and infrastructure to damage when subjected to earthquakes. Thus, the results and scenarios expected in Amari Camp can be applied to a high extent to other refugee camps in the West Bank.”* (AL-DABBEK 2007)

“Based on the collected data and the analysis done according to EMS 98”, AL-DABBEK concludes, “the buildings in Amari Camp have the following vulnerability classes: 50-60% of the buildings have vulnerability class A; 30-40% of the buildings have vulnerability class B; [and] 10-20% of the buildings have vulnerability class C. Taking into consideration the seismic vulnerability of the common buildings in Amari refugee camp, very heavy structural and non structural damages will occur. (Many buildings will suffer from damages of grades 4 and 5.) Damages are expected under the influence of moderate-strong (M 6-7) earthquakes in the future.” (AL-DABBEK 2007)

AL-DABBEK urges a number of steps *“to reduce the level of damage and the loss of lives and property”* in the camps and to *“reduce the seismic vulnerability of buildings and infrastructures.”* Considering the limited funds available, he recommends that *“seismic upgrading of the existing vulnerable buildings and infrastructure”* be made according to a system of three priorities. *“The first priority should be accorded to the public buildings and for the seismic vulnerable buildings situated around the main road. The second priority should be accorded to the seismic vulnerable buildings situated around the secondary roads. The third priority should be accorded to the other seismic vulnerable buildings. There is, moreover, a need to develop the public awareness and the capacity building for people and institutions of support and management against disasters.”* (AL-DABBEK 2007)

The impact of a potential earthquake is made worse by weak institutional capacity, lack of experience and resources to conduct disaster management and rescue operations, and the lack of national policy or programmes to build awareness. Section 2.2.4 “Infrastructures, Access, and Circulation” addresses the need to develop an emergency rescue plan.

Definition of Problem Areas

UNRWA’s current programme for shelter rehabilitation focuses merely on individual shelters without taking into consideration the neighbouring structures or the sub-area of the camp. The resulting measures are therefore often ad hoc and none-sustainable. Houses are replaced with new structures on the same site, although the block might be extremely congested. Before embarking on a particular rehabilitation project, it is therefore strongly recommended that this approach be revised to take into consideration other factors such as:

- the structural condition of the entire block
- the structure of the neighbourhood or sub-area
- the camp’s overall access and circulation system

It is recommended that camp areas be classified according to their structural conditions, the quality of life they offer, and their accessibility, and that priority action areas of 20 to 30 shelter units be defined for the

worst cases (i.e., are there areas that are in particularly bad shape?). This approach would allow other problems to be addressed as well, including insufficient living standards within houses and blocks. The findings of the micro study already provide alarming insight into living conditions typical of central camp blocks (→ 156 - 159).

(6) Conclusions and Recommendations

The detailed study of the domestic environment in camps is a vital precondition to developing new and more effective rehabilitation programmes. If UNRWA is not sensitive to the social and spatial structures of houses and blocks, residents will refuse to cooperate and will effectively hinder its planning and implementation of measures. Important factors UNRWA should consider include:

• The Issue of Perceived Ownership

The internal analysis of the building blocks shows that dwellings far exceed official UNRWA size standards. Decades of personal investment by refugee families have expanded UNRWA shelters into complex structures. Often houses are the only asset available to families and serve as a form of built life insurance. It is therefore not surprising that residents have come to see themselves as the legitimate owners of the dwellings, complete with the right to rent or sell them. Without legally recognizing this right, UNRWA has in practice implemented no steps to challenge it.

• The Need to Learn from Internal Spatial and Social Organisation

Refugee houses have developed some unique spatial and programmatic characteristics. These include converting the former courtyard into an internal living area, the common feature of the salon (or *dirwan*), and the use of roof terraces as spaces for social gatherings. Designs for new housing projects could benefit from awareness of these existing typologies, which will increase the attractiveness of the houses within the community.

• The Need for Comprehensive Strategies to Improve Substandard Living Standards and Reduce Structural Risks

Poor construction practices and underdeveloped technical infrastructures are a widespread problem in the region and are in no way limited to the camps. There are no building quality standards, nor is construction activity monitored or controlled by an external authority. UNRWA's current practice of asking residents to sign a written disclaimer acknowledging that construction beyond the second floor is prohibited may help to relieve the agency of direct responsibility for poor construction, but it does not solve the serious long-term risks posed to the entire camp community.

The micro-study surveys suggest that, although refugee families in many cases have access to sufficient living space, the quality of the available space is substandard (see section 2.2.2). Many houses are not only of poor structural quality but also lack access to sufficient public or private external spaces, which affects natural lighting and ventilation. Both aspects cannot be separated. All proposed measures should deal comprehensively with structural risks and aspects of substandard living conditions. Before designing and implementing improvement measures in a particular unit, the immediate surroundings of block and neighbourhood need to be considered.

Measures can include:

- Restructuring blocks in priority action areas in order to maximize long-term impact and benefits .
- Promoting measures to build awareness, such as conducting workshops and providing free structural advice to expose poor construction practices or suggest possible remedies.
- Providing best practice examples for home improvement measures and internal spatial arrangements, such as a catalogue of (existing and new) designs.

2.2.4 Infrastructure, Access, and Circulation

This section considers technical and infrastructural needs and risks in the camps. Are the infrastructural systems and access systems sufficient to answer the growing needs of urbanised camps? What could be done to limit risks and invest effectively with future needs in mind?

(1) **Technical Infrastructure in Refugee Camps**

Roles and Responsibilities

There is currently no universal agreement or understanding in place that clearly regulates which of the stakeholders (UNRWA, local municipalities, or the host government) is responsible for providing such infrastructure as roads, water, electricity, and sewage systems. In practice, the issue is handled differently in each region. The governments of Jordan, and (more recently and to a lesser extent) Syria, provide infrastructure to its Palestinian refugee camps. In Lebanon, on the other hand, UNRWA has stepped in to compensate for the host government's inaction. In the West Bank, the issue has not been resolved, and the confusion has created gaps and lack of investment in modernising the utilities network. Service providers vary from camp to camp, with services poorly coordinated. Officially UNRWA maintains that it does not consider infrastructure to be one of its core services. However, the agency does provide for the collection of solid waste, and in some cases it has carried out improvement measures. Municipalities and other public bodies provide sewage networks and water to the three case-study camps, while private companies such as the Jerusalem District Electrical Company (JDEC) provide electricity, and PAL-COM provides telecommunication services. In Fawwar, which is located within Oslo "Zone B" but cut off from nearby Hebron through a corridor of Oslo "Zone C" (subject to Israeli security and planning authority), Palestinian private companies relying on physical infrastructural links have very limited scope to operate. Here camp residents have no alternative to using the services of the Israeli Electrical Company. All infrastructural projects depend heavily on the support of international donors.

Common Deficits and Shortcomings in Provision of Technical Infrastructure

West Bank refugees (like ordinary residents) are generally expected to pay for utilities and services, and such costs are very high, especially for water, which has to be purchased from Israeli providers. A market oriented customer-service provider relationship with open competition has not developed, however (except in telecommunications). Due to the West Bank's generally complex and politically and economically unstable situation in the context of military occupation, service providers struggle to ensure reliable services, particularly in remote rural areas. The spatial fragmentation of Oslo "Zones A", "B", and "C" has inevitably also led to the fragmentation of service providers, each only being able to cover small population areas within the enclaves of "Zone A" and "Zone B". Service rates have thus generally remained very high. The ability to modernise and investment networks rely overwhelmingly on international funds and outside support and cannot be sustained through a market mechanism.

The research conducted in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar revealed many gaps and deficits in the provision of technical infrastructure. Some of the most significant issues were mentioned in interviews with local community members and UNRWA staff. They included water shortage, substandard and leaking pipe systems, flooding through storm water, insufficient electricity networks, septic tanks and gaps in the sewage system, and the lack of a coordinated strategy for waste water management.

• Water Shortage

The most commonly cited problem relates to water supply. The local climate limits natural rainfall to the months between December and March, with continual heat-waves and droughts during the rest of the year. Adding to this natural shortage of water, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ongoing occupation have transformed the problem into a perpetual crisis. The natural water supply is controlled by Israel and distributed through a politicized system that can be characterised as "Israeli settlers first, Palestinians second". In addition, the territorial fragmentation and other restrictions imposed by occupation have made it impossible for Palestinian institutions to develop an effective supply system to the entire West Bank. As a consequence, water cuts occur regularly. Some camps such as Fawwar only have access to water three days a week. Houses constructed on valley slopes in Deheishe and Fawwar are especially vulnerable to low water pressure in the supply system.

• **Substandard and Leaking Pipe Systems**

The antiquated pipe system is often in an alarming state of disrepair, leading to a high percentage of loss through leaks, higher costs incurred through waste and, even more significantly, structural damage caused by leaking surfaces or the erosion of structural reinforcements. Leakage also occurs due to the lack of – or poorly implemented – insulation on rooftops, cracks in walls, or poorly constructed windows. During the winter months, water spills through cracks into rooms or onto passers-by in the narrow alleys. Substandard pipe systems, moreover, often lead to the pollution of fresh water, as water supply and sewage pipes often run through the same channels.

• **Flooding through Storm Water**

Residents of all three camps have stated that the low capacity of the drainage systems leads to regular flooding during the winter months, when short, heavy rainfall is characteristic. Many of the houses in Amari, and some dwellings in Deheishe and Fawwar, are regularly flooded. The additional weight of wet, poorly drained ground can also lead to the collapse of retaining walls, posing a structural risk.

• **Insufficient Electricity Network**

A key hindrance to economic development in Fawwar is the limited electricity circuit and the substandard, low-capacity transformer serving the camp. High voltage electricity, a prerequisite for workshops and factories, is not available. (See also the description of Fawwar's Electrical Lighting Society in section 2.3.3.)

• **Septic Tanks and Gaps in Sewage System**

Virtually all open-channel systems in the camps have been replaced with underground sewage systems, addressing one of worst problems of camp infrastructure. In addition to the leakages in the pipe system mentioned above, however, some houses have never been connected to the system. They include structures in the old camp cores and, even more, on the fast growing periphery. Most of these houses rely on septic tanks. While such tanks can be cost-effective, they require regular maintenance and upkeep. If not cleaned regularly, they can overflow and lead to pollution of groundwater and conflicts with affected neighbours. The often poorly constructed septic tanks also have a tendency to leak.

• **Lack of Strategy for Coordinating Waste Water Management**

Water treatment plants are a rarity in the West Bank. Most waste water is directed to wadis (river beds), which only carry water during the winter season. The resulting smells and the impact on groundwater are a frequent source of conflict. When action is taken and treatment plants are constructed (in most cases funded through international aid programmes), their positioning is not coordinated by the planning authorities in the government or the PNA, or is perceived to be discriminatory against refugee concerns; Fawwar residents, for instance, oppose the planned construction of a treatment plant for the village of Yatta at the western entrance to the camp.

Techniques for Dealing with Water Shortages

Although the micro-study survey of 99 houses in three camps gives only qualitative insight, the results verify statements collected in interviews. Most houses in the three camps have rooftop water tanks. Water tanks are so popular in the region that they have become one of the most familiar features of residential areas (camp and non-camp). While tanks can bridge short gaps in the water supply system, especially during the summer months, the much more effective technique to save costs and natural resources are water reservoirs, which are usually constructed in the basement. Very few houses surveyed had such reservoirs, though this has become an accepted standard in newly constructed dwellings in the West Bank region. As most newly constructed houses in the camps are located on the peripheries and the investigated blocks were located in camp centres, the survey is not representative of the camps in their entirety. Nevertheless, reservoirs have great potential for improvement and cost saving and should be actively encouraged.

(2) Access and Circulation Systems

The access and circulation systems of camps evolved gradually in an unplanned fashion. In many cases, traditional paths and roads pre-dating the camps themselves became main roads or neighbourhood streets. UNRWA's attempt to structure the layout of shelter blocks in the 1950s did not include road planning. Blocks were simply placed apart from each other, leaving public open spaces in which dirt roads and lanes developed informally. The morphological analysis in section 2.1.3 clearly shows how this terrain vague between the allocated shelter blocks gradually disappeared, falling prey to the horizontal expansion of shelters. The gradual privatisation of these public zones was only negotiated between neighbours and often involved conflicts. UNRWA generally did not interfere. It is not surprising therefore that, in the absence of an overall regulating body, the access system is in a state of deep crisis. Many lanes have shrunk to the bare minimum required for pedestrians to pass, or they have disappeared altogether. Large parts of the camp are no longer accessible to private cars with routes closed off by houses or filled with other obstacles such as steps and light posts. Although there are significant differences from camp to camp, as a rule the current access and circulation system does not address the needs of an urbanised environment. It is inadequate in serving the community's daily needs – providing access to individual houses and parking for increasing commercial activities and the rising number of private vehicles – and it fails altogether where emergency access and evacuation routes are concerned.

Hierarchical Road System

While unregulated growth led to a collapse of the access system in some parts of the camps, informal growth has also generated an overall order. Road systems in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar consist of three comparable elements: main streets (6m wide or more), secondary (or trunk-) streets serving camp quarters (4.5m–6m wide), and small alleys leading to individual houses, sometimes forming cul-de-sacs (0.5m–4.5m wide). The morphological analysis of the camp's fabric shows that the three elements of the system are structured in a hierarchical, tree-like way. This is especially clear in Amari (→ 189) where the centrally located main street provides primary access into the camp. From this main street, four neighbourhood streets lead to the neighbourhoods in the east and four to the neighbourhoods in the west. All eight of these neighbourhood streets fan out into a multitude of capillary-like lanes and alleys, which penetrate the residential fabric itself. Some of these have the width of trunk-streets (4.5m and above), while others are small alleys impenetrable to vehicles. While the primary and secondary access system performs reasonably well, figure → 190 shows that the tertiary element fails.

In Fawwar the existing hierarchisation of roads is less clear (→ 193). But here, too, a main camp road exists, which takes most of the internal traffic load and also carries significant through-traffic (leading to congestion and air and noise pollution). The main road gives access to a comb-like system of secondary streets penetrating deep into the camp. Originally this pattern of secondary streets was regular, following the straight boundary lines between the historic camp quarters which sloped up the hillside. Horizontal expansion of shelters, however, has distorted this order and led to the closure of some roads and diversion of others. Only a few of these old quarter roads have retained a width of more than 4.5m, while most have shrunk or almost entirely disappeared, resulting in access problems similar to those identified in Amari (→ 194). At the fast growing periphery of the camp – outside UNRWA's boundaries – new roads, mostly dirt tracks, have appeared with hardly any connection to the camp. In obvious response to the difficulties of taking a private car through the camp, these new roads allow residents to bypass Fawwar's congested centre and circumvent the camp from the eastern side. Although the system is still fragmented, it could potentially develop into an alternative access system independent of the old camp.

Like Amari, Deheishe is located adjacent to a main road of regional importance. The Jerusalem-Hebron Road fulfils to some degree a function similar to that of Fawwar's internal main street. The road is a major commercial hub and provides for six access points into the camp. From here three major and three minor roads lead into the camp. The circulation system within the camp itself has changed very little over the decades. The same roads that have marked the boundaries of the historic camp quarters have remained main circulation routes. The 1950s grid superimposed by UNRWA during the shelter programme has left a system of secondary roads. As in Fawwar, a new peripheral road system has developed in recent years. A well-constructed road bypasses the camp and the adjacent Anton mountain from the east and leads towards the Finiq Cultural Centre and Deheishe's fast growing eastern and southern peripheries.

In Amari and Deheishe the existing hierarchisation of roads seems to have the potential to be further strengthened and rationalized as a basis for strategic planning. The systems could be used and developed to provide access to serve the growing needs of the camps. In Fawwar, however, strategic planning will have to provide a new vision for reconnecting and rationalising the fragmented and disjointed parts of the street system.

Access and Evacuation in Emergency Situations

Although camp residents find pragmatic solutions to their everyday access problems, the situation can become serious and even critical in emergency situations. Physical constraints may prevent an ambulance from reaching a sick person. Even if the house has access to a sufficiently large road, medical teams from outside may not be able to navigate the maze of the camp roads without local help and significant delays. In an urgent incident such as a gas leak, explosion, or fire – or an incident involving internal or external violence – entire neighbourhoods are in danger of being cut off from external help (→ 196 - 198).

Larger emergency vehicles such as fire engines require a street width of 6m. The case study camps were categorized into different territories in accordance with the minimum distance (on street level) between a house and the nearest parking spot for such a vehicle (→ 198):

- Good emergency access: emergency vehicles are able to approach the shelter to a distance of 15m or less. The smallest and most flexible fire hose can therefore be used.
- Reasonable emergency access: emergency vehicles are able to approach the shelter to a distance of up to 60m. Several hoses have to be joined together, reducing efficiency and speed of help.
- Insufficient emergency access: distance 60m plus.

The following additional factors might seriously affect emergency aid but could not be considered in the survey: Existence of electrical wires and other obstacles to the use of ladders; lack of sufficient night-time lighting; crowded streets, especially after 7pm; parked vehicles and other obstacles blocking street access; insufficient knowledge of local geography. (It is common for emergency teams to request guidance from locals upon arrival at the entrance to the camp.)

Emergency Rescue Plan: Evacuation Routes and Access for Fire Engines and Emergency Equipment

The current access situation could contribute to a serious humanitarian disaster should a major natural disaster such as an earthquake occur. While the likely immediate impact on weak structures in the camp has already been discussed in section 2.2.3, the muddled access and circulation system would prevent fast and efficient rescue operations. Hindered access to emergency rescue teams and fire engines dealing with fires from exploded gas tanks would cause many more casualties. International studies even predict that the average casualty number will rise hours after the initial impact if rapid response cannot be provided. JALAL AL-DABBEK identifies the “absence of spaces between the building and the limited width of roads” as a key risk that “will increase the risk level and close most of the roads. Consequently the many residential areas within the camp will be isolated... Lack of awareness among the people to the safety measures and regulations, [combined with] the lack of discipline prevailing in the streets due to the very bad political situation, will cause panic and mess to a level that will affect all emergency, rescue, and first aid activities.”²¹⁰ (AL-DABBEK 2007).

AL-DABBEK’s study placed particular emphasis on emergency scenarios, testing existing systems under extreme conditions and deriving preliminary recommendations for both buildings and circulation. These include the following:

- Taking Preventive Measures along Main Evacuation Routes

The main priority zones for repairing vulnerable structures should be along main streets and possible evacuation routes of the camp (see section 2.2.3). This will limit closure of main roads from building rubble.

- Establishing Safe Zones for Camp Residents and Emergency Teams

In close proximity to the camp, open and easily accessible areas should be defined to set up emergency rescue centres, assembling evacuated residents, and providing help to the injured. The areas could be used as basis for emergency response activities and for temporary shelter.

²¹⁰ source: Al-Dabbeek, Jalal. “Seismic Vulnerability of Buildings and Lifelines in Palestinian Refugee Camps”, UNRWA commissioned report, February 2007.

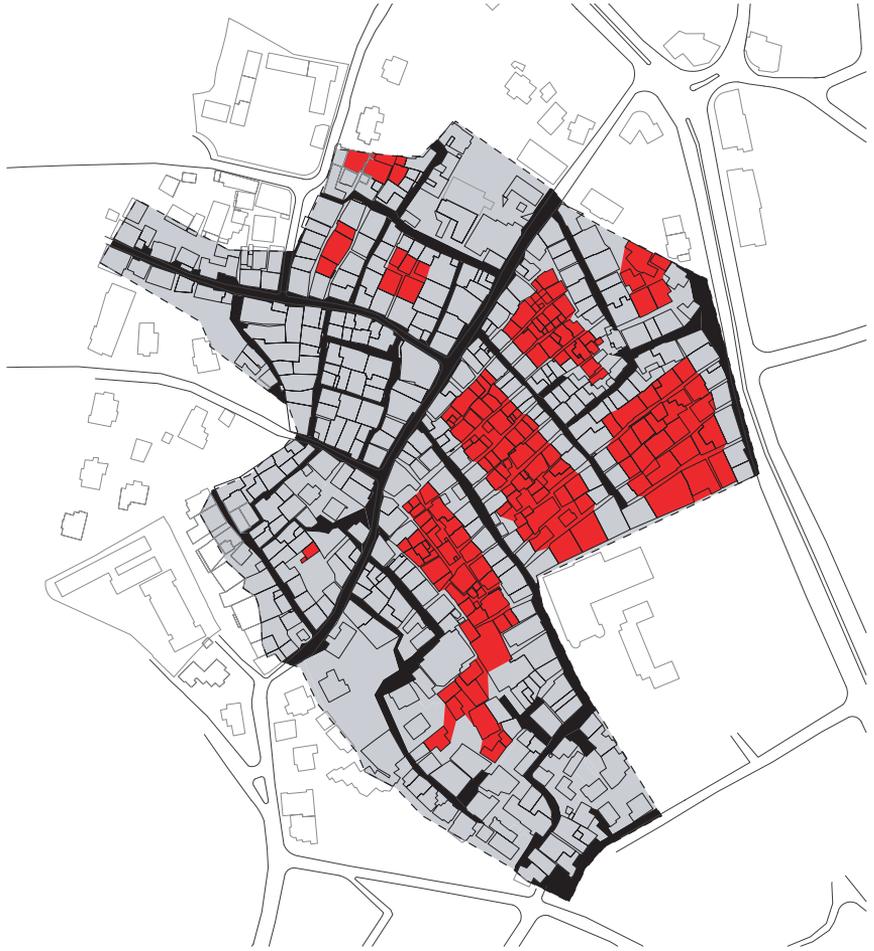


→ 189

Amari Camp (2006) – Road Hierarchy

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- major roads
- secondary roads
- lanes and pathways



→ 190

**Amari Camp (2006) – Areas Inaccessible
to Private or Emergency Vehicles (Lanes
Smaller Than 2.5m)**

Legend

- - UNRWA's official camp boundary
- major and secondary roads
- inaccessible with ordinary vehicles
(2.5m width)



→ 191

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Road Hierarchies

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- major roads
- secondary roads
- lanes and pathways



→ 192

**Deheishe Camp (2006) – Areas Inaccessible
to Private or Emergency Vehicles (Lanes
Smaller Than 2.5m)**

Legend

-  UNRWA's official camp boundary
-  major and secondary roads
-  inaccessible with ordinary vehicles
(2.5m width)



→ 193

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Road Hierarchies

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- major roads
- secondary roads
- lanes and pathways



→ 194

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Areas Inaccessible to Private or Emergency Vehicles (Lanes Smaller Than 2.5m)

Legend

- - UNRWA's official camp boundary
- major and secondary roads
- inaccessible with ordinary vehicles (2.5m width)

Indicator	Amari Bl.	Deheis. Bl.	Fawwar Bl.
Access to Private Water Tank (Roof) ¹	100 %	100 %	96 %
Access to Private Water Reservoir ²	0 %	2 %	3 %
Reliance on Septic Tanks ³	0 %	0 %	7 %

→ 195

Techniques for Dealing with Water Shortages

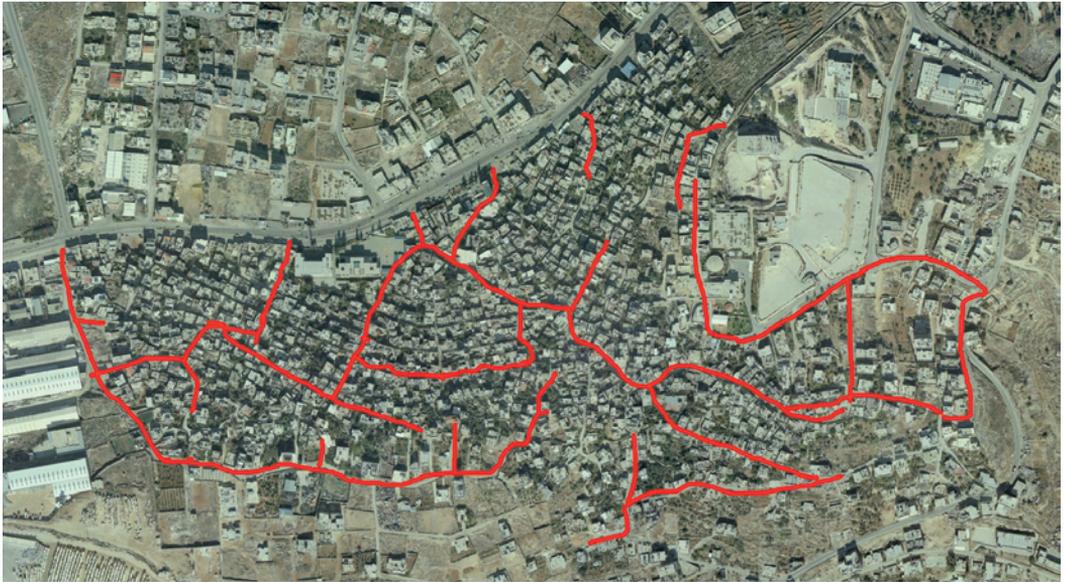
- 1 Rooftop water tanks are widely used. They are connected to the mains and ensure that water is available with sufficient pressure, even during times of water cuts or other shortages in the general supply system.
- 2 Private reservoirs are increasingly popular in Palestinian towns and cities. They are usually constructed in the basements and supplied by the winter rainwater.
- 3 House not connected to the main sewage system.

Indicator	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
Area with No Vehicle Access ¹	10 %	10 %	4.1 %
Insufficient Emergency Access ²	no data	43 %	52 %
Reasonable Emergency Access ²	no data	55 %	47 %
Good Emergency Access ²	no data	2 %	1 %

→ 196

Access and Evacuation in Emergency Situations

- 1 Estimate made by UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project based on aerial photography and interviews. The area within UNRWA's official camp boundaries was considered as 100%. Lack of access can be caused by insufficient street width (less than 2.5m), topography, and the existence of stairs and other obstacles (see table XX).
- 2 Area inaccessible to emergency vehicles. Map prepared by UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project based on interviews with the civilian defence units (Bethlehem and Hebron branch) responsible for emergency relief. The area within UNRWA's official camp boundaries was considered as 100% (see table XX).



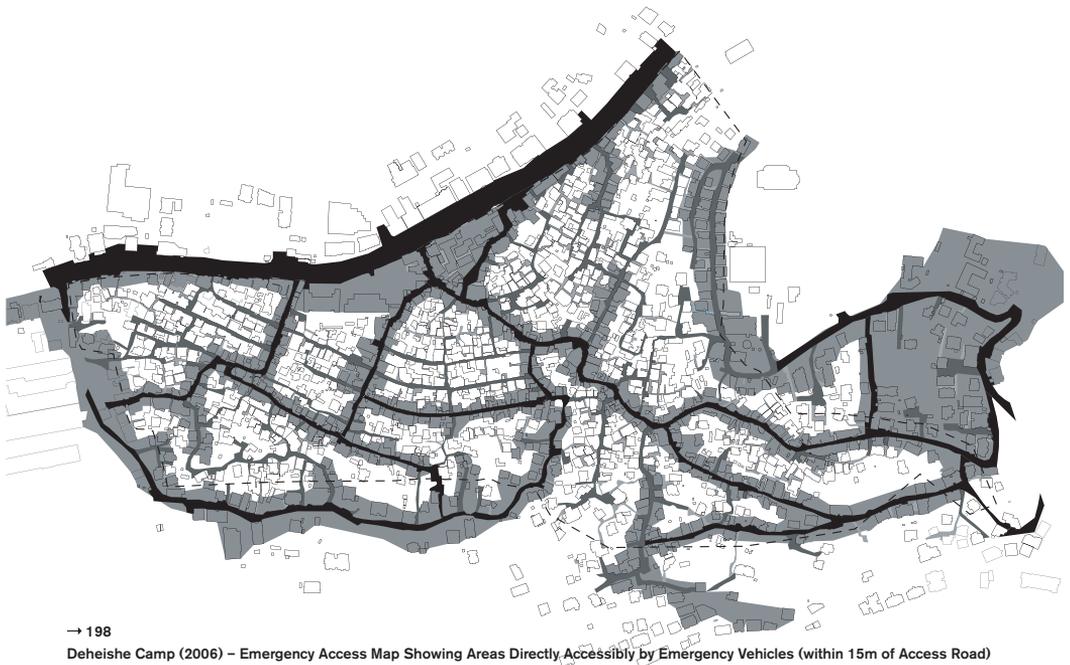
→ 197

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Aerial Photograph Showing Commonly Used Emergency Access Routes

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- emergency access routes used by Civil Defence Units

Source: Civilian Defence Unit, Bethlehem, 2006



→ 198

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Emergency Access Map Showing Areas Directly Accessibly by Emergency Vehicles (within 15m of Access Road)

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- areas directly accessible by emergency teams (15m from access roads)

• **Setting up a Rescue Plan, Raising Awareness, and Providing Capacity Training**

One of the most important recommendations of AL-DABBEEK's report is the need to train rescue and rapid response teams and raise awareness among camp residents. Ideally, an emergency rescue plan should be developed and communicated to each household with information on the steps to be taken by each family should a natural disaster or other major impact occur.

(3) Conclusions and Recommendations

The research findings lead to the following recommendations with regard to camp improvement:

• **Clarify the Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

The specific context of enduring military occupation in the West Bank has made cooperation between the various stakeholders – UNRWA, camp communities, municipalities, the PNA, and outside donors – more difficult. Compared to the clear roles and terms of involvement of host governments like the Jordanian or Syrian governments, the role of the PNA as external administrative authority vis a vis the camps is ambivalent. The PNA lacks continuity and resources to address the issue. More importantly, however, its involvement is contested by the camp community as a possible step towards permanent settlement. Yet for political and organisational reasons UNRWA cannot fill the resulting void. UNRWA may, however, be required to assume a more active role in terms of providing infrastructure though this does not necessarily mean relieving other stakeholders of their responsibilities. A key to improvement may be better stakeholder communication, coordinating actions and clarifying roles. This will require UNRWA to re-energize and nurture its links to municipalities as well as to the local and national government.

• **Alleviate Substandard Technical Infrastructural Systems and Encourage Self-Help**

Once stakeholder roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, the worst deficits and shortcomings of infrastructural systems need to be addressed. Large-scale investment will continue to be necessary, but significant progress can also be made by encouraging residents to help themselves. Credit funds, capacity building workshops, free consultancy services, and planning help are some of the measures that UNRWA could initiate. An awareness campaign about water reservoirs for instance can highlight the long-term savings they offer refugee families. Workshops on improving pipe work, septic tanks, and insulation can have a more immediate and lasting impact on building practice than externally coordinated rehabilitation measures imposed from above.

• **Develop Comprehensive Access and Circulation Concepts**

A key element of Camp Improvement Plans will be comprehensive access and circulation concepts, which must be developed in close cooperation with neighbouring village councils and municipalities. These concepts should evolve as much as possible from existing street hierarchies, which have developed over decades. House demolitions may be necessary in some cases but should be kept to a minimum. Instead of serving each individual house, block and neighbourhood access concepts can provide practical alternatives.

• **Invest in Risk Reduction**

Predicting, preventing, and mitigating disasters should include the development of "risk maps" and evacuation plans in cooperation with seismic experts and emergency response teams that have already gained experience operating in the camps. Such maps and plans should be developed together with the community and presented to community members.

2.2.5 Camp Borders, Overspill, and Informal Extensions

A visit to almost any camp in the West Bank will lead to the same conclusion: on the ground, it has become almost impossible to identify the camp's precise boundaries. Although the dense core of the camp remains a recognizable feature, its borders have blurred with the camp's surrounding urban, suburban, or rural context. This section focuses on the new spatial-physical reality that has emerged at the periphery of camps, forming a multitude of spatial and functional links to neighbouring villages or municipalities. This discussion should be read as complementary to section 2.3.7 ("Relations to Neighbouring Non-refugee Communities"), which addresses the sociocultural and economic aspects of this interaction. Both sections deconstruct the widespread but misleading notion that camps are de-contextualised entities cut off from the surrounding communities. On the contrary, they engage with their surroundings in multiple ways and depend on them in most aspects of everyday life.

(1) Closed and Open Borders

On the ground, the spatial and programmatic constitution of a camp's edge zone can vary significantly, underlining its ambiguous status. Two main types of border (with infinite variations between them) can be identified among the camps of the West Bank:

• Closed Borders:

From the outside, a camp can appear fortress-like – both a sanctuary and a ghetto. Back-to-back buildings can form a uniform mass with only a limited number of entrance points. Interaction with the surroundings is very limited. It can be assumed that closed borders developed at least partly in response to actual and perceived external threats and a desire to shield from military incursions and other forms of violence.

• Porous Borders:

Amari and Deheishe, and to a lesser extent also Fawwar, have also developed different zones along their peripheries where intense, mostly economic interactions with the surroundings take place. (In Deheishe this interaction is cultural as well.) Amari and Deheishe are both located next to major thoroughfares. Here, as well as at other main entrances into the camp, houses are fronted with many shops and cafes inviting passers-by and neighbouring residents. In such cases, camp borders have been transformed into permeable membranes between the camp and its surroundings.

The development of "engaged borders" is a more recent phenomenon and relates to the establishment of partial sovereignty through the PNA as part of the Oslo Peace Process (see section 1.1.1 and 2.1.3). Today most camps are surrounded by both porous and closed boundary sections.

(2) Spatial Typologies of Informal Expansion

The blurring of the camp boundaries with the outside context produces a new spatial reality characterised by various conditions (which vary from camp to camp). These conditions range from overspill to informal extension, from unofficial camps and clusters to formal extensions and, finally, to satellite cities.

• Overspill:

On the ground, camp boundaries are not marked, are rarely precisely known, and are virtually impossible to recognize. Reconstructing boundary lines via aerial photography suggests that many camp houses or gardens are positioned on the line or beyond. Informal construction activities have simply "spilled over" an invisible boundary, especially in more isolated camps, where property rights are either unresolved or they are the result of more deliberate attempts to claim land. A comparison of recent aerial survey photography and records of camp boundaries prove, however, that overspill is a common condition applying to most camps. In Amari the ordered and well-maintained residential area surrounding the camp leaves little room for overspill developments (→ 210). In Deheishe, on the other hand, the ongoing dispute over ownership rights at the southern periphery of the camp – in areas known as Al Maghayir and Jabal Anton – have fuelled considerable construction activity (→ 211). Deheishians argue that the land was traditionally arid and has never been officially registered, while both the city of Dora and the village of Artas claim ownership. In the confusion, Deheishians have simply created "facts on the ground". Figure → 199 shows that, for Deheishe, the zone of overspill is almost equal to a quarter of the official camp area (within UNRWA's camp bounda-

ries). In Fawwar, clear land ownership and less density have limited overspill to small areas along the main street and to the western bypass road.

• **Informal Camp Extensions (“Commuter Belts”):**

Out-migrating families generally continue to register as refugees and choose to reside close to the camp, often within easy walking distance. In this way, families can continue to take advantage of the free schooling and health systems UNRWA provides and continue to participate in camp life. An area south of Amari was particularly popular and developed into a de facto camp satellite. Despite the appearance of living “normally” outside the camp, refugees choose to stay amongst themselves. Most families also maintain “ownership” over their plots and shelters inside the camp and (if it is not occupied by other family members) have rented or sold their “property” to other refugee families. The spatial expanse of informal camp extensions, which comprise large areas – between 2 and 7 times the official size of the camps themselves.

• **Unrecognized Camps, Unofficial Gatherings, and Clusters:**

When official camp boundaries were defined in the late 1940s, not all clusters of scattered refugee shelters were included. Some of these – like Saqayef Al Amari to the east of Amari, which is located across the main Qalandiya-Al-Bireh Road – were located in close proximity to the camps. Refugees were entitled to official UNRWA registration cards and free services, but their territorial exclusion meant that they were not entitled to shelters or shelter rehabilitation: *“UNRWA did not acknowledge this cluster of refugees outside the camp and considered it as an unofficial gathering – the same as Qaddura and Abu Shkhaidem close to Amari camp. When the concept of the Local Committees in the 1990s was introduced, these clusters were called camp clusters and are also officially represented in the network of Local Committees.”* (interview with GHALIB AL BESS, CSO Amari, July 31, 2006) The exclusion of certain areas from camp territories has remained a point of contention among refugee lobbies, UNRWA, and local municipalities. The research project did not conduct a detailed study of this phenomenon.

• **Formal Extensions:**

Although UNRWA’s camp boundaries are officially viewed as static and none-negotiable, the agency has been obliged to absorb overspill areas in several cases. In the Abu Anton area next to Deheishe, for example, a large area was formally added to the camp. As early as 1978 UNRWA agreed to enlarge Amari’s boundaries. Also in Amari, the limited area within the camp boundaries forced both main schools (Boys’ and Girls’) to be constructed outside the camp on separate plots that have acquired semi-official legal status. A very recent camp extension was a territory adjacent to Jenin Camp. After the Israeli incursion and large-scale destruction of houses and subsequent reconstruction efforts there, homeless families were relocated to a plot of land donated by the United Arab Emirates in an effort to decrease the population density in the centre of the camp. Land was officially donated to a *Wakf*, which then leased it to UNRWA.

Formal extensions remain a rarity, however, and, generally speaking, UNRWA’s response can be summarized as official denial but pragmatic response on the ground. The result is a grey zone of blurred rights and responsibilities, and it is questionable whether the continuation of this status quo is advantageous to the agency as it struggles to make ends meet. This grey zone relieves other stakeholders of key responsibilities, which are then also taken on by UNRWA. This includes neighbouring towns and cities, which continue to deny the presence of camps in their municipal territories and exclude camps from most planning and development initiatives. Municipalities by and large ignore the fact that an increasing number of refugees have become regular (tax paying and voting) citizens within their municipal territories. Last but not least, the camp communities themselves strike an ambiguous stance: Many residents fear stronger involvement of the PNA and neighbouring municipalities, seeing this as part of a creeping process of normalisation. Others fear losing their access to UNRWA’s free services, which are often significantly better than those provided by the state or the municipality.

• **Offspring and Satellites:** Several precedents in the West Bank show that informal extensions can develop their own representational structures, independent of both the camp and the surrounding municipality. Two examples near Amari are Umm al-Sharayit and the so called Lifta Cluster, both concentrations of refugee families registered with an Amari code that have bought or constructed properties in close proximity to the camp boundaries. The sociologist JAMIL HILAL explains, *“Umm al-Sharayit is part of Al-Bireh town municipality...[and] residents vote in local elections... to elect a larger administrative body. In the 2006 Al-Bireh municipal elections, the popular committee of the Umm al-Sharayit (an informal committee created during the inti-*

fada) negotiated with one of the electoral blocks for representation and succeeded to have [a representative] elected to the municipal council.²¹¹ (HILAL 2007)

Another degree of formalisation was reached in the case of Doha, a satellite of Deheishe. *“The Doha hillside is just across the Jerusalem-Hebron Road from Deheishe Camp. It was convenient for the refugees to choose a close location [in order] to maintain the connection with the camp and their families. Back in the 1950s, only a few houses were scattered randomly over the Doha hillside. The availability of the land, its low-cost value, and its nearness to the camp encouraged many Deheishians to settle there.”* (interview with SAMI MROWWEH, Mayor of Doha, July 19, 2006). For reasons that included the fear of losing its Christian character, Beit Jala municipality, which owned the area, decided to cede the hillside, and after the establishment of the PNA and the Israeli military withdrawal, the area was left in limbo: *“Neither Beit Jala, Bethlehem, nor UNRWA tried to take control of Doha. This left the residents of Doha without an administrative body to organize their affairs and provide needed basic public services. Its need for organizational authority thus led to the establishment of the Doha municipality in 1996.”* (interview with SAMI MROWWEH, July 19, 2006) (For detailed discussion of the evolution of Doha, colloquially known as “the refugee city”, see section 2.3.7)

(3) Local Factors Influencing Out-Migration

As indicated in fig. 3.7.2, the estimated average of registered refugees living in informal expansion zones outside of official camp boundaries is 20% (according to information obtained from local CSOs). This is the most important evidence of the significant out-migration that has taken place in the last decades. The camps of Amari, Tulkarem, Deir, and Ammar lead the ranks with around 40% of the registered camp population living outside camp boundaries. Deheishe is close to the average, while in Fawwar, a comparatively smaller number (around 10%) live outside the boundaries. Responses to questions about out-migration in the micro-study survey suggest that the trend is continuing (→ 200). Interestingly these figures, albeit non-representative, seem to suggest that the desire to leave the camp is greatest in Amari (the camp that has experienced the most out-migration), while in Fawwar (the camp with the lowest rate of out-migration) the desire to leave was only voiced by 14% of interviewed households. The factors influencing out-migration are complex and numerous and have already partly been discussed in section 2.1.3. This section summarizes the most important local factors (internal and contextual) that could be held responsible for the existing differences between the three case-study camps of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar, bearing in mind the fact that the latest socioeconomic data from the house-to-house survey currently conducted in the West Bank are not yet available.

Amari

Amari is the smallest and by far the densest of the three camps and indeed ranks amongst the densest in the West Bank. Scarcity of land within the camp’s official boundaries can be assumed to be the most significant factor triggering out-migration in the past as well as the current desire by half of the households interviewed to leave the camp in the future. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, land prices in the surrounding municipalities were affordable, and refugees enjoyed the advantage of employment opportunities in the urban region. Both of these factors meant that out-migration was an affordable option to a significant part of the population. This has changed recently, however. While internal segregation processes have meant that the most able and affluent have left already, at the same time, land prices have risen exorbitantly in the fast growing Al-Bireh, Ramallah region. Land and property have become unaffordable to most in the camp residents, compounding a sense of “being trapped” without options to leave.

Deheishe

Deheishe’s camp territory is larger, and overall building and population densities are significantly smaller. It can be assumed that the lower levels of congestion are partially responsible for the fact that less out-migration has occurred in the past, although many land resources have been available in close proximity. Although property prices have also risen, land is still available, and out-migration is expected to continue in the future.

²¹¹ source: Hilal, Jamil. “Elite Formation and Conflict Resolution in Refugee Camps”, UNRWA-commissioned report, 2007.

Spatial Characteristic	Amari	Dehishe	Fawwar
Overspill Area (in Dunums)	19 D (1.9ha)	74 D	5 D
Overspill Area in Rel. to Camp Area ¹	20 %	23 %	2 %
Informal Extension Area ²	693 D	2,027 D	567 D
Inform. Extens. in Rel. to Camp Area	726 %	619 %	207 %

→ 199

Overspill Areas (Informal Camp Extensions)

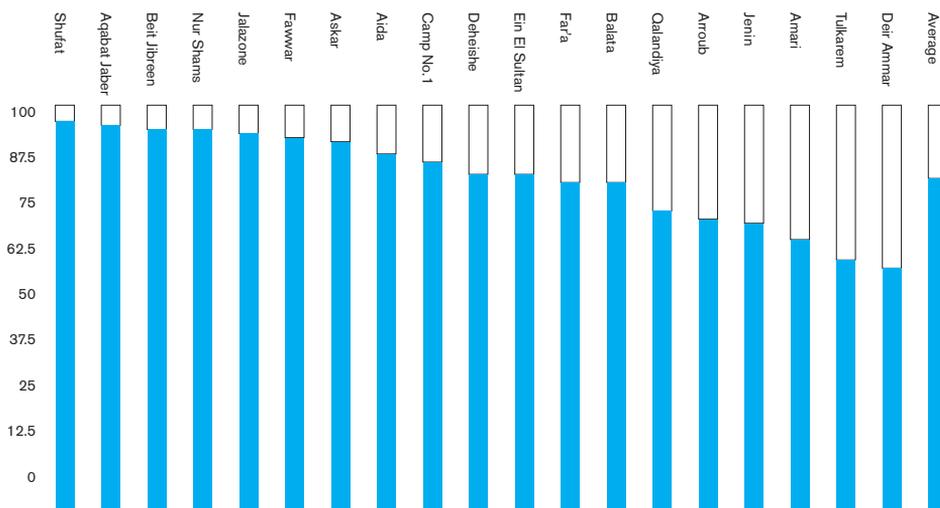
- 1 Percentage of overspill area in comparison to area within UNRWA's official camp boundary.
- 2 In contrast to overspill areas, informal extensions are areas with houses that appear to belong to the neighbouring village or town. They are differentiated from camp houses by their larger size, detached nature, architectural qualities, private gardens, etc.

Reaction	Amari bl.	Deheis. bl.	Fawwar bl.
Aiming to Leave the camp*	50 %	26 %	14 %
Planning to Stay*	25 %	42 %	66 %
No Answer	25 %	32 %	20 %

→ 200

Planning to Stay?

- * The criteria were developed after the survey was completed in an attempt to categorize the wide range of answers received. 100% equals the total number of households in the micro-study block.



→ 201

Planning to Stay? Out-migration Based on CSO estimates

- registered refugees inside camp boundaries (estimate by CSO)
- registered refugees outside camp boundaries (estimate by CSO)

Source: based of information provided by the local CSOs, 2007

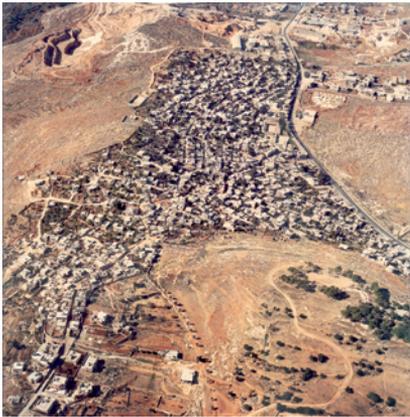




Amari Camp
1990



Amari Camp
2006



Deheishe Camp
1990



Deheishe Camp
2006



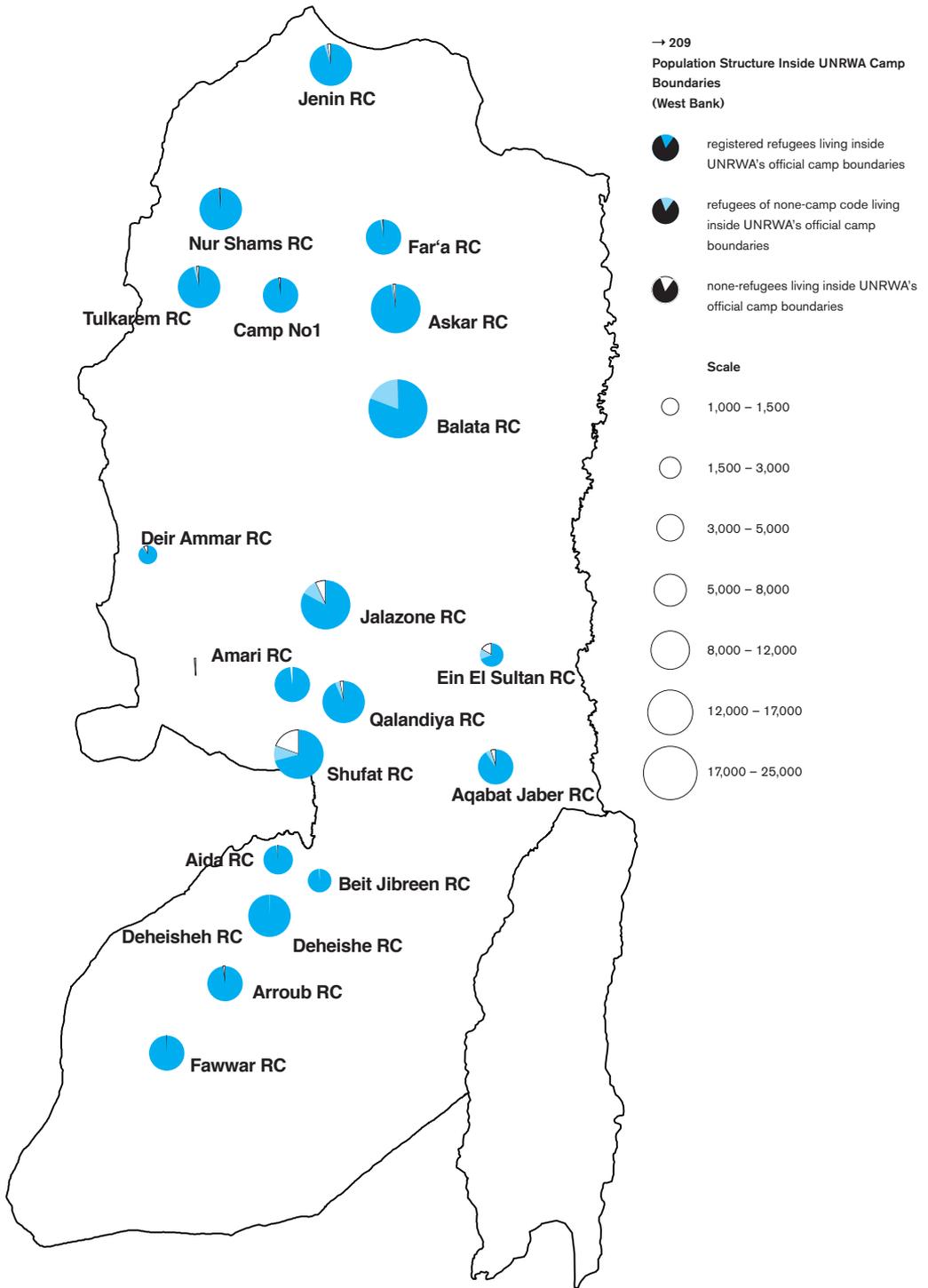
Fawwar Camp
1990

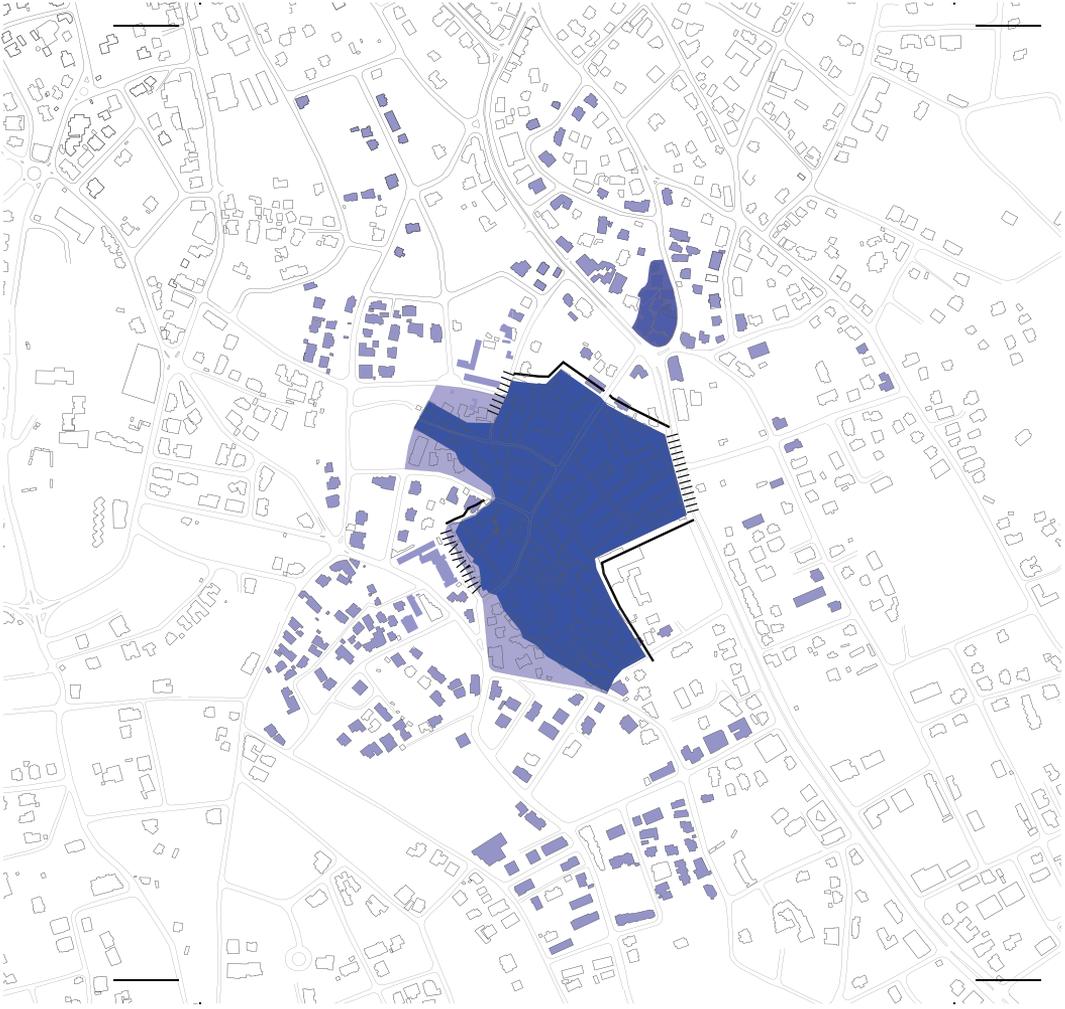


Fawwar Camp
2006

→ 203 - 208

Aerial Perspectives Showing Recent Acceleration of
Urbanisation and Informal Expansion



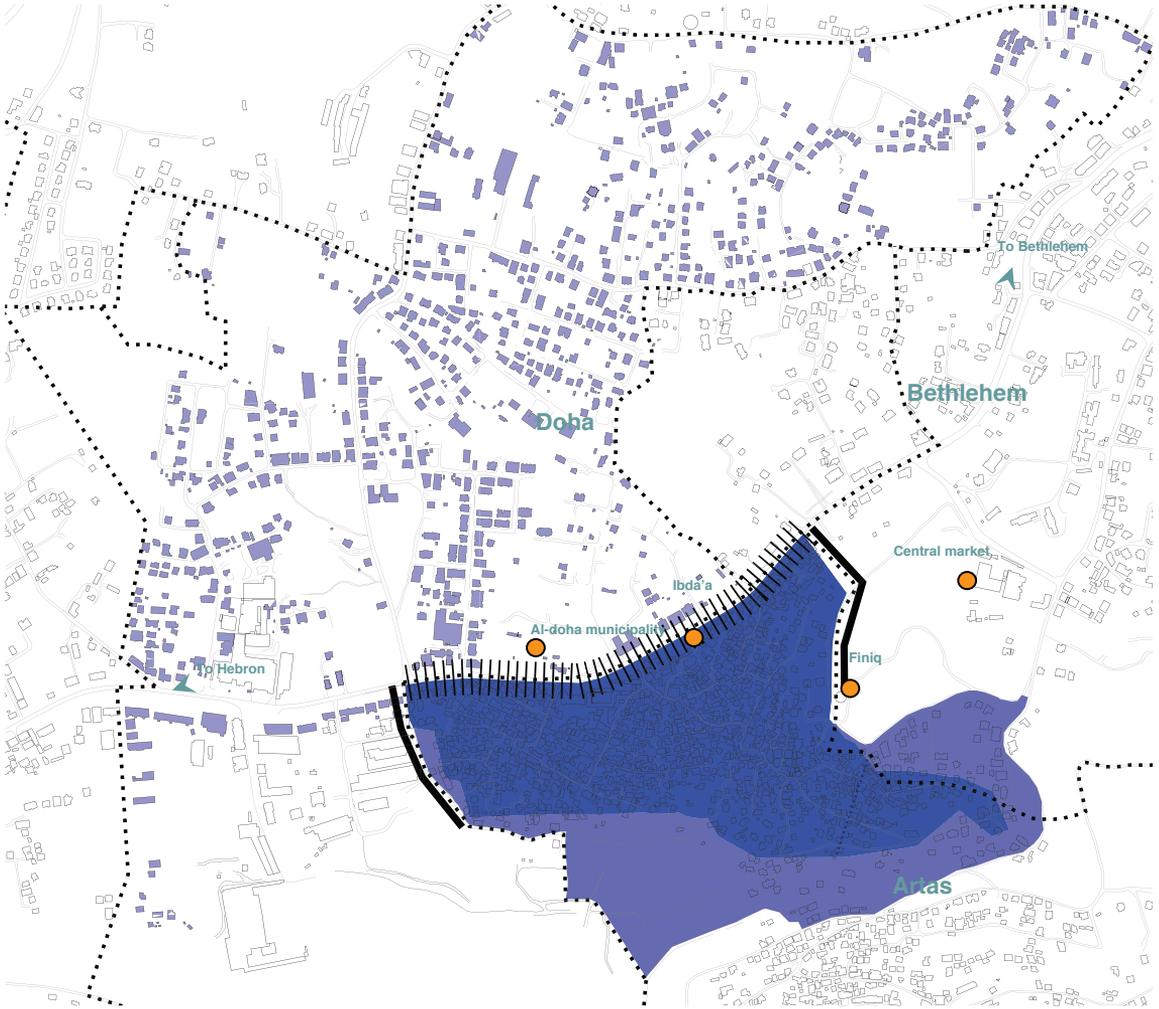


→ 210

Amari Urban Context Plan with Closed and Engaged Borders, Overspill Areas, Informal Extensions

Legend

- camp boundary
- informal extension
- overspill
- ||| engaged border
- closed border



→ 211
Deheishe Urban Context Plan with Closed
and Engaged Borders, Overspill Areas,
Informal Extensions

- Legend
- camp boundary
 - informal extension
 - overspill
 - ▨ engaged border
 - closed border

Fawwar

In Fawwar, too, the informal expansion has fundamentally altered the camp's surrounding landscape despite the fact that, according to CSO estimates, only 10% of the camp population has chosen this option. The main reason for this might be the population's comparatively poorer socioeconomic status and the comparatively large land resources within the camp boundaries. (Fawwar has one of the lowest building and population densities in the West Bank.)

As all camps approach saturation (exhaustion of internal spatial resources to expand) and some camps such as Amari have already overstepped this point, contextual factors will become ever more important in the future. These include: Available land resources close to the camp, affordable land prices, ownership of land (are owners willing to sell?), planning context (Oslo Zones A, B, C).

(4) Regional Factors Influencing Informal Growth and Expansion

Up until the outbreak of the first intifada, economic growth and employment opportunities were fairly evenly spread across the West Bank. Although Ramallah/ Al-Bireh/ Bitunia and Bethlehem developed as leading economic, cultural, and political hubs, the difference in development between these centres and other major cities such as Hebron and Nablus (as well as with smaller towns and villages located in the periphery of the West Bank) was not as profound as one might expect. Major internal migration movements (indicators of unbalanced development) did not take place. In this context, of course, one has to bear in mind the following specific factors:

- Israeli closures and checkpoints: These made free movement impossible, creating a highly artificially contained and specific situation.
- Traditional culture: Villages, towns, and even larger West Bank cities continued to be predominantly conservative and unwelcoming to strangers, including migrants from other Palestinian areas.
- Lack of real estate market: The property structure in the West Bank continued to be family based, and no real estate market developed that could provide migrating populations with cheap housing and easy start-up possibilities in the central cities.

No significant evidence or data on the migration patterns of refugees could be found. Like other Palestinians, the 200,000 refugees are in principle free to move within the West Bank and always have the additional privilege of being entitled to UNRWA services in the location of their choice, which makes migration more convenient. However, economic incentives for possible migration were lacking. As camp residents at the time were among the most mobile work forces (more so than Palestinian villagers and townspeople), they were able to take advantage of low-skilled job opportunities in Israel. Most camps were ideally positioned for this mobile working pattern. For many migrant workers, being based in a camp on the West Bank's periphery put them at a strategic advantage. Beyond the 1997 PCBS survey, few statistics are available, and UNRWA lacked sensitive monitoring tools to track possible differences in the socioeconomic profile. It can nevertheless be assumed that differences between camps remained small and that camps developed under comparable conditions. The average monthly household incomes in West Bank camps are similar. (The exception is Shu'fat Camp, which is located inside the Israeli boundaries of Jerusalem. Its residents hold Jerusalem identifications cards and therefore have privileged access to work opportunities in West Jerusalem and Israel.)

The collapse of the Oslo Peace Process, the ongoing second intifada, recent Israeli closure policies, and the construction of the Separation Wall have profoundly affected all Palestinians. Short-term implications included the collapse of the economy, the almost complete loss of jobs inside Israel, daily violence and curfews, and a new checkpoint system, which has led to further fragmentation of the Palestinian territorial enclaves. Refugees suffered disproportionately compared to other Palestinian social groups with commuter jobs inside Israel's industrial zones. The socioeconomic impact of recent developments has been explored elsewhere.²¹² The following regional "change scenarios" could have a profound and lasting impact on refugee camps. The scenarios follow current trends in the West Bank, which are likely to continue, or even increase.

²¹² see, for example, UNRWA's November 2006 publication: "Prolonged Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Recent Socio-economic Impacts": <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pubs07/RecentScEclmpacts.pdf>.

Scenario 1: Regional Polarisation: Strong Centres versus Weak Peripheries

The construction of the Israeli Separation Wall and the almost complete loss of employment opportunities inside Israel disproportionately effects the West Bank's periphery. Here refugees (as well as ordinary Palestinians) have far fewer chances of finding alternative employment than those situated closer to the main Palestinian cities. (Commuting is not an option due to continued movement restrictions.) While the central hubs are enjoying a modest economic boom, peripheral locations have little hope of reaping benefits and suffer alarming socioeconomic decline. The full impact of this profound structural re-orientation of the Palestinian economy is yet to be seen.

Scenario 2: Increased Internal Migration

There are already indications of major internal migration towards the economic hubs of Ramallah/ Al-Bireh/ Bitunia, and the belt around Eastern Jerusalem and Bethlehem/ Beit Jala. These cities are swelling with migrants arriving from villages and even from larger cities such as Hebron and Nablus, triggering major construction booms. The trend of consolidation and growth in the centres and decline of the periphery is expected to gather pace. What is its possible impact on refugee camps? Given the privilege of refugees to move freely without losing their entitlement to UNRWA services, it is likely that they will participate in the trend. Refugees, more than non-refugees, are mobile populations with fewer accumulated assets like property and land. UNRWA lacks appropriate tools to measure possible internal migration between camps, but the strain on its service centres is already evident. One example is Amari's medical centre, which serves a constituency more than three times as large as the camp population of 8,000. *"Many refugees, although not necessarily living in the camp, still make use of the services UNRWA provides within camp boundaries such as education, health services, etc. Amari's clinic actually serves around 30,000 people, who come from Al-Bireh and Ramallah districts and their surroundings. The clinic in the camp is considered a central clinic."* (interview with GHALIB AL BESS, CSO Amari: June 30, 2006) If internal migration continues to rise, UNRWA's current service infrastructure in centrally located camps is likely to be stretched even further.

Scenario 3: Growing Camps versus Shrinking Camps?

A possible long-term effect of such internal migration trends could be a disproportionate population growth in centrally located camps such as Amari, Qalandiya, and Deheishe and a population decline in peripheral camps. Camps most qualified and able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by central cities will face the highest growth. In Shu'fat Camp the population of the camp tripled within a few years when the Israeli "Centre of Life Policy" of the mid 1990s sparked a drive by refugees to secure a Jerusalem identification card. Shu'fat showed a high degree of flexibility in accommodating this influx but also withstood dramatic impact on local infrastructure and increased congestion. Economic incentives are equally powerful and, in the context of large-scale migration in the West Bank, it is likely that refugee camps will have a role similar to slum areas in comparable regional urbanisation processes: providing newcomers with affordable accommodation.

(5) UNRWA's Current Response

Informal structural extensions are a sensitive and politically charged subject, and the agency has so far refrained from addressing the issue in a proactive way. It refuses to engage in conflicts that result from disputes over land ownership along the camp periphery, and it officially refuses to provide technical support. The obvious realities of out-migration and informal camp expansion have simply been left unrecorded. (Either the agency is reluctant to face the implications of such facts or it simply does not consider them important enough to merit records and statistics.) Official population figures for camps include all those registered in a camp code and who draw on UNRWA services, regardless of whether they actually reside within camp boundaries. The obvious disadvantage of such demographic imprecision is that there are no reliable figures on actual population density inside the camp. On the ground, however, UNRWA has developed a more pragmatic approach, which includes the following:

• Providing Services to All Refugees:

The agency's general mandate is to provide services to all refugees, regardless of whether or not they reside in camps. This undermines the importance of camp borders, as registered refugees outside camps are entitled to essentially the same set of services as camp residents. Shelter programmes and certain infrastructural services like garbage collection provided by UNRWA are an exception.

• **Keeping Informal Records:**

Camp CSOs generally know which families have moved outside of the camps.

• **Technical Improvement Measures:**

The policy of not offering technical services beyond camp boundaries is difficult to maintain on the ground. Programmes such as road improvement and waste removal often deliberately ignore the location of the border. In fact, during the recent boycott of the Hamas-run PNA ministries by Western governments, UNRWA undertook many projects outside boundaries. These included school construction, road improvement, and providing other forms of infrastructure to refugees and non-refugees. Some services such as UNRWA's micro-finance programme deliberately target non-refugees, and the agency has in fact already assumed the role of a broader development organisation.

(6) Conclusions and Recommendations

Camps are contextual entities. UNRWA and other stakeholders, such as municipalities and host governments, need to recognize and actively address the fact that camps are expanding. Equally important is recognizing the complex interdependencies between camps and their surrounding contexts. The current trends of regional polarisation and internal migration resulting from geopolitical and economic pressures are likely to make a camp's location even important in the future; centrally located camps are likely to enjoy privileged access to local employment opportunities, while peripheral camps will probably suffer from fewer employment opportunities. Camps' social structures and demographic development are also likely to be affected by internal migration.

- Centrally located camps and UNRWA facilities will be impacted by the disproportionate demographic growth of central urban regions such as Ramallah/ Al-Bireh/ Bitunia, the belt around Eastern Jerusalem, and the Bethlehem/ Beit Jala area.
- Peripheral camps might lose populations, particularly their best-trained and most able residents, triggering a process of "brain-drain" that can already be acutely felt in such isolated camps as Fawwar.

What are the implications for UNRWA services and their strategic development? Will central camps need more services in the future? Do peripheral camps need more hardship programs and job generating initiatives? Will it be possible for UNRWA to uphold the principle of evenly distributing services to all camps if each camp's structural problems become very different? Should UNRWA prevent or foster internal migration to central camps that are closer to employment opportunities?

These case studies cannot answer such questions but stress the importance of establishing a strategic planning capacity in the agency to monitor economic and demographic trends in close dialogue with the PNA, independent think tanks, and other experts. In Part III of this dissertation, some of these recommendations are discussed in relation to UNRWA's current camp improvement initiative, which has the potential to function as a catalyst, re-energizing joint debates and interdisciplinary brainstorming in order to develop tools to monitor changes on a regional scale. Camp improvement could help set up a cross-programme brainstorming group that would include experts from UNRWA's diverse service portfolio and reach out to other UN organisations (such as OCHA and UNDP) that have specific skills and resources. For all Palestinian refugee camps, but especially those in the West Bank, regional and local changes in the host countries should be considered as a challenge and opportunity for a dynamic and flexible response: to develop more effective and tailor-made camp-level service for the refugee population.

2.3

Sociocultural Analysis

2.3.1 UNRWA and Communal Self-Organisation

The Emergence of Community-Based Organisations

When speaking of the “traditional approach”, staff members generally refer to the camps’ initial decades, when UNRWA assumed full responsibility for almost all aspects of communal life beyond family and clan activities. This included setting up and running community organisations. Some of UNRWA’s oldest institutions were the Sewing Centres for women set up in most camps in the early 1950s (Sewing Centres later became WPCs). Youth Centres were set up at the same period. No record could be found of communal initiatives (beyond traditional family and *hamule* activities) set up independently of UNRWA during this time. Although more research needs to be conducted to verify this claim, it can be assumed that during the early years, little effort was made by refugees to construct a lively community spirit. The expectation of being able to leave the camps soon was very real and present.

By the 1980s the situation had radically changed, and UNRWA ran numerous community organisations serving the needs of especially vulnerable groups such as women, the disabled, children, and youth. The first genuine internal reform effort was partly triggered by the increasingly precarious socioeconomic situation in the camps during the first intifada, which over stretched UNRWA’s capacities. UNRWA realised that the traditional relief approach was no longer sufficient for dealing with increasingly complex camps and their social and economic problems, especially under emergency conditions. Secondly, it was felt that the local community had to be more actively involved to effectively improve the situation. One of the most significant consequences of the time was the restructuring of the relief departments into Relief and Social Services (RSS) departments in order to form an effective body for renegotiating UNRWA’s relationship with the community.

One of the first efforts of the new RSS department was to conduct extensive need assessments of the situation of women. The intifada – with its mass arrests of men and high unemployment – had transformed the roles of women in the camp, imposing tremendous responsibility on them as main breadwinners for larger families. Preparatory committees were formed to brainstorm on the future of the Women’s Programme Centres (WPCs) and design new activities aimed at supporting women in their new roles. It was felt that this could be better achieved if the WPCs were run by local women themselves who could tailor programmes to the specific local needs. A ten year transition process began, during which elected administrative committees were established in all West Bank WPOs, and the centres achieved de facto independence in the late 1990s. MAKAREM AWAD explains: *“It is empowering and coordinating relationships, not supervision. In the 1980s we supervised these Women’s Centres, but nowadays we only coordinate with them and give them our recommendations. In general, there was a change in UNRWA’s role and mentality, from relief towards social services. This led to UNRWA’s attempt to assist in realizing self-sufficiency and sustainable development within these centres. In the past, the impact of all workshops and programmes ended at the end of those activities, and now we are trying to ensure follow-up.”* (interview with MAKAREM AWAD, Ramallah, December 14, 2006.) Although the idea of independence for WPCs started as an UNRWA-wide initiative, the host governments of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon did not support the initiative. So only in the West Bank and Gaza did WPCs acquire the status of CBOs. They remain in frequent contact with UNRWA, receiving UNRWA funding yet being independent in financial management and linked to the network of national women’s institutions. MAKAREM AWAD explains the interest of UNRWA in empowering women in the camps: *“We are interested in showing the woman how to deal with her situations and how to solve her problems. These experiences build a sort of relationships between women and make them feel their importance. Hence, they become more capable in problems solving and decision making. And that’s what we really care about – giving them the chance to solve their problems by themselves.”* (interview with MAKAREM AWAD, Ramallah, December 14, 2006.)

In the past UNRWA had mostly taken control of the activities of the WPCs, while now, as MAKAREM AWAD pointed out, *“Women’s centres are responsible for assessing their own needs. UNRWA offers assistance only in training and does not undertake needs assessment. In the past UNRWA determined the programs and projects implemented in those centres, but the idea has changed to let those centres decide on their needs and choose the appropriate programs independently.”* (interview with MAKAREM AWAD, Ramallah, December 14, 2006.) The establishment of the CBOs cannot be underestimated in terms of policy change within the agency. The same model that applied to women’s centres was followed for rehabilitation centres in the West Bank and Gaza. Committees were set up in the early 1990s (although members were nominated, not elected), need assessments were conducted, and in the late 1990s, such centres became de facto independent.

Current Difficulties Faced by CBOs

Although the basic concept of CBOs has proven to be accepted in the community, some issues are still considered problematic. Most interviewees cite the difficulty of raising funds by themselves. A key problem seems to be the absence of a clear communication of their newly-won independence vis a vis the donor community, which still assumes that all expenses of programmes and activities are covered by UNRWA. Rahma, the director of the WPC of Fawwar, explains: *"We suffer from lack of funds in the centre. We are not trained to do fundraising and at the same time donors do not approach us because they considered us under UNRWA responsibility. We maintain the centre only with the money generated from our small projects like the kindergarten and the nursery."* (Process Development Report of UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project Focus Group, Fawwar WPC, August 2, 2007.)

Even though Fawwar's WPC is perceived by UNRWA to be an active women's centre, its set-up required a struggle. MAKAREM AWAD pointed out that: *"There was no Sewing Centre in Fawwar Camp prior to the formation of the Women's Centre. The basic idea of establishing the Women's Centre was made by some women's initiatives that put pressure on UNRWA to establish it. Fawwar's Centre is distinctive among women's centres. [The women] are quite aware of their situations, and they set up programmes that meet their needs. They divided their programmes into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning sessions address women, while the afternoon ones address students – especially tawjihi students [high school graduates] – to prepare them for the General Secondary Certificate Exam. Other courses address some other beneficiary categories."* (interview with MAKAREM AWAD, Ramallah, December 14, 2006.)

UNRWA's Divorce from Youth Centres

The transformation of Fawwar's YC from an UNRWA-run institution to an independent institution took place very differently. It was far more abrupt than the WPC's gradual transition. YOUSEF HUSHIYA, Jerusalem area officer, explains: *"What goes on in the WPCs is more oriented towards women and less politically influenced. It is a sort of gender based activity centre that attempts to uplift the situation of women in the camp, so it is more technically rather than politically oriented. There are therefore fewer constraints for UNRWA to deal with WPCs than with YCs, where the majority of the activities have a political colouring. Whether the activity is social, athletic, or what not, it must be politically coloured at the YCs in the camps."* (interview with YOUSEF HUSHIYA, Jerusalem Area Officer, Ramallah, November 3, 2006.)

YOUSEF HUSHIYA points to the historically fraught relationship between UNRWA and the YCs. At the beginning of the first intifada, the UNRWA-run YCs had become highly politicized. The most vocal members of resistance against the Israeli occupation were YC activists, and UNRWA faced mounting pressure from Israel and the US to either close the centres or disassociate itself from them. This pressure eventually led to the official cutting of ties. Many YCs continued to work underground in spite of the threat of arrest and long prison terms. YOUSEF HUSHIYA explained: *"UNRWA is a none-political organisation and the YCs are heavily involved in politics. Since these centres carry out activities that have a political nature and UNRWA is keen to maintain its political neutrality, it therefore served both parts to have fewer links to each other."* (interview with YOUSEF HUSHIYA, Jerusalem Area Officer, Ramallah, November 3, 2006.)

Despite official statements and apologetic explanations that UNRWA has to maintain political neutrality in times of armed conflict, the divorce was unanimously interpreted as a sign of UNRWA's weakness – or worse, abandonment in times of hardship. UNRWA never revived its relationship to the YCs, despite the fact that most opened again in the wake of the Oslo Accords. The relationship to UNRWA is scarred, and YCs are not considered CBOs. Local resentment against the agency is still strong, despite the fact that YCs were generally allowed to reclaim their old premises in the centres of UNRWA compounds. YCs are keen to raise the UNRWA flag but have refused to cooperate with UNRWA on other occasions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The contrast between the two precedents of transition to independence (that of the WPCs and the YCs) could not be greater. On one hand, the gradual, mutually agreed transition of WPCs and Community-Based Rehabilitation Centres (CBRCs) could serve as an interesting model for phasing in greater community participation. The community was involved in the different steps of transition, benefits were explained, initial funding guaranteed and – most importantly – trust preserved. In hindsight the transition is considered positive by most, although some centres now face the difficult reality of generating funds for daily activities. UNRWA is strongly encouraged to continue nurturing this positive experience by provid-

ing all possible help, such as capacity building programmes, which are necessary for WPCs to face camps' increasingly complex needs.

The handling of the YCs on the other hand could not have been more damaging, although the international pressure that led to this decision allowed for few alternatives. UNRWA now finds itself in a dilemma. The international community insists on its strict adherence to "neutrality" – the absence of all ties to Palestinian politics, including not employing individuals who are political activists. Meanwhile, the community accuses the agency of being ignorant of the politicised reality of life in the camps – or worse, of siding with the international community at the expense of the Palestinians.

UNRWA's awkward divorce from the Youth Centres generated a frustration and distrust that will negatively impact present and future efforts to increase local participation and empowerment. It has added to a general atmosphere of mistrust, which overshadows any genuine concern for community empowerment by questioning its sincerity and legitimisation. The community now associates such efforts with an attempt "to leave through the back door." In order to address such fears, UNRWA must develop a clear and well-coordinated communication effort that directly addresses camp institutions and individual refugees and explains the advantages of increased participation and empowerment. Clarity and transparency about the political framework for camp improvement are crucial.

2.3.2 The Role of Local Committees

Local Committees (sometimes also referred to by their original name of Popular Committees) are unique to the West Bank and Gaza. This section traces the emergence of Local Committees (LCs) from the late 1980s, when the first intifada led to a general upsurge in community mobilisation. This brief historical excursus is followed by a comparative analysis of the three LCs in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar. The chapter attempts to address the current deficit in understanding the LCs' roles and functions as well as their potential to become a key agent in camp rehabilitation.

The Emergence of the Popular Committees during the First Intifada

The first Popular Committees (PCs) and Neighbourhood Committees were formed as part of a general popular mobilisation aimed at boycotting Israeli controlled administrative systems (for health, education, security, and the economy) and market systems and to setting up alternative structures. PCs were formed not only in the refugee camps but also in all Palestinian cities and villages of the West Bank. NAJJI ODEH, director of Finiq Cultural Centre in Deheishe, points out that *"the concept of the Popular Committees traces its roots back to the period of political awareness and struggle in the 1980s. During the first intifada, the role of the committee developed and intensified to answer the pressing need for civil institutions not only in the camps but in all of Palestine as well."*²¹³

PCs were also born out of need. As flexible, semi-formal entities, PCs guaranteed the maintenance of civil organisation and order within periods of lengthy curfews in Palestinian cities, villages, and camps, anticipating the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) with its parliamentary and municipal administrative system. When the Israeli military became aware of this mobilisation, a law was passed (in summer 1988) prohibiting any involvement in the PCs and allowing for a maximum prison sentence of ten years. Thereafter PCs operated underground, with most members directly appointed by the political parties from the main factions of the PLO. In other places, secret elections were held to choose members of the committee. Under the umbrella of the intifada's United National Leadership, Public Committees (outside the refugee camps) became de facto municipalities with the following general functions:

- Public Maintenance: street cleaning, garbage collection.
- Health: operating hospitals and arranging supplies.
- Education: organizing popular schools that also functioned on curfew days and replaced official schools that had been closed by the Israeli military.
- Public Security: setting up a guard-system with the purpose of alerting residents to danger.
- Agriculture/ Food Supply: helping rural workers during the harvest season and encouraging people to utilize empty land around their homes for small-scale agriculture.
- Conflict resolution: beginning to challenge the familiar system of heads of families as the only accountable parties capable of mediating internal conflicts .

The development of Popular Committees and Neighbourhood Committees varied greatly by locale during the first intifada, and many of the functions outlined above, such as alternative schooling and food distribution, were only undertaken in the early phase of the first intifada, at a time of mass mobilisation. Although there were many common features between PCs outside refugee camps and those inside them, it should be noted that UNRWA schools and hospitals did not close during the intifada and continued to provide full services. For this reason the role of Popular Committees in the camps was different, not in the form but in the services offered, which included the following:

- Mediation: resolving local conflicts
- Maintaining public order in partnership with UNRWA: Filling the mediating role (formally performed by police services) during the increase in building activities, which at times led to violent conflicts
- Distributing in-kind and cash donations from international donors amongst the camp population
- Food assistance: assisting UNRWA in distributing rationed food (up to 70% of total consumption)
- Public representation: serving as effective camp representatives in the local and international media

²¹³

source: interview with Najji Odeh, Director, Finiq Cultural Centre, June 18, 2006.

The Importance of Youth Centres

The success of PCs set up inside the camps around the time of the first intifada is crucial to understanding the emergence of a new representational entity during the Oslo years: the Local Committee. UNRWA-initiated activity centres – and the Youth Centres in particular – were equally important in influencing the emergence of the Local Committees. UNRWA set up and operated YCs until 1988, when Israeli pressure forced them to close them down. Youth Centres had become extremely politicised centres of intifada resistance, a fact that clashed with UNRWA's mandate of declared neutrality as a UN body. The importance of the YCs for social and political mobilisation can be summarized as follows:

- New Elites: Youth Centres played a crucial role in forming camp leadership and the political elite.
- Independent Organisational Model: Youth Centres were crucial not only in the camps but also had their counterparts in Palestinian cities and villages, which had been formed beginning in the late 1950s. After the Israeli occupation began, they were the only centres where Palestinians of different ages could gather beyond the direct control of the Israeli military.
- Politicisation: NAJĪ ODEH, member of Deheishe's Local Committee and the director of the Finiq Centre, described the crucial role of the camp's old YC in circulating political consciousness in the camp: "*The old UNRWA Youth Centre embraced us as a community in need of social and public activities. Not only did it encourage sociability in the camp, but soon after its establishment it also became a core for circulating political consciousness.*"²¹⁴

When the Israeli military implemented punitive measures against the YCs, including shutting them and imprisoning their members, new forms of organisation were needed. Inside the camps, Local Committees could be considered as their natural successors. The members of the newly set up LCs were directly recruited from amongst the most active YC members. As the case of Deheishe shows, Youth Centres were eventually not only replaced by LCs but often by a much broader and more complex landscape of institutions and NGOs such as the cultural, social, educational, and recreational centres Ibdā'a, Finiq, or Kheima Centres in Deheishe. Although some YCs were reopened after the intifada, they operated in a much reduced way and never regained their former importance. Amari YC could be considered an exception to the rule. It remains very strong and is considered to be the camp's Fateh party stronghold. The centre not only houses a very successful and West Bank-wide respected football team but has also succeeded in attracting external donations to add a basketball court and hostel to the compound. The sociologist JAMIL HILAL observed an inverse relationship between the strength of LCs and YCs in the camps. Where "*a strong Local Committee exists, then Youth Centres [are] weak, and vice versa.*"²¹⁵

The Emergence of Local Committees during the Oslo Years

With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the beginning of the Oslo Peace Process, Popular Committees that had been established in the cities and the villages of the West Bank dissolved. The PLO under the leadership of Yassir Arafat had a complex and at times uneasy relation to the PCs, favouring instead traditional lobbying system of family heads, who seemed more loyal and easier to control as a support base. Little continuity therefore was encouraged between the PCs in cities and villages and the new independent municipalities, which started to operate under the umbrella of the PNA.

PCs were also abolished in the camps but re-emerged vigorously in 1996 as Local Committees. In most cases, they included the same members they had had during the first intifada. (Most of the PC members from the camps had been imprisoned by the Israeli army, which gave them additional credibility within the community.) With the beginning of peace negotiations of Oslo, the fear of marginalisation of the issue of the Right of Return spread quickly amongst the refugee population. It was feared that the PNA could "trade in" refugees' rights to reclaim property lost to Israel in 1948 in return for Palestinian independence. The rising new awareness of refugeehood led to the demand to remain independent from the PNA and to uphold the definition of the camp territory as legally independent entities under UNRWA's auspices – islands within the territory under PNA authority. The rejection of PNA authority included all of its executive and security structures.

²¹⁴ source: interview with Naji Odeh, Director, Finiq Cultural Centre, June 18, 2006.

²¹⁵ source: Jamil Hilal, sociologist, quoted in a personal interview, March 3, 2007.

Mistrusts and fear of the Oslo process also extended towards UNRWA. And the refugees' desire to reassert their rights and put pressure on both organisations fuelled a mobilisation unprecedented in the history of the refugee camps. Through the participation in the daily affairs of the camp, it was hoped that a degree of control could be exercised that would prevent any possible effort to normalise the situation of refugees or force their integration into territory under PNA control. This tension came to a head during the looming first presidential and Legislative Council Elections in 1996. At the time, municipal elections were also prepared. The refugee community collectively refused to participate in them.

In this context, the positive experience of the Public Committees during the first intifada now became a reference point and model for the emergence of new Local Committees. LCs represented a new camp leadership in which all political factions were represented (including the parties Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Fateh and parties on the left). Most members had been active in the Youth Centres. According to SALIM TAMARI, however, in contrast to the earlier PCs, these bodies now focused primarily on affirming refugees' political rights and pressuring the PNA to refrain from making a deal that would write off their Right of Return. LCs also formed a platform for improving daily living conditions in the camp (through health, sewage, and education committees) in co-ordination with UNRWA. Eventually, a deal was reached with PLO Chairman Arafat in which refugees were exempt from participating in elections or setting up municipal structures.

Local Committees Today

Ten years after their formal constitution, LCs still exist in every camp in the West Bank. They have survived the ongoing military occupation, the collapse of the peace process and the second intifada. However, their current make up and function varies enormously from camp to camp. Although in 1996, there had been a concerted and coordinated effort to set up LCs in all camps, several omissions led to the emergence of other institutions, whose roles, responsibilities, and strengths also differ from camp to camp. These omissions included:

- Not agreeing on clear standards and regulations for setting up of LCs, including number of members and internal background
 - Not setting up a democratic election system, which would guarantee legitimacy and change
 - Not defining a clear set of functions and responsibilities for the LCs
- Due to the lack of universal standards, the LCs developed in highly specific ways in each camp, some with greater success and acceptance than others. While some have become effective players, influencing daily affairs and serving as partners to UNRWA, others have become almost insignificant. LCs vary in size dramatically, meeting at different intervals taking on varying functions.

Despite their numerous particularities, LCs do share several elements:

- **Representational function:** All LCs are primarily understood as political bodies with representational functions. For this reason the various political parties and fractions have a predominant power in the LCs and contribute most of their members. An exception is the LC of Deir Ammar Camp, which follows a family model in terms of the constitution of its members.
- **Not democratically elected:** As a general rule, LC members are not democratically elected but appointed. Change on the committee is rare. Most members have simply remained on the boards since their foundation in 1996. The PLO's Department of Refugee Affairs (DORA) conducted a survey four years ago to investigate the possibility of running democratic elections for LCs in West Bank and Gaza, but no concrete progress was made.
- **Representative and mediating role:** LCs have primarily representational functions and are, with some exceptions, recognized as partners to UNRWA, which cannot be bypassed in important decisions regarding specific camps. LCs have also adopted mediating functions within the refugee community.

The collapse of the peace process and the unlikelihood of an immediate or even medium-term settlement has taken some of the urgency out of the refugees' primary mistrust and fear of being sidelined in a settlement. This puts into question the future role of LCs. A crucial question remains whether LCs can serve as partners in UNRWA's new camp improvement initiative.

Types of Local Committees: a Comparative Analysis of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar (→ 212)

Due to the lack of nation-wide coordination or clear top-down directives for the structure, competencies, and responsibilities of LCs, local forces primarily conditioned the way LCs developed after 1997. Each of the three case study camps developed a unique type of LC in terms of its role in the camp and the services it offers to the community. This suggests that many more models exist in other camps. What follows is therefore not a comprehensive overview of LCs in the West Bank camps. New field work conducted in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar examined the LCs, their ways of operating, their relations with UNRWA and with PA, the position of their members in their respective camps as well as their effective influence on daily camp affairs. Three different models could be identified.

(A) Amari LC: The Local Committee as Representative Body

The Amari Camp LC has remained closest to the initial role defined for it in 1997. It acts as a representative body on behalf of the camp community. It is the first point of contact for outside organisations, including UNRWA, for special programmes and initiatives.

• Constitution of Membership

The 13 current members of Amari's LC are representatives of all the camp's major institutions, such as the Youth Centre, the Women's Centre, the Children's Centre, the Health Centre, the mosque, the UNRWA School, charitable societies such as the Lydd Society, the Na'ani Society, and the Disabled Society, as well as of respected individuals ("*aama*") who have no institutional or party affiliation (→ 212). In several cases, one member represents more than one institution. It is worth noting that Amari's LC is the only LC of the three camps with a female member (representing the Women's Programme Centre).

• Role in the Camp

The Amari LC is respected as an important representative institution that negotiates among and coordinates the local power structures. However, the LC is not perceived as an actor or agent in its own right. It does not initiate, coordinate, or implement projects in the camp. Local residents therefore only believe to a limited degree in its power to achieve improvement. It is somewhat overshadowed by the very efficiently run Youth Centre. Abd Al Nabi Al Shafi'e (the current head of the LC and also head of Amari's Boys' School) explained: "The Local Committee in the camp is a very influential party. But there are also many active institutions in the camp such as Youth Centre, Child Centre, Handicapped Rehabilitation Centre, Na'ani Society, and the Lydd Society. Actually the role of institutions in the camp is very recognized and widely appreciated. The LC however is an important institutional body that deals with conflict resolution and acts as camp representative vis a vis external parties such as the PNA and UNRWA". (interview with Abd Al Nabi Al Shafi'e, Head of Local Committee, September 7, 2006)

• Mode of Operation

In accordance with its function, Amari's LC is only called into session as necessary, when important issues need to be discussed or coordinated. Meetings take place very infrequently. The LC presently has no permanent meeting space (a space that had been used during the intifada was destroyed by the Israeli Army) but uses the Youth Centre – another indication of the YC's leading role in the camp.

• Current Limitations

Amari LC (in contrast to Deheishe LC) does not assume real power – nor, therefore, real responsibility in the camp. Although the LC has established itself in such a way that UNRWA has to request its consent for any significant camp project, it has remained rather passive and is primarily focused on monitoring and putting pressure on UNRWA. This has partly contributed to the fact that Amari has developed fewer civil society institutions or other initiatives compared to a camp like Deheishe. Nor has it been as successful in acquiring funding despite its geographical location and closeness to most NGO headquarters in the area. In this respect Amari LC has not developed into an effective lobbying institution.

The most striking problem with Amari Camp's "representative model", however, seems to be its vulnerability to the influence and control of other local power structures. A somewhat ambiguous dual leadership system appears to run the LC and contributes to a lack of transparency and accountability. The LC's official director is the school principal. He was only recently chosen as a "neutral figure" ("*aama*") and non-party member in order to help resolve the intense political competition between Fateh and Hamas that was threatening to paralyse the LC. In fact, much more influential and popular individuals remain JIHAD

TOMALEH (former head of Amari's YC and now GLC member) or SAMIR HAMMAD, the camp's pharmacist, who is a generally well known but also somewhat controversial personality in the camp. While he is not officially a member of the LC, HAMMAD appears to act as its executive manager. Describing his role, SAMIR HAMMAD explains: "*I am very curious by nature and enjoy the volunteer work. Through my work at the pharmacy I became a well-known figure in the camp. Refugees started to seek my advice and request my interference in different social issues. Thus, I joined the Local Committee and became a member with another 17 members. Since I spend most of the time in the pharmacy, I run most of the Committee's work in the camp... I find myself most of the time working as a cross link among the camp, the PNA, and political groups and camp residents.*"²¹⁶ Other sources contradict this self-description and, pointing towards his habit of distributing money amongst the camp residents, fear that he might be using the profits from his pharmacy businesses to promote personal agendas.

(B) Deheishe LC: The Local Committee as a Powerful and Dynamic Local Player

Deheishe LC assumes a unique role in the West Bank. Among the three case studies, it is by far the strongest and most active LC. Since its founding in 1997, it has initiated numerous projects that effectively offer services to the local community as well as to the surrounding urban environment. It keenly lobbies for refugee affairs not only on the local camp level but also in the entire West Bank. Deheishe LC and its leaders have become known as advocates and defenders of the refugee cause vis a vis the Palestinian national institutions (PLO, PNA/ PLC).

• Constitution of Membership

The committee has seven appointed members, most of whom were among the most active community leaders during the first intifada and had been imprisoned several times by the Israeli military. The LC has a self-proclaimed open-door policy, inviting all camp residents to participate in the work and decision-making in the camp. This means that the size of the LC can change from project to project. This "all are welcome" atmosphere has attracted a large network of young professionals from the camp who support it in different areas – from fund raising, to translation work, to guiding visitors and coordinating projects. In this way Deheishe has managed to initiate and run an impressive array of different projects in the camp.

• Leadership

From the time of its foundation until recently, Deheishe's LC was headed by ABU KHALIL AL-LAHHAM, one of the most noted and respected figures in the camp and in all of the Bethlehem area. His recent election to the Palestinian Legislative Council led to his official resignation from the LC's leadership, though he remains a member of the LC and is still considered its unofficial head. His replacement is MOHAMMAD MALASH, an architect born in Deheishe who currently lives in the neighbouring town of Doha and is also a member of the Doha municipality.

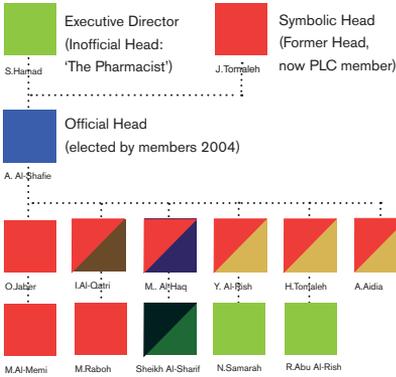
• Role in the Camp

Deheishe's LC has transcended its purely representational and mediating roles and has become a pro-active, service providing player. It has made a significant difference to the community's self-image and its perception from the outside. Even inhabitants of the surrounding cities and villages are attracted to some of its camp institutions like the Finiq Centre and Nur Shams Maternity Hospital. It is tempting to compare the camp to a municipality. NASIR AL-LAHHAM, a native Deheishian who works as the editor-in-chief for the Ma'an Press Agency in the West Bank summarizes the LC's role in the following way: "*The committee works as a social organisation, political institution, and public voluntary establishment. Its responsibilities vary from raising funds, to carrying out projects to resolving conflicts in the camp. The committee is responsible for Ibd'a'a [Centre], Finiq [Centre], Shams [Maternity Hospital], and other projects in the camp. It also adopted a program for well-off Deheishians to help deprived refugees in the camp, based on their monthly incomes. The committee also follows up with any successful achievements, for example when the Ibd'a'a basketball team won the Palestinian Basketball Championship in 2005 (the team was established in 2003), the committee generously rewarded the team as an incentive to push them forward. The Local Committee is also responsible for the safety and protection of the refugees.*"²¹⁷

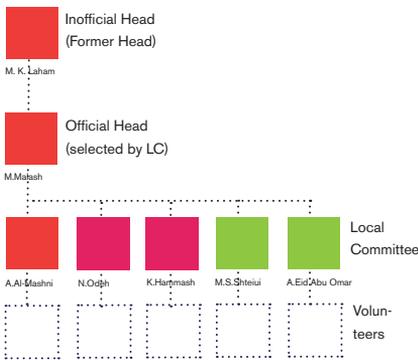
²¹⁶ source: interview with Samir Hammad, Executive Director of Amari's Local Committee, September 12, 2006.

²¹⁷ source: interview with Nasir Al-Lahham, Ma'an Press Agency Chief Editor, August 10, 2006.

Amari - Local Committee



Deheishe - Local Committee



Fawwar - Local Committee



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Local Committee Structure in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar

Legend

- Fatah
- ▤ considered Fatah
- Hamas
- ▤ considered Hamas
- Popular Front/ Left Parties
- UNRWA
- CBOs
- NGOs
- Clan/ family clubs and societies
- religious
- independent



→ 213

Local Committee Building Fawwar

Computer lab/ meeting hall funded by KfW.



→ 214

Local Committee Building Amari

The basis for the LC's success are excellent fundraising skills and the ability to maintain an active international network of donors and supporters. According to NAJĪ ODEH, the director of Finiq Centre and a member of the LC: *"The camp lacks the appropriate space needed for any social or public gathering. Before the establishment of Finiq, many wedding celebrations took place in the narrow alleys of the camp. The need for such public space where the Deheishians can celebrate their social occasions and gatherings triggered the Finiq project. Again the Local Committee managed to secure funding through its expanded international network. We have strong connections with many European cities through our community centres as Finiq and Ibdā'a. Over the years we have managed to earn the trust of many international donors. The committee also managed to find a site for the project ... The PNA had wanted to build a jail on the site, but we managed to stop this. Finiq is the fruit of Deheishians' joint efforts. The Local Committee secured the financial support and the site, Deheishian architect Muhammad Malash did the design, Deheishian contractors supervised the project, and all the camp residents supported the idea."*²¹⁸

Beyond providing services for camp residents, the LC has a very important mediating role in cases of internal conflict. Here the LC has replaced the traditional tribal system still dominant in other camps. ABU KHALIL AL-LAHHAM, the former head of the committee, pointed out: *"The Local Committee for services is a highly esteemed body in the camp. The concept of the clan and loyalty to family still affects the daily life of the residents but not as powerfully as before. The authority of the clan and the traditional tribe started to fade away with the institution's development and growth. Little by little, the LC became the big family that managed to enfold all the refugees. Today the Committee is capable of absorbing all conflicts and resolving any dispute."*²¹⁹

• Mode of Operation

LC members work primarily as volunteers (an application to the PA to cover the salaries of two of the members was turned down). However, members who run LC-associated institutions such as the Finiq Centre, receive salaries. Occasionally salaries are paid on a project basis through external donors. The LC operates in an office provided by UNRWA and is open to all Deheishians on a daily basis.

• Current Limitations

The Deheishe LC vigorously presents itself as an "open and dynamic institution", which serves to underline its legitimate role as a community leader for the entire camp. The "trust" attributed to the entire camp community, however, has been questioned by a number of Deheishians. Due to the lack of democratic endorsement, the small circle of seven permanent activists has remained unchanged and appears to some rather closed and "cliquish". Moreover, five of the members are politically affiliated with Fateh and the Popular Front, while two members are independent. (→ 212) The camp's large constituency of Hamas supporters (which, according to a recent CSO estimate, amounts to about 30% of its population) remains unrepresented. Nor are there any female representatives. When questioned about these aspects, the LC members strongly contested such concerns.

(C) Fawwar LC's Services Committee

After many years of public invisibility, Fawwar's LC has recently emerged as a very active representative body modelling itself on that of Deheishe. An important trigger for this new activism can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with a serious and bloody clan conflict that took place in the camp in 2005. (See also section 2.3.6.) The LC is now eager to lead the camp out of isolation and passivity. It is keen to provide public services for the community and to connect directly with donors to fund projects. Compared to Deheishe, however, its leadership still is less confident and confrontational.

• Constitution of Membership

Fawwar LC was the last Local Committee to be formed in all of the West Bank camps (1998). The community's suspicion derived from the fear that refugees would be forced to normalise as municipalities, thereby trading in their Right of Return. Only after ABU KHALIL AL-LAHHAM from Deheishe Camp actively promoted the idea of LCs in Fawwar did the camp community consent. The nine-person committee is dominated by individuals associated with the Fateh party but also includes two individuals representing mosques that are affiliated with Hamas, one NGO representative and a respected camp elder (→ 212).

²¹⁸ source: interview with Naji Odeh, Director Finiq Cultural Centre, July 18, 2006.

²¹⁹ source: interview with Abu Khalil Al-Lahham, member of PLC, August 8, 2006.

During its initial phase in the late 1990s, some family notables were appointed as members to lend the LC credibility within the very traditional clan-based community, but all of these members have since left. Due to current political tensions between Hamas and Fateh, Hamas members attend committee meetings only infrequently.

• Leadership

ZIAD HMOZ (ABU TAREK) headed Fawwar's LC until he left to become the CSO of Aida Camp in Bethlehem. While he was officially replaced by LC member MOHAMED AL-SOS, he has maintained a very strong position and active participation on the committee. ZIAD HMOZ was recently offered the CSO position back in his native Fawwar. If he accepts, it will create a conflict of interest with his continuing membership in the LC. His resignation from the LC is likely to become effective soon.

• Role in the Camp

Fawwar (as a remote camp far away from urban centres) did not receive as much UNRWA support as Deheishe did to install water supply and sewage systems, repair streets, etc. The local LC thus became primarily absorbed in developing the camp's deficient infrastructure. One of their main projects became the installation of a new sewage and water supply system. The LC was able to create a "twin-ship" with some cities in Europe, which has helped to raise external donations for projects: The LC initiated the rebuilding of the Youth Centre building (now mainly an athletic centre) as well as the construction of a centre for very young children. The LC occasionally hosts outside guests and assists UNRWA, donors the PNA in distributing food in the camp. The LC also assists the camp's many unemployed to find new jobs in the area.

• Mode of Operation

The LC recently managed to acquire funds from the German KfW and EC to purchase a centrally located building in the camp that was abandoned after the internal feud. The building was extended and now houses well furnished offices, a meeting hall, and a computer lab. Further activities are planned. The LC meets daily and even has a permanent staff member financed by external donations. The LC office has also established itself as a popular meeting place where men meet in the afternoons.

• Current Limitations

Fawwar LC is generally considered to be an active committee with high community participation. In contrast to Deheishe however, its current focus is on infrastructural projects and meeting the daily needs of the camp inhabitants rather than on cultural and educational projects. This is partly due to the fact that the camp's infrastructure was less developed to begin with. A recent application to a UNDP/ KfW fund for a new community centre suggests that new programme areas are being explored.

Although the conflict between Fateh and Hamas has not stopped the functioning of the LC, tensions clearly demonstrate how the general politicisation of the LCs make them vulnerable to macro-political developments, which can have a negative, even paralysing, effect. The current political tensions between Hamas and Fateh prevent bipartisan and inclusive action, with the Hamas members currently withdrawing from the LC and using religious and charitable institutions (including the mosque) to promote an independent agenda. How this development will affect the LC in the near and medium-term future is unclear, but it could very well lead to a de facto breakdown or split.

• Conclusions and Recommendations

The three case studies of the LCs in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar reveal fundamental differences in their modes of operation, their membership constitution, leadership, and most importantly in their credibility and effectiveness in the camp itself. In many ways the achievements of Deheishe LC and the ambitions of Fawwar LC are not dissimilar in their objectives of camp improvement. LCs are beginning to establish themselves as municipal-style bodies dealing not only with representational issues but also everyday affairs: the improvement of daily living conditions (implementing street repair, setting up recreational facilities, etc.). In this way, Deheishe has established a precedent that could serve as a model and reference point to muster support for the programme within both UNRWA and with local camp communities. Despite its current limitations, the Deheishe model could also serve as a reference point for other fields where community mobilisation has not developed to the same degree.

Amari LC is closer to the majority of LCs in other West Bank camps, which have not succeeded like Deheishe LC has and have maintained a purely representational and, at best, mediating role. Due to the limited scope of this research project, other LCs could not be studied. A comprehensive survey of all West Bank LCs is strongly recommended. It is more than likely that more models will be found than the three identified in this report, or that variations exist among them. According to UNRWA's area officer for Jerusalem, the LC of Deir Ammar LC, for example, is based exclusively on family/tribal membership.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The complexity of the representational landscape in the West Bank is in itself little known within UNRWA. This underlines the need to develop sensitive and camp-specific approaches to facilitate community involvement. No "one-concept-fits-all" solution will suffice. The complexity of the current LCs, however, also highlights the current lack of vision by external Palestinian bodies such as the PLO and PNA, who have, unlike UNRWA, the potential scope and power to propose a coordinated reform to the LC system, such as introducing democratic elections.

Despite all of their limitations, West Bank LCs will be key agents for facilitating strategic planning processes and implementing camp improvement. Although the present effectiveness of some LCs is questionable, the agency has few alternatives to embracing them as partners and encouraging structural improvements. Any attempt to bypass the LCs would not only undermine a considerable achievement of communal self-mobilisation but also lead to sharp and effective resistance and boycott, which would endanger the programme's success. The Local Committees have established a West-Bank-wide network, with an executive office located in Ramallah, and conflict of interest in one camp could quickly affect work in the entire region.

2.3.3 Camp Institutions

Amongst all regions that host Palestinian refugee camps (also referred to as UNRWA's fields of operation), the West Bank is considered unique in its level of community mobilisation and engagement. This has created a rich landscape of camp based CBOs and NGOs, initiated and run by camp communities without the help or guidance of UNRWA. This section discussed some of the key factors that triggered the rise of civil society institutions. The study of just three of the West Bank's 19 camps reveals striking dissimilarities and local specificities, which strongly suggests that the emergence of civil society institutions inside camps is not a uniform process but part of a gradual transition from clan-based familial structures towards a more complex, mixed, and urbanised society. The process varies from camp to camp, takes place at different speeds, and leads to very different results. The three case studies show three very different landscapes of communal institutionalisation (→ 217 - 219). Amari has developed fewer institutions than Fawwar has, but both are far behind Deheishe, which has by far the most institutions per resident of any of the West Bank camps.

It should be noted that in the cultural context of sometimes still very traditional camp society, many networks or initiatives are not formalised in an institutional way. It was beyond this project's resources to include in the survey such semi-institutionalized networks as extended family networks, self-help groups, women's networks, privately run services such as kindergartens, and so forth. In such cases the distinctions among formalised institutions with legal status, family associations, and private businesses are blurred. This section discusses the following questions: Who are the new elites who have facilitated the institution building process? Why have institutions developed so differently in each of the three camps? What external and internal factors have had an influence? What programmes and services do camp institutions provide? How do they succeed and in what areas do they fail? What variations exist from camp to camp and why? Finally, what conclusions could be drawn and recommendations given to strengthen local institutions to become agents facilitating the improvement of living conditions in the camps?

New Community Elites

Civil society institutions are mostly born of the initiative and stamina invested by individuals. Who are these elites and how have they succeeded in gaining the trust of the community, or at least part of it? This subject has been extensively covered by the UNRWA-commissioned report by JAMIL HILAL. HILAL describes the gradual decrease in importance of traditional elite structures and the emergence of a new elite: *"Since camp communities were established after the Nakba of 1948 and the discrediting of traditional leadership (large land owners and traders), and the loss of land and other capital by camp dwellers, there is hardly any space for traditional familial systems to play a significant role in elite formation. With the institution of basic education in camps and free secondary education by the Jordanian government, education became a determining factor in elite formation within the camp community. With the rise of the resistance movement in the mid and late 1960s, politicisation became a necessary factor. Thus education and politicisation became, and remain the determining factors in camp communities. Outside the camps [on the other hand] economic and traditional social capital (wealth and family connections and local affiliation) retained some relevance, with their importance varying according to the period (e.g., declining during the first intifada, but rising after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority)."*²²⁰ (HILAL 2007)

HILAL draws a general contrast between camps and the surrounding Palestinian communities and describes camps as laboratories, situated at the forefront of the gradual transition process from the dominance of traditional familial structures towards a more politicised, civic form of life. The importance of family wealth and status is decreasing quickly in the camps, opening doors to previously excluded sections of the population who can achieve leadership status based on individual deeds and achievements. Investigating elite formation in the three camps of Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar JAMIL HILAL defines several factors that characterise a new community leadership in contrast to traditional clan representatives: *"The examinations of the three camps in the West Bank points to three processes that are important for understanding the making of camp leadership; the accumulation of 'cultural' capital (acquired through education), the accumulation of political assets (through activism in a political party and in the national struggle), and the accumulation of social capital*

²²⁰ source: Hilal, Jamil. "On the Making of Local Leadership in Refugee Camps", research paper commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project in 2006.

(through acquiring a leading position in local institutions and associations, and possibly through having a wide kinship or local base, although this is not always necessary)." HILAL points out that there are, however, striking similarities between camps and ordinary cities and villages in terms of gender roles: "The near absence of women in the national leadership and in the leadership of local community reflects the skewed gender balance of power. It also reflects the low priority given by the larger political organisation to the issue of the rights of women. For the most part, women are restricted to leading positions in women's organisations belonging to political parties and to NGOs concerned with gender issues or charity. One may expect that the huge expansion of women's participation in higher education and in the modern sector of the economy will be conducive to exerting pressures for changing the traditional outlook toward the role of women in the public sphere. This, however, has not happened so far." (Hilal 2007)

Local Factors Conditioning the Emergence and Flourishing of Civil Society Institutions

Using the case studies of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar, the following section will investigate the diverse external and internal factors. These include camp locations, the relations and interaction with surrounding towns/ villages, internal social structures, specific socioeconomic conditions, levels of education, the impact of politicisation, and the presence of activists.

The Amari Paradox: Less Institution Building Despite Urban Location

Counting the total number of CBOs and NGOs, Amari (registered population: 10,370) has developed 11 institutions compared to Deheishe (population 12,370), which has 24 (only 2500 more residents but more than twice the number of institutions). A comparison with Fawwar (17 institutions with barely 8,000 registered refugees) is not flattering to Amari either. Why does it lag behind? This might partly be explained by the fact that Amari is located in the central area of one of the largest urban conurbations in the West Bank. The urban facilities of the surrounding cities Ramallah and Al-Bireh are used by camp residents and made it less of an requirement to develop their own social and cultural infrastructure. These include the rich cultural life of Ramallah's countless cultural institutions, the recreational possibilities in Al-Bireh such as the nearby Al-Sa'a Park, but also the general landscape of political organisations and Palestinian NGOs. It can be assumed that Amari elites are, more than elites from other camps, part of a general urban network of organisational structures and initiatives, rather than working in isolation.

On the other hand, one might have assumed that the presence of a cosmopolitan, highly urbanised context nearby should have inspired activism and triggered a lively institution-building process. The advantages of direct and straightforward access to international donors close by and countless NGOs should have given Amari a strategic advantage in lobbying for funds and structural help. This is even more surprising since Amari suffers from severe problems that urgently require innovative solutions. These include extremely congested conditions, high unemployment, many buildings with a high structural risk, and severely strained general environmental and technical infrastructure. (An indicator is the frequent flooding of some areas of the camp.) Yet Amari only developed two institutions (the Zaka Committee and the Charitable Society) that seek to improve living conditions, and both focus primarily on helping individual poor families. Reasons for the apparent underdevelopment of formal activism include the following:

- The passive role of Amari's Local Committee: Although the camp's Youth Centre takes on some of the activities carried out by LCs in other camps, the fact that the LC has remained an almost purely representative body creates a vacuum. Amari LC has not initiated any larger project in the camp.
- Many Amari residents are overwhelmed by the challenges and opportunities provided by the surrounding cities. Some residents feel unable to compete with "cheaper" migrant labour from the periphery of the West Bank. Others feel alienated by Ramallah's Western-style cafe culture and night life. (Amari's apparent lack of self-confidence and feelings of exclusion and discrimination will be discussed in section 2.3.7)
- A lack of willingness to engage with Amari on the part of the surrounding cities (Amari is regularly excluded from planning projects) partly heightens the camp's sense of discrimination and exclusion and does not generate the transfer of knowledge and expertise to help initiatives in the camp.

Deheishe as a Model for Community Mobilisation

Deheishe has long been an internationally known centre of the Palestinian resistance movement. During the first intifada it suffered some of the worst closures and waves of arrests. Political activists from Deheishe, after their release from prison, were the most vocal in the West Bank in defending the rights of refugees during the Oslo years and the formation of the PNA. They were also key figures in setting up the first regulated system of local representation. Local Committees were not welcome in all camps, but the fact that Deheishe actively promoted the idea has persuaded others, such as Fawwar, to come on board. No

other LC, however, has managed to match the degree of activism and resolve to improve the living conditions inside camps. Deheishe established cultural institutions such as the regionally known Finiq Centre, which includes a public park. Deheishe LC also broke existing taboos by establishing service institutions such as Shams Maternity Hospital and a new cemetery, and by calling for initiatives to improve local infrastructure. All projects were financed by a self-initiated network of international sponsors and implemented without the help of UNRWA. Other Deheishe initiatives display the same proactive spirit. A youth group established the Ibd'a Centre, a multi-purpose activity centre also known and well attended by non-refugees from the wider region. Compared to the two other camps, Deheishe leads by a large margin in the number of institutions set up without UNRWA. Beyond the camp's tradition of political activism, the cultured environment of Bethlehem, including international tourism and the presence of countless Palestinian and international NGOs, helped to encourage the formalisation and implementation of ideas. The experimental spirit, activism, and pride of Deheishians is widely admired by other camps but sometimes also arouses suspicion.

The process of building civil society institutions in Deheishe has always been associated with secular political movements. While most other camps are dominated by the Fateh party, Deheishe also has a strong base of left-wing parties such as the Popular Front. The strong religious community, however, has been somewhat excluded – as it has been everywhere else in the West Bank. According to several interviewees, at least 30% of the camp population (mostly also Hamas supporters) does not feel adequately represented by the camp's institutions and has built up parallel communal facilities around the camp's four large mosques. Although conflict between both constituencies has so far not erupted in violent confrontation, the differences are apparent and could become problematic in the future.

Fawwar's Attempt to Catch Up

Fawwar's refugees describe themselves as isolated and excluded from the economic, social, and cultural opportunities enjoyed by most other camps. Although the camp is only 8km south of Hebron, the particular conditions under Israeli occupation (the permanent road checkpoint, difficulties entering the city, etc.) coupled with the expense of travelling to the city, result in a genuine geographical and mental isolation. This condition is not new, although it clearly has become worse since the second intifada. Social and physical processes of transformation happened more slowly here than in camps like Deheishe and Amari. The camp's society has remained more conservative, as expressed in the importance of family clans, the importance of religion, and the noticeable absence of women from public life. (Women do not even have access to a separate public prayer space.) Religious and clan/ family oriented organisations dominate camp life. Most other institutions aim to improve very basic services such as infrastructure and education, indicating serious development deficits in those areas compared to Amari and Deheishe. Very noticeable is the absence of strong cultural and recreational facilities, beyond the camp's Youth Centre. The aftermath of a deadly feud over land resources in 2005 and the subsequent evacuation of part of an entire clan can still be felt in Fawwar but also has led to a more positive development. The recently re-energized Local Committee has become more active. A new LC centre was established, following the purchase of one of the abandoned houses. The LC also recently launched a project application for funding for a new recreational centre, to be built on already purchased land. Moreover, other institutions, such as the Educational Affairs Committee, were set up with the aim of pushing for the establishment of a high school. It can be assumed that at least part of this new activism is the result of an attempt to overcome the internal crisis. Another positive factor has been the appointment of a new CSO (previously involved in the LC) who actively pursues projects for the improvement of Fawwar.

What do Institutions Provide for the Community? Where are Current Deficits?

To characterise the role and function of institutions in the camps, five broad categories were defined:

- (A) The provision of basic community services such as infrastructure, financial assistance, poverty alleviation, hospital care, etc.
- (B) The enrichment of communal life through culture, leisure, and sports; the provision of recreational or leisure facilities such as parks, theatres, spaces for folklore and other cultural activities and groups.
- (C) The provision of social services to community groups such as child care, support of pupils and students, educational programmes, and capacity building.
- (D) Contributions to community, family, and religious life such as communal meeting spaces for clan gatherings, family festivities (such as weddings or funerals), and prayer.
- (E) Political advocacy lobbying for the rights and interests of the Palestinian refugees.

Type of Organisation	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
CBOs	2	2	2
NGOs	5	17	7
Clan/Family Clubs/Societies	2	1	4
Religious Organisations	2	4	4
Total	11	24	17

→ 215

Comparison between Local Community Mobilization in Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar

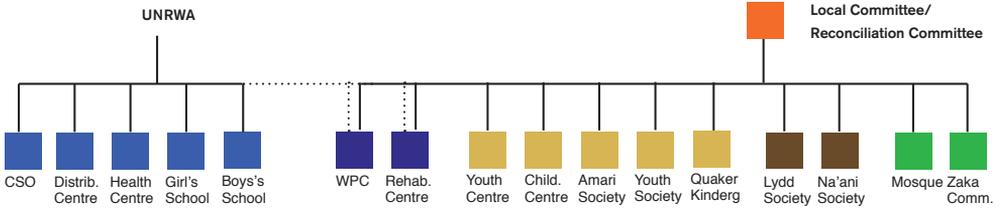
Source: Survey of institution, 2006/ 2007

Purpose ¹	Amari	Deheishe	Fawwar
Basic Services (A)	2	5	5
Culture, Leisure, Sports (B)	2	5	2
Social Services (C)	4	11	8
Community/ Family/ Religion (D)	3	5	8
Political Advocacy (E)	1	3	0

→ 216

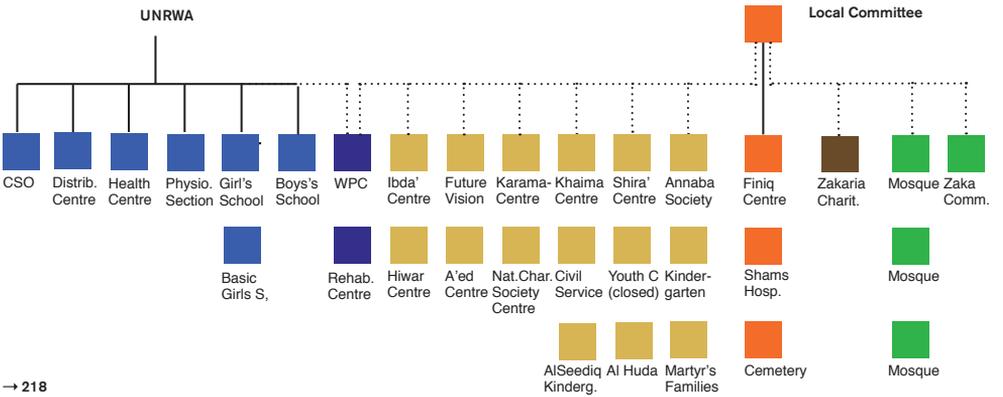
Categorisation of Camp Institutions

- 1 The above figures do not include UNRWA/ PNA service facilities in the three camps. Institutions were categorized according to their main aims and objectives. In some cases, institutions were placed in two categories. (For details on categorisation see table 4.2.4.) The above summary list does not take into account the size or degree of effectiveness of the institutions, which can vary considerably. (Source: survey of institutions, 2006.)



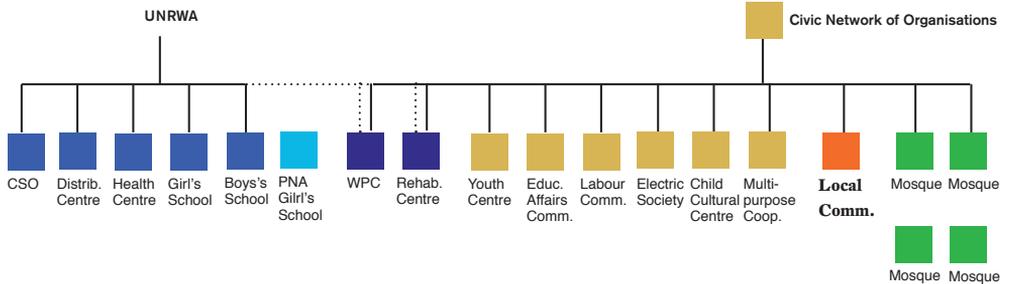
→ 217

Amari - Camp Institutions



→ 218

Deheishe - Camp Institutions



→ 219

Fawwar - Camp Institutions

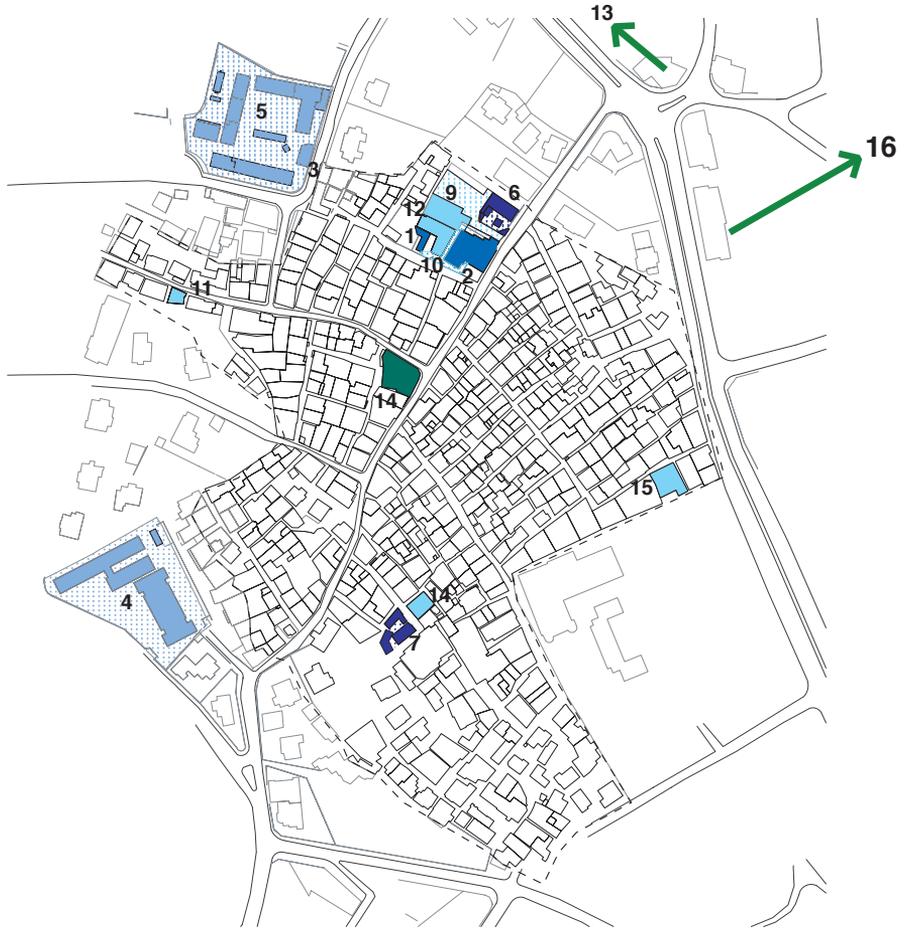
Organisation/ Refugee Camp	Amari RC	Deheishe RC	Fawwar RC
UNRWA services	CSO office	CSO office	CSO office
	Clinic	Clinic	Clinic
	Basic Boy's School	Physiotherapy Section at Clinic	Basic Boy's School
	Basic Girl's School	Elementary Male School	Preparatory and Basic Girl's School
	UNRWA Distribution Centre	Preparatory Girl's School	UNRWA Distribution Centre
		Basic Girl's School UNRWA Distribution Centre	
Local Committee	Local Committee (E)	Local Committee (A/C)	Local Committee (A/C)
Community-based Organisations (CBOs)	Women's Programme Centre (C)	Women's Programme Centre (C)	Women's Programme Centre (C)
	Rehabilitation Centre (C)	Rehabilitation Centre (C)	Rehabilitation Centre (C)
NGOs and other grass root organisations	Youth Centre (B)	Ibda'a Centre (B/E)	Youth Centre (B)
	Children's Centre (C)	Finiq Centre (B/E)	Pal. Children's Cultural Centre (B)
	Amari Charitable Society (A)	Shams Maternity Hospital (A)	Electrical Lighting Society (A)
	Amari Youth Charit. Society (B)	National Charit. Organisation (A)	Labourer's Committee (A)
	Quaker's Kindergarten (C)	Shiraa Centre (C)	Educational Affairs Committee (C)
		Karama Centre (C)	Multipurpose Coop. Society (A)
		Khaima Cultural Centre (B)	Civic Network of Organisations (A)
		The Future Vision Society (C)	
		Hiwar Centre (C)	
		Al-Huda Centre (A/C)	
		A'ed Centre for Cultural Act. (B)	
		Al-Seediq Kindergarten (C)	
		Civil Services Centre (A)	
		Youth Centre (closed) (B)	
	Deheishe Kindergarten (C)		
	The Soc. of Martyr's Families (D)		
Clan/ family clubs and societies	Lyd Charitable Society (D)	Zakaria Charit. Committee (C/D)	Ghatasheh Assembly (D)
	A'anani Charitable Society (D)		The Hmouz Assembly (D)
			The Sarahneh Assembly (D)
			The Titi Assembly (D)
Religious organisations	Amari Mosque (D)	Al-Shohada Mosque (C/D)	The Old Mosque (C/D)
	Zaka Committee (A)	Masjed Al-Deheishe Mosque (D)	Mu'ath Ibn Jabal Mosque (C/D)
		Al-Naser Mosque (D)	Al-Sahaba Mosque (C/D)
		Zaka Committee (A)	Abu-Baker Al-Seddiq Mosque (C/D)
PNA Services			Secondary Girl's School

→ 220

Comparison of Existing Community Organisations

Programmatic Focus of Institutions:

- A - Provision of basic services to the community
- B - Enrichment of communal life through culture, leisure, sports
- C - Provision of social services to community groups
- D - Contributions to community, family and religious life
- E - Political advocacy of refugee concerns



→ 221

Amari Camp (2006) – Zone of UNRWA Facilities and Camp Institutions (NGOs, CBOs, Mosques, Cemetery)

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA installations outside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space outside camp boundaries
- community-based organisations (CBOs)
- ▨ CBOs open space
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs)
- ▨ NGOs open space
- mosque
- cemetery

UNRWA Installations

- 1 Camp Service Officer (CSO)
- 2 Health Centre
- 3 Distribution Centre
- 4 Boy's School
- 5 Girl's School

CBOs

- 6 Women's Programme Centre
- 7 Rehabilitation Centre

NGOs

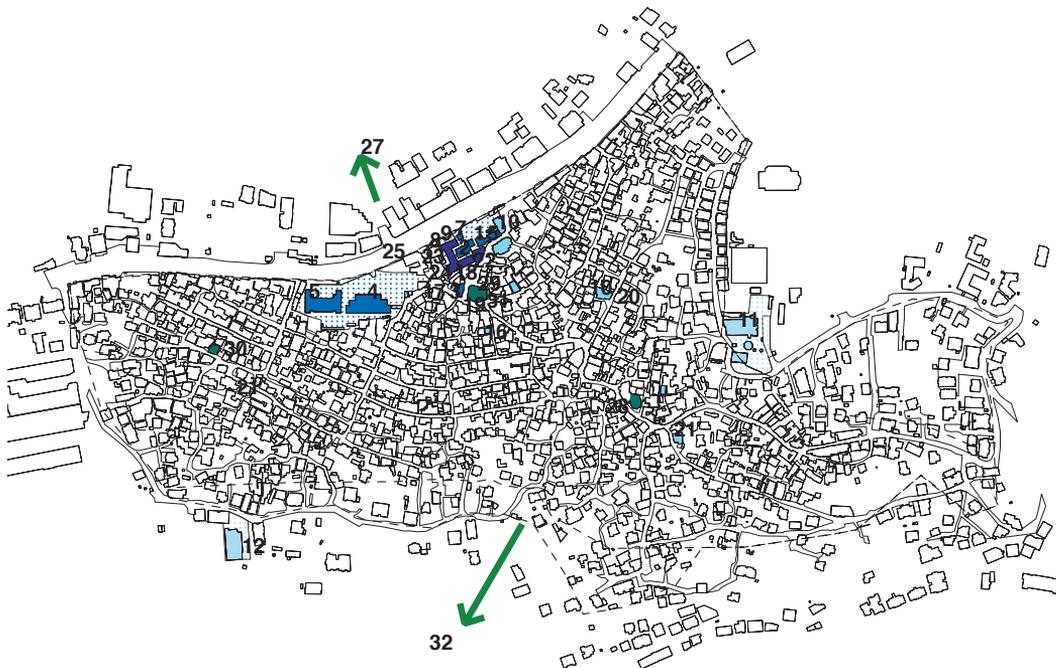
- (8) Local Committee (no permanent building)
- 9 Youth Centre (including hostel)
- 10 Children's Centre
- 11 Amari Charitable Society
- 12 Amari Youth Charitable Society
- 13 Friend's of Quaker's Kindergarten

Clan/ Family Clubs and Societies

- 14 Lyd Charitable Society
- 15 Na'ani Charitable Society

Religious Organisations

- 14 Amari Mosque
- 15 Zaka Committee
- 16 camp cemetery



→ 222

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Zone of UNRWA Facilities and Camp Institutions (NGOs, CBOs, Mosques, etc.)

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries
- UNRWA installations outside camp boundaries
- ▨ UNRWA open space outside camp boundaries
- community-based organisations (CBOs)
- ▨ CBOs open space
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs)
- ▨ NGOs open space
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs) outside camp boundaries
- ▨ NGOs open space outside camp boundaries
- mosque
- cemetery

UNRWA Installations

- 1 Camp Service Officer (CSO)
- 2 Health Centre
- 3 Distribution Centre
- 4 Boy's School
- 5 Girl's School
- 6 Physiotherapy Centre

CBOs

- 7 Women's Programme Centre
- 8 Rehabilitation Centre

NGOs

- 9 Local Committee
- 10 Ibd'a centre
- 11 Finiq centre
- 12 Shams Maternity Hospital
- 13 National Charitable Organisation
- 14 Shiraa Centre
- 15 Karama Centre
- 16 Khaima Centre
- 17 Future Vision Society
- 18 Hiwar Centre

- 19 Al-Huda Centre
- 20 A'ed Centre for Cultural Activities
- 21 Al-Seddiq Kindergarten
- 22 Civil Services Centre
- 23 Deheishe Social Youth Centre
- 24 Deheishe Kindergarten
- 25 Society of Martyrs' Families
- 26 Deheishe Social Centre
- Clan/ Family Clubs and Societies
- 27 Zakaria Charitable Committee
- Religious Organisations
- 28 Al-Shohada Mosques
- 29 Masjed Al-Dehishe Mosque
- 30 Al-Naser Mosque
- 31 Zaka Committee
- Cemetery
- 32 camp cemetery



→ 223

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Zone of UNRWA Facilities and Camp Institutions (NGOs, CBOs, Mosques, etc.)

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- UNRWA installations inside camp boundaries
- UNRWA open space inside camp boundaries
- community-based organisations (CBOs)
- CBOs open space
- non-governmental institutions (NGOs)
- NGOs open space
- mosque
- cemetery

UNRWA Installations

- 1 Camp Service Officer (CSO)
- 2 Clinic
- 3 Distribution Centre
- 4 Boy's School
- 5 Girl's School

CBOs

- 6 Women's Programme Centre
- 7 Rehabilitation Centre

NGOs

- 8 Local Committee
- 9 Youth Centre
- 10 Palestinian Children Cultural Centre
- 11 Electrical Lighting Society
- 12 Labourer's Committee
- 13 Educational Affairs Committee
- 14 Multipurpose Cooperative Society
- (no site) Civic Network of Organisations

PNA Services

- 15 Fawwar Secondary Girls School

Religious Organisations

- 16 The Old Mosque
- 17 Mu'ath Ibn Jabal Mosque
- 18 Al-Sahaba Mosque
- 19 Abu-Baker Al-Seddiq Mosque
- 20 camp cemetery

Clan/ Family Clubs and Societies

- 21 Ghatasheh Assembly
- 22 The Hmouz Assembly
- 23 The Sarahneh Assembly
- 24 The Titi Assembly
- 25 Dar Al-Kariuf clan club



→ 224

Youth Centre Fawwar (NGO)

Once set up by UNRWA the agency was forced to close all West Bank and Gaza Youth Centres in response to pressure from the Israeli Army during the first intifada arguing that Youth Centres had become a base for militant activity. During the Oslo years (1990s) Youth Centres were reopened as community run NGOs and continue to important and formative institutions offering sporting activities and training courses.



→ 225

Youth Centre Fawwar (NGO)

The existing Youth Centre of Fawwar has recently been awarded a major Palestinian Authority grant and will expand existing facilities (building and football field) with an indoor basketball court.



→ 226

Amari Mosque Complex

The centrally located mosque of Amari was recently expanded with help of local donations. In addition to the prayer space, the new complex offers divers programmes such as training courses, a kindergarten, a community kitchen and multipurpose assembly rooms. Mosques tend to be controlled and funded by Hamas.



→ 227

Rehabilitation Centre, Amari (CBO)

Each UNRWA refugee camp has a Rehabilitation Centre offering programmes for the physically and mentally disabled. The institution was set up by UNRWA but management responsibilities have since been passed on to the community. UNRWA continues to provide guidance and some funds.



→ 228

Rehabilitation Centre, Amari (CBO)

Amari's Rehabilitation Centre has recently attracted a major donation which allowed for the construction of a second and third floor. The initial single storey pavilion buildings remained intact. Instead of demolishing the facilities, it was decided to bridge over with a new structure. Thus the formerly external courtyard became an internal activity space.



→ 229

Finiq Centre, Deheishe (NGO)

The large community centre was an initiative of Deheishe's local community. The building houses meeting rooms, a large assembly hall (used for theatre performances, concerts, weddings, community meetings), a library and computer lab as well as accommodation for guests. Next to the building is a community park. The facilities are unique in the Bethlehem area and are frequently also used by non-refugees.

Figures → **215 and 216** tallies the number of each camp's institutions by these basic categories and reveals significant differences among the three camps:

- Deheishe and Fawwar have developed more institutions than Amari has for providing basic services to the camp community. Judging from Fawwar's number of institutions devoted to infrastructural projects, basic services such as water, streets, and electricity are more of a priority than cultural work or leisure facilities. This indicates the generally poor quality of Fawwar's infrastructure compared to other camps.
- Deheishe's development of cultural and recreational facilities is unique in the West Bank. The camp has broken important taboos that have long equated the provision of public parks and cultural facilities with the loss of the Right of Return. Other camps such as Fawwar are currently attempting to emulate Deheishe's achievements in this sector.
- Providing social services is clearly a main priority for Deheishe and Fawwar, but significant differences exist between the two camps in terms of the organisational structures through which these are provided. In Fawwar, social services are delivered more through the mosques and related religious programmes, whereas in Deheishe civic institutions fill this role. Amari's evident lack of an equivalent number of similar institutions is puzzling.
- Despite its comparatively smaller size, Fawwar has the most institutions categorized as "community/family/ religion". This includes formalized clan or place-of-origin-related institutions such as *diwaween*, which underline the importance of traditional representative structures in the camp. It also indicates the dominant role of religion.
- Not surprisingly, Deheishe is host to the most institutions promoting political advocacy of refugee issues. As stated before, the camp has developed something of a leading role for refugee advocacy amongst all West Bank camps.

The Role of Political Parties in the Camp

The role and impact of political parties and factions in the camps cannot be underestimated. Some general observations follow here, though true analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this dissertation and would be extremely difficult to conduct, given the current tensions between Fateh and Hamas.

• The Relationship among Parties, Institutions, and Camp Leaders

Political parties generally do not have specific party headquarters or offices in the camps, but their presence is primarily ensured in the camp's main institutions and community leadership. JAMIL HILAL observes that *"a strong institution tends to attract ... the patronage of major political organisations, which will compete to control it and prove their leadership by being pro-community.... The parties use the organisation's network to mobilize resources. In Deheishe, Fateh and the Popular Front are the dominating forces, while in Amari, it is Fateh."* (HILAL 2007) In Amari and Deheishe each and every institution appears to have an affiliation to the main parties (with the exception of the religious institutions, which tend to be Hamas – see discussion below). It is therefore not surprising that the strongest institutions in the camps are also considered informal headquarters for the dominant political parties. In Amari, the Youth Centre is widely considered to be *"run by Fateh"*. In Deheishe, Fateh and left-wing parties such as the Popular Front control the main institutions, including the very strong Local Committee (see also chapter 2.3.2). The Popular Front, however, acts more through Ibd'a Centre, while Finiq and the Local Committee are dominated by Fateh activists. The strength of the parties in both camps is illustrated by the fact that both camps were able to vote in members to the Legislative Council in 2006 – a unique occurrence in the West Bank, which requires unity amongst the camp population. A known Fateh activist was voted in for Amari.

The situation seems different in Fawwar, however. Here institutions seem to be less strongly associated with political parties. The camp may be less of a focus for party networks because of its isolated location and its less prominent role in the West Bank's political affairs. The general view of Fawwar as a less politicized camp may have contributed to the fact that institution building is somewhat behind other camps. (JAMIL HILAL draws attention to the fact that the forces of the left are rather absent.) The camp receives less help from party networks, which also often means less funding. On the other hand, de-politicisation may also be an advantage, as the camp community may be more united, and community leadership can emerge independently of party patronage.

• The Emergence of New Religious Groups

Throughout the Oslo years, Hamas remained excluded from the institution building process in Palestine. Until the recent election in 2006, the party had no representation on the Palestinian Legislative Council.

This seems to be mirrored in the microcosm of the camps, where the institution building process (emergence of the Local Committee and other institutions) in the late 1990s took place without input from Hamas. Consequently Hamas supporters have so far had little identification with camp institutions or the structures on a macro-political level. The 2006 elections marked a turning point, however. Hamas began actively to expand its political activities, vying for popular support. While the party decided to enter and control the political system on the PA-level, on the micro-level of the camps, Hamas appears to prefer to set up alternative institutional structures rather than demanding power sharing of the established institutions such as the Local Committees. Hamas has used mainly mosques and other religious institutions as a base for creating parallel structures – sometimes offering services similar to those offered by institutions run by Fateh or left-wing parties. Amongst the organisations that have recently been associated with Hamas in Deheishe are Al-Zaka Committee, Al-Nour Girls' Centre, and Al-Huda Centre. In interviews with activists from these organisations it became clear that they feel marginalized and also ostracized by UNRWA and other international donors due to their party affiliations.

A Hamas representative stressed that they need to adhere to Islamic rules, unlike other political parties like Fateh and the Popular Front: *"We don't have any problem cooperating with any organisation except for what is allowed and what is not allowed by our religion [Islam]. Organisations belonging to Fateh and the Popular Front don't pay attention to these limits and invite foreigners to sleep at their places sometimes."* (interview, February 22, 2007.) During the research period in Fawwar camp, several large-scale charity events were held, usually taking place in the mosque, including free lunches to which the entire camp population was invited. In the context of the political turmoil in the Middle East, UNRWA has been keen to repeatedly reassert its role as a neutral organisation, prohibiting its staff members from engaging in political activities. A consequence of this, however, has also been that the agency has developed little awareness of the role and importance of the political parties. The imposed separation has meant that community leaders and activists actually shun UNRWA and do not consider the agency to be a career option or institution worth supporting. This is not to say that this policy needs to change but the general role of the political parties should be acknowledged. It is of course impossible for the Agency to side with political parties, but it should be understood that political activism in the camps is a crucial factor influencing almost all aspects of camp life, and it cannot be omitted when analysing local power structures and representative institutions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These case studies can only provide a qualitative insight into the programmes and activities offered by the various camp institutions in the West Bank. Even such a glimpse, however, reveals a perhaps surprising and still little understood diversity. Unlike camps in Syria and Jordan, in the West Bank, the host government (nominally represented by the PLO) does not interfere in the camps' internal civil society structures. This has resulted in a rich landscape of institutions with a broad portfolio of agendas and issues. Most of the institution building has taken place in the last ten to fifteen years, and the trend is to increase further. This process has coincided with and is an important part of the more general acceleration of urbanisation in the camp – such as population growth and physical expansion – pointing towards a link between sociocultural, economic, and physical urbanisation.

The emergence of new civil society institutions also positions certain refugee camps like Deheishe at the forefront of Palestinian urbanisation and societal transformation, providing new opportunities for camp residents. The gradual decrease of traditional clan and family hierarchies has increased freedom of choice for individuals and nuclear families. This affects diverse aspects of everyday life, including the choice of professional careers and places of residence, the choice of particular lifestyles, social networks and many other matters. Camp institutions have created a public sphere beyond the family or clan, more typical of larger cities than of West Bank villages of the same size as the camps. Some institutions are engaged in constructive competition, lobbying for the support and interests of their constituencies. Although far from achieving gender equality, women have considerably profited from the emergence of such institutions. The availability of social services for infants and small children allow women to work outside the home. New capacity building programmes to help with career choices have also become more available, at least to some members of the community, although these have largely remained very limited and unambitious.

The current system of camp institutions, however, has also left many crucial issues unaddressed or have indeed led to certain conditions that have had negative impact on social mobilisation in the camps. These include:

- Increasing fragmentation: Competition over limited resources and donor support has sometimes created destructive competition, conflicts, and projects of questionable effectiveness. The dominance of institutions that perform like lobby groups catering the particular needs of one constituency (single-issue pressure groups) makes strategic negotiation, planning, and decision-making for the entire community more and more difficult.
- Prioritizing the strongest: Weaker social groups such as children, youth, and women tend to be under-represented, and their needs remain unheard.
- Lack of democratic accountability: Heads and executive board members of most institutions are appointed rather than elected, and the planning, budgeting, and implementation of activities is not transparent.

Living conditions in the camp can be improved in a significant and sustainable ways only if the refugee communities take on long-term responsibilities. The understanding of local camp elites and the diverse objectives of local institutional structures (formalised and unformalised) is therefore paramount to any camp improvement effort. Local institutions are not only effective power and lobby structures that can block any improvement effort. They are also important agents with access to particular camp constituencies. UNRWA should utilize the institutions as agents, strengthen them, and help them make their programmes more effective. At the same time, it should also encourage more inclusivity and broader agendas in the interest of the entire community. This can only be achieved by offering capacity building and strategic advice rather than prescriptive rules or guidelines.

Institution building has so far not developed the structures and capacities needed to steer urban development into a strategic and sustainable direction. The institutions closest to developing promising “municipal-style” ambitions – at least in some camps – are the Local Committees. These, too, lack democratic accountability, however, and are contested by some parts of the camp community. LCs undoubtedly will play a crucial role in increasing dialogue and bipartisan thinking in the interest of the entire community. Sometimes LCs already operate as effective mediators between the camp institutions and should be strengthened in their capacity to make effective decisions. In other cases, LCs will need to be persuaded to be more inclusive and genuinely representative of the entire spectrum of the community.

2.3.4 Identity and Belonging: Camp, Quarter, Block

The mapping, analysis, and interpretation of the land uses and programmes in Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar (section 2.2.1) has already shown that camps have recently developed a quasi urban diversity of functional clusters/ zones. This section focuses in more detail on the internal structure of the residential zones themselves. In particular, the section questions today's relevance of "quarters" (*hara*) – sometimes also referred to as camp neighbourhoods – which were formed in the early years of the camps (see section 2.1.3). Does this social-spatial order still provide spatial and cultural "sub-identities" within the camp? Or have these clan-based sub-identities been superseded by a communal identity in which residents feel they belong more to the camp as a whole? What, furthermore, is the role and extent of neighbourly relations within particular building blocks?

(1) Are "Quarters" Still Relevant Today?

As demonstrated in section 2.1.3 ("Historical Evolution 1948-2008"), quarters provided a vital internal ordering system in the camps' initial decades. Camps replicated the traditional social-spatial ordering systems of the refugees' villages and cities of origin. They followed to an extent the urban principle of *hara* (or quarter), typical of the traditional Islamic city. The section described the process of transition from socially and culturally "closed" quarters to increasingly "open" quarters and eventually to "mixed" quarters – the gradual blurring of social boundaries through a process of intermarriage and internal migration. Has this process of transition in fact started to dissolve the quarters as a locus of micro identities within camps? In the Islamic cultural context, similar processes could be observed during the modernisation of traditional city centres.

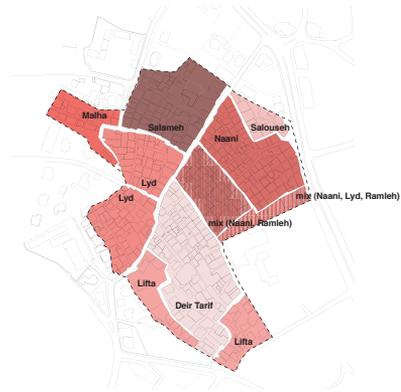
In the three case study camps, traditional quarters cannot in fact be detected through obvious physical traces. Boundaries are imperceptible, and a morphological analysis of the urban fabric does not provide clear indications. The issue of quarters was raised in numerous interviews with camp residents and community leaders. However, when interviewees were questioned about the quarters' social and cultural relevance as locations and systems of spatial identification, a more ambiguous picture emerged. Some interviewees denied outright the continued relevance of quarters, while others spoke of their continuing importance. Often, statements were contradictory on the issue. The following two sections attempt to summarize aspects that seem to support or reject the notion of quarters as important organisational structures.

Five general trends were identified that seemed to have contributed to a reduction of the importance of quarters: Urbanisation and the emergence of public life; the perception of camps as "one quarter"; activism and politicisation; intermarriage and mobility within the camps; and various forms of institutionalized memory.

• Urbanisation and the Emergence of Public Life

The recent process of urbanisation described in section 2.2.1 on land use has strengthened the identification of residents with the camp as a whole and lessened their ties to particular quarters. This can be demonstrated by the emergence of a business zone in the camp. Traditionally, shops served local customers in the quarter, but today entrepreneurial thinking clashes with the more introverted quarter mentality. Shops have found more attractive locations and a broader customer base within the main mixed zones. Another aspect of urbanisation is the emergence of clusters of camp institutions as nuclei of centres used by the entire camp community rather than the population of a particular quarter. A new type of public space has thus been created – "*spaces of public interaction accessible to all members of the community or social groups [allowing for] public life – defined as associational life where opinions and ideas can be exchanged and joint activities undertaken.*"²²¹ (JOHNSON 2007)

²²¹ source: Johnson, Penny. "Public Spaces and Public Life", UNRWA-commissioned report, 2007.



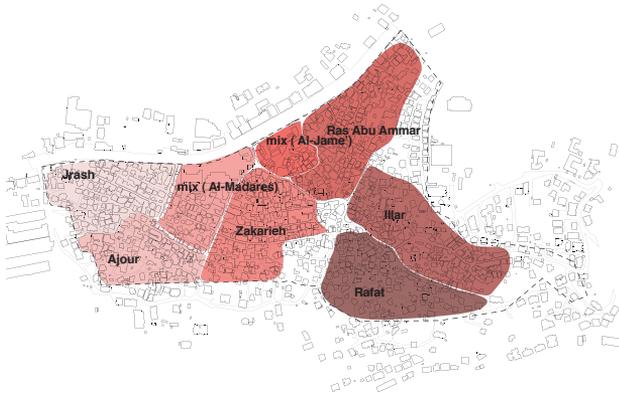
→ 230

Amari Camp (2006) – Quarters

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- light red Deir Tarif
- light red Salouseh
- red Lifta
- red Lydd
- orange Malha
- red Naani
- dark red Salameh
- dark red mix (Naani, Lydd, Ramleh)
- dark red mix (Naani, Ramleh)

Source: Amari CSO, 2006



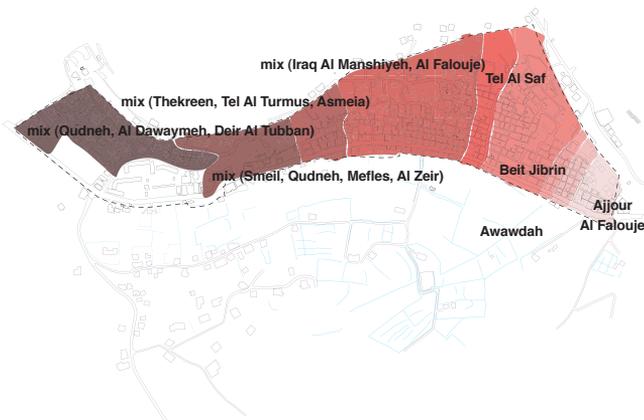
→ 231

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Quarters

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- light red Jrash
- light red Ajour
- red mix (Al-Madares)
- red Zakarieh
- red mix (Al-Jame')
- dark red Ras Abu Ammar
- dark red Illar
- dark red Rafat

Source: CSO Dehseishe, 2006



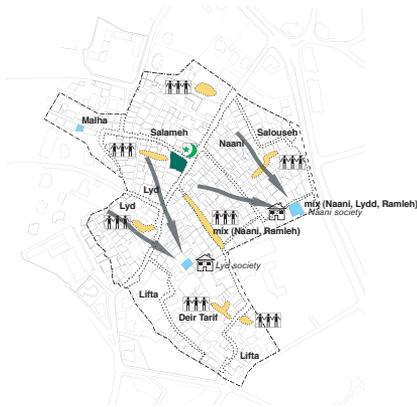
→ 232

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Quarters

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- light red Ajjour
- light red Al Falouje
- light red Awawdah
- red Beit Jibrin
- red Tel Al Saf
- red mix (Iraq Al Manshiyeh, Al Falouje)
- dark red mix (Thekreen, Tel Al Turmus, Asmeia)
- dark red mix (Smeil, Qudneh, Mefles, Al Zeir)
- dark red mix (Qudneh, Al Dawaymeh, Deir Al Tubban)

Source: CSO Fawwar, 2006

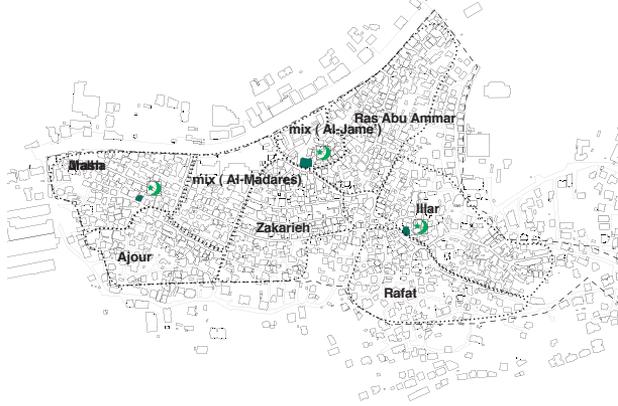


→ 233

Amari Camp (2006) – Quarter Elements

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- 🕌 mosque
- 🏠 club societies
- ↑↑↑ external spaces used during public festivals and gatherings such as wedding and funerals

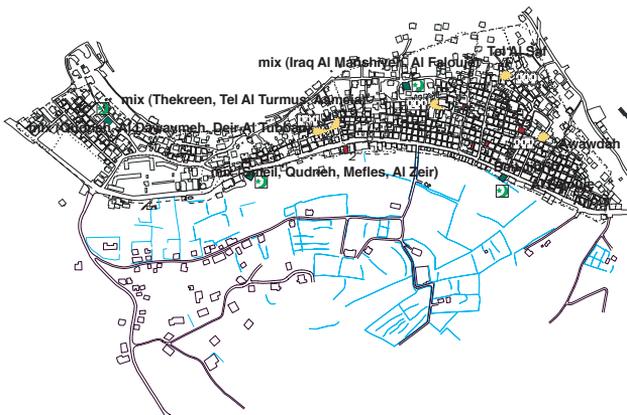


→ 234

Deheishe Camp (2006) – Quarter Elements

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- 🕌 mosque
- 🏠 club societies
- ↑↑↑ external spaces used during public festivals and gatherings such as wedding and funerals



→ 235

Fawwar Camp (2006) – Quarter Elements

Legend

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - quarter boundaries
- 🕌 mosque
- 🏠 club societies
- ↑↑↑ external spaces used during public festivals and gatherings such as wedding and funerals
- clan club

Clan and Family Clubs

- 1 Al-Titi clan club
- 2 Al-Sarahna clan club
- 3 Ghatasha clan club
- 4 Al-Hmouz clan club
- 5 Dar Al-Kariuf clan club

• The Perception of Camps as “One Quarter”

The head of the Na’ani Society expressed his belonging to Amari camp in the following terms: “*The camp is one big quarter; all for one and one for all.... Endless memories, priceless moments, and an intimate social environment are what the camp means to me. There are no social divisions among the quarters. We all act like we are neighbours and close friends regardless of the quarters’ names or locations.*”²²² (interview with MAHMOUD ABU SHILABAYEH) The shared history of living together in a densely built up environment has created numerous social connections across the borders of the initial quarters. Camp residents have faced economic hardship and external threats together. As a recent incident in Amari showed, when the camp is in conflict with surrounding communities, camp residents act as a closely-knit community. (See chapter 6.) Camps such as Amari and Deheishe struggle for participation and recognition in increasingly urbanised surroundings, behaving as “one quarter” with “one voice”: “*Within camp boundaries, the unity of the refugees left no room for cultural competition. However there is a social tension between refugees in Amari and the residents of Bireh.*”²²³ (interview with ABD AL NABI AL SHAFI’E) It is also worth recalling that West Bank camps are relatively small in scale and population compared to camps in Gaza, which have the populations of large cities. It would be interesting to research, for example, whether camp quarters in Gaza have retained greater significance than they have in the West Bank.

• Activism and Politicisation

Camps are highly politicized spaces, with many residents active in the political or military resistance. Many were or are still imprisoned. The process of politicisation helped to forge a new collective camp identity, which has challenged the identification with extended family or *hamule* – and with it the quarter. For all three camps, but especially for Amari and Deheishe, the first intifada had a crucial impact on the refugee identity. Both camps were hot spots of political protest, military incursions leading to casualties (armed and civilian), and curfews. Amari’s CSO describes how the common struggle against the occupation forged a common identity across cultural and social divisions: “*When the first intifada started in 1987, the refugees came together and all the social boundaries vanished. The refugees found themselves united in a struggle against occupation. The political struggle in the camp brought the people together and strengthened public awareness of the need for unity and cooperation.*”²²⁴ (interview with GHALEB AL BESS) Similar mechanisms were at work in Deheishe, where as a result of political activism, a powerful Local Committee and other camp institutions emerged to offer their services to all camp residents, rather than to individual families or quarters. The process has started in Fawwar more recently. Here the daily presence of the military watchtower at the camp’s Western entrance generates a sense of collective exposure. To summarize, one could state that politicisation and activism has contributed to the transformation of quarter identity into camp identity

• Inter-marriage and Internal Mobility

As indicated in section 2.1.3, mental and social divides within camps were particularly strong in Amari, where traditional animosities between village and townspeople – inhabiting separate quarters – were replicated. Even before the first intifada’s period of politicisation, however, these boundaries were slowly eroding. “*Today one can walk through these quarters but cannot find the social clusters in accordance with the quarters’ names. It is a more of a mixed up social gathering that joins refugees from different villages and cities in the very same quarter.... The quarters still carry the names of Lyd, Na’ani, or Lifta but they no longer have the social exclusiveness of one village or city of origin. For example there are 128 families from Lydd in the camp, but these families are scattered all over the camp and are not concentrated in the Lydd quarter only.*” (interview with GHALEB AL BESS) As discussed in section 2.1.3, particularly important factors were an increase in inter-marriage as well as the informal real estate market in which shelters were traded to refugees regardless of their belonging to a particular quarter. Internal migration followed (→ 131, 132), radically altering Amari’s internal social landscape and transforming closed quarters into mixed quarters (the only exception being the Lyd quarter, whose population still consists to more than three quarters of families from Lyd). The following statement is exemplary of these new social interconnections: “*We all feel that we belong to the camp in spite of the different quarters. Whenever any social event takes place in the camp (wedding or a funeral) we all gather in the house of the groom or the deceased regardless of the quarter or the clan.*”²²⁵ (interview with FATIMA JA’FARI)

²²² source: interview with Mahmoud Abu Shilabayeh, head of Na’ani Society, Amari, September 12, 2006.

²²³ source: interview with Abd Al Nabi Al Shafi’e, head of Amari LC, September 7, 2006.

²²⁴ source: interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

²²⁵ source: interview with Fatima Ja’fari, member of Women’s Programme Centre, Deheishe, August 15, 2006.

• Institutionalized Memory

A vital function of the original quarters was to preserve social and cultural relations between refugees from the same *hamule* or place of origin. Quarters were therefore also a form of resistance to normalisation and served as symbolic reminders of the Nakba and the life predating the Nakba. Over time, the memory of the place of origin has been institutionalized in the form of charitable societies in all camps. In Amari Camp, three societies were formed, but interestingly, none of the society buildings are located in the same quarter as the groups they ostensibly serve. This is similar in Deheishe, where *diwaween* for clans are being set up at the border of the camp, with clans associated with one quarter choosing different locations. Both aspects seem to support the notion that the boundaries of the quarters have lost significance. The following three aspects point towards a continued relevance of the quarters, albeit to a lesser degree when compared to their original importance: The persistence of quarter names, the importance of folklore, and the recent trend towards strengthening family and clan ties.

a.) Quarter Names

It is striking that both the names and geographic locations of quarters are basic knowledge shared by all camp residents. Precise boundaries can still be drawn based on the descriptions of residents. The names have become part of the general camp “culture” and are firmly established in the vocabulary of everyday life. They are used to describe locations of dwellings and institutions or to give directions through the camp.

b.) Folklore

Festivals such as funerals and weddings are still mostly held in external public spaces close to the family home. In both Amari and Fawwar, those spaces that are most frequently used for such occasions reveal a striking relation to the structure of quarters. Almost all quarters have one specific place.

²²⁶c.) Strengthening of Family and Clan Ties

During the worsening political and economic situation, multi-generational family support systems and ties have been re-energized as vital alternatives to a collapsing state represented by an increasingly dysfunctional PNA. It could be expected that with this shift, other aspects – such as the spatial settings of quarters – might once again become more important.

From Spatial Settings to Symbolic Structures

These contradictory findings on the continued relevance of quarters suggest that camps are characterised by the simultaneous presence of different systems of spatial/ social organisation and identity inside the camps. These are unstable and undergoing a dynamic process of change at all times. The degree to which they overlap with or dominate one another varies in each camp. In conclusion, it can be stated that the overall trend is towards a shared camp identity rather than a quarter identity and with it, the quarters are becoming less important. At the same time, quarters remain important historical cultural reference points. As NASIR AL-LAHHAM from Deheishe points out: “*The camp started as quarters when the refugees first grouped according to their places of origins. Today the younger generation in the camp overlooks the quarters’ names and their implications.... Beit Utab, Beit Yibrin, Zakariyya, Rafat, and Ajjor are names that keep our memories alive and affirm our Right of Return, but they do not dictate our lives in the camp.*” (interview with NASIR AL-LAHHAM)

This and numerous other statements made by camp residents suggest that, although they have lost significance as spatial settings for the organisation of daily life (which is now much more oriented towards the camp as a whole), quarter names are invested with symbolism of pre-Nakba life and serve as a powerful reminder of the Right of Return. The quarters have been transformed from spatial settings to symbolic structures. Interviews also suggest that the significance of quarters differs across the three to four generations living in the camps today. While younger camp residents consider quarters primarily in terms of their symbolic value, the older (first and second generation refugees) might still be attached to traditional forms of living in the camp and more frequently refer to the quarter as a place they identify with. Even if the majority of camp residents think of quarters in increasingly symbolic and folkloristic terms, they remain firmly established in the culture of the camps and the collective memory of inhabitants.

Research in the three case study camps has shown that processes of mixing vary from camp to camp, and therefore the importance of quarters varies as well. In Amari, congestion often left residents little choice but to change quarters and led to a larger degree of mixing than in Deheishe. In conservative Fawwar, quarters seem to have retained the most autonomy.

(2) The Importance of the Block

Section 2.1.3 traced the gradual transformation in refugee camps over several decades. In addition to the early camp quarters, the first spatial order in camps also consisted of micro clusters of shelters, where relatives attempted to group, living side by side, sharing assets, and nurturing a common social life. That chapter also showed how the continuous horizontal and vertical expansion of clusters (similar to traditional hosh living) has gradually formed dense “blocks”, with houses joined up side by side, or back to back – reducing open space to narrow, sometimes shared, courtyards.

The micro study investigated several blocks in each of the three camps and showed that, although mixing has taken place, blocks still house many close relatives with intense social ties. The brief analysis of the three micro-study blocks (see section 2.2.3) described how family relations and place of origin in a block can still play an important role. In Deheishe’s and Fawwar’s blocks, for example, most inhabitants belonged to the same village of origin or family. The block investigated in Amari Camp, on the other hand, could be considered a “mixed block” with no particular kinship network clearly dominating. (→ 186 - 188) Here the transition from cluster to block as a sociocultural unit mirrors in some ways the transition from closed to open quarter.

It is assumed that, regardless of whether a block is still dominated by particular kinship ties or ties to a place of origin, social interaction between its inhabitants is extremely important. Although more research is necessary to substantiate this hypothesis, it is assumed that living together in a block now involves a different, more mundane set of issues similar to those faced by the inhabitants of an urban apartment building or condominium: the negotiation of physical boundaries between units, the negotiation with neighbours if an expansion of a shelter is planned, sharing and borrowing everyday assets, joint child care, and social interaction on nearby streets or lanes, across the roof terraces, or within a shared courtyard.

(3) Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, although camp quarters and micro-clusters such as blocks have lost some of their initial functions as spatial settings for family and clan life, they still continue to be important spatial and social organizing structures that should be respected and possibly strengthened in strategic camp improvement planning efforts. Both quarters and blocks remain vital spatial and sociocultural reference points for the planning and implementing of interventions.

In particular, quarters and blocks can help to:

- Define camp neighbourhoods: Strategic urban planning will require an intermediate scale between blocks of individual houses and the camp as a whole. Here, quarters offer a useful matrix that, in cooperation with the community, could form neighbourhoods. Smaller quarters and traditionally mixed quarters can be more easily combined than large quarters with a strong identity and homogenous population. As the importance of quarters varies from camp to camp, camp-specific strategies are required.
- Define micro-clusters: Due to the congestion of the camps, access and infrastructural service provision will not be possible for all individual houses. Blocks or clusters of smaller blocks could define smaller planning areas with shared access and service points.
- Act as a spatial and social frame to address the problem of congestion and reduced living quality: Re-structuring blocks – including measures to reduce population and building density – will be a necessary part of camp improvement. The blocks should be respected as spatial and social units as much as possible. Careful internal restructuring should be given priority over an approach of demolition and rebuilding in order not to endanger the camp’s sensitive social fabric.
- Enable camp management: Blocks and quarters offer suitable social structures for achieving sustainable management of camp improvement interventions – such as building maintenance, technical facilities, and external public spaces and their protection against decay or vandalism. Delegates or elected representatives could be made responsible for micro-management tasks.

2.3.5 Gender Roles in the Domestic Environment and Camp Life

Despite the obvious contrast to Western societies, there are many indicators that suggest that the traditional, strictly patriarchal model of Palestinian society is gradually eroding, offering more opportunities for women to contribute actively to communal life beyond the domestic sphere. The multitude of factors that play a role in this gradual transformation process are too varied and complex to discuss in this report. A thorough investigation of the differences among camps, villages, and cities also requires much more research than was possible within this project's scope. But even the limited insight afforded by the three case study camps suggests that the transformation of gender roles is not uniform but varies considerably from place to place, and even from household to household.

The Importance of Physical and Cultural Context

Location is certainly a key factor. Interviews with women in the isolated and remote camp of Fawwar yielded accounts that were very different from those conducted in Deheishe and Amari, which are situated within or close to cosmopolitan urban environments. Fawwar is known for its conservatism. In their responses to questions about the status of women, interviewees and focus group participants in Fawwar were divided. Some did not fundamentally question their much more restricted role but presented it as a cultural fact. Others, mostly younger women, complained vigorously. *"The life of a woman in the camp is full of routine and her situation is really bad. Being locked in her house, the woman in the camp feels very bored and has no opportunities to widen her horizons."*²²⁷ (interview with Women's Programme Centre staff, Fawwar Camp)

The Role of Women in Public Life

A chief indicator of gender roles is the degree to which women are represented in public functions such as NGOs and CBOs in the camp. Women are noticeably absent here. The only Local Committee with a women member is Amari LC, and she is the head of the Women's Programme Centre (WPC). Apart from the women who head the WPCs and girls' schools in the three camps, only Deheishe's Civil Services Centre and main Kindergarten are run by women. In the programmatic focus of institutions however, Deheishe is the most accommodating toward women. A good example is the cultural centre Ibda'a, which plays a significant role in generating a more liberal image of the camp. Ibda'a is one of the most active institutions in Deheishe and is located at its main entrance. Even compared to urban NGOs in Bethlehem and Ramallah, the level of mixing between male and female programme participants is unique in the West Bank. Theatre performances, sport, film productions and events are mixed by default, as are facilities such as the computer lab, the theatre hall, the restaurant and a coffee shop, and the guest house for mostly international guests. WAFĀ' ADĀWL, a girls' school counsellor, pointed out that *"girls that join Ibda'a institution are very self-driven girls who always stand out in every event. The Ibda'a girls are very disciplined, dedicated, and committed and I always count on them and seek to involve them in many school activities."*²²⁸ (interview with WAFĀ' ADĀWL) In most other institutions, however, women play a predominantly marginal role, if they play any at all. Despite its very religious and conservative society, In Fawwar, there is no separate prayer space for women.

"Female Spaces"

Four-way's women, much more than those of Deheishe and Amari, are restricted by cultural convention from moving freely in the camp beyond their domestic environments. Only at home do they feel free to conduct their own affairs, including entrepreneurial activities, meeting, and socialising. As soon as they leave the home, they feel controlled by their husbands or other male members of the wider family. As the Ramallah-based social researcher PENNY JOHNSON points out, young, unmarried women and girls are particularly affected: *"One focus group member in Fawwar complained about community surveillance of their movements: 'Even the taxi drivers ask me, where are you going?... and the neighbours will say, she is going and coming'."* (JOHNSON 2007) Some women in Fawwar stated that they require permission from their fathers or husbands to leave home, and permission is granted only if they go to accepted "female spaces". The following section attempts to provide an overview of a range of "female spaces" outside of the private home, places where women feel comfortable and where it is acceptable for them to go without male company. These include first and foremost established camp institutions such as the Women's Programme Centre (WPC). The role of the WPC cannot be overestimated. It is an institution that considerably widens the spectrum of

²²⁷ source: interview with members of the Women's Programme Centre, Fawwar Camp, February 8, 2007.

²²⁸ source: interview with Wafa' Adawi, school counsellor, School Administration Deheishe, November 13, 2006.

opportunities available to women, offering lectures, social events, courses, and other capacity-building programmes. (The contrast to rural Palestine, where women do not have access to such spaces, is therefore considerable.) Beyond the WPC, other established institutions can also be considered as trusted spaces open to women. Penny Johnson elaborates that *“parents in both Deheishe and Amari have permitted their teenage daughters to participate in trips abroad, whether sponsored by Ibd’a in Deheishe or the Women’s Programme Centre in Amari. Organized activities under a trusted sponsor expand the public space of young women, even for conservative families. As one such young woman in Deheishe remarked: ‘My family does not allow me to go out except when I go to the [Women’s] Centre’. Here it should be noted that mosques as religious institutions are also reaching out to young women and are thus not simply male spaces. A mosque in Deheishe, for example, offers computer classes for girls, and religious instruction for girls and women has greatly expanded under the banner of Islamic activism in almost all settings in Palestine.”* (JOHNSON 2007)

Another “female space” is the camp’s clinic or health centre. Interviewees admitted that because of their limited and often substandard domestic environments, with insufficient natural light and outdoor space, additional visits to the clinic are often made under various pretexts, including simulated illnesses. One of the women pointed out that *“going to the Clinic is the only way we have to wake up in the morning, to get dressed, and to get outside home and to have some fresh air.”*²²⁹ (interview with members of the Women’s Programme Centre, Fawwar)

For girls of school age, UNRWA’s compulsory education programme until the 9th grade is a crucial source of opportunities to socialize outside the family home. The head of the girls’ school in Amari pointed out: *“There are two types of students at Amari school. While the majority of families in Amari do not allow their daughters to spend any time outside the walls of the school, a few families allow their daughters to wander about the streets of Ramallah. As the headmistress of the school I became aware of the girls’ desperate need to spend more time at school just hanging out, chatting, and fooling around far away from their families. Most of the families in the camp get irritated by any school activity outside the school’s boundaries. For example, when a teacher asked [the students] for a list of internet resources for a research project, the school received endless phone calls from annoyed parents complaining about their daughters going to internet cafés and the extra charge [this involved]. Many girls consider school to be the only place where they can stay freely away from their homes.”*²³⁰ (interview with RANA ODEH 2006)

PENNY JOHNSON offers another perspective that is relevant to understanding “female places” in camps as complex and non-static, temporal structures. JOHNSON points to the fact that *“public space and activities for women and girls are often more accessible if they are associated with familial space.”* (JOHNSON 2007). Consequently “female spaces” can emerge virtually everywhere in the camp in the context of social occasions (such as weddings and funerals) – family gatherings that often occur in streets or small openings in the dense texture of the camp. Johnson explains that *“in the camp context, as in Palestinian society in general, it is not fruitful to deploy a strict dichotomy between public and family, but rather to consider the context, purpose, and outcomes of activities, groups, and institutions.”* (JOHNSON 2007)

Extensive interviews conducted during the field research showed that the mobility of women and their need to rely on “female spaces” varied considerably from camp to camp. The general degree of female freedom in Deheishe appears to be higher than that of Fawwar. As PENNY JOHNSON notes: *“While the head of the Women’s Centre in Fawwar essentially saw all public spaces of the camp as danger zones for girls, women interviewed at Deheishe’s Women’s Programme Centre affirmed that the whole camp was ‘safe’ for women, perhaps both reflecting their own experience and supporting the camp’s good reputation. Although other young unmarried interviewees had mentioned one disreputable internet café and the main entrance of the camp, where young men gather, as places to avoid, the head of the Women’s Programme Centre noted that there was no place that women intentionally avoided.”* (JOHNSON 2007)

²²⁹ source: interview with members of the Women’s Programme Centre, Fawwar, February 8, 2007.
²³⁰ source: interview with Rana Odeh, Headmistress, Girls’ School Amari, September 7, 2006.

Role of Urban or Rural Context in Mobility of Women

Women in Amari also appear to enjoy greater freedom of mobility compared to those of Fawwar. Here the surrounding city seems to play a major role. Even though the densely built-up camp and urban surroundings offer less open space than Fawwar, the urban environment of the twin cities of Ramallah/ Al-Bireh compensated for this lack. A member of a focus group, KHADEEJA ALHELO, pointed out the importance of this environment, although it is generally more accepted for male refugees to take advantage of it: *"My brother and his male friends spend more time in Ramallah than they do in the camp. Since my brother is not burdened with any obligations, he does whatever he feels like doing. He goes to Ramallah every day, whether to shop, fool around, or meet his friends. Sometimes I feel I need to go to the city. Everybody needs a change of scenery once in a while. Sometimes I seek the open space of Ramallah Park to enjoy a breeze and fresh air. I wish I had the luxury of going to the city more, but coming from a very conservative family is affecting my personal freedom."*²³¹ (interview with KHADEEJA DAUD ISSA AL HILO 2006.) Although restricted by her conservative family, KHADEEJA ALHELO generally feels comfortable venturing into the neighbouring cities. When asked if she maintains social relations such as girlfriends there she answered: *"No, but this has nothing to do with Ramallah or Al-Bireh. My family does not allow me to have friends over or visit my friends. The way I was raised and my family's restrictions make it difficult for me to communicate with girlfriends outside the camp. However, this is not the case for all girls in Amari. Many families from the camp allow their daughters to visit their friends and vice versa."* (interview with KHADEEJA DAUD ISSA AL HILO 2006.)

As indicated in KHADEEJA ALHELO's statement, other female residents from Amari enjoy the freedom of daily access to the cities. NAWAL SHARQAWI lives at the periphery of the camp, close to Al Mawalha Quarter. She states that living on the outskirts of the camp makes it easier to go to Ramallah: *"All of my girlfriends are from Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Hebron. My family allows me to have my girlfriends over and vice versa. I feel very fortunate to have the freedom to invite my friends over and to visit them whenever it's possible, since not all the families from Amari allow their daughters such freedom. I can say that I go to Ramallah two or three times a week. Usually I go there to meet up with my girlfriends in a cafe²³² or a restaurant. I also go to Ramallah to shop and buy clothes."* (interview with NAWAL SHARQAWI 2006.) Both interviewees, KHADEEJA ALHELO and NAWAL SHARQAWI, stated that they would prefer to leave the camp altogether and reside in Ramallah or Al-Bireh: *"Of course I would prefer to live outside the camp. As I mentioned before, the camp lacks many essentials that we all need. Add to that the issue of the lack of privacy and the crowded structures with no room for extension or addition."* (interview with NAWAL SHARQAWI 2006.)

KHADEEJA ALHELO's reason was slightly different: *"Honestly speaking, I would prefer to live outside the camp. The major issue is the lack of privacy in the camp. When my neighbour argues with her husband, I end up hearing every little thing. There is no respect for or appreciation of the concept of privacy in the camp. It is everybody's business to know every possible thing about everybody else. Nevertheless camp life also has its advantages. Everybody is eager to lend a hand or help in a time of need, or console in a time of grief. But I believe that if I ever had the chance to live in Ramallah, I would enjoy more personal space within social settings that cherish privacy and appreciate the individual."* (interview with KHADEEJA DAUD ISSA AL HILO 2006.)

In Fawwar, the agricultural fields around the camp provide only a poor substitute to Amari's urban surroundings (and to a lesser extent those of Deheishe). Yet some interviewees pointed out that *"there is no other open place to go to apart from the agricultural lands of the neighbouring villages. So we go often for walks there."* (interview with members of Women's Programme Centre 2007.) Another women pointed out: *"Because our house is near the mountains, there are agricultural lands and open spaces for us, and we don't have to use the roof."*²³³

²³¹ source: interview with Khadeeja Daoud Issa Al Hilo, Amari Camp, October 31, 2006.

²³² source: interview with Nawal Sharqawi, Amari Camp, October 31, 2006.

²³³ source: interview with members of Women's Programme Centre, Fawwar, February 8, 2007.

Gender Roles in the Domestic Environment

• Traditional Role of Men

It can be assumed that camps mirror the generally patriarchal society of the West Bank, where polygamy still occurs, especially in the more rural areas, including isolated camps. Men are considered to be the natural heads of households and preside over family affairs. Clan belonging is passed on through the male-lineage, as are most assets such as property and family valuables. It is also considered standard for a groom to provide a house and income for his bride before the couple can get married and settle down. The difficult task of meeting these expectations is one of the reasons why grooms are generally 5-10 years older.

• Traditional Role of Women

Local rural traditions prescribe that women are responsible for domestic upkeep and the upbringing of children. In conservative societies like Fawwar, this pattern seems still to apply to most of the houses that were visited. Often visiting family relations, neighbours, and a television set are a woman's only means of everyday contact to the world beyond the house. Tight spatial conditions restrict most other possible activities. When questioned about their most important wish, most housewives in Fawwar spontaneously stated that they desire to participate in the TV program "*Belsaraha Ahla*" – a popular program advising women about make up, dress, hair styles, etc. This reflects the longing to break the routine of their monotonous lives and bridge the yawning gap between life in their substandard homes and the glamorous world evoked on the ever-present satellite TV. The different norms applying to men and women already set in at school age. Most families interviewed indeed stated that they preferred their girls to stay at home at the end of the school day. Penny Johnson points out that "watching television is also the main activity for girls, given their greater confinement to domestic space. A 2006 survey of youth aged 14-19 found that almost all girls (96%) spent most of their free time in the house, as opposed to only one third of boys: the girls' principal free time activity was watching television." (JOHNSON 2007)

Private Open Spaces

As stated before, the only outside space freely and regularly accessible to most women in the camp were traditionally domestic courtyards. Because most such yards were internalised during the shelter expansion, women resorted to using the roof as a space for socialising with visiting friends and relatives, mirroring a tradition known from old city centres such as Cairo and Damascus. Thus the roof has become a very important element of a house, indeed often one of the most important spaces where the family socialises and receives guests: "*The camp is too crowded and we don't find any open place except on the roofs. Nowadays, people are using their roofs as open places to sit and spend time. However, not all roofs are suitable, because some are covered by the roofs of other houses.*" (interview with members of Women's Programme Centre 2007) Many women also complained about the lack of privacy on rooftops, stating: "*I don't feel comfortable being on the roof when my neighbours are looking at me. I feel very reluctant to have a barbeque because of my neighbours.*" Indeed many of the women questioned said they considered it a main priority to improve the roof terraces with sun shading, perimeter walls, and outdoor furniture. Some even mentioned the possibility of connecting different rooftops in order to enable social contact with neighbouring women.

Women as Breadwinners

Although the issue of female employment was not further researched (general statistics are available from census surveys conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics – PCBS), it is common knowledge that women are employed at a much higher rate in the refugee camps than they are in Palestinian villages and even some towns. The fact that daughters and wives can be regularly employed has slowly become more acceptable to most families. Especially during the first intifada, when mass arrests often put male breadwinners out of work for years, women had little choice than to support their families by taking jobs. (For a more detailed discussion of women bread winners within multi-generational family structures, see MAYA ROSENFELD, *Confronting the Occupation*, Stanford University Press, 2004.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Any comprehensive improvement programme needs to be sensitive to gender roles by carefully addressing the needs and aspirations of the female part of the population without alienating the traditional value system or imposing a gender balance policy. This would need to include a sustained effort to give better expression to the needs of women. As a largely under-represented group, women lack their own lobby systems. UNRWA should ensure that female participants are included in the participatory management structures that will need to be set up for the camp improvement strategic planning process.

Spatial/ physical measures to improve the condition of women in the camps might include the following:

- Creating additional “female spaces” – i.e. spaces that are accepted as safe spaces for women – such as recreational spaces like public parks and neighbourhood centres
- Re-locating Women’s Programme Centres, especially in Fawwar where the WPC is in a remote location away from the main body of the camp and therefore difficult to reach
- Creating safe passages accepted by women (including street lighting if necessary) linking the camp’s main public facilities

Community development measures might include:

- Extending capacity building for women
- Establishing career advice centres and job counselling for women
- Establishing programmes such as after-school activities for girls (for example using UNRWA school facilities)

2.3.6 Internal Conflicts and Resolution Models

In principle, host government law applies in the refugee camps. (In the case of the West Bank, the law is defined by the PLO/ PNA administrative system.) In practice, however, camps are legal “grey zones” where the reinforcement of the law is almost impossible. This condition is partly the result of UNWRA’s limited mandate, defined in the following terms: “*The West Bank camps are active social agents. While UNWRA does not administer the camps, the Agency only administers its own installations and programs. Camp residents run their own activities, and camp committees in each camp are regarded as an official body representing the camp population.*”²³⁴ (UNRWA, 31 March 2005.) However, Local Committees are far from fully functioning administrative bodies. (See discussion in section 2.3.2) In the absence of an administrative body that can ensure the enforcement of the law, camps have developed their own system of coping with the many conflicts that naturally emerge when a large population must share very limited spatial resources and coexist in a very congested environment. The following section focuses on three questions: What internal conflicts patterns exist? Who are the mediators in cases of internal conflicts? And what conflict resolution models exist?

Internal Conflict Patterns

The following generic sources of conflict were identified in interviews with residents of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar. (Included are only the most common of a vast variety of conflict sources in the three camps.)

• Conflicts Over Representational Structures

Camp institutions are powerful instruments for vocalising and defending local interest. Although most institutions would claim to work inclusively for the general good of the entire community, the elites that control them are often contested figures. Democratic elections for leadership of the camp institutions are extremely rare. This also includes membership to the Local Committees, which claim to act in the interest of the entire community but have failed to democratically endorse their unique status. Many camp residents do not feel represented by the LCs because they reject particular leaders. Other groups – such as women, youth, and children – are unable to achieve institution building and participation in camp leadership and therefore cannot adequately represent their interests. A third group might reject the principle of camp institutions altogether. This includes some ²³⁵Hamas supporters, who view institution building involving the Local Committee as a “Fateh affair.” (Indeed, most camp institutions were set up after Palestinian National Authority self-rule began and were under the influence of Fateh.) Despite Fateh dominance in the West Bank, the Hamas constituency is estimated to vary between 20 and 30 percent in the camps – a potential source of conflict given the recent violent clashes between both fractions.

• Cultural Conflicts

Some West Bank camps, including Amari, include refugees from a very diverse range of places of origin. According to Amari’s Camp Service Officers (CSO), this created many rifts and borders inside the camp. (For full discussion see section 2.1.3.) “*In the early days of the camp as I said the cultural division was very dominant but not between clans, rather between rural and urban origins. The segregation was very dominant to the degree that when a Lyd groom wed a Na’ani bride, most of the bride’s relatives were excluded from the wedding festivities.*”²³⁶ (interview with GHALEB AL BESS 2006) Although these cultural boundaries have increasingly blurred with intermarriage and internal migration, a residue remains, and Amari’s social fabric is less coherent than that of Deheishe and Fawwar, where all refugees originated from neighbouring villages. NAJI ODEH, director of Deheishe’s Finiq Centre, explains: “*Amari has not absorbed its different groups (political, traditional, lobbying clusters, etc.) as Deheishe did. Amari failed to create a democratic climate that nurtures political and social diversity.*” (interview with NAJI ODEH 2006.)

• Conflicts over Spatial Resources

In the rapidly urbanising camps, space is the key resource, and it is only natural that most conflicts are about the perceived ownership of a plot, access to property, or the problem of vertical construction affecting the living quality or structure of a neighbouring building. In many cases, the “unwritten” or “customary” laws

²³⁴ source: www.unrwa.org.

²³⁵ source: interview with Naji Odeh, Director of Finiq Centre, July 18, 2006.

²³⁶ source: interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

of construction described in section 2.2.3 are either not respected or insufficient. The head of Na'ani clan, one of the most respected elders in Amari Camp, gave us some examples of internal conflict resolution in the camp and the resolution models: *"Conflict emerged when a refugee from Lyd, who wanted to stir up trouble with his cousins, sold his house to another refugee from Na'ani. The new owner of the house bought the house on the condition of having two entrances leading to it. The problem started because of the side entrance that the new owner wanted to open. Once opened, it would lead directly to the court of the seller's cousin. Upon investigating the issue, it turned out that this side entrance had been shut for the past 15 years and the seller only wanted to cause his cousins trouble by promising the buyer the right to open and use that entrance. After negotiations involving the buyer, the seller, and the seller's cousins, it was thus agreed that the seller should return an amount of 3000 JD to the buyer to compensate him for not being able to open that side entrance."*²³⁷ (interview with MAHMOUD SALMAN ABU SHILBAYEH 2006.)

A Conflict in Fawwar that Spiralled out of Control

While the above conflict was solved successfully through internal arbiters, other conflicts can be exacerbated by outside interference. A deadly conflict in Fawwar started in 2005 when a man from the Halayqa clan bought a piece of land opposite his house in the camp. The land bordered the camp's boundaries, and contained a public path used by other camp residents. The new owner claimed that the street was part of his new property and wanted to close it, annexing the new land to his bordering property. The surrounding neighbours – who belonged to the Qalaya'a clan – started threatening the new land owner with consequences if the street remained closed. As Fawwar's CSO explained: *"The conflict started over a street and was exacerbated to become a complicated, deadly feud. Today the community of Fawwar is still dealing with the painful repercussions of the fight, which resulted in the deaths of four members of the Halayqa clan, one member of the Qalaya'a clan, and the expulsion of around 600 Qalaya'a clan members from the camp. When the first victim of the conflict (from the Halayqa side) was shot, the conflict was no longer an issue of a street but an issue of revenge – getting even, and establishing authority. Both fighting clans were blinded and engulfed by malice and hatred. Both parties started to get ready for the fight by buying weapons, grouping the young men and urging them to fight and avenge those killed."*²³⁸ (interview with Ziad Hmoz 2006.)

Initially, no party was able to step in and mediate. The two clans armed themselves with the help of the nearby villages of Yatta and Dora (the former notorious for its involvement in armed crime), and the fight spiralled out of control. To avenge the loss of four clan members, the Halayqa clan targeted the head of the Qalaya'a clan (who held a PhD) for revenge. With the death of DR. QALAYA'A, elders from the towns of Hebron, Dora, and Yatta finally stepped in and held council. The council decided that the Qalaya'a clan members should leave the camp as soon as possible to avoid more bloodshed. Around 600 members of the Qalaya'a clan were expelled from the camp. When the elders called for the immediate evacuation of the entire Qalaya'a clan, a few Qalaya'a families decided to stay in the camp, publicly foregoing their clan membership and paying an *atwa* – as part of an ancient custom of paying a sum of money in compensation – the amount being set by the elders involved in resolving the conflict. Some Qalaya'a families who had been forced to leave even returned to the camp once they became aware of this option. The conflict is still not resolved. The Halayqa clan continues to come to terms with the painful loss of four of its members and is still not satisfied with the settlement.

Most of the Fawwar residents interviewed consider this conflict to be unrepresentative of the situation in the camp. AHMAD AL A'AMSI explained: *"I consider the recent events to be a very bizarre sudden phenomenon. In the last three years events have negatively affected Fawwar's reputation. I personally think that the conflict is the result of the actions of one dreadful group, all belonging to the same clan. The group managed to disturb the social life in the camp and stir different problems especially in the absence of any security system or source of authority. I can confidently declare that we have never encountered such a complex conflict before. It has certainly debilitated the camp's reputation, history, and image."*²³⁹ (interview with AHMAD AL A'AMSI, School Principal, August 31, 2006.)

²³⁷ source: interview with Mahmoud Salman Abu Shilbayeh, elder, Head of Na'ani refugees, September 12, 2006.
²³⁸ source: interview with Ziad Hmoz, Fawwar CSO, November 29, 2006.
²³⁹ source: interview with Ahmad Al A'amsi, School Principal, August 31, 2006.

Conflict Resolution Models

How can conflicts be resolved? Who acts as arbiters between conflicting parties? The following local powers exercise influence to a degree that varies from camp to camp:

• Political Parties

According to JAMIL HILAL, the most stabilizing influence in camps is exercised by political parties. The fact that in Fawwar a minor conflict for a strip of road escalated into a tragic and deadly feud is to him a clear indication of the lack of their effective presence there. *"It seems that there is no one centre of control in the camp, as the outbreak of violence there indicates. In Deheishe, the Popular Committee controls camp affairs, and in Amari it is the Youth Centre, but in both political organizations exert real influence over the two institutions. In Fawwar, political organizations do not seem clearly in full control, and there sort of 'semi-clan' formations are vying for influence, diminishing the role of both the Popular Committee and the Youth Centre.... The series of killings and [the subsequent] banishment of large numbers of people from the camps testifies to the relatively weak influence of the political parties in Fawwar, compared to Deheishe and Amari."* (HILAL 2007)

Indeed the CSO of the camp seems to support this analysis: "Before the PA was established it was the political organizations that ruled the camp. Since the PA, there has been security unruliness and lawlessness (*felatan amni*). There are many problems now. Even clanism (*al-asha'riya*) no longer can solve the problems and provides only temporary calm (*mukhadir*). The problems soon return. There is 'no central authority, no laws, and no deterrent'. Political organizations have a role, but it is less than it was before, and clan intervention is stronger than before. The main two parties are Fateh and Hamas. Fateh has more support (65% Fateh, 20% Hamas, and the rest are for the remaining parties)". (Quoted in HILAL 2007)

• Traditional Elites and Clan Leaders (*al-asha'riya*)

The case of Fawwar's tragic feud showed that clan elders were in the end the only authority able to enforce a drastic measure aimed at preventing further bloodshed. The influence of tribal law is obviously broken, and notables from the surrounding area (in this case Hebron, Yatta and Dora) are asked to become mediators (*rigal al-sulh*) in an internal conflict. The influence of such traditional figures is likely to be particularly strong in the more remote camps, which are still dominated by traditional and conservative societies.

• Local Committees

The Local Committee can also play a crucial role in conflict resolution. Amongst the three camps investigated, Amari's LC clearly was most active in the field of conflict resolution and poignantly also acquired the name "reconciliation committee." The CSO of Amari explains: *"Usually the Local Committee resolves internal disputes. Also well known elders in the camp can solve quarrels and problems. The good thing about Amari is that there are no clan divisions or familial prejudices. Since many families living in the camp are from different places and origins, there are no big clans or families that can exercise a control over their members in the camp. We all belong to the camp; our loyalty is to the camp and not to the clan."*²⁴⁰ (interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.)

• The Camp Service Officer (CSO)

UNRWA usually attempts to avoid getting involved in conflicts. Even when the conflict in Fawwar became deadly, UNRWA did not step in and did nothing to prevent the feud's worsening. The role of the CSOs however, is more blurred. Although the CSO is technically in the service of UNRWA, he is generally from the camp and considered part of the local elite. Questioned on the issue of local conflicts, Amari's CSO stated that being called in to resolve minor quarrels between neighbours consumes a large percentage of his working time.

• A Combination of Different Arbiters

Often, more than one arbiter become involved in conflict resolution. The head of Na'ani clan of Amari describes a typical situation: *"One conflict involved a family complaining about another family's intent to open a wide window through the wall opposite their neighbours' bedroom wall. The first family (the complaining party) requested*

²⁴⁰ source: interview with Ghaleb Al Bess, Amari CSO, July 31, 2006.

*my intervention to resolve the conflict. I went to the site in question and examined it myself. At the site I requested that the second family leave the construction opening for the window with no jamb until the issue was discussed with the CSO. The CSO did not want to get involved in such a matter and thus we turned to the camp's Local Committee. After a series of discussions and negotiations between the two families, a small upper window was decided on instead of the original wide one.*²⁴¹ (interview with Mahmoud SALMAN ABU SHILBAYEH 2006.)

• Negotiation between Neighbours

It can be assumed that in most cases conflict arbiters are not even required. The intense building activities in Amari Camp suggests that the following positive examples of a successful negotiation between two neighbouring families is not unique: *"When we had our house built, we made sure not to build along the plot boundaries but rather on the setback lines. Unfortunately, our neighbours did not do the same and built on their plot's exact boundaries. As you can imagine it is hard to enjoy any privacy with our neighbours living so close. Add to this our neighbours' old-fashioned life style and extreme poverty. They cook and warm their water by burning wood on a daily basis, and we have to put up with the smell and smoke. Fortunately, our other neighbours are more cooperative and understanding. My father-in-law owned another piece of land close by yet not adjacent to our current house plot. We have managed through negotiating with our neighbours to switch plots. Thus, on the traded plot, we now enjoy a small garden next to our house.*"²⁴² (interview with RIHAB QATANANI, Headmistress of Fawwar Second Girls' School, August 31, 2006.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is important to emphasise that, in most cases, the internal conflict resolution systems are sufficient to contain and solve contested issues. External intervention is not generally required. Given the precarious living conditions in most camps, this is a tremendous success – and would be unthinkable in similar circumstances in many European cities. Fawwar's CSO explains the preference of camp communities to rely on their own resources rather than outside help: *"We intend to solve our problems by our own, we don't need any more the outside intervention, that is reveal to be a negative intervention in many cases."* (interview with ZIAD HMOZ, Fawwar CSO, November 29, 2006.)

Conflicts over the scarce spatial resources are likely to increase with growing urbanisation, and the internal conflict resolution and reconciliation systems are likely to be stretched. Given the uncertainty of the future status of the camps, help is unlikely to come from outside, for example from the host government or neighbouring communities. The most effective way to ensure internal stability is therefore to strengthen the local camp institutions, most of all the Local Committees, which are by definition designed to stand above the interests of particular lobby groups. Democratic endorsement of the LCs is certainly desirable but difficult to put into practice. Other consensual models could, in the meantime, ensure that LCs open up and represent more, currently marginalised, segments of the community.

Of even more immediate importance to camp improvement is the question of who can enforce strategic planning decisions on the ground. In the absence of an external authority, an internal coordinating and mediating function needs to be developed, possibly by strengthening the camps' Local Committees, which enjoy the respect of most community members. Here UNRWA should play a facilitating role, propagating "best practice" examples in the West Bank (like Amari's LC's "reconciliatory role" in the camp). But beyond overall coordination, other more localized systems of negotiation are required to ensure general consensus and stability. These might include micro-structures such as neighbourhood or block committees.

²⁴¹ source: interview with Mahmoud Salman Abu Shilbayeh, elder, Head of Na'ani refugees, September 12, 2006.
²⁴² source: interview with Rihab Qatanani, Headmistress of Fawwar Second Girls' School, August 31, 2006.

2.3.7 Relations to Neighbouring Non-refugee Communities

An Uneasy relationship: Refugees and Their Neighbours

Penny Johnson's description of a walk to the borders of Amari Camp illustrates the conditions that can result from the surrounding area's sheer ignorance of refugees' concerns: "*Walking along an alley at a southern border of Amari refugee camp, the narrow path suddenly darkens. Above the one or two-story cement shelters of the camp, a large, almost monstrous, building rises, blocking much of the light. It is the new and luxurious Palestinian Red Crescent (PRSC) administrative headquarters in Al-Bireh. There is barely more than a meter between this eleven-story building and the small shelters of the camp. Prior to its construction, appeals by Amari's camp director to the head of the PRSC and to the governor of the Ramallah/Al-Bireh District to find another site were to no avail. The result is that a building serving the Palestinian public has excluded the needs of its camp neighbours and adversely affected camp public space, including public access to light and air, those most vital public resources whose deficit is acutely expressed by camp households in numerous studies. 'There is nothing but harm', said the director bitterly when asked if the building might have some benefits for camp residents. The camp, it seemed, was an invisible part of the Al-Bireh urban landscape and thus no general civic appeal or specific building code could be invoked.*" (JOHNSON 2007.)

The sociologist SARI HANAFI has referred to this phenomenon as "*Marginalisation from below*" (see in depth discussion of the precarious position of refugees within Palestinian society in Part II, chapter 1.1/ section 1.1.2) refers to the many reservations or prejudices expressed about the refugee community – generally an issue that cannot be debated in Palestinian society. Coexistence with a large refugee community intensifies conflicts that would otherwise be considered ordinary conflicts between neighbours. The almost total absence of institutionalised communication or conflict resolution between camps and neighbouring communities makes things worse. Even conflicts among individuals can disproportionately deteriorate into major confrontations, with the camp community uniting in solidarity and protest. "*A middle-aged woman, the wife of an electrician, expressed the dilemma for camp families in a 2003 incident where a young woman from a Al-Bireh family was shot and killed by an Amari youth in a dispute over stolen goods with her brothers. When R. was sentenced to execution, the camp came out on his side even though that was a mistake, because he was sentenced by the court for his deed. But since he was from the camp, the camp came out in solidarity with him and went to break traffic lights and to burn tires.*" (P. JOHNSON quoting the Institute of Women's Studies, 2004.) Another example is given by the CSO of Amari: "*The refugees of Amari always come together to defend any refugee against any outsider no matter what. One such incident took place a couple of months ago. One of the refugees was shot by Palestinian national security forces. He was a suspect in a drug deal. When the camp learned about the incident, they were furious and attacked different restaurants and hotels in Ramallah to avenge their killed comrade.*" (Ghaleb Al Bess 2006.)

Beyond individual cases of crime that occur in any community, more generic sources of conflict characterise the difficult relationship between camps and neighbouring communities. Interviews with camp residents and neighbours in and around the three camps revealed several recurring sources of conflict:

• Contested Land Control (Sovereignty/ Ownership)

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, land ownership is valued extremely highly in Palestinian society. It ensures both social status and long-term security for the owners and their families. It is therefore not surprising that land- or property-related issues rank amongst the most frequently cited sources of conflict. This applies first and foremost to the immense development pressure on the areas adjacent to refugee camps. As seen in the discussion of spill-over zones and informal expansion areas in section 2.2.5, refugees have bought land and constructed dwellings in close proximity to the camps. In the case of Deheishe, the unresolved status of the hilltop area to the south of the camp resulted in a conflict between Deheishians and the villagers of Artas. The former claimed that the land had been registered as common land under the Jordanians, while the villagers claimed that the land actually belonged to them. In another instance, the PNA wanted to build a prison on Abu Anton mountain next to Deheishe Camp, but effective resistance in the camps organised by the LC forced the PNA to abandon the plan. The land was bought by the LC instead and was used to construct the Finiq Centre. Another latent source of conflict is the status of land on which the camps themselves were built. In the West Bank, a very high percentage of camp land is owned privately. In the context of soaring land prices, the families that originally owned the plots making up Amari Camp, for example, expect that they will eventually recuperate the property (which is now worth millions of US dollars). Whatever the source of conflict, the PNA's extremely weak stance on matters of land use, land pricing, and strategic planning – and the impossibility of reinforcing decisions in the context of Israeli occupation – generates a void of authority that is exploited by private interests.

• **Sectarian Tensions**

Camp populations are by and large Muslim. In traditionally Christian areas such as Beit Jala/ Bethlehem and Ramallah this can cause problems, as refugees are perceived as endangering the traditional status quo. This is exemplified in the case of the new city of Doha near Deheishe Camp, which is referred to as “the refugee city” by many surrounding residents. Beginning in the mid 1980s, Deheishians began to buy plots of uncultivated land from Beit Jala and Bethlehem residents. Dismayed by the demographic threat posed by the influx of Muslim residents into its municipal territory, Beit Jala’s mayor decided to release this territory from municipal authority, thus creating an authority vacuum. On the ground, the informal development accelerated after the withdrawal of the Israeli army in 1995 and the establishment of the PNA planning authority in “Zones A” and “B”. The newly established PNA finally decided to address the precarious situation: Doha was awarded the status of an independent municipality – the only new municipality that has been set up in the West Bank. But quarrels continue to the present day over the definition of Doha’s municipal borders, as the Christian residents of Al Khader, members of the Christian SABBAT family, and the Greek Orthodox church have refused to be governed by a “city of refugees”.

• **Control of Representational Bodies**

Because camp residents do not vote in municipal elections, their interests are not represented. This is a partly self-imposed condition rooted in their fear of integration, especially of losing the Right of Return. In reality, however, it increases the gap between camps and their neighbouring towns and villages. Registered refugees who own property outside of the camp enjoy different status and are entitled to full participation in local elections. In the case of Doha, where 45% of residents are registered refugees from Deheishe (35% come from other camps, only 20% are not refugees), their lobby system effectively controls municipal affairs. Indeed, Doha has acquired the dubious reputation of have been “taken over by Deheishe”.

• **Access to Services and Resources**

One of the main issues raised by interviewees from Artas village and neighbouring Bethlehem concerned the matter of Deheishians refusing to pay their electricity bills. Neighbouring communities feel, to their dismay, that they have to pick up the bill instead, through payments to the PNA: “*We are paying for the refugees*”. The fact that refugees do not pay taxes but enjoy the use of all public services adds to the perception that refugees refuse to participate in improving public services and place a burden on development of neighbouring Palestinian villages and towns. Jealousy towards the refugees for their special status and the free services they obtain though UNRWA is widespread in the West Bank. The claim that these services put refugees at an advantage over non-refugees was indeed supported by a recent study, which revealed that the socioeconomic conditions in camps are better than in many villages of the West Bank. Similar conditions have developed in Syria and Jordan, where many refugees are “better off” than other groups, such as the inhabitants of informal settlements in the conurbations of Amman, Damascus, and Aleppo.

• **Bias and Collective Scape-Goating**

Previously cited examples of incidents involving Amari Camp residents have cemented the common perception of the camp as a unwelcoming and even dangerous space. Its residents are perceived by the surrounding communities as a collective group of troublemakers, or “*zo’ran*” (gangsters). The CSO of Amari added: “*As refugees, we feel that the surrounding communities consider us as outcasts who came to share their social and cultural space with no permission. Unfortunately our community is imperfect; there is a lot of social tension with the surrounding communities.*” (interview with GHALEB AL BESS 2006.) General bias varies from camp to camp, but it can be stated with some certainty that a residue of negative feelings towards refugees is widespread. Bias, however, does not always amount to collective “criminalisation”. The more conservative/traditional villagers of Artas look at their neighbours, the more urbane and cosmopolitan Deheishians, with suspicion. Particularly the activities of Ibda’a Cultural Centre and its policy of involving girls and young women in all its programmes and activities concern them. Generally, however, Deheishians are treated with respect, bordering at times, on admiration. As one elderly woman put it: “*I worked as a nurse in Bethlehem and I had many friends who never visited me in the camp. People from Bethlehem are normally afraid to come and visit us in the camp especially at night.*”²⁴³ (interview with FADWA ABU LABAN 2007.)

²⁴³ source: interview with Fadwa Abu Laban, temporary assistant in the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project and Deheishe camp resident, 2006-2007.

Pride Versus Shame: Self-Perception of Refugees

How do refugees see themselves? How do they face neighbouring communities? How strong are the collective identities with which camp communities differentiate themselves from their neighbours? Comparing interviews held with residents of Amari, Deheishe, and Fawwar reveals surprising variation. There is a correlation between how outsiders view the camp and the self-esteem of refugees. Thus the outside perception that Amari residents are troublemakers (“*zo’ran*”), while Deheishians are worthy of respect, plays out internally as well.

As Amari’s CSO stated: “*We are a camp with a bad reputation*”. Amari’s self-image perpetuates the outsider’s perception of the camp as a marginalized, crime-ridden area, making it hard for it to capitalize on the potential of being inside a “booming area”, close to the West Bank’s cultural and economic centres of Ramallah/Al-Bireh. Many camp residents seemed resigned to their fate. They are frustrated and overwhelmed by the challenges of succeeding in the cosmopolitan and affluent urban context, feel unable to compete with cheap migrant labourers, and are threatened by the perceived cultural differences and the collective bias towards them from the neighbouring communities. NAJI ODEH, director of Deheishe’s Finiq Centre, explains: “*It is true that Ramallah is one of the biggest cities in Palestine and today has a much diversified social fabric, but the residents of Amari Camp did not grasp that potential and employ it for the camp’s development.... Ramallah has always been characterized as a growing city with a lot of opportunities and growth potential. My personal view is that the refugees of Amari were negatively affected by this growing city. Many of them felt inferior in front of its urbane community and did not mingle with its residents. This feeling of inadequacy among Amari residents combined with the camp’s introverted social culture and opened a window for crime, internal clashes, and disputes.*”²⁴⁴ (interview with NAJI ODEH 2006.)

Deheishean interviewees frequently cited the slogan “*nahno alam am mantiqa*” (Arabic for “We are the area’s main attraction”). It reveals the high self-esteem of residents vis a vis the neighbouring communities. This indicates a successful transformation in self-image from “poor refugees” to confident participants in the cultural and political affairs of the Bethlehem region. The camp’s reputation was built during the first intifada, and Deheishe continues to attract regular local and international visitors to its Ibd’a and Finiq Centres. The camp, moreover, actively shares its cultural infrastructure with its neighbours. While youth from the entire urban region frequent Ibd’a’s panoramic cafe and theatre facilities, the Finiq Centre is popular for its wedding hall, and its garden offers leisure activities and recreation. Both of these facilities are located at the camp’s perimeter. (Indeed, few outsiders venture deeper into camp’s dense urban fabric. Unlike Amari, however, Deheishe is not generally perceived as a dangerous area.) An elderly man from Deheishe pointed out that: “*The word ‘refugee’ is by itself a ‘racist word’. To be considered a ‘refugee’ among my own people is an insult. Many of them believe that we ‘forsook our land’.... The community of Bethlehem had always considered us a people living in misery and misfortune. Now that our conditions are totally different, however, we have gained a very important position in the area.*” (Source: FADWA ABU LABAN 2006-2007.)

Fawwar Camp represents yet another mode of self-perception, somewhere between Amari and Deheishe. Fawwar’s CSO stated: “*We are not what people think we are*”. Fawwar shares with Amari a sense of being a disconnected and isolated community. However, the statement also reflects a feeling of being misunderstood and an eagerness to overcome the bad reputation the camp acquired after its deadly internal feud of 2005 (See section 2.3.6). Since that catastrophe of conflict and evacuation, the camp’s institutions such as its Local Committee seem to have become re-energized rather than being paralysed. NAJI ODEH explains: “*While Fawwar did not benefit from its position as an isolated camp, it was negatively influenced by Yatta, a city nearby where many young people were involved in illegal drug and paramilitary activities. The street to Yatta passes through the camp. This inevitably influences the camp negatively, even though the people of Fawwar were rarely involved in illegal activities. What really damaged Fawwar’s image was the feud.... Many people from Fawwar claim ‘We are not what people think about us’. Indeed, Fawwar has many institutions and is a very well organized community, which contradicts the big conflict, which is still open in the camp.*” (interview with NAJI ODEH 2006.)

²⁴⁴ source: interview with Naji Odeh, Director of Finiq Centre, Deheishe, July 18, 2006.

Interaction with the Outside

How do camp residents interact with their neighbours? What are the reasons and circumstances for this interaction? This section – following on the discussion in sections 1.2.2 and 2.2.5 – aims to explore the broader aspects of social, economic, and cultural interaction that may contribute to blurring camp boundaries and work to integrate camps into society at large. Again, the three case study camps represent very different models of interaction with the neighbouring communities and show how a relationship with the surrounding context can energize or paralyse the camp’s urbanisation process.

• Economic Interaction

The CSO of Amari describes the camp’s situation in the following words: *“In terms of our location, we consider ourselves lucky and unlucky at the same time. We are lucky to be very close to Ramallah and Al-Bireh. Ramallah is one of the biggest cities in Palestine and a hub for job opportunities and economic growth. A lot of refugees work in Ramallah, and this gave us an advantage over other camps such as Fawwar Camp, which lacks a nearby urban context. Although many refugees work in Ramallah, we still suffer from a very high unemployment rate. But compared to other camps we are in better economic shape. The bad economy is linked to the current political situation. Many refugees used to work in Israel, but these days nobody can cross into Israel. Because of the generally poor economy, many refugees from Nablus have also come to seek work opportunities in Ramallah and are willing to work for wages that the refugees from Amari consider the pretty low. This worsens the financial situation for many families in Amari. As I said, we also consider ourselves unlucky to be located close to an urban centre like Ramallah. The refugees are exposed to new living standards. Our children want to go to parks, movie theatres, and Ramallah’s sophisticated restaurants. This requires extra income for many families who can hardly afford to survive and causes a tension between the refugees and the residents of Ramallah.”* (interview with GHALEB AL BESS 2006.) Although Amari, like Deheishe, has developed a mixed-use zone along its main street and the neighbouring Qalandiya Road, the camp has generated fewer refugee-run businesses aimed at attracting outsiders. The general sense of resignation and passivity expressed by many of Amari’s residents has possibly added to the fact that the camp has been unable to capitalize on its fortunate geographic location.

The case of Deheishe offers the clearest example of the positive effects of the limited Palestinian sovereignty that came after the Oslo Accords. Before the establishment of the PNA in 1995, the camp was mostly surrounded by vacant land that was under direct Israeli military control. The only locations available for those seeking to buy property outside the camp were the municipal areas of Beit Jala and Bethlehem, where refugees were not welcome. (See discussion in section 2.3.6) Oslo brought new opportunities for Deheishe. The limited sovereignty within “Zone A” opened the gates for a rapid informal urbanisation and expansion process, which radically changed the context of the entire sub-region. The Jerusalem-Hebron Road quickly developed into a commercial hot spot for the entire Bethlehem region, following investments by Deheishians, residents of Beit Aowa village, and many other individual entrepreneurs. During the Israeli occupation, the street had been a notorious frontier and site of violent clashes with passing Israeli settlers. Army patrols were attacked by stone throwing youths from the camp. Israeli military administration prohibited any building activity in the area, and land prices were therefore extremely low. Some refugees from the camp had purchased land in the faint hope that the situation might change, and when it did they become successful real estate investors. The more recent closure of Jerusalem has led to soaring land prices in the area and expanding economic activities. The street is now considered one of the Bethlehem region’s main shopping centres, specialised in furniture businesses. Deheishians are counted among those benefiting from this development.

In contrast, Fawwar’s remote geographic location has hindered its economic development. Its location in “Zone C” makes investment in buildings and businesses outside the camp boundary risky. Permits are almost impossible to obtain, and illegal building means facing the constant threat of demolition by the Israeli military. This means that the camp has been unable to expand towards the main regional road (Road 60) a few hundred metres to the west, which would be a natural place for businesses attracting passing traffic. A recent road closure in the area, however – which affects an estimated 60,000 Palestinians – has brought sudden traffic into the camp. The main camp road is now the only way for travellers to reach the large village of Rihia (the closest village to the camp) and the cities of Yatta and Samoh. The camp – unprepared for what it considers an “invasion of outsiders” and the frequent congestion, noise, and air pollution caused by the through traffic – has so far been unable to capitalize on the economic potential of this passing traffic. Travellers are not invited to stop and visit the street’s shops, which serve only the camp.

In general, economic interaction with outsiders largely takes place in zones located at the perimeters of the camps, along major traffic arteries. Here, land resources were available to set up businesses, workshops and light industrial zones. They are attractive and easy to reach destinations and do not require outsiders to venture into the dense and potentially “dangerous” territories of the camps themselves.

• Social and Political Interaction

Camp residents have numerous individual contacts with outsiders. In the course of decades of coexistence, many family relations between refugees and non-refugees have developed, though in many cases, families of non-refugees still frown upon “intermarriages”. Nevertheless, the integration of individual camp residents in the everyday social and economic life of their surrounding environments is very high, especially in Amari and Deheishe. A young Amari refugee described her relations to the people of Ramallah and Al-Bireh: “They perceive the refugees as they do members of any other Palestinian community, especially after they endured together the rough years of the first intifada. I think, however, that the Jerusalemites see us differently. My classmates from Jerusalem always made me feel inferior and uncomfortable around them. I felt that Jerusalemites are in denial of what we are going through and pretty satisfied with the privileges they have for being residents of Jerusalem. I have many girlfriends from Ramallah, Nablus, and other cities but none from Jerusalem.”²⁴⁵ (interview with KHADEEJA DAOUD ISSA AL HILO 2006)

While praising the tolerant and open atmosphere of the Bethlehem area, Naji Odeh, director of Deheishe’s Finiq Centre, explains Fawwar’s situation: “*Fawwar Camp in Hebron does not enjoy the broad minded, tolerant society of Bethlehem district* [Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour]. *Al Fawwar is a closed, bigoted, and almost secluded camp. No social or cultural interactions tie the camp to its host city. This seclusion can be blamed not only on the camp residents’ lack of initiative to mingle with the Hebronites but also on the less-tolerant nature of Hebron’s social culture.*” (interview with NAJI ODEH 2006.)

ABU KHALIL AL-LAHHAM of Deheishe’s LC points out an aspect that has helped to foster strong social ties between Deheishe and the city of Bethlehem: “*It is important to understand the social background of Deheishe’s refugees, their connection with the Bethlehem district, and this relationship’s impact on the camp and the district as well. As I said, the Deheishe refugees – actually most of the Bethlehem district’s refugees – came from Palestinian villages located along the Arqoub mountain chain. Most of the refugees worked as farmers and shared a similar social life within that rural area. This similarity of social background and place of origin helped them start new lives in the camp. Many refugees were also familiar with the Bethlehem district. As a known urban centre close to these agricultural villages, the Bethlehem district used to be a marketplace where farmers sold and traded their crops. This subsequently affected the social life in the camp. The refugees were not estranged from the Bethlehem district culture. Camp life was not marked by signs of cultural division, as in Amari. As I said, most of the refugees here shared the simple life of rural villages, whereas in Amari, the refugees came from different social and cultural layers. For example, the refugees from Lyd did not have the same sort of connection with Ramallah that refugees from Ajjour, Zakaria, and Beit I’ab had with Bethlehem. That is why we have very strong social ties between our camp and the surrounding cities. Bethlehem district in the 1950s was a humble city with modest potential. This helped the refugees adapt to its environment and socialize with its communities.*”²⁴⁶ (interview with ABU KHALIL AL-LAHHAM 2006.)

While patterns of individual interaction may be rich and numerous, formal interaction between city or village administrations and camp institutions are difficult and rare. An exception is the link established by the political factions that operate across camp boundaries. This has been particularly effective for Deheishe. NASIR AL-LAHHAM, Ma’an Press Agency Chief Editor, emphasises the crucial role of Deheishe’s politicisation in fostering ties to the outside communities: “*First is the gigantic group effort [and the fact that] refugees chose national cohesion over individual loyalties to political parties. (Jalazone, Alfara’a, and recently Aida [Camps] show signs of political maturity.) Second is the camp’s Youth Centre, which helped to unite Deheishians and spread public awareness. The centre was a base for political struggle in the camp. Third is the tendency [of residents] to join the different political Palestinian parties and embrace revolutionary beliefs. The Deheishians were very eager to participate in the political struggle and resist the occupation. (From my years in jail, I remember that, at one time, there*

²⁴⁵ source: interview with Naji Odeh, Director of Finiq, Finiq, July 18, 2006.

²⁴⁶ source: interview with Abu Khalil Al-Lahham, former director of Deheishe’s LC and member of Palestinian Legislative Council, Bethlehem Hotel, August 8, 2006.)

were 180 Deheishians out of the 260 political prisoners in Alfara'a Jail).²⁴⁷ (interview with Nasir Al-Lahham, Ma'an Press Agency Chief Editor, August 8, 2006.)

• Cultural Interaction

Deheishe's well known and respected cultural life has been built up on the basis of a strong cultural interaction with Bethlehem and the strong network it has with International institutions inside and outside the Palestinian territories. The camp hosts different international groups on a daily basis, "marketing" the camp as an "open museum" that brings alive the issue of refugeehood and the Right of Return. Beyond this, the camp's dynamic Ibda'a and Finiq centres offer leisure activities and recreation that is not matched by outside institutions and therefore enjoy great popularity and frequent visits from outsiders and insiders alike. The cultural links to outside institutions are exceptional in the West Bank and perhaps all other areas where Palestinian refugees live. The position of the camp near Bethlehem, according to NAJI ODEH, was one of the main reasons for the development of this lively cultural life: "*The city of Bethlehem and its general open-minded atmosphere have left its imprint on the cultural social life in the camp. We learned to respect others and rise above our differences. The diversified social environment of Bethlehem and its surroundings have welcomed and encouraged us to form strong connections with its Christian communities. Another significant factor that differentiates Deheishe is the religious status of Bethlehem and its momentous importance for tourists worldwide. The Deheishians took advantage of this proximity. Today, many of the tourists that come to Bethlehem come to the camp as well. The Deheishians have managed to promote their cause through networking and understanding the potentials of their host city.*" (interview with NAJI ODEH 2006.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

• Context is Crucial

The various aspects of interaction discussed in this chapter underline the point that camps are contextual entities, for better or worse. The three case studies show very different realities of refugee life, each one deeply connected to its particular context. Deheishe's "successes" depended on a complex web of links to the particular Bethlehem environment in which it has become known as a proud and self-confident actor. In Amari and Fawwar, "context" has had a more problematic impact. Each context bears different constraints and potentials, and strategic planning should address both aspects for the benefit of the camp community.

• The Need to Establish a Formal Mediating Body

No formal mediating body/ structure is currently in place to facilitate the relation between camp bodies, UNRWA, and external stakeholders. For political reasons, UNRWA has little choice but to maintain its status of "serving" rather than "administering" the camps. But as a facilitator of camp improvement, the agency should encourage the development of effective formal links to address issues such as conflict negotiation, the identification of areas of mutual interest, the negotiation of joint initiatives, and strategic visions. It is unclear which body can fill the current vacuum, but the role of the Local Committees in the West Bank camps represents a promising start.

• UNRWA Needs to Develop Context Specific Measures

UNRWA's programmes need to become more sensitive to the particular contexts of the camps. This applies as much to physical/ spatial projects that should take into account the reality of specific urban, suburban, or rural conditions as it does to community development programmes, which should help encourage refugees to face the challenges and opportunities offered by their surroundings.

²⁴⁷ source: interview with Nasir Al-Lahham, Ma'an Press Agency Chief Editor, August 8, 2006.

Chapter 3

Synthesis of

Research Findings

It is the dissertations's intention to utilize the research as a pool of sources, references, analytical models, and concepts for UNRWA's new Camp Improvement Programme, which will be introduced in Part II. Key research findings include the following:

• **Refugee camps have become “Camp-Cities”**

Palestinian refugee camps are undergoing a profound and irreversible process of urbanisation, which has accelerated in the last ten years. The dissertation argues that emerging new entities could be called “Camp-Cities” – a term that intends neither to “normalise” the camps' exceptional status nor change the status of refugees or their Right of Return. Camp-Cities not only share many urban characteristics with surrounding towns and cities. As far as population and building densities are concerned, Camp-Cities are generally even far ahead of their mostly semi-urban surroundings. This makes them to some extent a laboratory for informal urbanization. Similar urban phenomena can be anticipated in some “normal” municipalities and regions of the West Bank, given the region's high rate of population growth, scarcity of land, and the difficult conditions under which urbanization takes place.

• **Refugee camps are have developed numerous functional links with their surrounding municipalities and villages**

Understanding the camps requires a careful analysis of each camp and its urban, suburban, or rural context. Camps are not separated from their surroundings, and dealing with them in isolation will not bring about a sustainable improvement in living conditions. They share the same political, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts as neighbouring communities – and many of the same problems. And they depend on nearby municipalities and villages for employment as well as for services and facilities that are not provided by UNRWA. Most camps have dynamic, porous boundaries – with peripheral belts of new houses in which refugees have built up a double identity as both refugees and citizens, taking advantage of the relief services provided in the camps by UNRWA whilst behaving as normal citizens in many other respects.

• **New tools and methodologies are urgently needed to reduce fragmentation of initiatives and projects**

Congestion, overcrowding, and poverty have brought most camps to or beyond a “tipping point”, and substantial action is urgently required. Yet Palestinian refugees – more than any other refugee community worldwide – benefit from vast aid and support programmes provided by UNRWA and other organizations. Indeed, there is no shortage of external programmes or local improvement activities; neither UNRWA nor the local communities can be accused of passivity. Crucial deficits exist, however, in the way such projects and programmes are planned, coordinated, and implemented. In particular, the absence of comprehensive analysis of needs and medium- and long-term improvement planning leads to the fragmentation of many efforts. While additional funds to address the urban needs of camps are undoubtedly needed, change must start with achieving more effective synergies among existing initiatives. For UNRWA, cross-departmental thinking, internal dialogue, and better information flow are essential to making the new improvement policy viable. For the community, local efforts should be better coordinated, guided by the interests of the camp community as a whole and a more sustainable vision.

• **Change will be a slow, evolutionary process**

Camp Improvement has to be based on the community's own survival strategies. It must be sensitive to the problems and potentials within each camp. This includes not only considering the characteristics of the local population but also the camp's physical-spatial typologies – land use, building patterns, streets and open spaces, natural resources, and topography. The challenge is to initiate a smooth and flexible urban transformation process that takes into account all the characteristics mentioned above but also provides a new vision for the camp's future. Only then can quality of life be improved and isolation, marginalisation, and discrimination eliminated. Ensuring that the camp residents and their representatives have a say in shaping their environment is vital to this process, which requires empowering camp residents and their representatives. Community participation in capacity building programmes will be the initial step of setting up new community organization structures or, in other cases, building on existing structures with democratic decision making mechanisms. Without the parallel strengthening of the camp community and building up structures to sustain this process, improvement projects will continue to be a series of one-off initiatives that end when the projects are completed.

• Local communities are the best “experts”

Camps today are not just the sum of their dramatic histories, problems, and deficiencies. They are also the product of decades of investment by refugees in built fabric, institutions, and social networks. Camps are sites of exceptional economic and political hardship but also of experimentation and innovation. Residents have developed survival practices, skills, and expertise that have made it possible for them to endure where other communities would probably have collapsed, building up new livelihoods inside and outside the camps. A high-handed, top-down approach to camp improvement risks being perceived as ignorant or disrespectful and will not only trigger effective opposition and boycotts, but, more importantly, will fail to utilize the vital pool of local experience and coping mechanisms gathered by “local experts” and which can initiate and deliver effective change better than any external humanitarian organisation.

• Need to re-build trust between UNRWA and the camp communities

The “technocratic” and “authoritarian” approach that has characterised some of the agency’s work will not be an effective means of camp improvement. Trust can only be gained in a true partnership. This requires a genuine shift towards participation. It also includes sensitivity and great care in introducing the very notion of camp improvement to camp residents. Despite high-level consensus amongst host governments and the Palestinian organisation that improvements are urgently needed, large parts of the refugee community remain suspicious of comprehensive camp improvement. They fear it will change the status quo in a way that undermines their Right of Return and the right of future re-claiming of or re-compensation for ancestral properties. Moreover, many see measures taken to empower the community as a first step towards UNRWA’s feared withdrawal and removal of its services. The political framework under which camp improvement is set to take place must therefore be very clear and transparent.

Part III

Camp Improvement Planning: Piloting Community-driven Urban Rehabilitation for Palestine Camp Cities

Chapter 1 UNRWA's Camp Improvement Initiative

1.1 Politicisation of Refugee Camp Rehabilitation

1.1.1 Rehabilitation Efforts Through Military Means

Introduction

This section will give a brief overview of the efforts by the Israeli Military, as an occupying force responsible for administrating the camps of Gaza and the West Bank between 1967 and 1995, to force rehabilitation upon an unwilling and resisting camp population. The negative effects of these actions continue to impact on the perception of rehabilitation and urban planning by the Palestinian camp population even today and were a major contributing factor to the politicisation and militarization of planning, which forms a major obstacle to improving the physical and socioeconomic fabric of the camps today.

An Israeli Dilemma

In the aftermath of the 1967 war, the question of the Palestinian Refugees in the Occupied Territories imposed itself urgently on Israel and the state was compelled to find a solution to the refugees under its control, about 600,000 refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel faced a dilemma: How could the camps and its residents - visible and human reminders of the refugees' plight in 1948 and focal point of Palestinian identity and militant resistance, requiring constant army surveillance - be abolished or their image radically changed while avoiding their return to the villages and cities of 1948 which, in the eyes of most Israelis would radically change the demographic structure of the now Jewish dominated state and therefore threaten its existence? This dilemma was further intensified by the fact that there was no clear plan whether Israel should hold on to the territories it had conquered and occupied (West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Sinai peninsula) or exchange them in a peace deal with Arab states, with the exception of East Jerusalem and the Golan heights where annexation laws were quickly passed in the Israeli parliament, leaving little doubt about the intention of integrating these areas into Israel proper permanently.

During the period between 1968 and 1983 the "Palestinian refugee problem" was intensively discussed and several concrete proposals were developed²⁴⁸. These "solutions" ranged from a complete transfer of refugees to other places, to resettling them where they lived and to finding a just solution to the "problem". The Palestinian scholar NORMA HAZBOUN traces four main schools of thought which characterized early debates: "*Opposition to any form of resettlement; the transfer and resettlement of Gaza Strip refugees in the Gaza Strip and West Bank villages and towns; improving the refugees' conditions where they lived and allowing their integration to the general life of the territories and finally, adherence to UN resolutions. The first three views were all offered without the recognition of the Palestinian Refugees' right to return*"²⁴⁹. The general consensus between most positions (with the exception of the positions at the extreme left and right) according to NORMA HAZBOUN was an acknowledgement that camps in their present crowded and impoverished state had to be addressed. Positions however radically differed in their views how this objective should be achieved, ranging from forced closure and transfer of its populations²⁵⁰, to a more soft approach, which evokes a language not different from rehabilitation projects of the present day, including the articulation of the need to address overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition, etc. Characteristic was the ambiguity of the discussion (or in the words of NORMA HAZBOUN the "multiplicity of intensions"), blurring humanitarian concerns, with the pragmatic will to implement the political agenda of bringing an end to the refugee crisis, with or without international and Arab support. With the exception of few positions on the left who outspokenly supported a Palestinian state, the broad majority favoured the breaking up the concentrations of refugees, the Israelis assumed that they would be able to sever the refugees' link with their homeland, i.e. their sense of nationhood and right to self-determination. MOSHE DAYAN's (then defence minister) statement of June

²⁴⁸ Following Norma Hazboun, during the period from 1968 to 1983, the following proposals were submitted by Israeli officials towards solving the refugee "problem", mainly in the Gaza Strip. Ra'anan Weitz' proposals of 1967, 1969 and 1976; Abba Eban's proposal of 8 October, 1968 before the General Assembly; Yigal Allon's proposals of 1968 and 1972; Shimon Peres proposal of 1969; Israel Gallili's proposal of 1971 and 1973; Moshe Dayan's proposal of 1971; Ben Porath's proposal of November 1983

²⁴⁹ Hazboun, Norma Masriyeh. "Israeli Resettlement Schemes for Palestinian Refugees in the Gaza Strip since 1967", The Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Centre (Sham), Monograph 4, 1996

²⁵⁰ Weitz, Dayan, Gallili and Allon agreed to reduce the density of the refugee camps' population in the Gaza Strip by resettling them in the West Bank and al-Arish, an Egyptian city located at the northern coastline of the Sinai peninsula near the Gaza strip, in housing projects that would be set up for that purpose after the dismantling of the camps. As Allon put it, a model village was to be constructed in order to prove to the world Israel's good intentions (Younis, 1979; al-Qabas, 13 November, 1988), see N Hazboun (1996) The Ben Porath plan was not disclosed fully by the government, Israeli officials revealed the proposed places for resettlement of refugees. The Jordan Valley (Fasayel area) was given a priority; and Qalandiya and Shu'fat camps in Jerusalem were suggested as the first for clearing (al-Awdeh, December (1983); al-Houriah, October (1985). Jericho was suggested, where refugees could occupy the empty camps, deserted by their refugee inhabitants during the 1967 war (al-Bayader al-Siyassi, November (1983), see Norma Hazboun (1996)

1973, "As long as the refugees remain in their camps... their children will say they come from Jaffa or Haifa; if they move out of the camps, the hope is they will feel an attachment to their new land"²⁵¹.

NORMA HAZBOUN cites two main strategies which have dominated Israeli policies and projects towards the camps: "Since the early days of occupation, the Israeli military authorities have used two methods to 'thin out' the Gaza Strip's refugee population: encouraging emigration; and road - widening operations." The following account of the various approaches adopted by Israel reveal a constant oscillation between these two strategies:

Approach 1: Encouraging emigration and attempts to persuade refugees to leave the camp (1967-1971)

First measures included a systematic Israeli policy of encouraging people to leave in the months following the War. (LESCH, 1984) The overcrowdedness of the camps in the Gaza Strip and the militancy of its youth have been of major concern to the Israeli authorities. The authorities' operations toward "thinning out" the population of the camps in the Gaza Strip could be considered a first step in a long-term policy aimed at finding a partial or final solution to the refugee "problem". The policy consisted of a mixture of repression or persuasion. Persuasion attempts included the setting up offices in the Gaza camps, offering incentives such as free transportation, 50 Israeli pounds to help finance the travel and so forth. It is estimated that as a result, more than 100,000 refugees left between June and December 1967. In 1968 these practices were finally stopped after the official intervention of the government of Jordan to UN General Assembly (HAZBOUN 1996)

As a consequence, a change of policy had to follow. A significant document that became a basis for the formulation of a new approach was the Mapam's²⁵² peace proposal of 11 December, 1969 and August 1972 which called for the integration of refugees in the general life of the territories (Gaza and West Bank), i.e. not 1948 Israel, through the construction of housing projects, the adaptation of a new socioeconomic policy to improve living conditions, and provision of employment in agricultural, industrial and public service sectors. Supported strongly by Israeli Prime Minister GOLDA MEIR and MOSHE DAYAN (then Israeli Defence Minister) who were against the return of refugees to Israel proper, the Mapam recommendation was considered, and a social-economic planning team was set up consisting of engineers, sociologists, and experts on water and electricity. An early plan developed by this team aimed at the liquidation of the biggest camps in the Gaza Strip, starting with Rafah camp, which had a population of 40,000 people. Instead of lurking refugees to leave the strip altogether, like the early policies of 1967-68, the team now suggested the evacuation of roughly one third²⁵³ of the 6,000 families, which lived in the camp. Persuading measures were to include the offering of economic incentives to the camp residents, for example, housing at a symbolic price in urban regions and the improvement of public services in the new location. With regard to the provision of incentives, the team's programme explained that: The incentives are meant to hasten the process of evacuating the camps as part of the general change. Caution must be observed to prevent the impression among the refugees that the evacuation policy will liquidate their status as refugees or undermine its two basic principles - the right to the return of property and to draw food rations and other UNRWA amenities. The supply of housing or any other assistance was not to be linked to the matter of compensation for property in Israel or with giving up the refugees ration - card (quoted in ZAKIN 1972).

Indeed, the first practical action began in February 1970, adapting some of the proposals of the social-economic planning team set out in 1968 and 1969. SHIMON PERES was vested with responsibility for the rehabilitation of the refugees outside the camps (ZAKIN 1972). He set-up a secret trust fund (Trust Fund for the Economic Development and Rehabilitation of Refugees) in May 1970 for this purpose. Contributions from philanthropists abroad, both Zionists and non-Zionists, reached IL 7 million in the first half of 1972. The trust was secret because, as PERES told The Observer's correspondent, "the chance of success is in inverse proportion to the amount of publicity." PERES's hoped that, through resettlement of Gaza refugees, the military government could replace UNRWA's works (The Jerusalem Post, 22 September, 1971). The trust was used to improve the infra - structure of camps - IL 522,000 being allocated for the improvement

²⁵¹ The Jerusalem Post, June 13, 1973 – cited in N Hazboun (1996)

²⁵² Mapai was a political party in Israel and is one of the ancestors of the modern-day, left leaning Meretz-Yachad party. At the time, Mapai was part of the governing Alignment with Ahdut HaAvod.

²⁵³ The 1/3 target figure was confirmed by Schlomo Gazet, the former coordinator for the Occupied Territories, who stated in a press interview that: "the intention is to evacuate one-third of the Strip's refugee population , about 60-70,000 to new places in the Strip (al-Quds, 22 August, 1971; The Times, 22 July, 1971)

of four Gaza camps; IL 220,000 for improvements in five refugee camps on the West Bank; IL 300,000 for improvements of the Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip; and IL 22,500 for the electricity network in Jenin. This “soft” approach however, combining physical measures with community development and investment in socioeconomic improvement, which somewhat anticipate elements of the integrated development approach adopted by UNRWA in the 2000s, is almost immediately abandoned. The strategy of persuasion/encouragement was only partially revived, after a period of brutal and heavy-handed interventions in the camps, which will be briefly outlined in the following section.

Approach 2: The Road Widening Programmes (from 1971)

As various policies of persuading refugees to leave camps for either Jordan or their immediate surroundings failed, and violent resistance against military occupation continued especially in Gaza, a new set of military planned repressive actions were devised. The heavy-handed demolitions of camp fabric that were implemented from July 1971 were described by the scholar and architect EYAL WEIZMAN as “*Hausmannization of Gaza*”²⁵⁴, drawing a provocative parallel to the introduction of a new, axial road systems to the East of Paris replacing the dense, medieval urban texture and frequent site of rebellion against the authorities. WEIZMAN states that the Israeli Army had “*grown to view the armed conflict with the Palestinians as an urban problem, and the rapid expansion of the refugee camps as something that Israeli forces would later call the ‘Jihad of Building’...*” (WEIZMAN 2007, page 68)

As NORMA HAZBON notes, the operations included “*...systematically destroying homes in refugee camps, and forcibly removing thousands of Gaza residents to al-Arish in the Sinai Desert; to unoccupied camps in the West Bank; and to smaller Gaza Strip camps. This was said to be the first phase of demolition and evacuation in Gaza. The second phase so called “the Spring Phase” started in January 1972; and the third phase started in 1976.*” The demolition of camp shelters by road-widening, under the pretext of security continued throughout the years, at a slow pace. By 1984, the road-widening operations in the Gaza camps, were reported to have resulted in the demolition of 10,000 shelters between 1967 and 1984 (LOCKE and STEWART, 1985).

The aim of all campaigns followed two objectives: Firstly, the demolition of shelters was to thin out the camps populations, which was in itself considered a security risk. Demolitions were carried out by forced evictions at short notice, using in most cases excessive force and maltreatment. The second and perhaps crucial reason was to allow armed forces to patrol through the camps on straight lines, making it harder for Palestinian fighters (*Fedayeen*) to hide. In most cases, the original grid along which the camp had been laid out in the late 1940s had transformed into a maze-like texture and road width had shrunk to a minimum of less than a metre in many cases. Under the command of ARIEL SHARON, later prime minister of Israel, a process of “*design undertaken by destruction*” (WEIZMAN 2007) in which architectural and urban planning elements such as roads and squares became variables of control strategies. To pacify the Gaza Strip, the authorities altered the structure and form of the three big camps, Jabalyah (→ 236), Shati and Rafah. With the help of bulldozers the following works were carried out:

- “*A security perimeter around the camp was cleared that would effectively isolate the built-up area from its surroundings and render it impossible for anyone to enter or leave the camp without being noticed.*”
- *The carving of wide roads through the camps, effectively dividing the camps fabric into smaller units or quarter, each of which could potentially be entered with greater ease.*
- *The improvement of road surfaces in order to allow army patrols to quickly enter the camp at great speed and without fear of land mines.*
- *The installation of street lighting to aid military operations after dark”* (YOGEV 1973; The Jerusalem Post, 25 August, 1971).

These elements characterized not only the Gaza operations under the command of ARIEL SHARON continued the tradition of security planning in dense urban environments carried out by the British (Jaffa, 19302) or French (Algiers) colonial armies and continue to be used until the present day. Examples of more recent uses of design through destruction would include Israel’s invasion of Jenin camp in April 2002 (→ 237, 238) or the Lebanese’ governments destruction of Nahr El Bared camp in 2007.

²⁵⁴ Weizman, Eyal, “Hollow Land – Israel’s Architecture of Occupation”, Verso, 2007, page 68



→ 236

**Israeli Road Building Programme at
Jabalyah Refugee Camp, Gaza Strip**
source: Israeli Defence Forces, 1972

Approach 3: Israel's Resettlement Schemes

Strong international criticism may have contributed to the fact that after the major crackdown of the early 1970s, Israel re-introduced “softer” persuasion policies which however were frequently twinned with more destruction. A key policy tool introduced were resettlement schemes. MOSHE DAYAN, then Israeli Defence Minister, explained the “humanitarian nature” of the programme as follows: “*The purpose of the schemes is to improve the standard of living ... we have no designs on their political status as refugees. But in the meantime, they will live a better life.*” (quoted in HAZBOUN 1996). According to HAZBOUN, however, the new policy showed again the ambiguity between “soft” measures and military and political concerns. The attempt to persuade camp residents to leave the camp by offering them better living conditions was also a new technique to thwart Gaza Strip refugee militancy. By constructing new housing projects, one hoped to disperse the camp population and quell their resistance to the occupiers. Through improving daily lives one hoped to pacify the refugee population and therefore isolate the fighters.

In here analysis of the housing projects, NORMA HAZBOUN differentiates between two main, partially overlapping approaches. In the first approach stated in 1973 and offered complete houses to refugees (in total 18,920 persons were resettled in 2,686 houses). The second approach started in 1974 and reduced the incentive by offering plots of land (initially 250 sqm and later 125 sqm), involving a total of 42,798 persons. Any refugee living in a camp was eligible to apply through the “Housing Department” in the “Military Government” in Gaza to obtain a house or a plot of land. However, several conditions had to be met including the demolition of their shelter in the camp. The PLO issues orders prohibiting camp residents from taking part in the scheme. Even UNRWA protested against shelter demolition’s in the camps, as a precondition for having a new house or a plot of land in the resettlement scheme, stating that such shelters were UN property, and that they were desperately needed for the growing refugee population, with demolition only intensifying the housing shortage in the camps

Lasting effects

In hindsight, both policy approached, force and persuasion, failed. HAZBOUN states that “neither the ‘carrot’ (inducements such as one-way exit permits, housing or jobs of the West Bank and more work opportunities in Israel) nor the ‘stick’ (the heavy-handed repression of camps during the road widening programmes in 1971) worked”. Although, Gaza resettlement measures contributed significantly to the blurring between camps and surrounding cities, the camps remained and became denser and more difficult to control as ever before. Equally, the strong identity of refugees with the right of return only grew as harsh measures were implemented. Israel continued to be seen as an occupying force with political agendas whatever the action on the ground.

The most negative and lasting effect of the Israeli policies however can still be felt today. Demolition, re-planning and rehabilitation became viewed as synonymous with an agenda of normalisation, which would eventually lead to a cancellation of the right of return. The politicisation of planning and rehabilitation formed the context for fierce and dogmatic resistance to almost any proposal for the improvement of the urban fabric of camps for year to come, whether articulated by host governments, camp communities or political activists. It significantly reduced the scope of actions available to UNRWA and other humanitarian actors to deal with the increasingly dense and congested camp fabric. Measures such as the introduction of public spaces, gardens, wider roads for ambulances or fire engines or new housing projects were de facto tabooed. The fact that real motifs behind this point-blanc rejection can be various, complex and ambiguous will be discussed in the next section.

1.1.2 Just Resistance or Political Instrumentalisation? Motifs for the Rejection or Camp Rehabilitation from Oslo to the Present Day

“Residents of Ain al-Hikweh have expressed fear that the humanitarian associations could be linked to unnamed ‘international parties’, which are seeking to settle Palestinians outside their homeland and take advantage of their most basic needs to implement a settlement project. They see the political timing of the project as ‘improper,’ arguing that those who have suffered displacement for years are capable of suffering more in order to ‘stop the conspiracy from finding its way through need.’ Their right to return to Palestine is sacred, they said...”

MOHAMMED ZAATARI, in: Daily Star, Beirut, Friday, June 17, 2005

“There are some historical examples that show us that improving the camp life is not necessarily against right of return. The Gazan experience proves that UNRWA’s construction of new houses did not influence the status of the refugees... There are some in the camp that seek to politicize everything for their own benefit, to show how important they are. We should be careful to reject those projects that will help our women and children to live in better conditions.”

Community representative, Fawwar, August 9, 2007

Compared to UNHCR’s Mandate to pursue three explicitly articulated options for durable solutions - Local Integration, Resettlement, Voluntary Repatriation – UNRWA’s Mandate remains vague “to aid refugees until a political settlement and solution to the refugee crisis could be found”, without specifying what a durable solution may look like. Unlike the UNHCR, UNRWA has deliberately stepped out of the discussion on a durable solution. Instead, the debate on durable solution was polarised from the start with “Local Integration” (in the host countries) and “Resettlement” (in other Arab states) advocated by the State of Israel and key supporters, and “Voluntary Repatriation” fiercely advocated by the Arab countries, especially those hosting Palestine refugees, as well as by all major Palestinian organisations.

Polarisation between the parties in conflict and hence politicisation of the debate on durable solution is to be expected in almost any refugee situations and a discussion on the evolving positions or indeed attempts to overcome this in various peace negotiation efforts go beyond the scope of this thesis. What is perhaps unique in the global context, and of concern here, is the fact that this politicisation also deeply impacted on the debate on how to deal with the Palestine refugees in the intermediary term, especially with the congested and urbanised camp refugees rife with poverty. This specifically applies to urban rehabilitation of such contexts with UNRWA being “squeezed” from all sides: Virtually every programme, measure, policy issue that attempts to go beyond standard “relief” has been maliciously observed and scrutinized with regard to a possible hint of a hidden agenda of local integration. Others would argue that refugees should have long been integrated into their host countries following the example of other refugee situations, and UNRWA’s only purposed and agenda as a “Palestinian organisation” is to artificially obscure the reality of a de facto integration and delay its official recognition.

Many variants of these positions exist which will not be discussed here. Instead, the following section will investigate the Palestinian/ host government tradition of rejection of camp rehabilitation. While fear of losing the right of return is one reason for rejection, the section will show that this argument has often been instrumentalised serving other more complex and ambiguous agendas. The section will trace the “debate on rehabilitation” from a Palestinian point of view and reveal increasing internal criticism of the orthodox defence of the status quo, which in some ways is reminiscent of the “Warehousing Refugee Campaign” (see discussion in Part I/ chapter 2.1). These positions argue that “defending the status quo” and taboing rehabilitation is no longer an option. Lamented the static, “waiting room like” situation in the camps critical voices have demanded the implementation of urgently required developmental measures on the ground, to be delivered with a “rights-based approach”: A demand for a recognition of camp refugees as human beings with civil rights (as well as political rights) and a call for a reconceptualisation of the notion of camp.

Acting Against Normalisation:

Refugee Mobilisation in the Palestinian Territories during the Oslo years

The establishment of the Palestinian Authority rule based on limited sovereignty in Gaza and the West Bank following the Oslo Accords led to a significant divide within the Palestinian society. Led by YASSIR ARAFAT some 80,000 PLO cadres were repatriated to Palestine between 1994-1996 with the aim to build up the institutions of a Palestinian State. According to the Palestinian social historian SALIM TAMARI, the

leadership of the PLO therefore implicitly transformed the Palestinian issue “from a struggle for the right of return of the refugees, to one of state building.”²⁵⁵ (TAMARI 1999) This alienated significant portions of the Palestinians, above all the large camp population across the Middle East who felt that the Oslo deal had failed to address the refugee issue and state building efforts as an act of “normalisation” would therefore jeopardize their course. The vast expectations triggered by the peace agreement were far from fulfilling refugee expectations and many refugees accompanied the setting up of the Palestinian Authority with suspicion.

The alienation between the refugee community and the PA was firstly triggered by a failure to improve living conditions in the camps. While the civil insurrection against Israeli rule (known as the intifada-1987-1993) had been primarily instigated and sustained by refugee camps (first in Jabalyah and neighbouring Gaza camps, and then in Balata (West Bank) and hence suffered disproportionately in the conflict, the PLO cadres returning from exile in Tunis were now seen as taking advantage of the hard-earned peace, filling most well-paid positions of the PNA and “forgetting” about the refugees. According to SALIM TAMARI, conditions in the camp “even worsened with unemployment raising after the introduction of Israel’s closure policies... very few refugees from Jordan, Lebanon and Syria were able to come back to Palestine even for a visit... The four-country committee (known as the quadripartite group), which was established by the Oslo agreement to deal with the displaced persons from refugee camps, was unable to prevail on the Israeli to allow even a limited number of refugees to come home. Only a limited number of 2,000 cases of family reunification were granted. (Since mid-1999 these cases were raised to 3,000).” (TAMARI 1999) As a consequence those refugee youth who had fought in the first intifada and were now in their mid-twenties became extremely frustrated unable to see any clear outcome of their struggles. Particularly in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, territories unaffected by the PA camp refugees felt forgotten and betrayed. The second reason for alienation was caused by the PA’s failure to involve the refugee community in the ongoing peace negotiations and to foreground their concerns. Indeed, the Oslo agreement deliberately delayed the discussion on the right of return to final status negotiations, which were only supposed to begin in 1999-2000.

As a consequence, the camp community refused to be integrated and “ruled” by the Palestinian Authority system. At around the same time as the first national elections, camp organisations were set up in 1996. These newly setup Youth Activity Centres and Local (or Popular) Committees formed a parallel representative system with the aim of emphasizing independence from the PA system, strengthening the refugee voice vis-à-vis in the ongoing political negotiations, and mobilise for refugee rights and against ‘concessions’ anticipated by the final status negotiations (the setting up of Youth Centres and Local Committees in all West Bank camps will be more fully discussed in Part 2 of this thesis). These representative bodies refused to directly cooperate with the PA and chose to be linked to the PLO instead. In a process that SALIM TAMARI has termed a “strategy of voluntary disenfranchisement”, camp refugees refused to partake in the local municipal elections, again a gesture of defiance, and a clear statement against normalisation²⁵⁶. As UNRWA’s 1997-98 budget was significantly cut and services had to be refused, the camp community was even more alarmed, expecting imminent closure of the Agency (as indeed was frequently demanded by Israel) and local integration. Considering that the proportion of camp refugees amounted to one quarter in the West Bank and more than one third in Gaza, the exclusion of the camps from the Oslo process was a major political failure and factor of internal destabilisation. The expectation of imminent peace deal put extreme stress on the Palestinian society, increased the divide between camp dwellers and non-camp dwellers in West Bank and Gaza. As a consequence, the positions of refugees with regard to camps hardened and the defiant position, which defended the status quo of dominated. Indeed, across the Middle East, UNRWA experienced an upsurge in registration of refugees many of which had not bothered to register children or renew their refugee identity cards, which is also an indication of the overall strengthening of

²⁵⁵ source: Tamari, Salim. “Refugee Mobilisation and the Political Legitimacy of the PNA”, online publication (www.ids.ac.uk), 1999

²⁵⁶ After intense debates in the refugee community, the 1996 national elections to the PA were not boycotted. Also the boycott against municipal elections was questioned by some refugee representatives as Salim Tamari describes: “Dalal Salameh, Parliament deputy from Balata camp, and a Fateh activist, spearhead a campaign among refugees calling for improvement of housing and infrastructural conditions in camps. She also called for re-considering the exclusion of camp residents from the planned municipal elections. Although there was a substantial support for this position, there was also a strong counter-move. A country wide conference of refugee faction leaders met in Jericho in September 1998 and issued a proclamation supporting local camp elections to establish autonomous administrative councils that are independent from municipal councils. This formula was seen as a compromise between the advocates of municipal representation and its opponents, assuring the creation of an enhanced constituency in camps.” (Tamari 1999)

refugee identity.

The growing sense of fear, inflexibility and stubborn defence of the status quo stands in harsh contradiction to the rapidly changing reality inside and around the camps. In the West Bank and Gaza, more construction activity than ever before took place, radically changing the physical fabric inside the camps and increasingly blurring the boundaries between camps and their urban, suburban or rural contexts. Reasons include the following: The withdrawal of the Israeli army from Oslo territory A and B meant that fences around camps were torn down and vast land reserves (often in close proximity to the camps) were opened up to building activity. The Palestinian Authority took over planning control from the restrictive Israeli military administration but in reality did little to enforce or steer the beginning building book. UNRWA equally remained passive and did not enforce restrictions on verticalisation. Years of extreme building restrictions and life under almost permanent emergency condition in the intifada (1987-1993) had generated a huge backlog of demand by the rapidly rising population, and the relative peace of Oslo seemed like opening floodgates. The analysis of the urbanisation process of Deheishe camp of chapter 2 discusses the various factors that led to a building book in more detail. The contradiction between “rejection of normalisation” by political activists and the more pragmatic approach by camp residents who choose to invest in the camps and surrounding spaces seems to reveal a growing rift which will grow stronger over time.

For Agencies like UNRWA, however, the Oslo years remained a “*period of wasted opportunities*”²⁵⁷ (BUDEIRI 2007). In a period of uncertainty and waiting for a possible peace deal, no substantial reform efforts were possible or desired. The Agency simply “*soldiered on*” (BUDEIRI 2007) delivering the standard set of services. Its passive attitude meant also created a void which no other was willing to fill. No Agency spoke on behalf of the Agency, for instance, demanding that the vast development budgets made available to the PA by international donors should also benefit the camps. The opportunity to use the new limited sovereignty to test a new relationship between camps and their contexts and share land resources to mutual passed by.

Challenging the Status Quo

The impact of the second intifada, which begun in September 2000 on camp refugees was severe, and again, camp dwellers suffered disproportionately from the upsurge in violence and the imposed regime of curfews and closures. While the entire Palestinian community in West Bank and Gaza was affected by the collapsing economy and fast rising unemployment, again, camp refugees (who contributed a highest share of the migrant labourers working in factories or on construction sites in Israel) were particularly vulnerable to the withdrawal of work permits and the construction of the Israeli Separation Wall. Violence and destruction also affected the urban fabric of the camps. Mass destruction of houses resulted from the invasion of Jenin refugee camp, reminiscent of the Israeli “*design by destruction*” strategy of the early 1970s (see discussion in previous section), or the establishment of a “*safety zone*” along the Egyptian border where large parts of Rafah refugee camp were destroyed.

At the same time, the intifada brought about a new certainty that the Oslo peace process had stalled and negotiations over a “*durable solution*” to the Palestine refugee crisis was no longer immanent. This also meant that UNRWA’s Mandate was firmly in place. The combination of the new urgency brought about by new, previously not imagined levels of poverty and overcrowding in the camps, as well as the certainty of the “*failure*” of Oslo brought about an atmosphere in which the debate about rehabilitation was readdressed. Palestinian voices of dissent begun to challenge with more courage and vigour the hard line positions that rejected any physical or spatial improvement efforts in the camp. Under the directorship of sociologist SARI HANAFI, himself a Palestinian refugee who had grown up in a Syrian camp, the Palestinian NGO Shaml²⁵⁸, wrote in 2004: “*It is time now to demystify some Palestinian myths that do not allow us to invest in projections into the future of residents of the refugee camps... Many myths were circulated, not only in popular thought but also within the scholarly community: the more Palestinians in the camps, the more memory and Palestinian identity is formed which means more people would return. The more miserable the camps is, the more the right of return will be defended.... The discourse about the refugee camp is a discourse of stagnation and muzzling the camp.*”²⁵⁹ HANAFI highlights a form of instrumentalisation of camp refugees by political activists, Palestinian organisations and host countries. While on the one hand, camps are considered to be frontier of the Palestinian nation

²⁵⁷ Interview with Muna Budeiri, conducted in Amman, June 2007

²⁵⁸ www.shaml.org

²⁵⁹ Excerpt from a research proposal submitted by Shaml to the Canadian government, January 2005

building process and the demand for right of return, in daily life, they suffer from a tendency towards a “double marginalisation” (Hanafi): “[Firstly] from above: ... The PNA divides the land according to refugee and non-refugee areas. It excludes the refugee camps from any urban project or infrastructure. [Secondly] from below: Camps is disconnected from the social and urban tissues in their neighbouring areas. To an extent this has happened gradually, and would be expedited by the local election, which excluded the refugee camp dwellers from voting. According to MARX (1978) the refugee camps lost their temporary nature and became low-class residential neighbourhoods.” The argument presented here leads to the conclusion that camps have long turned into urban slum areas. The denial of this reality for political reasons, leads to marginalization and delegitimization, which further intensify the suffering in these slums.

In a later article HANAFI makes an even more provocative comparison: “It is time to ring serious alarm bells about what is going on in the specific space of refugee camps, as exemplifying the state of exception and the politics of void. The dominant Palestinian imaginary discourses have narrated the conflict in terms of victim hood. The image of a refugee in the Arab region is thus confined to those who dwell in miserable camps and not necessarily those who dwell outside. The assumption was that the more miserable the camp, the less people would want to settle in the host countries and would ultimately return home.”²⁶⁰ HANAFI argues that the assumption that there is a direct relationship between the place of residence (the miserable camp) and fighting for political justice (the right of return) is deeply flawed. In the same article he stated: “*Towteen* (settlement) is the scarecrow, which can release a public phobia against the basic rights of the Palestinians. Any debate about civil and economic rights starts by affirming that the objective should not be *towteen* and ends with the same tune to the point that rights become substituted by fast humanitarian or security solutions. The only common ground between the various Lebanese political parties is the use of *towteen* as taboo. Browsing just the headings of the main Lebanese newspapers, one can realize the very recurrence of one Lebanese political group opposing another promoting *towteen*, paramount to the treasure. Others consider mere talk of Palestinians’ right to work the first step toward *towteen*.” For HANAFI, the logic of the *towteen*-debate and is similar to the politics of humanitarian organizations regarding Palestinians as bodies to be fed and sheltered without political existence: “For those having such discourse, the Palestinians are mere figures, demographic artefacts and a transient political mass waiting for return. Between humanitarian discourse in the zones of emergency on the one hand, and the *towteen* discourse on the other, the rights-based approach for the Palestinians as individuals and collectives, as refugees with civil and economic rights, but also the right to the city, is lost.” HANAFI’s criticism echoes the arguments of the “Warehousing Refugees” campaign and the debates around the “rights based approach” within UNHCR.

The criticism voiced by Shaml already in 2004 and later reiterated by HANAFI in response to the debate on the reconstruction of Nahr El Bared camp in 2007 is still considered controversial amongst Palestinian scholars and public figures. An attempt to launch a research and planning initiative which would address Palestinian refugee camps as urban sites with needs for planning solutions failed in 2005.²⁶¹ But as an advisor to the “Reconstruction Committee” that formed after the destruction of Nahr El Bared by the Lebanese army in 2007 and frequent columnist, HANAFI continues to influence public debate. Summarizing his vision for what is urgently required for camp refugees he states: “There is a real need to empowering camp dwellers by giving them civil and economic rights and radically improving the urban conditions of their space. This will not be possible without connecting these spaces to the urban tissue of the neighbouring cities and creating a transparent mode of governance based on local elections.”²⁶²

Changing Attitudes Towards Rehabilitation Amongst the Camp Refugees

At the same time, similar intensive debates and discussions also emerged within the camp communities themselves, particularly in the aftermath of the Jenin crisis following the events of April 2002 when UNRWA unveiled its plans to reconstruct the centre of the camp. In the analysis of the debate on how to reconstruct the camp the sociologist LINDA TABAR quotes a senior engineer of UNRWA: “The design process began, and we had an initial vision of suburbs, with wide streets. The Refugees said no, this will allow the Israeli tanks

²⁶⁰ “Lebanese refugee camps as space of exception”, article by Sari Hanafi, Wednesday, July 18, 2007

²⁶¹ Sari Hanafi’s proposition of a programme developing a prototypical master plan for a refugee camp in order to address poverty and congestion was heavily criticized by members of Shaml and was abandoned in early 2005 when Hanafi left the organisation. However, the proposal anticipates and directly influenced the research project launched by UNRWA and the University of Stuttgart in 2006.

²⁶² “Lebanese refugee camps as space of exception”, article by Sari Hanafi, Wednesday, July 18, 2007

*to enter the camp. Ultimately the people insisted that the land and the homes should be rebuilt as they were before.*²⁶³ While the initial insistence by camp community and the donor United Arab Emirates on reconstructing the camp in a literal way waded quickly, the debate continued for over six months detailed aspects of the new housing scheme, particularly on the widths of the new roads. Here the camp community quickly polarized: While some agreed with UNRWA planners on wider roads which would help vehicle access to their houses, better serve shops and allow ambulances to enter the camp. Others stressed the wish to reduce the width of the roads in order to prevent regular patrolling by the Israeli military, implicitly and explicitly accusing UNRWA of and urban design which served military, rather than humanitarian concerns.

A full discussion of the complex debate around Jenin is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, the debate around the road width illustrates how divisive and controversial the introduction of urban planning into the camp environment still is. Although security and the constant threat of new violent confrontation with the Israeli Army has been a key factor, which cannot be underestimated, the division of the camp showed a pattern that also could be found in other camps, less exposed to constant military incursions. An UNRWA staff member who accompanied the project throughout all phases, *“opponents were mainly political activists who themselves had long left the camp and were not immediately effected by the destruction or reconstruction. Those directly affected were interested in an improvement of access to their houses and shops. Anger against the hard-liners was growing. They said ‘we are the ones who are suffering and we [want to] decide, how we want to live.’”*²⁶⁴ Similar internal conflicts emerged vis-à-vis camp improvement initiatives in Deheishe and Fawwar camp research – both comparatively stable and nonviolent contexts – which will be addressed in chapter two of this dissertation. Here, the more orthodox position of some camp activists, illustrated by the following statements, had threatened the collapse of the entire initiative:

“Why do we need planning, we are a refugee camp? Camps do not need playgrounds or parks... This is something for cities. Do you want to transform the camp into a city?”
Community leader, Deheishe, March 2007.

“We are afraid that UNRWA has a political agenda behind involving us as a community – an agenda which seeks to do away with our sacred right to return to our homelands...”
ISMAIL AL-EMSI, Working Group session, Fawwar, June 2, 2007.

“In 1978, the Israeli Civil Administration offered paving streets and roads for the Camp, but this was rejected by the people of the Camp fearing the loss of the right of return and turning the Camp into a town or city. The right of return is on the top of our agenda.”
RAMZI AL-QUASMEH, Working Group session, Fawwar, June 2, 2007

“Changing the signs and the status queue of the Camp is one way of substituting the right of return and considering the Camp a permanent residence for the refugee.”
Working Group, Fawwar, August 9, 2007

Reservations against positive change in the camps is often not based on “rational” arguments, but rather deep emotional fears. Often, support and rejection of camp improvement are even expressed in the same statement. Despite these prevailing doubts and reservations against camp rehabilitation, those voices amongst the camp community that advocate a more pragmatic approach (“We do no longer believe that any road improvement will endanger our right of return”) have gained strength in recent years and helped to generate an atmosphere in which a large scale reform programme of UNRWA could be launched, most importantly the introduction and beginning implementation of UNRWA’s camp improvement initiative, which will be introduced in detail in the following chapter 1.2 as well as chapter 2, which will discuss in more depth the challenges faced by UNRWA’s new camp improvement initiative and the way the ongoing debate shaped the design of the project and influenced the planning process and outcome at all stages.

²⁶³ Tabar, Linda. “The Reconstruction of Ground Zero in Jenin Camp: Towards Camp Improvement, the Challenges of Building Participation with Vulnerable Refugee Populations”, consultancy commissioned by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project, 2006

²⁶⁴ Interview with Muna Budeiri, conducted in Amman, June 2007



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Jenin "Ground Zero", 2002

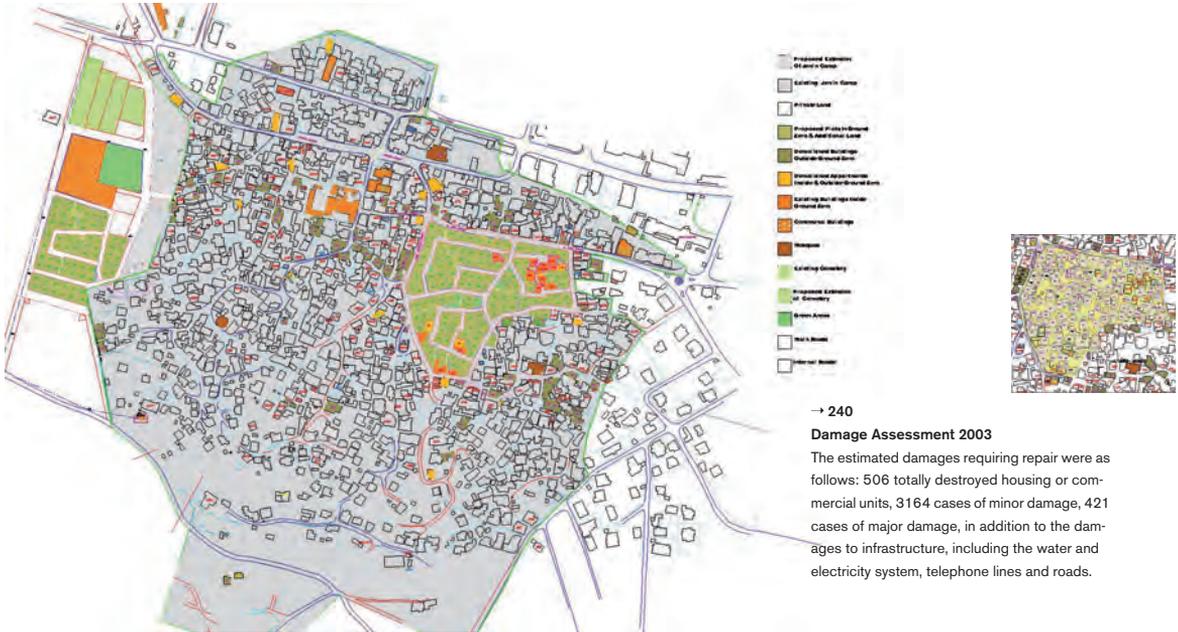
As a consequence of an intensive and bloody struggle between the Israeli Army and Palestinian in April 2002 fighters a large section of the central camp area was destroyed. With help of bulldozers, the army created broad access corridors in the width of tanks and a central area where vehicles could turn easily. Writers like Eyal Weizman have characterized the demolition as "design by destruction", aiming to change the maze-like camp environment into a "secure" environment that could be easily patrolled by army and police vehicles.



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Jenin "Ground Zero" close-up, 2002

Over 400 homes as well as commercial units in the Hawashin neighbourhood were reduced to a mound of rubble and ruin. This site, called "ground zero" by the refugees in the camp.



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Master Plan for the Reconstruction of Jenin
 Supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which donated \$27 million, UNRWA planned the reconstruction of "ground zero", as well as a newly purchased extension area adjacent to the camp. Jenin became the first "urban design" implemented for a West Bank camp, completed in 2005/6. The plan was an attempt to reconstitute the destroyed road pattern while providing better access through wider road. For detailed discussion on the "road debate" see main text.



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Reconstructed Road in the Centre of Jenin
 Widened road in the centre of the camp provide vehicular access and allowed for the opening of shops.



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Informal Extension of New Housing Unit
 Only weeks after completion, new residents started to expand the unit by building over courtyards and adding vertical extensions.

From Rejection to Cautious Embrace:

Changing Attitudes of Host Governments vis-à-vis Camp Rehabilitation

Arab host governments have often been accused of instrumentalizing the suffering of Palestinian refugees in their attempts to delegitimize and ultimately destroy Israel. In particular Israel has frequently claimed that integration was deliberately prevented in order to keep “fanning” the conflict. Multiple forms of instrumentalisation of the refugee issues have indeed occurred on all sides, yet the complex nature of the Palestine refugee issue escaped easy finger pointing or “scapegoating”. The rigid situation, which the refugees have been confined to since 1948 was a result of each side’s assumption that to change the status quo was against its own interests. For the Arabs and Palestinians, resettlement or local integration would have been an admission that a return to Israel proper was not the only solution. On the other hand, Israel categorically refused to admit to its role in generating the refugee crisis and acknowledge the resulting suffering and trauma of the exiled population.

Yet, the rejection of integration or resettlement or indeed the granting of full civil rights has also other and more complex reasons, connected to the fact that Arab host government came to view Palestine refugees as a threat to the stability in their own countries. The 1964 founded Palestinian Liberation Organisation PLO became so strong in Jordan for instance (at the time Jordan also ruled in the West Bank), that refugee camps and other enclaves became PLO controlled states within a state. Uniformed PLO militants openly carried weapons, set up checkpoints. Frequent clashes occurred with army and security forces. PLO gunmen also regularly attacked Israel from Jordanian territory, and reprisals caused heavy casualties amongst Jordanian civilian population. Thus, the PLO became also an obstacle to the beginning peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. In 1970, KING HUSSEIN attempted to reassert control and acted against the PLO, culminating the “Black September” events. Tens of thousands armed and civilian individuals were killed in the fighting. As the Jordanian army eventually prevailed, the PLO had to leave Jordan for exile in Beirut. Referring to the case of Lebanon, SALIM TAMARI states that the country’s refusal “to *‘solve’ the problem of refugees through naturalisation on their own soul, since this is likely to upset the delicate confessional political set-up the triggered the civil war in 1976, and in which the Palestinian military involvement was a primary factor in prolonging that war.*” (TAMARI 1999) Even the Syrian government, traditionally siding with the more militant, anti-Israeli Palestinian groups has been careful to maintain strict control of Palestinian camps, employing its mighty security apparatus which deeply penetrates into the camp environment.

The fear of Palestinian mobilisation has generally added to a rejection of stronger local integration. While the situation for Palestinians in Jordan significantly improved after the violence of the Black September, in Lebanon, Palestinian are still a largely ostracised community with significantly reduced civil rights such as access to the Lebanese labour market. This fear has also contributed to traditionally hard line position of the Arab host governments in relation to camp rehabilitation. The attempt by UNRWA to win support of the Syrian government to rehabilitate the camp of Neirab (→ 237 - 242) for example in the mid 1990s was rejected as *‘towteen’* (the example of Neirab will be more thoroughly discussed in the following chapter 1.2). Until very recently, the more liberal government of Lebanon equally maintained a hard line position vis-à-vis physical improvement of the camps.

However, attitudes begin to change. Indeed, Jordan was the first to launch a large-scale investment programme into camp infrastructure such as sanitation or road construction only a few years after the Black September. While this could be more cynically regarded as a dual strategy of controlling and pacifying (similar to the strategies employed by the Israeli army in Gaza at the same time if without displacement of populations), an important precedent was set which allowed UNRWA to carry out similar works in other countries. In 2003, the Syrian government revoked their rejection of UNRWA’s Neirab rehabilitation plans and most recently, the Lebanese government encouraged UNRWA to launch similar initiatives in all of Lebanon’s refugee camps. Since, the Geneva conference in 2004, which will be discussed in the following chapter, the Arab host governments have gradually opened up to the possibility of camp rehabilitation and have supported UNRWA’s camp improvement initiative. It remains yet to be seen whether UNRWA’s criteria of community-driven, integrated planning will be accepted or governments will favour a more controlled top down approach.

1.2

Opening the Door for Camp Rehabilitation

1.2.1 The Geneva Conference

“Housing should be defined in terms of the dwelling environment and not the dwelling structure.”

JOHN F.C.TURNER, AIP Journal, November 1988.

The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the beginning of the second intifada had two important consequences for UNRWA. During the Oslo years, UNRWA's future had been uncertain and proposals ranged from complete dissolution to gradual handover of responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority. Now, however, the Agency was firmly reinstated and even grew into one of the key stabilizing factors in Gaza and the West Bank, taking on a wide range of functions beyond its core responsibilities for refugees.²⁶⁵ The second consequence was the dramatic worsening of the political, socioeconomic and security situation in the West Bank and Gaza. If the Palestine refugee situation had already been “protracted” for decades, the rapidly worsening context in Gaza and the West Bank made the situation in camps alarming. Both, the new certainty of UNRWA's Mandate and the harsh challenges on the ground created an urgency for substantial reform which was embraced by UNRWA's leadership PETER HANSEN (Commissioner General until 2005) and KAREN KONING ABUZAYD (Depute Commissioner General from 15 August 2000 and Commissioner General since June 2005). UNRWA's leadership realised that only through a comprehensive strategy for improving the living conditions of the refugees to acceptable standards, the situation in the camps could be eased. Many internal voices and donors called upon introducing a “developmental approach” to the way UNRWA delivers its services, and acquire a set of new and more appropriate tools.

Limited and Outdated Tools: The Traditional Approach Towards Shelters

Before discussing the series of reforms implemented between 2003 and 2008, it is worthwhile recalling the tools and methods UNRWA has already at its disposal for intervening in the physical fabric of the camp shelters²⁶⁶ and assess why these tools were unable to deliver substantial improvement of the camp environment or indeed meet the challenges faced by the Agency now. After the camps were initially established in the 1950s and post 1967, UNRWA's role in refugee housing evolved to include two main tools: Firstly, emergency repair and reconstruction in response to or in the aftermath of armed conflict²⁶⁷, a reactive approach whose shortcomings are illustrated by the following two examples: UNRWA's involvement in the rebuilding of Shatila camp (Lebanon) shows in an alarming way the consequences of a lack of strategic vision. In the Lebanese civil war, the camp had been raised to the ground. In 1986, UNRWA used donor funds to distribute grants to affected refugees in order to rebuild the camp, without setting up a coordination mechanism for the rebuilding process. The result, 20 years later, show the dramatic effect. The camp is now the one of the densest, congested camps with some of the worst structural safety conditions and environmental health.

The case of Rafah (Gaza) and Jenin (West Bank) camps illustrates how the lack of established criteria how to rebuild shelters after destruction left UNRWA vulnerable to the imposition of donor demands. An UNRWA staff member characterized the situation that emerged in Gaza during the mass shelter destruction in the second intifada period as follows: *“In Gaza we have the Japanese shelter, the UAE shelter and the Swedish shelter, each vary in size and standard, creating confusion and jealousy amongst the camp population...”*²⁶⁸. Donors imposed their own timetables on implementation, design criteria, scope of works and so forth, putting UNRWA under immense pressure to meet donor expectations, rather than thinking strategically on how to generate the best possible impact of the intervention. This became clear in the case of the reconstruction

²⁶⁵ The 2006 landslide election win of Hamas and the formation of a new government eventually led to a boycott of PA institutions by most Western donor states. During this time, UNRWA and other UN bodies were frequently called upon to act as an implementing agency for projects and services beyond refugee concerns.

²⁶⁶ The following discussion will focus on tool sets available to the Technical Services and FECSO departments to intervene in the residential fabric of camp shelters and residences.

²⁶⁷ An internal UNRWA report titled “Planning, Design, and Community Participation for Camp Development and Re-Housing Projects” prepared by Muna Budeiri (May 2005) cites the following examples when this approach was used: (1) Assessing damages and assisting families with a grant for re-housing following the destruction of shelters in Shatila and Ein El Hilwa camps in Lebanon (2) Provision of plots, infrastructure and cash grants for relocation of refugees, e.g. Canada Camp (1984-2000) (3) Reconstruction of multi-unit housing for displaced refugees of the Lebanese Shatila and Ein El Hilwa, Badawi and Naher El Bared camps completely destroyed in armed conflict until the early 1990s (4) Temporary emergency shelters after the beginning of the first intifada in September 2000 (Gaza and West Bank) (5) Rebuilding refugee homes damaged or destroyed by Israeli incursions in the West Bank and Gaza (e.g. Jenin, Rafah)

²⁶⁸ Interview with Muna Budeiri, conducted in Amman, June 2007

of the destroyed centre of Jenin camp where “many mistakes of alienating the local population could have been avoided with proper tools in place”²⁶⁹. The project, officially named “The Jenin Camp Rehabilitation Project” was innovative in its introduction of developmental aspects (for example integrating support for local businesses and institutions), however, the UAE donor dictates frequently overruled the local design team, expanding shelters and pushing for an nontransparent and ultimately unfair distribution system.²⁷⁰

As a second tool, UNRWA’s “Shelter Rehabilitation Programme” developed the principle to assist refugees whose shelter and living conditions did not meet minimally accepted housing standards. The rehabilitation of individual shelters is possible only if the residents meet the strict Special Hardship Criteria (based on household income). While the eligibility criteria ensure that the limited funds are benefiting the poorest and are understandable from a humanitarian point of view, the application of the programme created many problems on the ground. At the same time, new shelters could only be built on the same spot, regardless whether the area was in need of de-densification or more open space. The shelters that could be upgraded are randomly located within the camp, often not the worst structurally, and frequently structurally connected to their neighbouring houses, reducing the possible scope of the intervention. At Neirab camp, Syria, UNRWA made the attempt to expand the scope of the Shelter Rehabilitation Programme, addressing the difficulty of dealing with randomly dispersed shelters, which had become structurally interconnected. Vis-à-vis the reluctant and suspicious host government, UNRWA used the argument that entire blocks had to be addressed: The main structural problem was the condition of old French army barracks, which had been converted into shelters in 1948, and which were now “buried” under a complex, vertical maze of self-build structures. The need to remove the barrack structures made a more comprehensive approach obvious, but Syria initially rejected the proposal.²⁷¹

The most important omission had been that available tools were only applicable in a piecemeal manner, constituting a haphazard, ad hoc and responsive approach rather than part of a larger-scale strategic framework. Urban planning and infrastructure development were largely nonexistent or at best. Partly, the resistance of host governments was to blame (for example in the case of Neirab, Syria), partly the organisation itself was to blame as it considered housing as a purely technocratic affair. There was no clear strategic concept of how to steer or improve the physical development of camps which had become extremely congested and seriously impacted on the living quality of camp refugees: The growing demand by refugees for housing and shelter inside camps marked by rapid population growth and limited resources has transformed the latter into dense and complex urban settings characterized by concentrated poverty and overcrowding. At the same time, UNRWA was forced into more and more responsive action without tools or strategic concepts in place.

The situation was even more alarming in Gaza with new emergency situations developing on an almost daily basis. New housing programmes had to be implemented at rapid speed, following the destruction of camps areas through the Israeli army. UNRWA did not fail to attract donor support for building projects. However, lack of strategic planning competencies meant that the Agency continued their “mindless cement and mortar policies by simply provision of housing” (BUDEIRI 2007), foregoing the opportunity to complement building projects by more sustainable community development and livelihood creation programmes. Instead, UNRWA programmes such as Technical Services (responsible for construction), Relief and Social Services, Health and Education rarely coordinated their activities, sometimes even contradicted each other while implementing actions on the ground. Within the Agency, a reform fraction demanded comprehensive organisational reform, which would allow UNRWA to quickly introduce a more developmental approach including comprehensive strategic development plans for refugee camps.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Muna Budeiri, conducted in Amman, June 2007: In the interview Budeiri referred to UNRWA’s lack of experience in involving the community in needs assessment and planning processes which resulted in a lack of ownership of the final product on behalf of the community.

²⁷⁰ The UAE at first insisted on rebuilding the destroyed camp centre literally. Finally, UNRWA convinced the donor to support a more contemporary and improved urban layout and standardized shelters. The donor insisted on a high quality finish and generous spatial provisions which created a divide between the rehabilitated camp and other camp residents.

²⁷¹ In 2001, Syria revoked its decision to reject UNRWA’s plans, recognizing that more comprehensive, block-based rehabilitation was urgently required. Neirab we revived as the “Neirab Camp Rehabilitation Project” and, together with Jenin, became an important precedent and learning experience for UNRWA in the wake of more substantial programme reform.



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Shatila Camp, Beirut (March 2008)

Most of the camp area was destroyed in the late 1980s during clashes with the Lebanese Army. Due to a failure of effective planning and steering of development, the camp has grown informally and is now one of the densest refugee camps in the Near East with some of the poorest living conditions. An estimated 50% of residents inside the camp are non-Palestinian refugees such as Kurds or Iraqis.



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Neirab Camp, Aleppo (August 2007)

The camp was installed in 1948 using abandoned French army barracks. The barracks have now become a major security risk and trigger for the ongoing Neirab Rehabilitation Project.



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Shatila Camp, Beirut (March 2008)

The Geneva Conference of June 2004

The reform process that began in 2003 was not dissimilar to the reorientation of UNHCR programmes and the introduction of the “Framework for Durable Solutions” and the DAR approach (see earlier discussions in Part I/ chapter 2.1). Despite many personal links - before joining UNRWA, ABUZAYD had a 19 year working experience with UNHCR and direct experience of the introduction of the “relief and development” approach in the early 1980s in the African refugee context – UNRWA’s strategic reform discussions remained largely isolated and detached of those within UNHCR.

In order to mobilize widespread donor and host country support, trigger a momentum for reform and ensure the necessary Mandate, UNRWA organized an international conference, which became known as the “Geneva Conference”, similar to UNHCR’s ICARA I and II conferences in the early 1980s. The conference conclusions and recommendations were to directly influence the writing of UNRWA’s Medium Term Plan (MTP 2005-2009) as a key tool for guiding the internal reform process. The Geneva conference was organised jointly by UNRWA, the Swiss government and its development agency, the Swiss Development Commission and officially titled: *“Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of the Palestine Refugees in the Near East: Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA”*. On 7 - 8 June 2004 more than 65 countries send representatives including the major donor countries and all host governments.

The conference achieved the desired results. Even host governments such as Syria and Lebanon, as well as all major Palestinian refugee organisations endorsed the launching of a new policy framework based on a developmental approach, including a radical overhaul of policy making and implementation. By employing the same argumentation developed in the “rights-based approach”, UNRWA succeeded in arguing that its Mandate should include the protection of the human right to live in appropriate living conditions. By effectively divorcing the political and legal right of return for Palestinian refugees from the right to live in improved living conditions within the camps, investment into the future of the camps was from now legitimised and accepted. Furthermore, Geneva has explicitly stated that camp rehabilitation could be best achieved through the integration of urban planning, livelihood-building and social relief programs:

“The report defines community development as the improvement of the Palestine refugees’ livelihoods and living conditions through the upgrading of their physical and social environments. It demands a combination of strategic and practical interventions undertaken by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in partnership with host authorities, the refugee community and other stakeholders, that are sustainable over time, from a social, economic and environmental perspective. Community development does not affect the refugees’ status and rights under relevant United Nations resolutions.”²⁷²

The conferences specific recommendations became part of UNRWA’s MTP and included, for the first time in the history of the Agency, the recommendation for the *“establishment of a new Urban Planning Unit, a tool for addressing deteriorating camp living conditions in a systematic and holistic manner.”* Instead of viewing the built environment from a purely technocratic point of view, this opened the door for the integration of spatial/ physical and socioeconomic strategies, providing the Agency with a tool kit to tackle the rapidly worsening situation in the camps. The conference recommendations highlighted the links among data collection, information, and improving planning and prioritizing on a needs basis – all within an integrated and comprehensive development approach that engages and empowers camp communities.

²⁷² Geneva Conference “Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of the Palestine Refugees in the Near East: Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA”, results of the Working Group II “Community Development and Refugees: Infrastructure, Environment, Housing and Social Development”, Discussion Paper, 7-8 June 2004

1.2.2 From Emergency Repair of Shelters towards Camp Improvement

First Steps Towards Camp Improvement

While the Geneva recommendations provided a clear political Mandate for UNRWA to embrace a developmental approach and introduce strategic camp rehabilitation, and this approach was firmly endorsed in the Commissioner General's memorandum for Agency Policy on Shelter Rehabilitation (25 October 2004) and the Agency's Medium Term Plan (MTP 2005-2009), it took time to internalise this decision within the Agency as well as to convince refugee communities and local partners. The politicization of rehabilitation continues to generate suspicion, particularly within the refugee community. At the same time, the prospect of internal reform and the setting up of an urban planning unit coordinating physical and socioeconomic measures has been contested within UNRWA itself. Moreover, the vast organisational structure with powerful and largely independent country directors makes internal reform extremely difficult.

Due to the opposition of country directors, the official endorsement of a "rights based approach" for instance failed after long and controversial internal discussions. Opponents were concerned of alienating Arab host governments as well as risking UNRWA's neutrality within the Israeli occupied territories. Since 2005, however, the Agency has gradually moved towards embracing internal reform to set up an urban planning competency. The Head Quarters department of Technical Services based in Amman was reformed into the "Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department (ICID)" with a new sub-department "Housing and Camp Improvement Unit (H&CIU)."²⁷³ The expected mirroring of this reform on a field level has so far not been implemented yet. Directors have been reluctant to introduce reform due to budgetary shortages. It is also likely that different field approaches will be adopted with regard to placing the unit within the organisational structure.

Aims and Objectives of UNRWA's Housing and Camp Improvement Unit (H&CIU)

The general objectives for the new Housing and Camp Improvement functions were defined as follows:

- *To improve the quality of life of the camp residents (living in substandard conditions) by means of integrated social and physical actions, that promote environmentally and socially sustainable neighbourhoods*
 - *To empower the refugee community to improve the camp environment according to the needs and priorities that they themselves will define*
 - *To assist the community in achieving these goals*
- In line with the above the specific objectives of the camp improvement program include:*
- *The identification of refugee needs in relation to their built environment and in particular shelter, housing, markets, access, paths, sidewalks, play areas, among others. This should include all infrastructure needs and incorporate all required socioeconomic elements identified by stakeholders (Local Committee, PLO, UNRWA, PNA and NGOs).*
 - *The establishment and implementation of strategic camp development plans for all camps in which the improvements of all elements such as shelter, housing, physical and social infrastructure are planned simultaneously. The aim is to avoid ad hoc action and a piece-meal approach and generate a maximum of synthesis between different initiatives.*
 - *Provision of shelter, housing and re-housing projects according to a mutually agreed criteria. This will include different interventions and implementation strategies to reconstruct and up-grade shelters using self help in terms of savings and labour, community housing initiatives and improved access to credit.*
 - *To build up the capacity of the Agency to answer the needs arising from political developments. An example is the disengagement plan in Gaza and the subsequent identification of the need to up-grade the camps in line with the PA master plans and to embark on various coordinated joint housing projects. Linking camps to their urban, suburban or rural surroundings does not mean abolishing the status of the camps and the role of UNRWA.*
 - *To facilitate the community development approach adopted by the Agency in all its activities/programs. Physical improvement is an issue of common interest to the community around which camp residents can organize effectively and get involved in the improvement of their living environment. Camp improvement projects will be combined with employment creation, capacity building and empowerment of the beneficiaries and the community.*²⁷⁴

²⁷³ The original name "Camp Development Unit" (CDU) was dropped for political reasons and replaced by the less controversial and more technocratic sounding "Housing and Camp Improvement Unit" (H&CIU)

²⁷⁴ Aims and Objectives as defined by Muna Budeiri in the first draft of the "Manual for Camp Improvement", prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project, 2008.

The aims and objectives of the new Unit clearly reflect the developmental principles of other agencies such as UNHCR's DAR approach and follows the Geneva conference recommendations to set up a comprehensive urban planning competency.

Organisational Structure, Responsibilities, Mode of Operation of Camp Improvement Units

These objectives would be delivered by setting up 5 country-based "Camp Improvement Units", staffed by an multidisciplinary team including architect/ planner, community development specialist, accountant, social workers. The unit's responsibilities would be

- to set up and facilitate a community-driven planning process including all relevant stakeholders
- facilitate participatory need assessments and other required surveys
- guide the development of strategic master plans for camps
- facilitate implementation process of rehabilitation measures in cooperation with other UNRWA departments and other stakeholders

The HQ Department would provide strategic advice to all units, including the provision of operational guidelines and tools, as well as coordinate all fund raising activities. Due to the funding shortages and on-going delays in implementing organisational reform on country level, the setting up process of the units is expected to take several years.

Chapter 2

Piloting Camp Improvement Planning

2.1

Developing and Testing a Camp Improvement Methodology in Al Fawwar Camp

2.1.1 The Camp Development Pilot Research Project

This chapter of the dissertation critically reflects on the operational steps and outcomes of a 2-year cooperation project (August 2006 – May 2008) between UNRWA's Housing and Camp Improvement Programme and the University of Stuttgart's Department of Urban Planning in Africa, Asia and Latin America (SIAAL).²⁷⁵ Under this cooperation, UNRWA for the first time, systematically developed and tested a methodology for community-driven camp improvement which has now become a key strategic instrument for UNRWA as a whole.

Beyond internal controversies and initial funding difficulties, UNRWA was aware that the ambitious camp improvement programme had to overcome significant conceptual and practical hurdles, which made the cooperation with an external partner inevitable. These hurdles included:

• **Lack of empirical data**

Firstly, the agency had no reliable and comprehensive data sets on the physical and socioeconomic situation inside the camps. Data collection has traditionally been the responsibility of each department and, hence, survey indicators were devised to aid the formulation of standards and measure success of specific programmes such as education or health only. In addition, data was mostly collected on country level, instead of camp level so that the Agency had no sufficient tool to measure significant variations of conditions between each camp. The Agency's data availability was weakest on aspects, which would be of crucial important to camp improvement such as spatial/physical surveys, land use, population and building density, structural conditions of shelters and so forth. UNRWA so far did not set up a centralized data management system to produce a holistic situation analysis on camp level. The Agency was therefore in urgent need to re-conceptualize its approach to data management with a specific emphasis on urban indicators.

• **Lack of sensitivity towards camps as complex urbanised environments**

Beyond the lack of empirical data, the bureaucratic, and uncoordinated and sector specific was in which UNRWA had traditionally delivered its relief programmes have not developed a sensitivity of camps as complex urban environments. On the pretence to "merely deliver services", rather than "administer" the camp, the Agency had turned a blind eye to the accelerating urbanisation process and had no understanding of factors that had and/or continue to influence this process. This includes for example the ignoring of the importance of external and contextual factors (the camp's physical and socioeconomic relationship to its urban, suburban or rural surroundings). Furthermore, the Agency had no knowledge of the community mobilisation inside the camps, the local actors and institutions, or internal conflicts and difficulties. What was urgently required therefore was to prepare situation analyses on camp level.

• **Mutual mistrust**

In its top-down approach to delivering services, UNRWA had developed an "*institutional arrogance*", not recognizing the local community as partners in developing solutions, but instead, keeping locals at arm's length following the logic of "*if we give them a small finger they want our whole arm*".²⁷⁶ No emphasize was given to communicate programme design, explain in a transparent way the constraints under, which the Agency operates (including funding shortages) or consider local feedback beyond technocratic surveys. Due to the lack of a direct language of communication based on mutual partnership, bias and prejudice against UNRWA has been thriving, including accusations ranging from corruption and incompetence, to political conspiracy. Although, this is a general problem facing UNRWA, camp improvement was likely to fail entirely if the relationship between the Agency and the community could not be improved.

• **Unclear support of host governments**

Despite their endorsement of the 2004 Geneva Conference and its recommendations which included clear mandate for the introduction of the community development approach, it was uncertain whether host authorities, would be prepared to support genuine community empowerment and participation. In countries

²⁷⁵ SIAAL is the abbreviation for "Städtebau in Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika", a department within the Städtebauinstitut (Urban Planning Institute) of the University of Stuttgart, headed by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Eckhart Ribbeck (see also: www.uni-stuttgart.de/si/siaal/siaal_forschung/)

²⁷⁶ Interview with Muna Budeiri, conducted in Amman, June 2007

with a tradition of autocratic planning outside the camp context such as Syria, why should a radically different approach be tolerated in the sensitive environments of camps, which always have been under strict control and surveillance? Or in the case of Lebanon, where refugees do not enjoy full rights of access to the local employment market, why should the government risk to “share” decision-making with camp refugees? What was needed was a strategy for gradual involvement and support building.

• **Lack of methodology to deliver camp improvement**

Beyond the general goals, UNRWA had not detailed operational methodology for how to deliver camp improvement. How could the objective of community participation and empowerment be implemented? What management structures would be needed to facilitate a planning process? What planning tools are required and how could measures be prioritized for implementation? How could the Agency steer and manage the vast and unfulfillable expectations that were likely to be raised? Ultimately, strategic urban planning remained untested in the context of refugee camps, without precedent, and therefore included many legal, administrative, political and practical uncertainties.

The Camp Development Pilot Research Project

First contacts between SIAAL and UNRWA’s Technical Services Programme (at the time under the directorship of GUY SIRI) were made in late 2004.²⁷⁷ At the time, the Agency became aware of the need for substantial external help to face the above questions. The objective was to gather experience on the ground while working with the community, UNRWA programmes and external stakeholders. During the following months, SIAAL authored several draft versions for a research proposal, with the aim to

- to build an awareness of refugee camps as complex and specific urban environments, interacting with their specific urban, suburban, or rural contexts
- to draft a proposal for a pilot initiative in strategic planning aiming to produce the tools and methodologies UNRWA has thus far lacked; to introduce and test a breadth of analytical tools, indicators, and terminology needed to understand the physical-spatial as well as sociocultural conditions in the camps
- to draw practical conclusions and pre-assess the strategic goals of the Camp Improvement Programme
- to implement (testing) this methodology in selected camps
- to write of a Manual for Camp Improvement to deliver camp improvement to all fields and provide the needed integrated, strategic coordination tool for camp improvement over a period of the next five years

The two-year time span proposed to the project was unusual for UNRWA. Moreover the pilot approach had been rarely used as the Agency was used to look for quick fix solutions in form of ready-made and tested methodologies. However, the approach offered the following advantages: Firstly, it is part of the nature of a pilot to „learning by doing“, to be open and flexible to the changing conditions on the ground, without having predetermined and detailed each step of the process. Tool sets will not be imposed from the outside but „tailor-made“ in partnership with all stakeholders and actors who will ultimately use the methodology and benefit from it. Secondly, a pilot is first and foremost aimed at raising questions, identifying problems and finding solutions and ways to navigate around those risks, which will accumulate experience that can be directly fed into the methodology. Thirdly, an open-ended pilot-research approach invites all partners to contribute to the process design rather than be pressured to accept a ready-made tool; the approach therefore increases the readiness to take risks and creates a sense „ownership“. The involvement of a university offered the additional advantage of an “academic research objective”, which, in the case of perceived failure, would not oblige the Agency to implement its recommendations. From Spring 2005, SIAAL and UNRWA jointly approached donors and, after 18 months²⁷⁸, finally received funding approval from the European Commission Delegation to West Bank and Gaza (June 2006). SIAAL became responsible for the technical management of a jointly set up team, based in UNRWA facilities in Bethlehem,

²⁷⁷ A first meeting between Philipp Misselwitz (on behalf of SIAAL) and Mr Guy Siri was held in December 2004, at HQ Amman. At the time it was agreed to cooperate on the writing of a research proposal to be submitted to donors.

²⁷⁸ Several factors caused significant delay in approving the project, including the landslide election win of Hamas, which ultimately led to a boycott of the newly formed Palestinian Authority government. In the general confusion, UNRWA projects were briefly affected by this boycott policy.

2.1.2 Preparatory Steps and Initial Concept

The UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation formally started in August 2006 with the recruitment of a 5-person project team (sociologist, architect, planner/ community-development specialist and two surveyors), led by a Technical Project Manager of SIAAL and administrated by UNRWA. In the initial months, the team faced many hurdles and obstacles. Beyond more practical issues (delay in setting up the research office and delivery of office equipment), the team faced some considerable reservations and even opposition from Agency staff at the West Bank field level. These were mainly the result of a general confusion and misconception of many staff members with regard to the aims and objectives of UNRWA's camp improvement initiative. The project begun at a time when UNRWA's internal reform process was only beginning to take shape. While UNRWA's Technical Services Programme under the directorship of GUY SIRI had received a clear mandate to lead on the initiative, many departments at UNRWA's Headquarters and also field directors had been openly critical to this decision, arguing that the programme had been insufficiently conceptualized and lacked a funding base. Opposition included the West Bank Field Office, at the time under the directorship of ANDERS FANGE (later to be replaced by JEAN TISSOT), which was hosting the joint pilot-research team.

The lack of clear endorsement of camp improvement by UNRWA's Director of West Bank operations and atmosphere of uncertainty about the future of camp improvement was well known by field office staff and meant that internal cooperation with the research team was not seen as a priority by some UNRWA staff and the research team did not always encounter positive cooperation. The prevailing negative attitude towards camp improvement as a whole (staff simply believed UNRWA would eventually withdraw the programme) did not help. At times, almost all the team's resources were absorbed by the need to defend the project and programme, and to convince partners and UNRWA staff at field level to support the team. Internal opposition also negatively impacted on the team's relation to external partners. It was difficult to persuade UNRWA'S field office to release written documentation or formal statements on the project. Several times, this led to significant delays (for example in the case of Deheishe camp which will be more fully discussed in section 2.1.3) and fuelled doubts from the community as to whether the Agency was seriously committed to the project. A more supportive information campaign would have prevented the spread of rumours and misunderstandings that several times seriously threatened the project.

The most fundamental obstacle however was the general confusion felt by most staff members in relation to the concepts of "community empowerment" and "participation" which was perceived as "empty rhetoric" of Senior Staff members with "little experience of how things work on the ground". Many staff members were outspokenly opposing the "full partnership with the community" propagated by the initial programme outline, which was circulated in the Agency and in management meetings. As the first initiative fundamentally based on these concepts, the pilot-research project faced hesitation, criticism and even outspoken opposition throughout (some of the internal debates triggered by the project will be discussed in more detail in the following sections).

Reflection on Baseline Research Phase

The declared aim of the first phase of the pilot research project (August 2008 until April 2009) was to conduct, gather and evaluate existing data sets within UNRWA departments, and commission additional baseline surveys needed for a strategic planning process. The specific research methodologies, outcomes and conclusions²⁷⁹ of this baseline research phase have formed a starting point for the detailed case studies of Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar camps described in Part II of this dissertation and will not be repeated here. However, facing the constraints described above, the research team developed a specific strategic response, which will be briefly reflected upon here:

(1) Constructing a Broad and Inclusive Platform for Debates

Although the 2004 Geneva Conference had included representatives of the Palestinian Authority (formally assuming the status of the Host Government for West Bank refugees), the West Bank based PLO, as well as major local NGOs and activists/ researchers on refugee issues, who endorsed the principle of camp

²⁷⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies applied in the UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project and a list of the most important research reports and surveys see Part II/ chapter 2.1.1 of this dissertation.

rehabilitation, the research team was aware that camp improvement would face staunch opposition once applied as a programme in the West Bank. The Geneva Conference results neither been published nor publicly discussed. One of the key objectives of the team was therefore to create an atmosphere of openness and transparency and trigger an overdue debate. Three workshops were organised in order to invite contributions of experts, researchers and activists as well as of representatives of the main external stakeholders (municipalities, government, PLO). The team regularly presented preliminary research results to a broad and mixed audience in the hope to build a broad support base for the initiative. The workshops successfully managed to trigger open and at times controversial discussions on the challenges of camp development.²⁸⁰ For UNRWA staff, this open and inclusive discussion was new and somewhat surprising. Many staff members articulated that they had never participated in a controversial debate, which the Agency usually “carefully controls.” In the later planning process, it became clear that those staff members who had participated in the workshops became vocal supporters of the project and provided vital input.

(2) Commissioning of External Research Consultancy

The intention to broaden the debate on camp improvement as outlined above, also motivated the commissioning of additional research papers by well-known local and international researchers in the field of refugee studies. Furthermore, the direct subcontracting of research and analysis reports on specific themes related to camp improvement mobilized a rich body of existing research and expertise. Reports included the following:

- “*The Real Estate Sector Inside the Refugee Camps*” (ADWAN TALEB, University of Tübingen)
- “*Seismic and Structural Vulnerability of Buildings and Lifelines in Palestinian Refugee Camps*” (JALAL AL-DABBEK, An Najah National University, Nablus)
- “*Public Spaces and Public Life*” (PENNY JOHNSON, Bir Zeit University, Ramallah)
- “*Modes of Entrepreneurship of Palestinian Refugees*” (SARI HANAFI, American University, Beirut)
- “*Lessons from Jenin*” (LINDA TABAR, SOAS, London)
- “*Elite Formation and Conflict Resolution in Palestinian Refugee Camps*” (JAMIL HILAL, Bethlehem) researcher and consultant, Ramallah)

These reports have also served as an importance source and reference point for the discussion of the spatial-physical and sociocultural urbanisation of Part II of this dissertation.

(3) Internal support building within UNRWA’s West Bank Programmes and Departments

One of the key challenges faced by the research team was the need to build internal support for the team’s activities as well as for camp improvement in general. As indicated at the beginning of this section, internal controversies and debates surrounding camp improvement impacted significantly on the work of the team. The official administrative link of the research office to the Field Engineering and Construction Services Office (FECISO), a somewhat unpopular programme, which was viewed by others as bureaucratic and uncooperative, caused additional complications. Moreover, the research office’s location in external UNRWA premises in Bethlehem, i.e. outside of the Jerusalem-based field office, which was made necessary by the strict Israeli imposed restrictions for Palestinians to enter Jerusalem, did not allow for day-to-day contacts with other departments. The fact that the research team reported to headquarters in Amman, rather than the Field Director, also increased the impression of the research team as an external entity. In order to overcome internal suspicion, the team invested time and resources to build support. Particular attention was given to involve relevant departments in particular research aspects. This included the cooperation with UNRWA’s West Bank Research Office, or the incorporation of an additional staff member of the Relief and Social Services Department RSS into the team. Furthermore, a “Steering Committee” was set up with the intention to regularly present and discuss progress with all programme chiefs. The role of the Steering Committee will be further discussed in sections 2.1.3 – 2.1.8.

²⁸⁰ The first workshop titled ‘Modes of Community Involvement in Palestinian Refugee Camps and Systems of Spatial Representation’ was held in October 2006 presented initial results of the land use survey and survey of camp institutions. The second workshop titled ‘The Relationship Between Camps and the Changing Urban/ Rural Context’ was held at the end of November 2006 and discussed the multiple physical, spatial, socioeconomic and cultural links between camps and their local host environments. The third workshop was titled ‘Methodologies of Community Participation and Empowerment’ (March 2007) and included presentations of external case studies such as Aleppo’s old city rehabilitation or participatory planning in a Favela context in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

(4) Local support building within camp communities

The decision to concentrate the research activities to three camps, Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar, not only helped to focus limited resources to gather a more complex and in-depth assessment of the spatial-physical and socioeconomic constitution of camps, and insights into the everyday coping mechanism of camp residents. While introducing, for the first time, a holistic 'camp perspective', which has been generally missing from most of UNRWA's past data collection and research efforts, the research team also used the research phase to build contacts and support for camp improvement on the camp-level. The presence of the research team became a familiar sight in all three camps, in environments where strangers are often viewed with suspicion. Camp residents were invited to discussions and activities organised under the project. Specific interviews conducted with key figures such as community leaders and representatives of the various camp institutions, did not only serve research purposes but also provided good opportunities to gain insights into their views on camp improvement and their views on appropriate planning tools, which significantly helped to formulate an initial methodological concept. Here, the fact that the team was viewed by most as "external", i.e. not UNRWA proved to be of a strategic advantage and helped to build trust.

Conceptualizing and Proposing an Initial Concept Paper for a Planning Methodology

In January 2007, the team began to draft an initial concept paper for internal discussion. While various concept papers prepared by UNRWA's Technical Services Programmes defined the general aims and objectives of camp improvement and some principles in the way it was to be delivered (participatory approach), a precise methodology of how to achieve such a "strategic camp improvement master plans" had been missing. Also the possible scope and spectrum of strategic objectives of such as master plan and of projects to be implemented under camp improvement was unclear.

The approach adopted by the team was the following: Instead of prescribing a detailed methodology, the team concentrated on drafting a work plan for the duration of 4 months (April – July 2007), the period expected to be needed to set up a working relationship with a camp and jointly develop a "strategic camp improvement master plan". This work plan therefore presented a draft of the initial steps for a participatory planning methodology, while deferring the conceptualization of later stages. The initial steps were defined in an interim report to the European Commission and donor of the project. The document prepared in January 2007 states:

(1) Participatory Need Assessment/ Asset Mapping (March – April)

Diagnosis of needs and assets of a specific refugee camp, which will integrate the following two components: (A) Participatory need assessment (workshops with camp representatives, NGOs, CBOs, focus group discussions with under-represented social groups, individual follow up interviews, etc.); (B) Expert diagnosis: identification of most pressing needs from an external expert point of view (SIAAL's technical diagnosis will consist of survey plans and the analysis of data sets developed during the first research phase. The data will be presented to the camp community in order to trigger the discussion process in workshops and focus group discussions)

(2) Prioritisation of Needs (April - May)

The responses collated during the participatory need assessment exercise will be analysed and compared to the technical diagnosis prepared by SIAAL. In a second loop of workshops and discussions SIAAL and UNRWA will lead the participatory process of identifying a list of need priorities, which will become the corner stones for the strategic master plan.

(3) Strategic Master Plan (May – June)

Based on step 1 and 2 the project team will develop the outline of a strategic master plan. The plan will integrate the list of need priorities into a spatial design. The plan will not fix interventions but instead identify certain spatial priority areas (zones) where interventions (such as access improvement, need for open spaces, need for additional commercial spaces etc.) will be recommended. The plan is considered to be an open and dynamic tool that will be refined in the following years in consultation with the local camp community.

(4) Identification of Pilot Projects (June – July)

In coordination with the camp community, SIAAL and UNRWA will recommend up to three pilot projects for implementation, which will be located in the priority zones defined by the strategic master plan. SIAAL will produce visualisations and written documentation in order to produce a suitable package, which can be presented to donors."

The response to this “open” approach was mixed. While key partners such as community representatives considered the openness as an invitation to participate in the shaping of the process, some UNRWA departments warned of the risks of neither having established precise criteria for each step, nor what a “strategic camp improvement master plan” might entail. This, some staff members feared, was bound to raise unrealistic expectations from the community, make UNRWA hostage to their demands and therefore endanger the entire process.

The Concept of the Working Group

The most important question not addressed by the above-cited report was how to set up a participatory working mechanism for how to conduct the planning process. In many previous cases, such as the Jenin rehabilitation project, the challenge to find an effective partner representing community interests had failed. Instead of setting up two separate bodies as was common practice in UNRWA-run projects (one body representing community interest, while a second body, a project office combining all UNRWA departments and programmes), the research team proposed to form a joint planning group at camp level. The internal working title for the new structure was “Working Group” whose members would be 50% UNRWA staff (nominated by the project team in cooperation with UNRWA’s steering group) and 50% community representatives. The proposed “terms of references” for the WG were the following:

- The WG will meet on a regular basis throughout all stages of the participatory planning process. The WG will formulate the key elements of the Camp Improvement Plan and present those to UNRWA and other local stakeholders such as host governments who will need to approve those recommendations.
- The WG should be composed of no more than 20 active members to ensure efficient discussions.
- At least half of the WG should consist of community members.
- The other half of the WG should include UNRWA department representatives with local knowledge (such as heads of schools, the CSO, etc.) as well as representatives of the other stakeholders.

While UNRWA accepted the principle of a joint group, the question on who should represent the community was discussed with some controversy: All agreed that the Local Committees in the camps should not be the sole partner but that a broader spectrum of representatives should be included. Some argued that the best way to proceed was to directly “appoint” community representatives, following earlier models, to ensure that the most active and respected would participate. Especially RSS staff members felt that more rigorous and transparent criteria for selecting WG members should be drafted. WG members only be composed of heads of camp institutions and some representatives of the Local Committees. Balanced female representation should be enforced through a quota system. In short, the community should be presented with a detailed “wish list” for Working Group members.

Others, including the research team argued that such a gesture would be seen as “imposing” and an attempt to “control” the community interests. The team succeeded in persuading UNRWA to go ahead with a more open and pragmatic approach, i.e. not to predefine a list. Instead, the community should be asked to nominate its representatives themselves. The intention behind this concept was to begin the process with a gesture of trust: More detailed criteria for community representation would be considered an imposition by UNRWA and a sign of a lack of respect. It was decided to verbally articulate the team’s wish and expectation that, *“It is desirable that representatives include all respected community leaders and individuals such as heads of active camp institutions, ensuring as much as possible balanced gender representation and the inclusion of all major constituencies in the camp. The WG should not be considered a ‘closed group’ and that its composition could change in the future.”*

2.1.3 Initial Contact with the Community: Formation of the Working Group

Between January and March 2007, meetings were set up with all three camps, Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar. In all three cases, the local Camp Services Officer (CSO) were asked to facilitate a meeting with the representatives of the main institutions and heads of the local UNRWA facilities. The aim was to formally present camp improvement concept and work plan and invite feedback and responses, as well as a proposal list for Working Group representatives.

Fawwar Camp

The first contact with the community in Fawwar camp was therefore organized by ZIAD HMOZ (commonly known as ABU TAREK), the local CSO. His personal background as a former head of the Local Committee in Fawwar and his academic background as a mathematician with a university degree, as well as his general standing in the camp made him an excellent partner and advocate for the process. ZIAD HMOZ was already considered by most residents as a genuine bridge figure between UNRWA and the inhabitants of the camp – an activist resident of the camp as well as an active UNRWA staff member – who also enjoyed the backing of Fateh, which provided him with additional political authority. In many ways ZIAD HMOZ is considered the most respected “community leader” to speak on behalf of the camp, especially in the absence of a strong and respected Local Committee (see discussion on Local Committee in Fawwar, Part II/ chapter 2.3.2).

The initial meeting included more than 40 community representatives (the LC Fawwar, traditional figures and elders as well as heads of institutions). At the meeting these camp representatives officially nominated him to select the representatives for the working group as well, which was done efficiently and smoothly within the following two weeks. Thus by the end of February, the research team was given a complete list, which included 13 individuals, mainly heads of institutions, traditional figures as well as political figures.²⁸¹ In addition to the community representatives, six local UNRWA staff members were included. Their role in the WG was to act as a bridge between their departments and the WG.²⁸²

Compromises and failures:

Although the formation process had been efficient and smooth, the resulting Working Group composition fell short of mainly two aspects considered important by the facilitating team:

- Failure to achieve balanced gender participation: It was clear from a start that a complete gender balance would be unachievable in the context of the conservative and traditional, male-dominated culture in Fawwar. The objective therefore was to ensure that at least some active and vocal women representatives were included. Although several women (mostly from the Women’s Programme Centre WPC) usually attended the working group meetings, “presence” proved to be very different from “participation”. Indeed, even the generally very outspoken head of the WPC stated “*If men are there they can decide*” and resided with a more observing, rather than participating role. The research team made considerable efforts to improve this situation (such as insisting to held meetings in the WPC against the wishes of other WG member).
- Generally, the team felt the lack of representatives of a younger generation (both male and female) who could bring in concerns, issues and vision of the next generation of community leaders. This point was addressed several times in WG meetings but more hierarchical thinking that only “established community leaders can truly represent the community” prevailed.

The fact that the WG fell short of the desired 50%-50% ratio and instead was dominated by community, rather than UNRWA representatives was considered an advantage. During the working process, the facilitating team stopped questioning the composition of the WG hoping, that at a later stage, once trust was established, the WG composition could be revised.

²⁸¹ Community representatives of the Fawwar Working Group included the following: Mohamed Jaber Al-Shadfan (Comm. based Rehab. Centre), Rusaila Abu Hashhash (Women’s Programme Centre), Mohamed Al-Sos (Head of Local Committee), Shaher Abed Al-Aziz Al-Teiti (Electricity Society), Mohamed Abed Al-Fatah Rasras (Education Affairs Committee), Mohamed Ahmed Abu Ajamieh (Palestinian Children’s Cultural Centre), Nihmeh Ibrahim Al-Najar (Women’s Programme Centre), Hussein Mahmud Aoad (traditional figure), Mahmud Ghanaim Al-Ehmoz (traditional figure), Khaled Mostafa Al-Sarahna (Zaka Committee/ Imam in the mosque), Ismail Mohamed Al-Emsi (Popular Front party), Kamal Amer Abu Ta’amieh (associated with Hamas), Ramzi A-Qawasme (Fawwar YC

²⁸² UNRWA representatives in the Fawwar Working Group included: Ziad Al-Ehmoz (CSO Fawwar), Rihab Qatanani (Girls School, headmistress), Ahmad Al-amasi (Basic Boy’s School, principal), Abed Al-Karim Aoad (Health Centre), Marwan Abu Haikal (RSS Social worker, Hebron office), Mahmud Aoad (Job creation monitor, Hebron area)

Deheishe Camp

In contrast to the mainly positive and constructive experience of Fawwar, the composition of a Working Group in Deheishe camp failed, for the following reason: At Fawwar, the local CSO was a widely accepted and trusted initial bridge between the research team and the community. At Deheishe, the team bestowed the local CSO with a similar request, only to find Deheishe's Local Committee snubbed and temporarily boycotting the progress of the project. Although the LC had been informed about the project well in advance, the involvement of the CSO was seen as a challenge to their legitimacy as a formal representation of the camp community. While in the case of Fawwar, a new platform was clearly needed since none of the existing institutions including the Local Committee could provide a substitute, the conflict that emerged when trying to do the same in Deheishe, resulted in a conflict of interest and a temporary stand-still of the entire strategic planning process:

- The LC questioned the need to include other community representatives (beyond LC members), considering this as a challenge to question the role and power of the LC in the camp
- The LC questioned the need to re-assess community needs ("We know what the camp needs") and other basic principles of the approach.

In short, the LC considered the request to form a Working Group as a challenge to their legitimacy and power in the camp. In their unique role as known activists and representatives of WB Local Committees and refugee concerns, the Deheishe LC demanded more time, debate, internal discussions, formal agreements before agreeing to join such a new process.

Dissatisfied with the LC boycott an "Alternative Committee" was formed by non-LC members who urged the research team to work with them on the strategic planning initiative. The team decided to halt any further action, insisting on the formation of one committee based on a broad consensus in the camp. Only after the drafting of a formal letter, approved by UNRWA and distributed to the Local Committee, describing in detail the role of the LCs in the strategic planning process, highlighting their exceptional role the planning process could eventually resume with one-year delay in April 2008.

Amari Camp

The third session was organised in the Youth Centre of Amari Camp, again facilitated by the local CSO. Although the discussion in the meeting was conducted in a friendly and constructive atmosphere, and the project team was assured that a complete list of community representatives for the Working Group would be delivered in due course, the process failed as well. Unlike Deheishe where internal conflicts between representative structures and institutions caused a collapse of the process, in Amari, both CSO and Local Committee failed to attract volunteers for the project. The general mistrust in UNRWA's ability and willingness to tackle the general problems of the camp – overcrowding, unemployment, crime – also affected the camp improvement initiative.

Choosing Fawwar

After intense internal discussion, the pilot research team made the decision to limit the test run of the full participatory need assessment and strategic planning exercise to one camp only, Fawwar, where the team had been met with most enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate. This pragmatic decision was based on the following considerations:

- Out of the three camps, Fawwar had received least external support for improving infrastructure and helping to build up a system of internal institutions. Electricity and water supply is substandard.
- Despite a recent clash between two families in the camp, and some tensions between the political fractions of Hamas and Fatah, the overall internal condition is stable and outside help is welcome.
- Deheishe had already developed self-initiative and self-mobilisation which led to a unique landscape of camp institutions (cultural, social) – in many ways Deheishe already meets the conditions that are hoped to be developed through the Housing and Camp Improvement Initiative. Fawwar on the other hand has thus far been unable to achieve the same results.

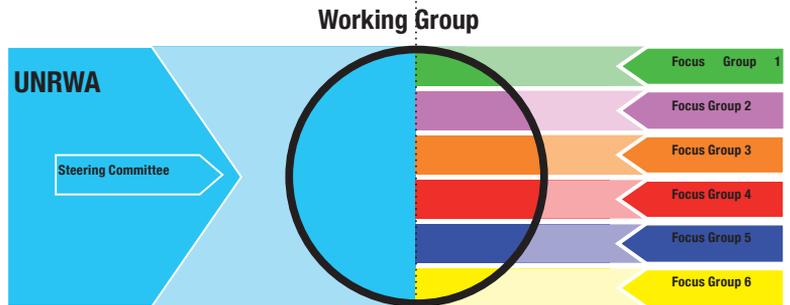
It was also decided to continue relations with community representatives of the other two camps, to offer the invitation of camp representatives as of „observers“ for key Working Group meetings in Fawwar, and work towards solving the impasse in both camps to include them in follow up projects.



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**Constitutive Meeting of the Working Group
Fawwar, April 2007**

The initial meeting hosted by the Rehabilitation Centre in Fawwar camp included many elders and heads of important families. Their presence was mainly a symbolic gesture. Few of them remained active members in the Working Group.



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Concept Model for the Working Group

The Working Group is a joint platform including representatives of the community and UNRWA.

2.1.4 Participatory Needs Assessment

During the preparatory research phase, the team had already accumulated empirical data sets such as aerial surveys and digital maps, land use and zoning plans, institutional surveys or socioeconomic data. On the basis of this data, an expert diagnosis was prepared of the most important problems and lacks, as well as of assets and potentials, which the team felt should be utilized in the strategic planning process. But instead of presenting this analysis to the newly formed Working Group, a conscious decision was made to “withhold” this expert diagnosis until a later stage. In this way, it was hoped, the community would not be alienated by what it might have perceived as “forgone conclusions” or “predefined solutions”. Following the principle of a genuine community-driven approach, community members, rather than planning experts should have the first opportunity in defining the camp’s needs, and stating their desires, priorities and expectations to the camp improvement process. The challenge now faced by the team and the Working Group was how to facilitate a genuine community input before developing technical solutions, i.e. community participation beyond community representation in the Working Group discussions.

Focus Group Sessions

The team’s proposal to the Working Group was to organise a series of Focus Group sessions as a method to collect qualitative data. The expectation was that the output of Focus Group sessions would complement the empirical data collected in the previous months through an articulation of emotional responses, desires, fears, specific suggestions and so forth - offering invaluable insights into how ordinary residents perceive everyday life in the camp. Each Focus Group session was supposed to target specific community segments, such as children and youth of certain ages, working men, women, or the elderly, each combining 10-20 participants. It was agreed that Working Group members should not directly participate in FG sessions, but should help to define the range of community segments to be included, the ultimate number of FG sessions to be organised and to preselect a list of individuals to be invited to the sessions. In this way, WG group could function as an access gate to the community, rather than be seen to control or manipulate the output of the sessions.

Over a period of two months, nine focus group sessions were held involving more than 100 individuals of the camp. The sessions included the following community groups:

- FG1 (children, 8-12 years)
- FG2 (disabled)
- FG3 (women)
- FG4 (men)
- FG5 (elderly women, 50+)
- FG6 (elderly men, 50+)
- FG7 (employees)
- FG8 (youth, mixed, 12 – 20years)
- FG9 (orphans)

The Focus Group technique is a well-established method to facilitate community participation in planning processes and was indeed used by UNRWA in the Jenin camp rehabilitation project. Overall its application in Fawwar was uncontested and welcomed also by the Working Group members. Some discussions emerged on the insistence of some Working Group members to interview orphans in a separate Focus Group (the research team argued that this would be a discriminatory act against orphaned children who generally have the same needs as other children).

Beyond these disagreements, the research team as facilitators of the sessions realized that direct contact to community groups for outsiders is an unusual affair with many complications, especially in the conservative and traditionally religious Fawwar Camp. It was a general challenge to steer discussions to transcend the most immediate and pressing needs and encourage forward-looking “out of the box” thinking, including more general wishes, expectations and desires for the future of the camp environment. Used to standard UNRWA consultation processes, participants were surprised to enter an “unstructured” and open ended discussion, rather than being asked to tick boxes or answer specific questions. At times, several sessions were necessary with the same community group until the facilitators felt that the discussion had become genuine and productive.

Specific care and attention had to be given to the organisation of the following Focus Groups with women (working women, housewives, female youth) where women are generally underrepresented in public life and not used to participate in discussions or decision-making processes, which concern the larger community. The presence of men women rarely speak up or intervene in a discussion and are even less likely to contradict a statement made by a man. The research team decided to conduct several Focus Group sessions in the more trusted environment of Fawwar's Women's Programme Centre or in domestic environments. Once trust was created, women offered excellent insights and perceptive analysis of the every reality and needs in the camp, as well as creative ideas and visions. On issues concerning domestic environment and family life, women indeed spoke more authoritatively and perceptively than men. The fact that the facilitating team consisted entirely of women, was a key advantage. Only in the Focus Group sessions with children and youth, an effort was made to push for the mixing of male and female participants. After some initial difficulties and resistance, these sessions proved highly productive, generating controversial discussions about gender issues in the camp and the general discrimination of women in public life.

Focus Group Reporting

How to report on discussions, which aim to generate qualitative insights, rather than quantifiable output? How can discussion be documented without losing its specific dynamics, spirit and atmosphere while at the same time, ensuring that the outcomes could be compared and synthesised with the outcomes of other sessions? The formatting and reporting technique devised for this purpose included the following components:

- *General summary of discussion and debates: Based on recordings and notes, the research team provided a general summary of the session, including the way it was structured, the course of the discussions, or possible conflicts and difficulties that emerged. Important statements made were included as direct quotes. Explanations, comments or evaluations inserted by the FT [facilitating team] when writing the report were clearly marked so as to distinguish between community input and FT input.*
- *'Individual Needs Lists': Towards the end of most FGs [Focus Groups], participants were asked to agree on the ten most important needs raised in the discussion. This was following by a final ranking exercise. Each participant was asked to rank these ten needs through a numbering system (1 for the highest priority, 10 for the lowest priority). The results of these exercises were also included in the reports.*
- *'FG Needs List': Most FG sessions ended with a general discussion and evaluation of the outcomes of these 'Individual Needs Lists'. Together, the group compared the results and established a general ranking of needs. In some cases such as the FG for children, the FT was responsible for this step.'*²⁸³

Synthesizing Focus Group Reports: Compiling the "Long Needs List"

After all Focus Group reports were drafted, the research team prepared a synthesis report, referred to as the "Long Needs List" (LNL) (→ 254). The aim was to provide an accessible document, which could be distributed to Working Group members, UNRWA staff and external stakeholders for information and commentary, and therefore benefit the further discussion process. The team decided to define as list of "Common Needs", issues that had been raised by more than two Focus Groups as one of their 10 priorities (as Focus Group participants sometimes chose slightly different names to address a similar theme or issue, the research team took the liberty to combine both issues under a common headline). The "Common Needs" were accompanied by a brief commentary contextualizing this need and a list of the rating it had achieved in each group. In addition, the team provided a proposal for rating "Common Needs". Other needs listed in Focus Group reports were collected in a separate section names "Additional Needs".

Feedback and Comments on Long Needs List

The outcomes of the Long Needs List (LNL) were presented in two extensive Working Group session and printed versions were distributed. All Working Group members agreed with the evaluation prepared by the facilitating team, including the ranking proposal, which had confirmed earlier discussions and comments raised by Working Group Members: the main priority was to construct a secondary school for girls in the camp, currently housed in substandard garages without natural light. Following suggestions of Working Group members, additional consultations with members of other camp institutions were organ-

²⁸³ Extract from "Guidelines for Conducting Focus Groups", internal paper prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team, presented to UNRWA in October 2007.



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Focus Group Children



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Focus Group Youth



→ 250

Focus Group Working Men



→ 251
Focus Group Elderly Men



→ 252
Focus Group Elderly Women



→ 253
Focus Group Camp Institutions

Common Needs (ranked by the research team) included:

(1)	Secondary school
(2)	Public park
(3)	All day health service/ ambulance
(4)	Job creation
(5)	Traffic management
(6)	Home improvements and new housing opportunities
(7)	External public spaces (“plazas”)
(8)	Infrastructure
(9)	Expansion of camp boundaries
(10)	Prayer and meeting space for women

“Additional Needs” listed in the report included:

FG1 (children)

- Clean environment
- Public library

FG2 (disabled)

- Medical insurance
- Physiotherapy clinic
- Regular social worker visits
- Vocational training courses
- Improved medical referral program
- Artificial limbs
- Wheelchair, crutches and other walking aids

FG3 (women)

- Empowerment programmes for women (computer, food processing, domestic agric.)

FG4 (men)

- Improving Fawwar’s institutions

FG5 (elderly women, 50+)

- Food & money assistance

FG6 (elderly men, 50+)

- Community centre for old men
- Exemption from electricity and water fees
- Free higher education
- Improved food supplies
- Public transportation

FG7 (employees)

- Improving work conditions
- Enhancing UNRWA services
- Scholarships

FG8 (youth)

- External public spaces to stage social events
- Radio station
- Provision of students services and needs
- Computer lab for girls
- Sports centre for boys/ sports centre for girls
- Viewing stand for matches at the existing Youth Centre playground

FG9 (orphans)

- Clean and calm environment
- Centre exclusively for orphans
- Expanding the classroom and adding ceiling fans
- Planting trees
- Public library for all children at the camp
- Computer lab for the children of the camp

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Long Needs List Fawwar, May 2007

- List of Common Needs
- List of Additional Needs (Focus Group specific)



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Focus Group with Children

During the Focus Group with children participants were asked to draw a vision of how to improve Fawwar camp: "I want traffic lights. I want a park and a club for girls. I want a line for children to walk on."

ised in order to invite their commentary on the outcomes of the LNL. These consultations, however, developed into a separate survey of needs and expectations for camp improvement measures, mainly reflecting the specific agendas of the respective institutions. Most camp institutions evidently lacked a more comprehensive vision of how their programmes could contribute to the general improvement of the camp and their input remained therefore of limited use. When presented to UNRWA staff in the Steering Committee, the LNL outcomes caused considerable irritation and controversy, due to the following reasons:

• **“Needs” versus “Desires”**

Several Steering Committee members criticised the common needs list as “...not backed up by empirical evidence, generally reading more like a list of desires, rather than concrete needs.”²⁸⁴ The research team argued that the LNL represents the „unedited voice of the community” and indeed represents a mixture of “needs”, “desires”, “themes/ issues”, some even doubling or contradicting each other. The research team explained that the LNL should not be confused with a master plan document and merely has the status of a “community input” to further discussions planned to be held in the Working Group. The discussions generally reflected that clash of the research team’s approach to community-driven planning and the established, traditional surveying techniques used within UNRWA to design programmes and justify measures.

• **Secondary School**

A more intense discussion erupted when the ranking was discussed. Some Steering Committee members strongly opposed the fact that the School had been listed as a top priority as UNRWA does not offer secondary school education to refugees in the West Bank. Representatives of the Education Department indeed felt that the mere inclusion of the school on the list presented a dangerous precedent, which may be used against UNRWA, and should therefore be corrected. The research team defended the list as an authentic community output, which could not be manipulated, arguing that UNRWA was not obliged to run a secondary school if it does not fit into its service portfolio and that the team would approach the PA to discuss the matter further. While the team was fully supported by UNRWA’s headquarters in Amman, many West Bank field office staff remained not convinced. For the first time, UNRWA staff realised that community-driven planning would indeed lead to a loss of power to unilaterally make decisions on behalf of the camp. A much needed intervention of the Director West Bank as the authoritative office for West Bank affairs within UNRWA could not be made due to the temporary vacancy of the post and the issue “dragged on” and continued to haunt the planning process (see also discussion in section 2.1.7).

UNRWA Department Workshops

Partly, in response to the harsh critique of the LNL results in the Steering Committee, the research group launched an additional series of workshops with UNRWA departments and programmes such as Relief and Social Services Department RSS, FECSO, Education and Health. This decision was partly motivated by an awareness that many misconceptions and rumours circulated with regard to the work of the team and “camp improvement” in general. It was hoped that the workshops would provide essential information on the initiative, as well as to ensure that the specific “expert knowledge” of each department vis-à-vis a particular camp was injected into the process. Each workshop was documented in detail and presented to the Steering Committee and the Working Group.

²⁸⁴

Source: UNRWA-SIAAL Report on Steering Committee Session, held at UNRWA’s West Bank Field Office, May 2007

2.1.5 Synthesis and Prioritization

With the completion of the participatory needs assessment, the following “inputs” were available:

- Fawwar’s community input (Long Needs List and documented consultations with camp institutions)
- UNRWA input (documented workshops with UNRWA departments and programmes)
- technical input (technical surveys and baseline data analysis prepared by the research team)

Each of the components raised different issues, some even contradicting each other. How could this diverse input be compared and synthesized into a coherent diagnosis and priority list, defining the key issues that would need to be addressed and solved by the “Camp Improvement Master Plan”? After the criticisms received in the Steering Committee (see section 2.1.4), UNRWA’s field office department chiefs needed to be brought back into the process and the research team was hoping to achieve a general consensus before proceeding with the more detailed planning. The team, however, insisted that the Working Group should remain the key platform for discussion and final decision-making. The team proceeded as follows:

(1) Presentation of Information Analysis by Research Team

At the beginning of the planning process, the research team had decided not to present the technical findings, so that participants of participatory needs assessments would not feel as if the research team might attempt to control or manipulate the process. Now, a presentation seemed appropriate and several workshops were organised to present and discuss the “scientific findings”. This included the presentation of

- aerial survey and plans
- land use survey
- zoning analysis
- survey of institutions
- camp profile combining physical and socioeconomic data in comparison to other camps

Omissions and Failures

The injection of visual maps and data was met with enthusiasm by some, but also fear and irritation by others which will be further discussed at the end of this section (“Reassuring the Working Group”).

(2) Preparing an Integrated Diagnosis

The camp maps and visual data introduced by the research team became instrumental to steer the joint evaluation process of technical input, UNRWA department feedback and Long Needs List. All three inputs were combined into an integrated diagnosis based on two key plans:

- “Problems and Constraints Plan”, addressing issues such as congestion, infrastructural and access problems, circulation problems, and other themes raised in the various needs analyses.
- “Asset and Potentials Plan”, documenting those aspects in the camp which were considered worth keeping, worth investing in, or simply worthwhile being aware of for the purposes of master planning

During the discussions in the Working Group, both plans were drafted as sketched and later drawn up and refined by the research team. The exercise successfully introduced a spatial dimension in the discussions, helping to highlight the interconnection between issues. Especially the discussion about assets and potentials was new to Working Group members. The discussions also proved that only some issues could be discussed and drawn in a spatial and physical dimension. The team therefore introduced an extensive list of symbols and captions to the plan which began to anticipate the scope of issues that a master plan would need to tackle, combining both physical/ spatial interventions with community development measures.

Omissions and Failures

During the beginning of the expert diagnosis, the research team had not yet defined clear criteria and guidelines for defining “constraints” or “assets”. The more clearly structured checklist prepared by the author may help to prepare future plans and could also inform a more extensive report accompanying the drawings (→ 256 - 259).²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ The charts of assets and constraints were prepared by the author, based on a draft list developed by the UNRWA-SIAAL team for workshop with UNRWA staff in Beirut, March 2008

(3) Preparing a Priority List (Short Needs List)

While the research team attempted to direct and steer all discussions on preparing both plans, the team failed to appreciate the value of written reports at this crucial stage of the process. The “Common Needs” list of the LNL report was only slightly modified (only the rating of two items on the list was changed) and re-named “Short Needs List”. This seems to confirm the fear of some UNRWA staff that the team acted in a partisan way, with the apparent intention to take all community’s wishes at face value while ignoring the reservations and comments of UNRWA. In a later Steering Committee presentation of the “Problems and Constraints Plan”, the “Asset and Potentials Plan” and the “Short Needs List”, the plans were almost completely ignored while the “Short Needs List” and its confirmation of the Secondary School at a top priority caused again controversial discussion. In hindsight, the following strategic mistakes were made:

Omissions and Failures

- Both plans and list should have been backed up by a more extensive report (rather than a short list), to document the extensive discussions that lay in between “Long Needs List” and “Short Needs List”.
- The term “Camp Priority List” (CPL) would have been more appropriate than “Short Needs List” to highlight the difference between community input and the result of the synthesisation process of all inputs.
- It would have been advisable to formulate priorities of the CPL in a less reduced fashion, fully explaining the reasons why an issue was included on the list, providing empirical evidence to back up and further legitimize the issue.
- In future planning processes, “ranking needs” should be avoided. Particularly in the community this created the misconception that camp improvement would work its way down the list from top to bottom, an approach which is both not strategic and impractical as many donors have specific funding priorities (see also discussion in section 2.1.7 of this chapter).
- The CPL list should have made clear, which stakeholder would be responsible for implementation of a specific item. It the secondary school issue would have clearly stated that running and programming of the school is not UNRWA’s responsibility, staff members would have been more assured not to raise wrong expectations. This would have also emphasised the fact that UNRWA is only one implementer and that camp improvement requires the joint efforts of all stakeholders.
- The research team should have insisted on a formal acknowledgement of the CIP list and, if possible, backing of all stakeholders, including UNRWA departments.

If the research team would have enjoyed the full backing and cooperation of senior staff in the West Bank field office, including its front office, many difficulties and misunderstandings could have been avoided very easily. One of the indicators of the lukewarm support the team had received was the omission by the field director to help negotiate in the conflict over the secondary school and invite the team to present the project at the West Bank Senior Staff Meeting (held fortnightly at the Field Office). More generally, the research team embarked on the process without clear knowledge of “red lines” (for example proposals and suggestions for pilot projects which UNRWA feels cannot be pursued by the agency within the current mandate, established priorities and the status quo which defines the interaction between UNRWA and other stakeholders such as the host authorities.

Reassuring the Working Group

Despite the enthusiastic support the Short Needs List had received in the Working Group, the research team’s crisis management skills were called upon to overcome resurfacing doubts in the project and deal with operational difficulties:

• Exhaustion of the Working Group

The intensity of the discussions during the prioritization stage had taken some Working Group members by surprise. The process demanded more time and commitment than most members had anticipated. All worked in a voluntary capacity, attending meetings after or between work, which was especially taxing. Participants also rarely had the time and patience to attend meetings longer than 1.5 to 2.5 hours, which significantly limited the meeting agenda and made more meetings necessary. With members not being able and prepared to meet more than once a week (sometimes with gaps), the process was stretched beyond the initially agreed time frame and the momentum of a particular discussion was difficult to maintain. Attendance rates were poor at times, which also made it difficult to “pick up a thread” of a particular discussion easily in the next meeting. A stronger insistence on regular attendance or to agree on “fixing a day” so that all WG members could plan ahead would have been helpful but proved impossible. Male WG members sug-

Assets	Description	Highest Potential*	High	Medium
1. Natural Assets				
	Landscape features			
	Views			
	Topography			
	Trees, private gardens			
	Vacant land			
	Access to water			
2. Spatial/ Physical				
	Camp location (rural, suburban, urban)			
	Area with development potential within camp boundaries			
	Area with development potential outside camp boundaries			
	External public spaces			
	Technical infrastructure			
	Infrastructural links to surrounding areas (e.g. road)			
	Internal road hierarchy (main roads, secondary roads)			
	Vehicle accessibility			
	Camp entrances			
	External private spaces			
	Vacant buildings/ plots			
	Traditional camp quarters			
	Landmarks/ memorials of particular significance			
3. Socioeconomic				
	Camp institutions			
	Clusters of institutions (emerging civic centres)			
	UNRWA service installations			
	Social nodes inside camp			
	Social nodes/ facilities in close proximity to the camp			
	Pedestrian flows			
	Business and industrial zones (e.g. souq, shopping arteries)			
	External business environment			
	Socioeconomic interaction with surrounding communities			
	Employment opportunities in surrounding areas			
	Internal social cohesion/ mutual support systems and coping mechanisms			
	Proximity of UNRWA services			

* The priority rating should be agreed upon in the Working Group.

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Proposed Chart of Assets

The checklist of assets was prepared by the author, based on a draft list developed by the UNRWA-SIAAL team for workshop with UNRWA staff in Beirut, March 2008

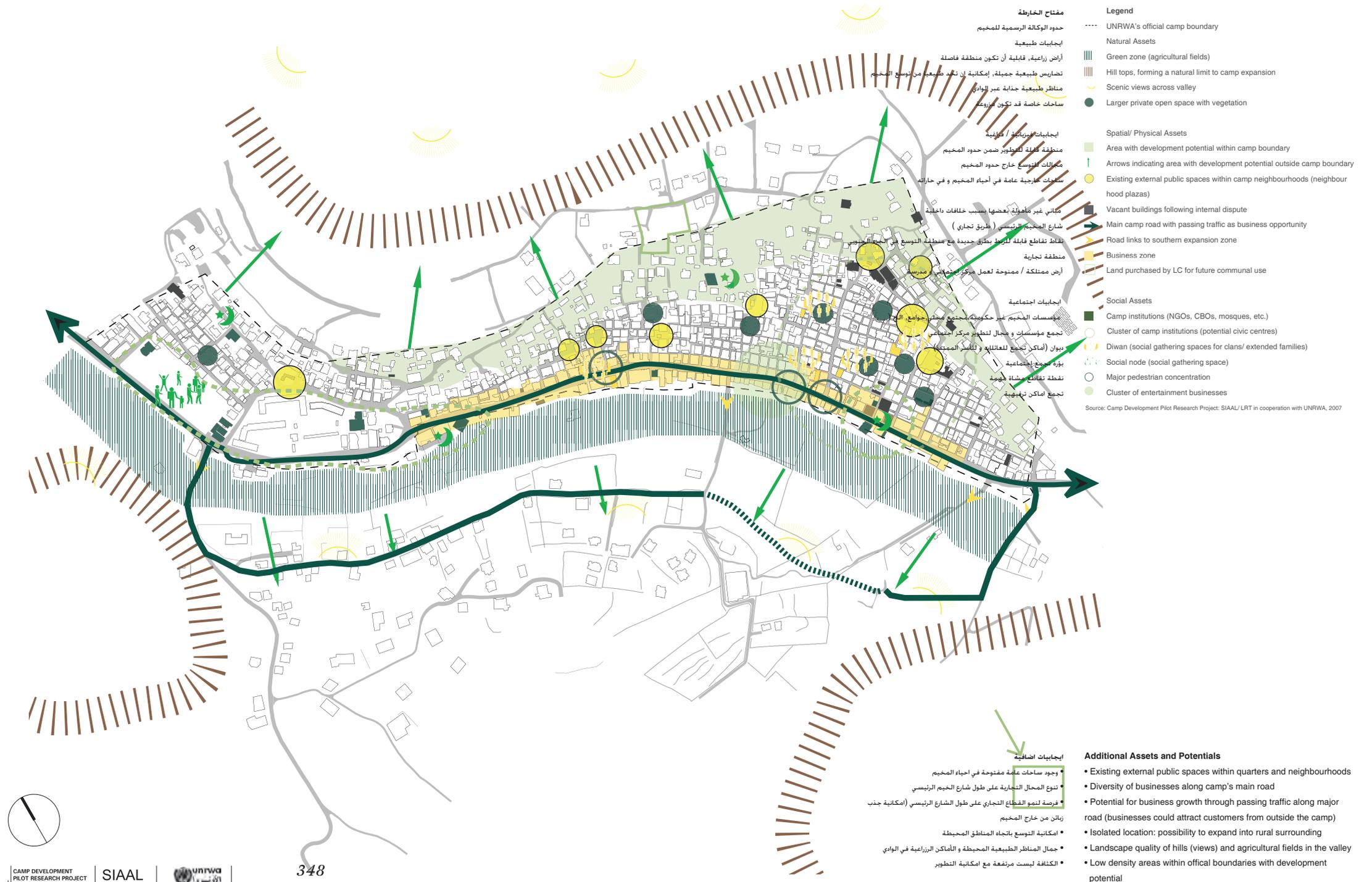
→ 257

Fawwar Assets Plan (May 2007)

As an evolving document, the Asset Plan accompanied Working Group discussions and visualizes the key development potentials specific to Fawwar camp.

Fawwar Camp – Assets and Potentials

مخيم الفوار ايجابيات وامكانيات



Constraints	Description	Highest Priority*	High	Medium
1. Spatial/ Physical				
	Building and population density (hyper-congested areas, saturated areas)			
	Insufficient shelter size			
	Lack of natural light			
	Pool natural ventilation			
	Lack of privacy			
	Lack of informal expansion zone			
	Insufficient technical infrastructure			
	Environmental health			
	Substandard structures			
	Lack of external public space			
	Areas with insufficient access for private cars			
	Areas not accessible by emergency vehicles			
	Internal Road blockages			
	Lack of road hierarchy			
	Lack of parking			
	Movement restrictions (checkpoints, etc.)			
	Inadequate service provisions (UNRWA and others)			
2. Socioeconomic				
	Poverty levels			
	Unemployment levels			
	Restricted access to employment markets			
	Poor education rates			
	Poor access levels to higher education			
	Lack of female representation in public life (gender balance)			
	Underrepresented groups			
	Ineffective or absent local representation			
	Internal conflicts			
	Conflicts with surrounding communities			
	Inadequate service provisions (UNRWA and others)			
	• Insufficient access to loans and credit schemes			
	Socioeconomic interaction with surrounding communities			
	Employment opportunities in surrounding areas			
	Internal social cohesion/ mutual support systems and coping mechanisms			
	Proximity of UNRWA services			

* The priority rating should be agreed upon in the Working Group.

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Proposed Chart of Constraints

The checklist of constraints was prepared by the author, based on a draft list developed by the UNRWA-SIAAL team for workshop with UNRWA staff in Beirut, March 2008

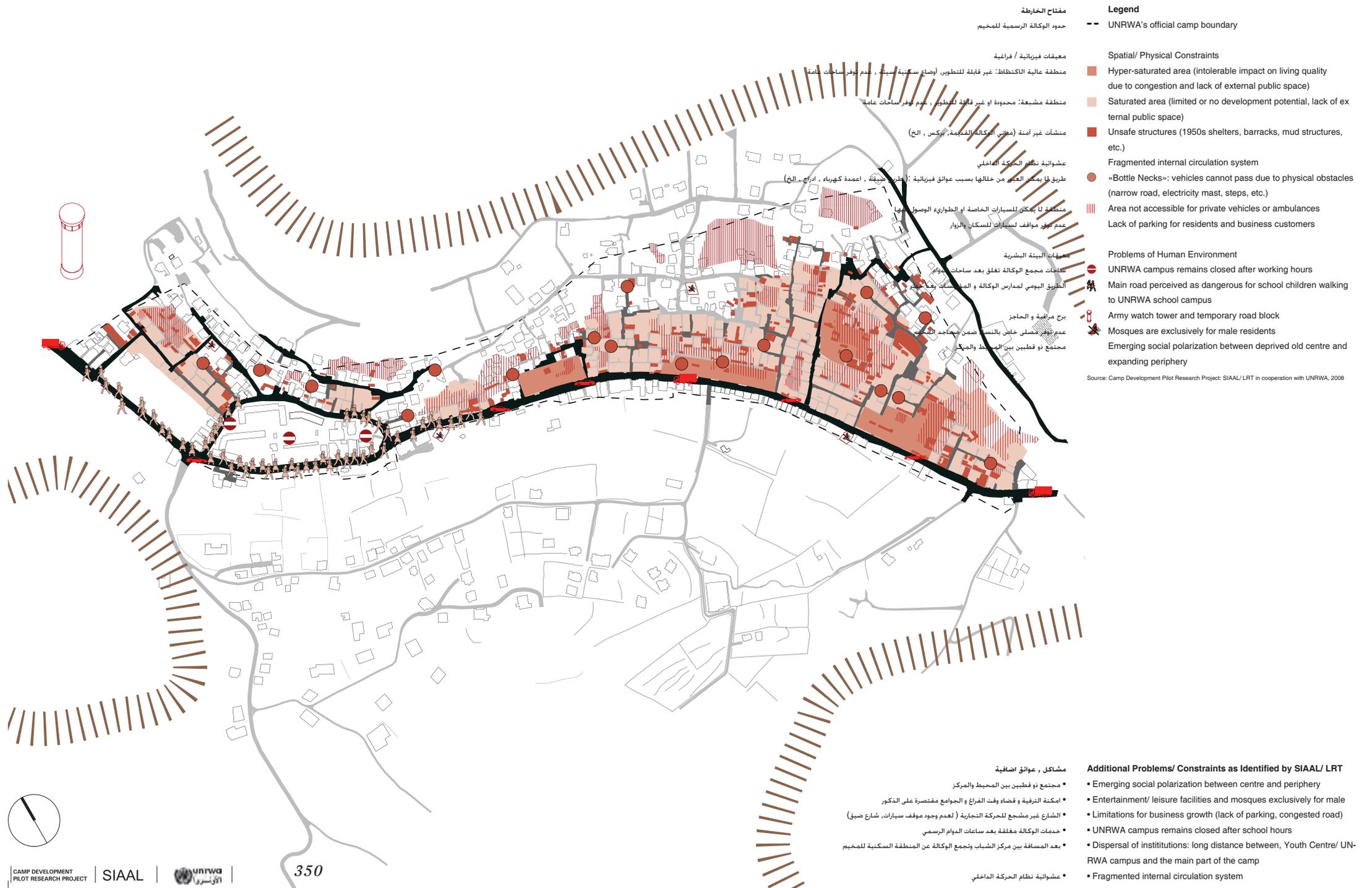
→ 259

Fawwar Constraints Plan

As an evolving document, the Constraint Plan accompanied Working Group discussions and visualizes the key shortcomings in need to be addressed.

Fawwar Camp – Problems and Constraints

مخيم الفوار , المشاكل , المعوقات



gested Friday mornings before the prayer hour as the most suitable day. Women objected as this is time needed to make weekend arrangements in the household. Several times, the meetings were specifically held on Thursdays with the hope in mind to increase female participation, however, with negative results. In the end it was decided to hold the meetings if possible Friday mornings and a special effort was made to persuade female members to attend. Organisation became easier and attendance more regular. In hindsight, the principle of voluntary contribution could have been questions and, during intensive periods, a small honorarium honouring the intensive time commitment of Working Group members could have been proposed.

• **Secondary School Debate impacted on Working Group discussions**

The reservations with which some UNRWA staff had discussed the Secondary School issue seemed to confirm to many community representatives in the Working Group that “UNRWA will never respect the community’s priorities”. Although the research team had been perceived as “defending the communities priorities”, at the same time it had been exposed as “weak” vis-à-vis “powerful UNWRA bureaucrats”. The team needed to reassure its belief that finally a consensus could be achieved and partnership between UNRWA and the community was possible.

• **Fear of “normalisation”**

Throughout the process, but particularly after the introduction of “maps” and other visual material, participants reiterated their fear that camp improvement planning would lead to “normalisation” (*tabbieh*) and the eventual abolishing of the refugee’s right of return. Almost every Working Group meeting begun with a more general political discussion. The situation was further complicated as Fawwar’s Working Group members became aware of the fact that the powerful Local Committee of Deheishe had boycotted the camp improvement initiative and that an agreement could still not be found. Several members articulated the fear that Fawwar was risking to be perceived as traitors by Deheishe and other camps and urged the research team to solve the Deheishe impasse.

• **Introducing a “Language of Planning”**

The joint discussions during the preparations of the “Problems and Constraints Plan” and the “Asset and Potentials Plan” partly involved technical planning terminology and analytical processes new to the community as well as many Agency staff members. The research team’s efforts to avoid over-complex terms and rhetoric, at times backfired as some members felt that the team was speaking with “two languages”: a simplified language for locals, and an expert language with Agency staff, donors or stakeholders. From now on, the team paid attention to avoid such double language as it clearly contributed to some alienation or mistrust on behalf of community representatives, and can be easily misinterpreted as a lack of respect (in addition, it is easy to underestimate the experience of some community leaders with regard to funding applications and negotiations with external stakeholders). This also follows the objective to foster capacity building and develop a sense of “ownership” over both process and results (the Camp Improvement Plan). Additional “training” sessions for Working Group members to read and work with plans, reports or any other major product of the process could have been introduced (often UNRWA staff members are equally in need of training). Products such as plans should be simple, well-constructed, not overloaded with information. Necessary abstraction of symbols, colours, lines or patterns, as well as legends are part of a standard toolkit of urban planners, which will be accepted by the community if necessary explanation is provided.

• **Building trust in long-term strategic planning**

Building and maintaining the necessary momentum throughout a lengthy planning process is not easy. Especially in the context of refugee camps and the instable environment of the West Bank, the trust in anything “long-term” is extremely limited. What counts are immediate, visible results. The mentality of “who-knows-what-will-happen-tomorrow” rules almost all decision-making processes. The effect is that quality standards suffer, piecemeal approaches dominate and initiatives are fragmented, reactive, poorly coordinated and lack long-term vision. In this early “pre-planning” stage, some Working Group members became impatient and demanded the immediate formulation of project proposals, literally following the ranked items included on the “Short Needs List” from top to bottom. This example also highlights a more fundamental challenge faced by the research team: to convince all participants in the value of “planning” in itself, and the need to work towards a “Camp Improvement Plan” as a comprehensive coordinating instrument before defining individual projects. Throughout the process statements such as “*Now we have been talking for weeks and what is the result?*” or “*Now we have been talking for months and still we only have paper*” were

frequently reiterated. How can this confidence be built in the WB context where planning (whether on a national, regional or local level) is almost completely absent, even outside refugee camps? Pragmatic reasons provide the best arguments to explain the disadvantages of the vicious circle of “ad hocism” and short-term activism:

- High percentage of waste if projects were not planned well (i.e. better planning can lead to better results with the same funds and resources)
- Provision of concrete example of ineffective use of funds due to lack of continuity of projects, lack of long-term strategic vision (in the context of Fawwar, a recent, costly health initiative had failed to produce concrete results because the project had not budgeted for running costs of the health programmes)
- Explain that a comprehensive Camp Improvement Plan can ensure trust and support of the donor community. The integration of a funding application within the CIP process can be of key strategic advantage. It could be considered as a “quality seal” that ensures well-planned, coordinated and sustainable projects.
- Explain that comprehensive and integrated planning and cross-departmental thinking has become a priority for UNRWA and will guide the provision of services in the future.

• **Dealing with (potential) internal conflicts within the WG**

The “ethical code” for Working Group membership to think and act on behalf of the entire community rather than to pursue individual interest should have been discussed more clearly at the outset of the planning process. The prioritization process for the first time exposed some potential conflicts of interest for the first time. Some Working Group members considered it “their right” to push for an inclusion of a certain area as a priority zone in which they resided or to highlight the need of a camp institution they represented. However, by directly addressing these conflict of interest and the dangers of possibly losing the trust of the community, it had been possible in all cases to find a satisfactory solution.

2.1.6 The "Camp Improvement Plan" (CIP)

Master plan versus Ad Hoc Solutions

At this crucial stage, the Working Group faced a dilemma: It was the declared aim of the planning process to produce a "Strategic Master Plan for Camp Improvement", yet due to a number of factors, the legalistic and regulatory principle of a master plan (following a European planning law) did not seem to match the complex camp situation. This included, among other concerns, the following:

- A master plan might fuel fears of the refugee community that camp improvement was aiming for full normalisation and integration of camps, therefore contradicting their temporary nature and threatening the political status of refugees.
- The instable and uncertain environment of West Bank camps including Fawwar bears many unforeseeable factors including a significant deterioration of the political, socioeconomic and security situation, as well as the possibility of "peace breaking out". A master plan appeared as too static and inflexible a tool in the face of these uncertainties.
- Some UNRWA staff considered a master plan as potentially threatening the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza: How could UNRWA maintain that the Agency does not "administer" camps (and therefore be responsibly for potential violence against the Israeli Army or civilians, or the reinforcement of "building codes") if it underwrites a detailed legalistic planning scheme.
- Other argued that a master plan would raise unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved in five years. Facing the huge challenges in the camp, projects would be likely to be of symbolic nature. At the same time, the internal discussion process about how to deliver camp improvement within UNRWA was still ongoing. Who could, several staff members argued, take responsibility for implementation and reinforcement of the master plan?
- There was no functioning legal planning system such as regional development plans or communal master plans that UNRWA could use as a model and legal reference for camp master plans.
- In general, the responsibilities and modes of interaction between the major stakeholders (UNRWA, host government, host community, camp community) remained generally unresolved and would require extensive discussions and negotiations. A master plan seemed therefore premature.

Several staff members advised to drop the ambition of a comprehensive plan altogether and resume in the development and fund raising for small-scale pilot projects better suited to the likely budgets available in the near future. The research team, supported by the Housing and Camp Improvement Unit at UNRWA's Amman-based headquarters however defending the need for a comprehensive, spatial coordination framework as an essential strategic tool:

- The analysis and expert diagnosis had clearly confirmed that ad hoc solutions would not be able to deal with challenges faced by the camp which included internal access problems, overcrowding, deteriorating environmental health, deteriorating poverty and so forth.
- The expert diagnosis clearly revealed evidence how commendable initiatives from UNRWA departments and programmes were frequently contradicting each other and generated confusion on the ground. A frequently cited example was the evidently absurd case in which UNRWA's Shelter Rehabilitation Programme had built a new shelter in an open space which had been earmarked as a potential public space in the "Assets and Potential Plan" of the expert diagnosis. Thus, uncoordinated actions stood in the face of improvement of an already highly congested camp area. Without a coordination framework of a master plan, the team argued, such mistakes would reoccur and the opportunity to better synergize programmes and initiatives would be lost.
- Furthermore, the team argued that Fawwar represented a unique opportunity to launch a pilot, albeit within a none-committal research context, which could raise important questions and highlight the need for stakeholder communication. In this way, the plan could serve as a tool to call upon action and cooperation with important stakeholders such as the host government.

As a solution, the research team proposed to develop a not legally binding "Camp Improvement Plan" in a draft version. The plan would serve as an interim tool and cooperation framework based on the voluntary coordination of all actors and stakeholders. The plan would address the defined priorities of the expert diagnosis ("Short Needs List"), but at the same time, avoid ad hoc solutions and produce a comprehensive, strategic and integrated vision for the improvement of the camp over the next five years. The status of a draft would ensure that the plan could be changed and adapted without delay if required. Thus, the plan would be "dynamic", rather than "static". Instead of relying on the reinforcement of rules it would rely on

the voluntary backing through the Working Group, UNRWA and other stakeholders. The emphasis on an open and flexible planning framework rather than a static regulatory framework such as a master plan also reflects global discussion in leading agencies engaged in slum upgrading and rehabilitation efforts such as UN-HABITAT or GTZ. The relation between the CIP methodology to global trends towards strategic planning and action planning will be discussed in section 2.2.1.

From Needs to Strategic Solutions

The following weeks were the most tasking and time-consuming of the entire process, which exhausted the willingness of Working Group members to attend and contribute to more frequently organised sessions. The team was working on an ambitious time frame, which left only four weeks to complete a first draft for a camp improvement plan. This did not allow for the organisation of larger community meetings and inclusive presentations, or to have intermediate results translated into Arabic and displayed in public.

A key tool for introducing the notion of "strategic thinking" into the discussions of the Working Group (as opposed to "project-based thinking") was the organisation of thematic workshops. It was agreed that individual needs should not be discussed in isolation, but should rather be brought together with all other aspects and issues raised that relate to the same theme. The combination of several community priorities and supporting elements of the expert diagnosis ensured a critical mass of sources to discuss more comprehensively a strategy for

- public space (combining all aspects of external space, social activities or recreational facilities)
- access and circulation
- housing and home improvement
- community development (combining all "none-physical" aspects such as support for institutions, local economy, poverty alleviation or education)

In parallel, similar thematic workshop were held with UNRWA staff. It was a similar learning experience for staff members to develop strategies addressing more comprehensive themes on a camp-level and the workshops were generally very well received. Some best practice examples for planning processes and projects in other camps or other urban contexts worldwide were injected. During each workshop session, sketches were prepared and later refined by the research team in order to serve to kick-off the following session. In this way, the drawings "evolved" in a participatory process. At the same time, a text document was drafted in parallel to the ongoing discussions.

The "Camp Improvement Plan" (CIP)

Both, text and drawings evolved into the first draft of the integrated "Camp Improvement Plan (CIP)" (August 2007) for Fawwar camp, structured into two core elements:

"(1) Urban Improvement Programme

The Urban Improvement Programme integrates all physical, spatial or infrastructural projects of camp improvement.

The following general objectives have been discussed and agreed upon in the Fawwar Working Group:

Objective 1: improving the urban structure of the camp (Urban Structure Plan)

Objective 2: controlling population density, building density, building height

Objective 3: providing for expansion and links to the surrounding context

Objective 4: improving streets and access network

Objective 5: improving public open spaces

Objective 6: protecting environment and natural resources

Objective 7: improving urban services and technical infrastructure

Objective 8: developing efficient local centre and sub-centres

Objective 9: improving UNRWA facilities and installations

Objective 10: promoting commercial and industrial activities

Objective 11: strengthening urban neighbourhoods and micro clusters

Objective 12: consolidating building blocks and improving houses

(2) Community Development Programme (CDP)

Complementary to the Urban Improvement Programme, the Community Development Programme (CDP) addresses strategic objectives that will strengthen and empower the local camp community to act as agents of change. Some aspects are already included in UNRWA's core services and special programmes. Existing programs can be evaluated in terms of achieving impact on camp level, as well as better integration into the overall development framework. This



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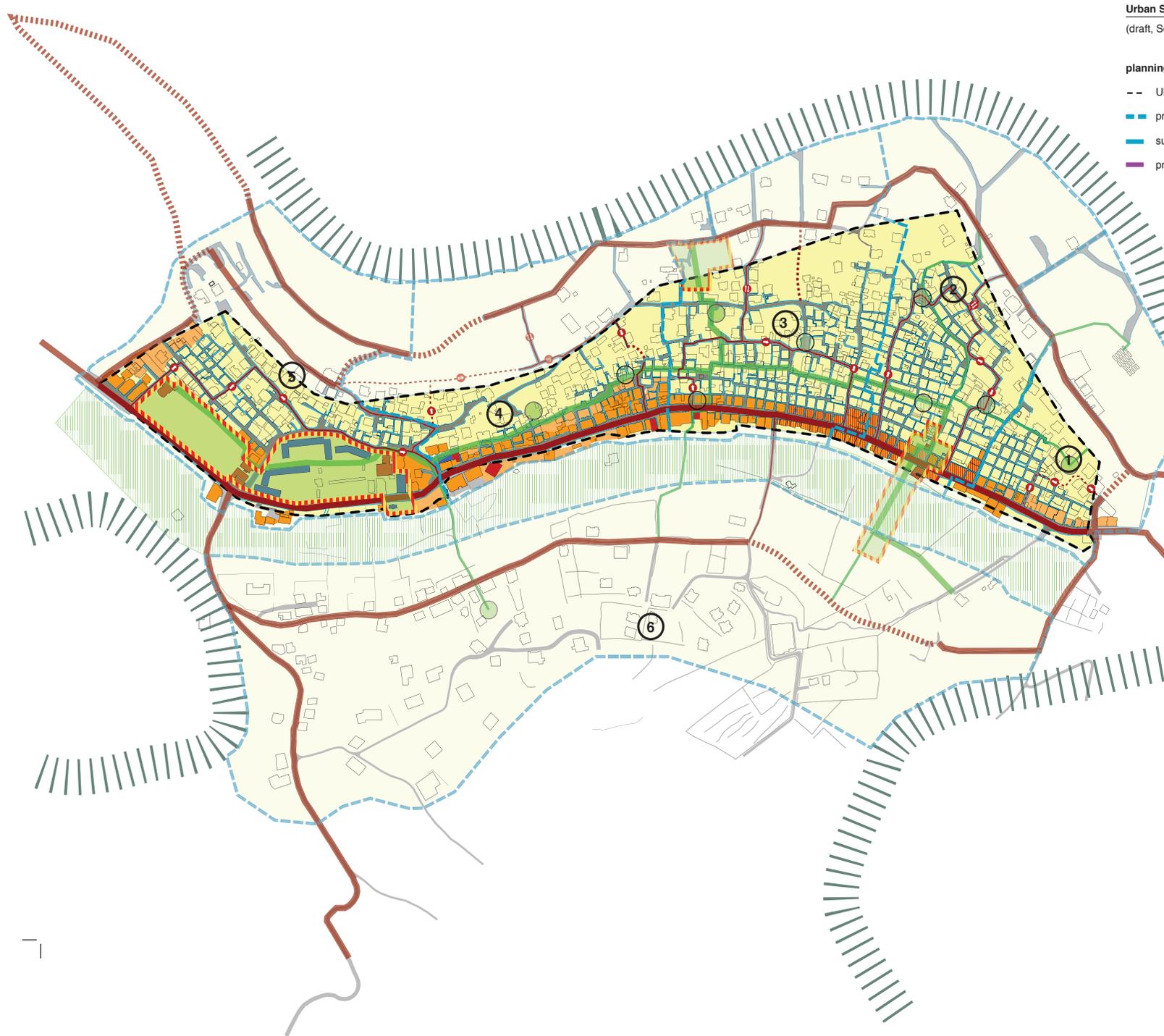
Working Group Session During Strategic Planning Phase (June 2007)

Thematic Workshops on public space, movement and circulation, infrastructure and housing structured the strategic planning process in order to develop a comprehensive and integrated vision for camp improvement.

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Fawwar Camp Improvement Plan (August 2007)

Visualisation of the Camp Improvement Plan (Urban Structure Plan) defining strategic goals for the comprehensive improvement of the camp. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



Urban Structure Plan
 (draft, September 2007)

planning areas

- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- - - proposed neighbourhood boundaries
- - - sub-areas (existing blocks)
- - - proposed action areas for pilot projects

functional zones

- proposed community centres (UNRWA installations, CBOs, NGOs, main mosque, etc.)
- central business zone
- existing mixed use zone (concentration of businesses and residential uses)
- proposed extension of mixed use zone
- residential zone inside camp boundaries
- informal expansion outside camp boundaries
- proposed limit of informal expansion: natural hill tops
- proposed central green zone: agricultural fields in the centre of the wadi

movement and circulation system

- proposed primary or main streets (upgrading of existing roads/ dirt roads)
- new road construction needed to complete main streets
- proposed neighbourhood street
- disjointed part of neighbourhood street
- one way street
- two way street
- main pedestrian spine (ideally, closed to cars)
- pedestrian priority path (some vehicular traffic possible)

public centres and sub-centres

- main community centre
- proposed new neighbourhood plaza
- proposed upgrading of existing neighbourhood plaza

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Fawwar Camp Improvement Plan
 (August 2007)
 Visualisation of the Camp Improvement Plan (Urban Structure Plan) defining strategic goals for the comprehensive improvement of the camp. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)

also applies to programmes funded and run by the host governments, NGOs or other local bodies beyond UNRWA's current portfolio. The following general objectives have been defined:

Objective 13: improving employment opportunities and income generation

Objective 14: expanding the local business sector

Objective 15: strengthening civil society institutions

Objective 16: improving gender balance by women participation

Objective 17: strengthening Local Committee as a key agent in implementing camp improvement measures

*Objective 17: improving educational facilities and access to higher education*²⁸⁶

The "Camp Improvement Plan" document and accompanying drawings for the first time indicated breadth and potential scope of camp improvement. The document abstained from prescribing detailed measures and projects, but was an attempt to outline the strategic direction and basis for the definition of pilot projects. In the following section, the most important goals defined for both, the "Urban Improvement Programme" and the "Community Development Programme" will be discussed and evaluated.

(1) The "Urban Improvement Programme" (UIP)

Based on the discussions in the Working Group, the research team had defined twelve general strategic objectives, which should steer and direct physical and spatial improvement measures. The **first objective, "Improving the urban structure of the camp: Urban Structure Plan (USP)"** intended to explain and reinforce the key planning document which brought together the most important spatial decisions. In order to avoid the impression that the drawing resembles a legally binding master plan, the team proposed the name "Urban Structure Plan", adding that "*...although the USP is not a legally binding document, all partners and stakeholders should respect the planning decisions that have been made. Changes should not be imposed unilaterally by any party, but should be discussed and agreed upon in the Working Group or successive platforms.*"²⁸⁷ After some internal discussion, it was decided that the drawing should show the camp area within UNRWA's official camp boundaries, but also recognize the informal overspill areas surrounding it. In order to highlight the different status of both territories, different colour shades were applied. The document stated that "*the USP also includes informal overspill, fringe and extension areas outside the boundaries, because this is considered to be vital for the future development of the camp. The planning area of the USP does not affect the legal status of UNRWA's official camp boundary or any other legal planning boundary but seeks to coordinate the ongoing urban development.*" The Urban Structure Plan (→ 261) represented a summary of all spatial recommendations and should therefore be read in conjunction with the other objectives described below.

The following objectives of the UIP, briefly summarized here, work through all major aspects, which concern the future urban development of Fawwar Camp. In most instances, the objectives contain a brief analysis of the present situation (problems and potentials as identified in the integrated diagnosis) and complements it with operational recommendations for action.

Objective two "Controlling population density, building density and building height" for instance defines three categories of congestion (derived from a density analysis prepared by a research team): (1) a "*hyper-congested zone*" where "*new developments such as expansion of dwellings should be avoided if possible*" which also represent priority zones for improvement measures; (2) a "*saturated zone*" where "*only minor extensions or construction projects should be added*" and "*new development should focus on the restructuring of the existing building fabric and measures to increase the efficiency of existing structures*"; (3) a "*zone with development potential*" where "*land resources should be made available to those most needed and affected by substandard living conditions within hyper-congested zones.*" All zones are represented in the USP (→ 261). Furthermore, it is recommended to work towards achieving a more even population density distribution which could be achieved by more effectively using existing land resources within the camp and surrounding it: "*Creative solutions should be found to utilise assets owned by registered refugees which are located outside of the camp boundary (such as land or dwellings) in order to decrease the density within the camp boundaries, without affecting their status as registered*

²⁸⁶ Except from Fawwar Action Plan (January 2008), prepared by the UNRWA-SIAAL research team, representing the final draft of the strategic objectives.

²⁸⁷ Source: Fawwar Action Plan (January 2008), prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team

refugees." The fact that the density and congestion problems of the camp could be solved on the basis of local land resources is perhaps unique (if compared to most camp situations) and owed to the comparatively low-density levels and its isolated location in a rural context with room for natural expansion (see also discussion in Part II/ chapter 2.2.2). In most camp situations, particularly those located in urban contexts, the problem of density and congestion will be significantly more challenging and will require different and more radical solutions.

The relationship between the camp and its context is more thoroughly addressed in the following **objective three** "**Providing for expansion and links to the surrounding context.**" The document confirms the potential of the camp's surroundings (termed "New Camp") not only in terms of reducing "*some of the most extreme population density within the old camp, but also as a land reserve for new social and commercial facilities, new access roads, open and green spaces, including opportunities for productive activities and for 'urban agriculture', which would strengthen Fawwar's self-sufficiency.*" Steering mechanisms however are needed such as the limiting of informal expansion to protect the camp's natural resources such as the central agricultural valley, the functional and spatial integration between old and new camp to prevent a likely "*segregation of deprived (centre) and better off (peripheral) sections of the community.*" Finally, the intervention of external stakeholders is called upon in order to address "*land speculation and soaring property prices in the fringe areas, which might require an intervention of the PNA (Ministry for Local Government) as a coordinating body*" or in order to find a solution for the camp's problems with heavy through-traffic (see also objective 4).

The strategic need for "**Improving streets and access network**" was addressed in **objective 4**. A description and analysis of the existing standard and problematic through-traffic and internal access situation is following by a recognition that overall vehicular accessibility of each house is unrealistic and also not desirable proposal. Instead, it is proposed to "*carefully and sensitively evolve the existing street network into a more efficient hierarchy of streets.*" This hierarchy would consist of the following elements: (1) "*Primary streets or main streets*" comprised by the existing main camp road as well as a two upgraded and completed road sections along either side of the valley, which would function as bypass roads; (2) "*Secondary or neighbourhood streets*" in each of the camps neighbourhoods (see objective 11) which would basic access and allow for improved "*urban services and security (e.g. waste collection, emergency access, taxis)*"; (3) a "*Pedestrian spine*" based on upgraded internal alleys and lanes, connecting all public functions at neighbourhoods and therefore allowing for safe and easy pedestrian flows; finally (4) "*Pedestrian lanes*" (all other internal passages), which provide access to individual houses would eventually need to be made safer. Furthermore, the section states that additional measures to improve safety and comfort for pedestrians such as "*safe road crossings, sleeping policemen, installations for old and disabled people, visual upgrading*" may be necessary and that "*all measures should be planned and carried out in a sensitive and participatory manner with the consent of local residents. Demolitions should be minimized but may be necessary in exceptional cases. Affected residents should be compensated appropriately.*" Again, the Camp Improvement Plan proposes a slow, evolutionary approach based on the upgrading of existing structures and functions.

The **fifth objective** "**Improving external open spaces**" deals with the general lack of external open space which, in all camps, significantly reduces living quality such as natural light or ventilation. Recognizing that in "*a traditional and conservative... [residents] in particular rely on open spaces in close proximity to their homes to meet, stage social gatherings and events and, for children, to play in a protected and supervised environment*", the plan recommends the following: (1) "*external public spaces within each neighbourhood (neighbourhood centres)*" which is further discussed in objective 8; (2) "*parks and outdoor areas for the use of the entire community (camp centres)*", again further elaborated in objective 8; and the "*improvement of internal street system as 'public lanes', open to multiple uses*" as the "*most directly accessible outdoor space.*" The plan stresses that all measures should contribute to a "*coherent and connected external public space network*" and, following the step-by-step approach of the earlier objectives, that "*most of these goals can be achieved by means of upgrading existing spaces and structures.*"

The **sixth objective** "**Protecting environment and natural resources**" addresses what is considered to be a unique asset to Fawwar: "*the unspoiled hilly landscape with scenic views, the central strip of agricultural fields in the wadi, a rich tradition of gardening and small scale agriculture found on private plots and courtyards which provide green relief in the density of the camp, improve the visual appearance of the camp and the local micro climate.*" Most of these natural assets, however, are under serious threat due to lack of public appreciation and lack of steering traffic or building activities (see objectives 2-3). Recognizing that in the absence of a legal regu-

latory system, natural assets can only be protected by public consensus, the plan proposes to launch (1) *"campaign[s] to increase environmental awareness"* such as educational programmes or collective *"tree planting"*; (2) to *"establish better links between the camp and its natural environment"*; and (3) to make a specific and concerted effort to *"protecting the wadi from development as 'central green zone'"* for the benefit of all residents. Here, *"some fields could be transformed into gardens or parks to the benefit of the entire camp community."*

As **objective seven**, the Working Group proposed the **"Improving urban services and technical infrastructure."** The currently *"incomplete, piecemeal and partially substandard infrastructure"* of Fawwar such as water, electricity, sewerage and waste disposal should be developed into *"coordinated and efficient urban services."* In particular, the following improvement measures were proposed: the improvement of the sub-standard storm water drainage, the installation of new water cisterns, the upgrading of the electricity system (including the installation of a high voltage transformer), a new waste water management system, or the general upgrading of the substandard pipe systems and the repair of leakages. The detailed recommendations of the plan for each of these aspects, or the introduction of new energy saving systems such as solar power to *"strengthen self-sufficiency and to protect the environment"* will not be discussed in detail here.

A main result of the Working Group discussions was the decision to transform the existing clusters of camp institutions and service installations (including UNRWA services) into effective, interconnected community centres. **Objective 8 "Developing efficient local centres and sub-centres"** summarizes these spatial and programmatic ideas. It proposes a hierarchy of three *"main centres"*, serving the entire camp community, and *"neighbourhood centres"*, serving the six main camp neighbourhoods. The three *"main centres"* should be developed with specific programmatic focus into a *"civic and religious centre"* in the centre of the camp including the main mosque, suq section and Local Committee centre, a *"services, learning and recreation compound"* combining UNRWA's school campus and neighbouring CBOs and NGOs and a new *"secondary education centre and recreation complex"* formed by the construction of a new secondary school on Local Committee owned land. Detailed ideas and recommendations are given on how to achieve this goal. Beyond the *"main centres"*, *"neighbourhood centres"* should *"strengthen the sub-identity of each neighbourhood"* and should be formed by a *"neighbourhood plaza"*, using, upgrading and extending the existing network of small *"plazas"* traditionally used for social events like wedding and funeral celebrations. Through small-scale interventions plazas could be transformed into more permanent outdoor centres for multiple use.

Objective 9 "Improving UNRWA facilities and installations" addresses the need to improve and extend the capacity of UNRWA's core installations. Instead of separating the main school campus through barbed wire fences and walls and insist on closing it after school hours, the campus should be better linked and integrated with the cluster of surrounding CBOs and NGOs.

Like all camps, Fawwar has developed a mixed use zone with a high concentration of businesses and workshops. **Objective 10 "Promoting commercial and industrial developments"** seeks to consolidate this zone in to a well-functioning *"business zone"*, attractive for local and external customers. While a range of business supporting measures such as credit schemes or improved links with surrounding communities are proposed in the "Community Development Programme" (objective 14), objective 10 proposes a range of spatial/ physical interventions such as the definition of extension zones for businesses, workshops and small-scale industries or the installation of parking facilities for external customers.

Objective 11 "Strengthening urban neighbourhoods and micro clusters" complements objective 8 in discussing the criteria that led to the definition of the six camp neighbourhoods (boundaries of traditional camp quarters and population between 1500 and 3000 residents and presence of main public functions such as mosques). Acknowledging the presence of informal overspill beyond UNRWA's official camp boundaries, the neighbourhood boundaries are extended accordingly. Neighbourhood 6 is located completely outside the borders and includes all the southern sprawl of the camp. The document clearly states, that *"this decision does not affect the existing and legally binding camp boundaries, but is a recognition of the rapid urban change outside and the need to steer and structure this development."*

Following objective two's recommendation on population density and congestion, **objective 12 "Consolidating blocks and improving houses and dwellings"** discusses more detailed measures on the scale of a block and an individual house. Recognizing that *"originally solitary shelters have increasingly been expanded and joined up to form coherent building blocks... not only a spatial and physical unit (sharing retaining walls and*

structural systems and surrounding internal courtyards)... [but] also sociocultural units with close family relations", the authors proposes the residential block as a key to urban rehabilitation. Blocks should be consolidated into units with no more than 20 dwellings (100 - 200 persons) and "architectural possibilities of re-organisation" should be explored to "free up valuable spatial resources for neighbourhood gardens and courtyards as well as for future growth." The objective is "to transform existing building blocks into viable 'urban cells' with an acceptable urban quality" and "basic 'service units' for internal circulation and access." Again, the plan proposes a sensitive evolutionary approach involving local residents at all stages with support programmes such as "compensation grants for demolished structures, building grants and loans... to complement private investment."

(2) The "Community Development Programme" (CDP)

Complementing the recommendations to improve the "hardware" of the camp through physical and spatial interventions, objective 13 to 18 deal with improving the "software": A series of measures geared towards poverty alleviation, encouraging self-help and improving the capacities of camp residents to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on direct relief programmes. The proposed objectives resemble most directly the "developmental approach" advocated by UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations and build upon some initial steps launched by UNRWA in recent years such as the Agency's Microcredit and Microfinance Programme (MMP) or other community-based loan programmes.

Objective 13 "Improving employment opportunities and income generation" emphasizes the need to provide additional "employment opportunities inside and outside of the camp and to support and create new income generation initiatives." It is proposed to work towards the better coordination and integration of existing initiatives launched by UNRWA and other agencies and to include Fawwar into UNRWA's micro-finance and community-based loan schemes, which "should be introduced with sensitivity to Fawwar's predominantly religious community... [and may] require some adjustments to the programme." Proposed measures include awareness campaigns for existing schemes that have not been fully used by Fawwar residents.

Confirming and expanding upon objective 10 which called for the spatial consolidation and expansion of Fawwar's business zone, **objective 14 "Expanding the local business sector"** emphasizes the key role the local business section plays as "one of the most important sources of new employment and income generation for the camp community and therefore essential in the fight against poverty." Existing service providers, traders, small commercial ventures, light industrial activities, workshops and small scale industries should be supported through: (1) "setting up a camp-level business association to promote local interests", (2) the "introduction of loan schemes (e.g. micro-finance) and help to gain access to external funding possibilities", (3), the "offering [of] mentoring and capacity building (such as helping to develop business plans, strategic development concepts and management skills) for existing businesses and new start-up ventures", (4) "workshops with external experts (Palestinian business representatives and representatives of other business associations)" or, (5) "improve[d] links with business sectors in surrounding villages and municipalities."

Objective 15 "Strengthening civil society institutions" recognizes that "local civil society institutions are important agents of change in the camp." The Community Development Programme should strengthen these institutions (NGOs and CBOs) by improving work conditions, capacities and budgets for programmes. Recommendations include the need to "encourage more inclusivity and broader agendas in the interest of the entire community" and proposals for a range of detailed measures.

Objective 16 "Improving gender balance by encouraging women participation" stresses the specific need to encourage the female population "to assume greater roles and responsibilities in public life and improve their participation and access to public facilities, recreation, employment and representative structures." The document states that the Women Programme Centre (WPC), like in many other camps, is currently the "only institution and vehicle to achieve this goal" and recommends the upgrading of its substandard infrastructure and expansion of its facilities. In addition, the WPC should be assisted to "develop a camp-level strategy and action plan to improve women participation" and "instigate gender awareness campaigns and capacity building programs."

Building on the sustained efforts of the recent years to establish a functioning and effective Local Committee in Fawwar, **objective 17 "Strengthening Local Committee as a key agent in implementing camp improvement measures"** proposes measures to increase the committee's capacity and scope. It states the in-

tention to work towards transforming the Local Committee into an effective body representing the camp communities interests vis-à-vis external stakeholders and function as facilitators and implementer of improvement measures.

Finally, **objective 18 "Improving educational facilities and access to higher education"** addresses the need for improvement in the education section. This includes the urgently needed extension of UNRWA schools in line with the needs of the constantly increasing population number which could be easily accommodated in the comparatively large campus. Additional classrooms should be built and teachers hired to reduce class sizes. A key proposal concerning the existing school campus is also to shift the main campus gates away from the main street and restructure internal circulation *"in order to increase safety of access" and the "upgrading of internal public areas and landscaping to exploit full potential for open space."* In addition to the UNRWA run basic education system, objective 18 re-articulates the urgent need to improve secondary school facilities: *"Due to its isolated location and overcrowding of PA-run facilities in neighbouring villages and towns, the CIP advocates the construction of a new secondary school for girls (currently accommodated in substandard garage building), as well as a secondary school for boys. Funding, construction and running of the school are not the responsibility of UNRWA, but require the commitment of the PNA in partnership with donors. Land adjacent to the camp has already been purchased by the Local Committee for the purpose of the construction of a secondary school for girls."* Finally, graduates need help in accessing higher education facilities in the West Bank such as scholarship programmes or career advise services.

Critical Reflections

The lack of suitable precedents for integrated urban rehabilitation programmes in a refugee camp context meant that the research team had refer to none-camp models such as the GTZ/ Aga Khan Trust led rehabilitation of the Old City of Aleppo²⁸⁸ or examples of rehabilitation of informally developed urban context in Latin American cities (see also discussion on relation of CIP methodology within global trends of development planning: section 2.2.1). Several examples were presented in workshops and discussions in order to enrich the discussions on the Camp Improvement Plan. Frequently, however, the citing of none-camp examples only fuelled local fears that the plan would in the end lead to *"normalisation"*, the *"withdrawal of UNRWA"* and the *"abolition of the right of return."* At the same time, UNRWA itself did not provide clear guidance or criteria for the development of the plan and, as already stated at the beginning of this section, many staff members openly argued against the need for a CIP. In this context, the drafting of the CIP was a difficult and risky experiment. Full support and constructive feedback of all programmes and departments on the field level, would have helped to produce a more comprehensive document. In hindsight, the following aspects could have helped to strengthen the document and increase its impact both in the camp, within UNRWA and amongst external stakeholders:

- The extremely tight time frame set by the donor allowed only for a limited number of revisions of the document and reduced the possibility to present drafts to a wider camp community beyond the Working Group. A concerted "public awareness campaign" could have included participatory planning workshops (following the focus group model), public hearings, the printing of leaflets and so forth.
- A shorter, better illustrated document (including pictogram's) and translated into Arabic could have served to lead this campaign and would have invited additional feedback
- A key omission includes the failure to develop ideas for a sustainable management structure on the level of blocks, neighbourhoods and the camp itself (see also section 2.2.3)

While most of the above measures were suggested by the research team, UNRWA preferred to abstain from a too "euphoric" awareness campaign and keep a "lower profile". In August 2007, at the time of the finalization of the first draft, it was still unclear whether the plan could be followed up by concrete measures. With no solid budget commitment from any donor, the West Bank field office preferred to refer to the CIP as a "research experiment conducted in a university context" rather than fully and outspokenly commit to its implications. On a more positive note, however the Fawwar CIP served successfully in later project implementation as will be seen in the following sections. The document also served as an important reference in numerous training workshops conducted by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team in early 2008 and is now been advocated as key tool for camp improvement in all fields of UNRWA's operation.

²⁸⁸ for further information see: www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/maghreb-naher-osten/syrien/8234.htm, or Busquets, Joan (ed.). "Aleppo – Rehabilitation of the Old City", Harvard University Press, Boston, 2006

2.1.7 The Action Plan 2008

"In the beginning you were talking about changing the entire camp... giving us the total freedom of what are our priorities... now you are talking about small projects..."
Community member, Fawwar, August, 2007.

The discussion leading up to the CIP had been uplifting and inspiring for most Working Group members. But when, after a short summer break, the Working Group reconvened with the task to discuss first pilot measures, many Working Group members were disappointed. After defining an ambitious plan, members began to realise that implementation would be a painful and slow process lasting many years. Although the research team had clearly stated throughout the process, that implementation depended on attracting additional funding sources, the positive dynamics within the Working Group was now threatened and expectation management became crucial. At this crucial point, the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)²⁸⁹ and the prospect of implementation from early 2008 provided an important boost for the team. Throughout September 2007, the prospect of BMZ support for a first round of pilot projects dominated the Working Group discussions, which were asked to submit a proposal to UNRWA's Field Office for approval.

A crisis emerged when the Field Office refused to endorse the proposal to use most of the funds for constructing a secondary school for girls, which had been listed as the highest priority in the "Short Needs List". The research team was forced to mediate between an uncompromising Field Office and an angry and disappointed Working Group. Again, UNRWA appeared not to listen to the community's wishes. When the research team negotiated a second batch of proposals it was considered by many Working Group members as compromising the camps most urgent need for better secondary education. In hindsight, however, the revised proposal offered some considerable advantages: The new project proposals included more diverse, manageable and faster realisable interventions, which will be seen and enjoyed by a large part of the community. Instead of using the available funds of USD 230.000 mainly for constructing a reduced basic school building (the total of BMZ funds for Fawwar would not have been enough to build the entire school), a series of interventions could be tested out that would demonstrate the scope of prototypical projects for an "Urban Improvement Programme" as well as an "Community Development Programme", which will be discussed in more detail below.

The prospect of a very short time gap between CIP planning and implementation was undoubtedly an advantage ensuring that the momentum created during the planning process was upheld. However, the dominant role of UNRWA, securing the first donor commitment (BMZ), censoring the pilot project list and ultimately holding the administrative responsibility for implementation was problematic. Again, the Working Group felt sidelined and became more passive. In hindsight, the process would have benefited from a more leading role of the Working Group in attracting funds and launch independent project initiatives. Only later on, when two independent project initiatives were indeed launched by the Local Committee (in December 2007 the LC managed to secure a Palestinian Authority grant of USD 155,000 for the extension of the camp's Youth Centre and in August 2008 the Palestinian Ministry of Education directed funds made available by the German KfW to build a secondary school for girls), the "balance" was reinstated. In both cases, the Working Group proved to be a successful platform to discuss and refine the projects. Indeed, both cases also prove that the community accepted the CIP as a primary reference point and coordination instrument and agreed that the projects would be integrated.

In December 2007 the UNRWA-Stuttgart team prepared an "Action Plan 2008" document, which contained the overall vision of the CIP, as well as a detailed description (including budget) of each project to be implemented in the coming year. In addition, all pilot projects were presented in a plan intended to be distributed within the camp community, based on the overall budget of USD 230,905 provided by the German BMZ (excluding overhead costs) (→ 264).

²⁸⁹ The BMZ supported programme "From Relief to Development – Innovative Solutions for Strategic Improvement of Palestinian Refugee Camps" (BMZ-No. 2007.07075) was launched to aid the implementation of the Fawwar CIP, supported the implementation of the rehabilitation of Syria's Neirab camp, and allowed to kick-start the first CIP planning process in Jordan (Talbiyeh), following the Fawwar model. Between 2008 and 2009, 1.2m EUROS were made available, approximately one fourth was made available for Fawwar projects. In 2008, the BMZ decided to extend the programme beyond 2009 and made additional funds available for Fawwar.

Urban Improvement Programme	USD
• Upgrading of external public spaces in Fawwar/ Deheishe	70,000
• Restructuring UNRWA school campus	17,905
• Improving streets and vehicular access network	40,000
• Block upgrading	50,000
• Improving urban services and technical infrastructure	10,000
Total	187,905
Community Development Programme	
	USD
• Strengthening CBOs (Women's Programme Centre)	13,000
• Strengthening Local Committee Fawwar	15,000
• Community run Loan Scheme	15,000
Total	43,000
Total	230,905

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Budget Plan for implementation (February 2008)

Based on the funds provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development BMZ for Fawwar, excluding staff costs and overheads. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)

strategic objectives of Camp Improvement Plan	Objective 1 improving the urban structure of the camp (Urban Structure Plan)	Objective 2 controlling population density, building density, building height	Objective 3 providing for expansion and links to the surrounding context	Objective 4 improving streets and access network	Objective 5 improving public open spaces	Objective 6 improving environment and natural resources	Objective 7 improving urban services and technical infrastructure	Objective 8 developing efficient local centre and sub-centres	Objective 9 improving UNRWA facilities and installations	Objective 10 promoting commercial and industrial developments	Objective 11 strengthening urban neighbourhoods and micro clusters	Objective 12 consolidating building blocks and improving houses and dwellings	Objective 13 Expanding the local business sector	Objective 14 improving employment opportunities and income generation	Objective 15 strengthening civil society institutions	Objective 16 Improving gender balance by encouraging women to participate in public life	Objective 17 Local Committee as a key agent in implementing camp improvement	Objective 18 improving recreational facilities and access to higher education
projects implemented	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
UNRWA identified by BMZ	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
improving car access	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Block upgrading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Electrical transformer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
improving WPC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
strengthening EC finance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Community loan scheme	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
projects by Local Committees	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
adequacy for cost handling	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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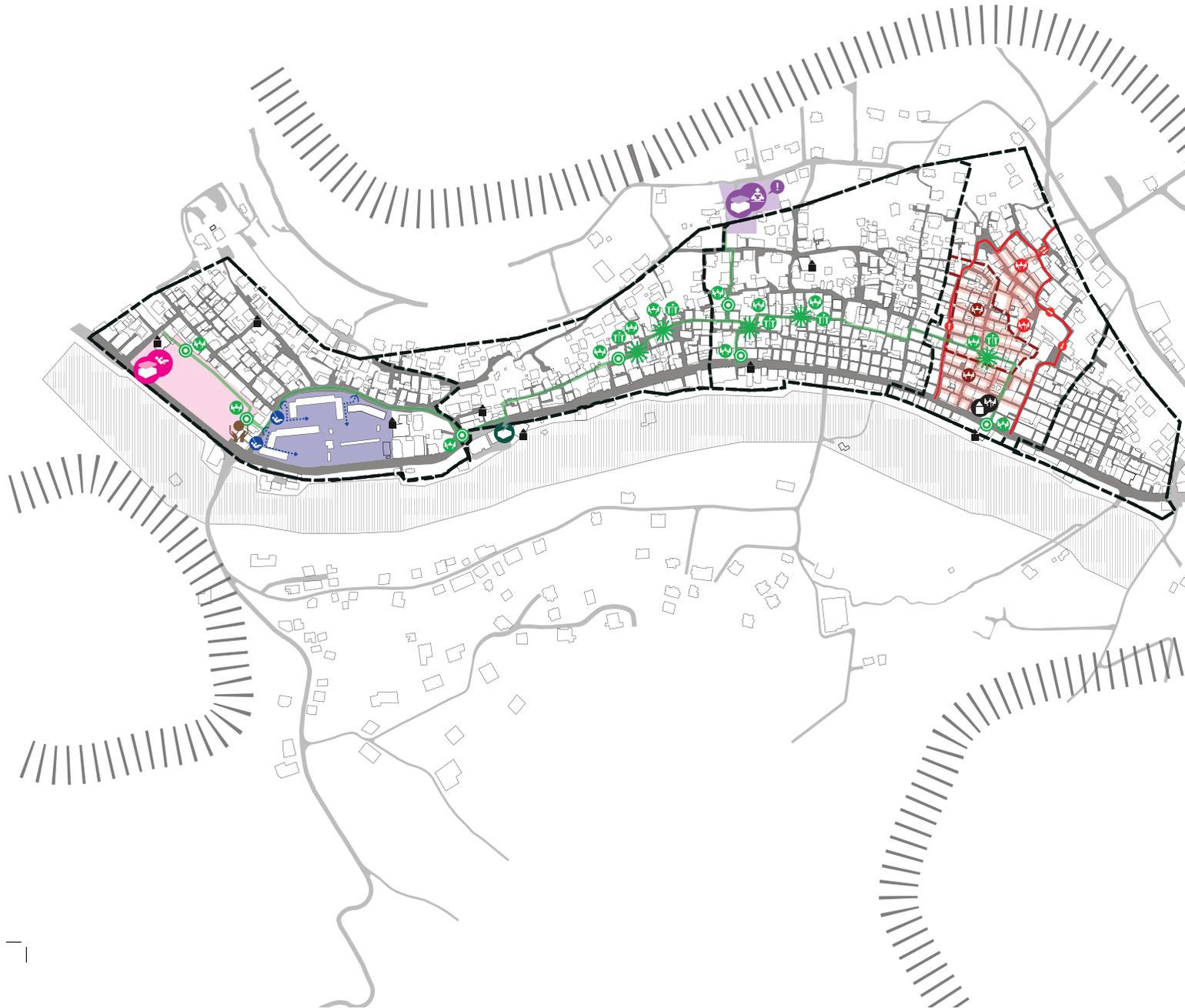
Integration of Action Plan Projects within Camp Improvement Plan

Chart relating the relevance of proposed implementation projects to the overall strategic goals as defined in the Camp Improvement Plan. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)

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Fawwar Action Plan 2008 (February 2008)

Spatial impact of proposed pilot measures for BMZ-funded implementation 2008. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



Urban Improvement Programme

UNRWA/community led project (BMZ)

Upgrading of external public spaces

- participatory workshops
- proposed pedestrian route
- proposed focus areas
- proposed plaza upgrading
- public events ("activation")

Re-structuring UNRWA school campus

- proposed location for new campus gates
- external public space improvement

Improving streets and vehicular circulation

- proposed neighbourhood streets
- proposed focus area
- proposed one way street
- proposed two way street
- participatory workshop

Block upgrading

- proposed action areas (three alternatives)
- participatory workshop

Improving urban services/ infrastructures

- prop. location for new electricity transformer

Community led projects (PNA funds)

- planned recreation centre

PNA led projects

- proposed location for secondary school
- advocacy (community led)

Community Development Programme

Strengthening local CBOs

- Women's Programme Centre

Development grants for institutions

- Local Committee building
- camp institutions
- site boundaries

Legend

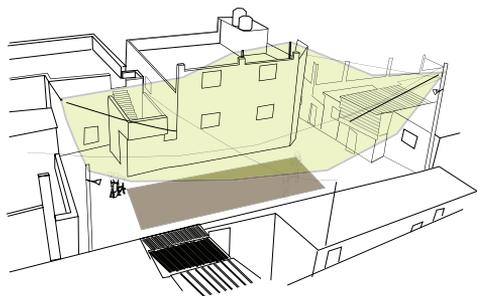
- UNRWA's official camp boundary
- camp neighbourhoods
- landscape features



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Al Qasas Plaza, Fawwar Camp

Residents of the Al Qasas neighbourhood share the open space for social occasions such as family weddings, funerals or the reception of important guests for which private houses do not provide sufficient space. During most of the year, the plaza remains empty.



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Planning the Public Space Action

Concept sketch for "quick win project" with temporary roof structure and new surface for Al Qasas Plaza.

(Source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)

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Al Qasas Plaza Action (April 2008)

Day 1: Construction of temporary sun shade and painting of new surfaces with neighbours of Al Qasas neighbourhood.

Day 2: Temporary appropriation of plaza through different community groups (women, men, children, youth).



(1) Pilot Projects under the Urban Improvement Programme

• Upgrading of external public spaces in Fawwar

The largest budget component was allocated to a series of project, which had never been implemented in a Palestine refugee camp context before: The step-by-step implementation of a network of public spaces for the camp. The lack of external public space as a key problem was identified in the density surveys conducted by the research team and, later on, in the participatory needs assessment and expert diagnosis. Especially, women, youth and children suffer from an alarming deficit of external space for social activity, play, sports and other leisure activities. The jointly developed network of neighbourhood plazas, connected through a pedestrianized “spine” represents a prototype that could easily be adapted to other camps: The approach of upgrading and connecting existing spaces promised a realistic prospect for implementation, both in terms of local acceptance (no demolition required), scale of projects (the CIP concept was based on small-scale interventions) and budget frameworks. During the summer of 2007, the project team had already conducted several events with youth and children testing how the existing plazas could be animated and the events had generated positive feedback and a local momentum. This also helped to easily achieve a consensus within the Working Group on allocating EUR 70,000 on the realisation of the core part of the concept, to be spent on repairing floor surfaces, lighting, sun shading, public space furniture, etc. With the support of the WG and other camp institutions, these interventions could function as “catalysts”, setting precedents in terms of design quality and vision, and encourage camp residents to invest in additional upgrading efforts such as cleaning or tree planting. The following steps were proposed:

“*Design phase: design workshops with youth and children.*

• *Detailed planning: meetings and workshops with affected residents.*

• *Implementation: cooperation with UNRWA’s Job Creation programme to involve camp residents.*

• *Activation: organisation of events inaugurating small-scale interventions.*

• *Management: neighbouring residents committees will be formed to ensure the long-term maintenance of all interventions.*”²⁹⁰ (Action Plan 2008)

• Restructuring UNRWA school campus

During the participatory need assessment and expert diagnosis, camp residents had frequently pointed out the problems linked with the position of the campus gates. The Action Plan 2008 states that, “...*children have to enter and exit the campus from the main road that, at peak hours is frequently congested. There are not sufficient pavements along the main roads so that the current situation is perceived as dangerous. Women’s and girl’s focus group discussions also pointed out the fact that current outdoor facilities for the girl’s school are inappropriate, and playing and sports equipment lacking.*” The Action Plan proposes a comparatively small-scale but effective intervention: the relocation of the main access gates. Instead of entering and exiting from the main road to the South, school children would enter from new gates, which would redirect the campus’s access system towards the neighbouring camp institutions (Youth Centre and football grounds and the Women’s Programme Centre at the Western Gate; Rehabilitation Centre at the Eastern Gate), thus helping to build an interconnected and coherent “community centre”, linked to the pedestrianized spine described above. The relocation of the gates would also allow for an internal restructuring of the campus and a more effective use of the open spaces which are to be upgraded with trees and landscaping elements in addition to the construction of a kiosk for the girl’s school.

• Improving streets and vehicular access network

As already stated in the Camp Improvement Plan, “*vehicular traffic is a major problem in the Fawwar camp, decades of informal building activities in Fawwar have led to the steady decline of street widths and external public spaces. The current network of streets and access lanes is consequently totally insufficient for private cars as well as service and emergency vehicles and access to the individual blocks and houses is in urgent need of improving.*” (Action Plan 2008) The Working Group therefore agreed to allocated funds for the realisation of a prototypical “neighbourhood street”, which was proposed in the CIP. If successful, the same system could eventually be realised for other neighbourhoods. It was decided to designate one of the most crowded and least accessible areas in the camp as an “action area” to implement the neighbourhood in which the following interventions should be implemented: (1) Main bottle necks should be tackled by removing obstacles such as lamp posts,

²⁹⁰ Source: “Action Plan 2008”, prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team on behalf of the Fawwar Working Group. Presented to UNRWA in January 2008

steps, and on occasions garden walls (in such cases, refugee families should receive compensation for loss of private space); (2) “unsafe dry stone walls and structures” should be demolished and rebuilt; (3) exposed water and infrastructure networks which are blocking streets should be dealt with; (4) rain water gutters should be repaired; and (5) repairing the dilapidated sewage systems and manholes. The proposal follows an “acupuncture approach” proposed in the CIP and was intended to be realised in conjunction with the block upgrading described below. Again, UNRWA had no experience in small-scale block upgrading and would need to rely on the cooperation of local residents.

• **Block upgrading**

Already the Camp Improvement Plan had recognized that the block-structure of the residential fabric in camps should be accepted and developed into a structure of viable “urban cells” and micro environment with a functioning social tissue. The Working Group decided to support the access improvement (see above) with additional funds to test the possibilities of strategic block upgrading. Again, the “action area” was to become a testing ground for strategies to be applied in other sites in the camp and beyond:

- *Conducting workshops with residents to develop an architectural concept for spatial re-organisation, including freeing up valuable spatial resources for neighbourhood gardens and courtyards as well as for future growth. The objective is to transform the building block into a viable „urban unit ” with an acceptable living quality.*
- *Demonstration of best practice examples of internal and external house design and provision of design service to individual house owners within the affected block in order to develop improvement concepts.*
- *Providing small rehabilitation grants for block residents to secure structures and consolidate some of the worst and most dangerous constructions – grants will be given to block residents who are eligible for shelter rehabilitation according to UNRWA’s criteria and scoring systems (socioeconomic hardship cases and substandard housing conditions).*
- *Upgrading the visual environment in the block area and optimizing the private outdoor living space such as courtyards and terraces.” (Action Plan 2008)*

The plan recognizes that, in some cases, small-scale demolition could not be avoided and recommends the compensation of camp residents. This implied the establishment of an important precedent: So far, UNRWA had refused to directly compensate residents for shelter demolition arguing that there is no legal ownership. In recent years, however, and especially during the reconstruction project of Jenin, UNRWA had grown to accept that the investment residents had made over generations should be recognized as assets and, in the case of loss, compensated in kind (new structures for residents were sized in relation to what had been lost). Direct cash compensation for lost assets would establish a new precedent opening the door for a vast range of rehabilitation measures otherwise likely to be boycotted by local residents.

• **Improving urban services and technical infrastructure**

The Camp Improvement Plan had identified the substandard electricity network and, specifically the absence of a high-voltage transformer as a key obstacle preventing development in the business sector, or of small workshops or factories. The Working Group, after consultation with the Fawwar Electrical Lighting Cooperative Society and UNRWA experts agreed to invest in a new transformer.

• **Fawwar Recreation Centre**

As already mentioned at the outset of this section, an independent project initiative of the Local Committee of Fawwar had successfully attracted USD 155,000 for the extension and upgrading of the camp’s Youth Centre. The initiators agreed to develop and refine the project in accordance with the objectives of the Camp Improvement Plan, which was seen as an important sign of trust in the CIP and the planning mechanism of the Working Group. The project was thus included in the Action Plan, which declared the intention “...to upgrade the existing Youth Centre and adjacent football grounds of Fawwar camp into a multi-functional, all-year recreation centre.” A new indoor basketball court was to be added to the existing facilities, which could also “be used as a community hall for various social and cultural functions.” In this way, the project would benefit all residents and provide a much needed facilities for weddings or cultural events.

(2) **Pilot Projects under the Community Development Programme**

• **Strengthening CBOs (Women’s Programme Centre)**

The under-representation of women in the public life of the camp has been an ongoing theme throughout the participatory needs assessment and integrated diagnosis, and the Camp Improvement Plan clearly stated the need to support women. In Working Group discussions it was decided to prioritize the upgrading of the camp’s Women Programme Centre (WPC) as the most respected and trusted institution caring

for women's needs: *"The proposed grant of USD 10,000 will allow to improve the substandard physical conditions of the WPC which will improve the day-to-day functions, allow for an expansion of activities and help to improve the image of the centre in the camp community and thereby attract other women to use its services."* The funds would upgrade and extend the integrated nursery, help to set up a cafe and support training courses.

• **Community run Loan Scheme**

In addition to the upgrading of infrastructure and programming of the Women's Programme Centre, the Working Group decided to contribute funds to the "Micro-credit Community Support Programme" (MCSP)²⁹¹, a new UNRWA initiative seeking to "further economic growth of the refugee communities and, specifically it aims at increasing the household asset of the refugees through supporting community-managed initiatives that will provide Palestinian refugees with access to financial products and non-financial services." (Action Plan 2008) In contrast to the "high-risk, high-interest" loans provided by UNRWA's Microcredit and Microfinance Programme, which is administered like a professional banking system, the MCSP programme specifically seeks to empower local camp institutions *"to fully manage their own credit operations, portfolios and benefit from the generated revenues to expand and improve their services to the refugees."* MCSP and RSS staff selected the Women's Programme Centre as the most suitable and professionally run institution and would provide initial training and advice. BMZ funds would *"provide the needed financial envelop to run a pilot in order to provide financial and non-financial services to vulnerable refugees especially women and to increase their access to credit opportunities."*²⁹² (Action Plan 2008)

• **Strengthening Local Committee Fawwar**

Finally, the Action Plan has reserved funds to boost the Local Committee of Fawwar as a key institution. Concrete steps to strengthen the Local Committee of Fawwar camp include the training in *"specific expertise in designing projects, approaching external donor, implementation and monitoring"*, as well as to build capacities to function as the main representative body of the camp in relation to external stakeholders. The project would *"help to hire external consultants to develop and implement an action plan to transform the LC into an effective and respected body, committed to improve the lives of the local refugee community."* (Action Plan 2008) Unresolved, however, remained the future relationship between Local Committee and Working Group and the precise terms of reference for a representative structure within the camp (see also section 2.2.2).

Reflection and Outlook

The use of an "Action Plan" to complement the broader strategic planning framework of the CIP reflects a general trend within leading global agencies such as UNHCR and GTZ. A more thorough reflection on how it is embedded in a wider planning discourse will be proposed in section 2.2.1. The following remarks focus on the way this methodology was perceived by the community and UNRWA. Although the overall package of measures proposed in the Action Plan have been criticised by some as "construction heavy" (several RSS members wished to have boosted the Community Development Programme which had only received 20 per cent of the budget), the majority of UNRWA staff, Working Group members and other stakeholders accepted the proposal. A key advantage for the Camp Improvement Initiative as a whole was the fact that the Action Plan represented a broad spectrum of prototypical measures that provide concrete illustration of the intention of the programme: A step by step improvement, combining physical and developmental measures, guided by an overall strategic concept that had been developed in a community-driven way. The Action Plan played a significant role in persuading UNRWA's West Bank Field Office in giving up initial reservations and indeed, the new "Housing and Camp Improvement Unit" that evolved out of the research unit in May 2008 now enjoys full support. At the time of writing, implementation of the above-mentioned pilot projects was underway and SIAAL/ University of Stuttgart's direct involvement in managing the research team ended. Implementation was boosted by a one-year extension of BMZ funding for Fawwar and new measures are currently being defined.

²⁹¹ MCSP has been developed by the Social Services Division (SSD) within UNRWA's Relief and Social Services Department and was planned to be introduced to the West Bank in 2008. The allocation of BMZ funds ensured that Fawwar became one of the first pilot camps for the scheme.

²⁹² The Action Plan further specifies that the "project will be implemented in steps, on the condition that a predefined set of benchmarks and criteria will be met. In a first step (possible duration 3 months) a sum of USD 5000 will be made available for up to 12 short-term loans (expected average of each loan USD 400). In a next step, the programme would be expanded with additional funds being made available. Revenues (8% interest per loan) will be added to the overall fund and redistributed in new loans." Source: "Action Plan 2008", prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team on behalf of the Fawwar Working Group. Presented to UNRWA in January 2008

2.2

Reflection on CIP Methodology and Lessons Learnt

"The UN wants to normalise the camp by introducing parks and wider streets. We will fight this attempt to abolish our sacred right of return..."

"UNRWA do not listen to us and always do it their way"

„We are afraid that UNRWA has a political agenda behind involving us as a community – an agenda which seeks to do away with our sacred right to return to our homelands..."

"Why do we need planning, we are a refugee camp? Camps do not need playgrounds or parks...This is something for cities. Do you want to transform the camp into a city?!"

"We know that many donors are requesting to involve the local community in planning the camps' development as well as needs assessment but we fear that UNRWA will only use us because it is forced to or because it is for its own benefit..."

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"UNRWA treats us like cattle on a farm"

"In 1978, the Israeli Civil Administration offered paving streets and roads for the Camp, but this was rejected by the people of the Camp fearing the loss of the right of return and turning the Camp into a town or city. The right of return is on the top of our agenda."

*"Nobody is depriving u
No one can ask the refu
her UN ration card kno
fugee and the symbol fo
The right of return is an
nobody can decide on*

"I don't like people from other neighbourhoods coming here. After you fixed it up last night with the new light and so on, there was a large amount of young men hanging out here. When I went out of my front door, I was embarrassed. I had to use two different streets."

"The only space the children have is the main road... we built speed bumps in order to protect our children."

"Which women is going to leave her work and come to drink coffee here in the morning? It is shameful in our society... If we would meet here and drink coffee they would write about us in the Al-Ahram newspaper, not in the local newspaper."

"We like sitting outside in a plaza. But each one of us has a husband, we are controlled. ... other places are more developed than us. Here we are not civilized... Old traditions are still ingrained... People can't break out of our parents' mould..."

"I have 11 children at home. None of them go out. They are all trapped inside..."

political parties try to get involved in everything concerning camp. And they will do anything to further political, not non interests. Some political parties create a bad atmosphere around certain projects in the camp, just to increase their support. For example yesterday, we had some activities in the squares. Sections from Hammam complained that was mixing, dancing and singing, because they want political gains at the expense of others.

"I like going out. I tell Ibrahim: I feel like putting on my sport shoes at 11pm when people are asleep and start running out of our front door... He tells me: Where do you think you are living? So I have to run on our roof, which is 120 square meters. My husband sits and counts my laps. You know the 'Triangle' is just down the road at the end of the camp. So after about 30 laps I ask him: Have I reached the 'Triangle yet? He tells me: No, not yet..."

is our right of return. I agree to give up his own as the sign of return for the right of return. It is an individual one and not a collective one."

"We can barely do what we want in the houses! Do you think our husbands know that we are talking to you now?! They would kill us if they knew! I swear!"

"The plaza should be closed from buildings... a place for women only, then it is possible."

"I support public spaces, they are very, very necessary for the camp, because our houses are stuck together. On occasions, we don't know where to go with our guests. Either on the roofs and sometimes we have to borrow roof space from our neighbours, but the elderly can't always go up, so each neighbourhood should have at least a small square. And everybody will empty the square out for each other... this takes place already. If my neighbour has a wedding I'll use the other street until he is finished..."

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Changing Perceptions of Camp Improvement (2006-2008)

Statements by community representatives during the planning process 2006-2008: Initially, resistance to the idea of "improving the camp" was strong due to the fear of undermining the right of return. Slowly, a relationship of trust was established and the debate shifted from macro-politics into the intricate micro-cosmos of survival in the camp.

2.2.1 Positioning the CIP Methodology Within the Global Discourse on Development Planning

How does the CIP methodology compare with the global trends in development planning? How are concepts such as “participation” and “sustainability” used in an urban planning context by leading global agencies such as UN-HABITAT and GTZ? Does the combination of proposing a broad strategic planning framework in form of the “Camp Improvement Plan” and a focussed “Action plan” guiding implementation reflect a state-of-the-art tool sets used in the context of urban slum rehabilitation? A comprehensive history of the evolution of the diverse concepts and solutions proposed in the context of development planning would be the subject of a dissertation itself. The field is too extensive and rich to be discussed here in detail. In the following I would therefore like to focus on brief remarks on the long-standing and ongoing debate “master plan” versus “action planning” which will position CIP within a broader discourse.

Action Planning versus Master Planning

“Town planners in the developing world should be prepared to dynamically adapt their plans, and involve local communities and techniques, as opposed to imposing a static master plan based on Western ideas.”²⁹³

The critique of the master plan is in fact rooted in a long tradition started by development planners such as OTTO KÖNIGSBERGER in the 1960s.²⁹⁴ In his article “Action Planning” (1964) KÖNIGSBERGER proposed that *“Master Plans’ are not suitable for the fast growing cities of the tropics, example of Karachi: the plan took 3 years to complete, by then it was out of date. A similar situation was found in Singapore in 1963...”²⁹⁵* KÖNIGSBERGER argued that problems of informal growth could not be tackled by inflexible, slow master planning which regulates private initiative. Instead of what he considered a futile attempt at regulation, he proposed a *“series of action”*, developed for specific local contexts, and providing opportunities for private as well as public investment. This also implies a new role for planners and architects. KÖNIGSBERGER envisaged planners not as *“controllers but initiators and leaders”²⁹⁶*, needing to re-educate administrators and guide the overall development process - *“a guiding concept to shape the mosaic of individual action programmes into a complete picture.”* (KÖNIGSBERGER 1977). After over four decades KÖNIGSBERGER’s concepts of a balanced combination of “local actions” with a general “guiding concept” have recently acquired renewed significance and appear as timely as ever. The following brief and inevitably limited summary of some of the most important trends in development planning discourse will explain how KÖNIGSBERGER’s ideas evolved through time.

Bottom-up Planning: Empowering the Poor

Since the 1960s countless theorists, planners and development specialists delivered invaluable contributions to the development planning discourse including PAUL GOODMAN, IVAN ILLICH, JOHN F. TURNER or E. F. SCHUMACHER, striving for conceptual models and planning approaches beyond the European master planning model. UN-HABITAT became a leading proponent of planning reform in the developing world. But a real break through in global discussion and, most importantly, delivery of an effective approach to tackle the developing world’s key challenges only became possible with the re-democratization in Latin America and Asia in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Progressive governments began to issue policies to tackle urban poverty and the global phenomenon of slums which had been largely ignored by the previous regimes. One of the key questions underlying the debate on “master plan” versus “action planning” was: Who is controlling decision-making processes in planning? Who are the actors involved? At what level (local, municipal, regional, governmental) are decisions being made?

²⁹³ Definition of Action Planning, source: Wikipedia

²⁹⁴ Otto Königsberger (1908-1999) set up Department of Tropical Architecture at the Architectural Association (1953), London, which later moved to the University College London as the Development Planning Unit. K was also one of the founding fathers of UN-HABITAT. Königsberger proposed the notion of “Action Planning” as an alternative to master planning already in 1964. Interestingly, Königsberger claimed that the European idea of the master plan had evolved not so much in response to the “European slums” which triggered movements such as garden city, but in the 30s during periods of stagnation and destruction similar in some ways to some of the stagnating/shrinking contexts of today. Planners assumed slow rates of urban growth and social change. Master planning had intended to stimulate private initiative for physical, social, economic development. In the context of the fast and informally growing southern metropolises of the post-war period that planners like Königsberger were confronted with, the problem posed itself radically differently: an abundance of private initiative (informal construction) and the need to stimulate and guide public action.

²⁹⁵ source: Königsberger, Otto. “Action Planning”, article in Architectural Association Journal, London, May 1964

²⁹⁶ source: Königsberger, Otto. Lecture at the Commonwealth Association of Planners, Conference on Education and Planning, Liverpool University, 1977

As a reaction to autocratic rule, centrally controlled “master planning” became deeply contested. Instead, leading development planners advocated for the radical devolution of central government power to the “lowest appropriate level”. Also UN-HABITAT emerged as a strong campaigner for models of decentralized good governance based on the “direct, broad-based participation of communities in decision-making as a way of improving responsiveness of local policies and initiatives to citizen’s priorities and needs... allowing grassroots movements to take part in decision-making at the local level.” The large slum rehabilitation projects in Brazil, Mexico but also Indonesia and Thailand attempt to put this approach into praxis through the testing of radical policies such as participatory budgeting, participatory planning, popular movements for access to land and housing and so forth.

The widespread believe at the time that urban poverty could be best tackled through small, tangible and successful interventions on a neighbourhood and city district level, informed many “action planning” initiatives already from the 1970s. Bottom-up planning methods were being pioneered in urban communities in the UK, Germany or USA from the late 1960s. These ranged from advocacy planning, in which professional planners acted as advocates for a particular community, bargaining with city authorities on the community’s behalf and interpreting technical language, to the formation of neighbourhood corporations where participants directly managed state grants to plan their own economic development programmes. Residents themselves would know best how to help themselves, conceiving and implementing “actions” to achieve quick results and a maximum of direct impact. TONY GIBSON’s concept “Planning for Real” exemplifies this approach. Gibson first conceived the idea for a method of public participation in the impoverished east end of Glasgow in 1977 but the idea quickly spread across the developing world.²⁹⁷ Another radical examples is the still practiced “micro-cycle approach”: Community groups are given grants to design and implement their own projects. Based on positive external evaluation, the size of grants would increase. Community groups would thus discover themselves how best to plan and manage.

Bottom up AND top down: Action Planning and Strategy Planning

In recent years, however, many voices begun to critically review the effectiveness of grassroots empowerment tools and programmes. ELLEN WRATTEN, herself involved in conceptualizing “Planning for Real” critically reflects on its limitations, especially the failure to address effectively problems that cannot be solved on a neighbourhood level and require planning on a national or city scale.²⁹⁸ UN-HABITAT’s “State of the World’s Cities 2006/ 2007” report states: “The relationship between good local governance and its effect on reducing slum growth is often far from clear-cut... [and] does not seem to automatically result in improvements in the lives of the urban poor, especially in the short-term.” Grassroot mobilization on its own is often not strong enough vis-a-vis other stakeholders to implement policies, lacks capacities and experience and required budgets for implementation. Moreover, local structures themselves cannot guarantee the necessary political stability, security and legal framework for a community-driven action plan to be successful. It is now more widely recognized that effective governance vis-a-vis poverty eradication and slum rehabilitation requires a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes of decision-making involving all stakeholders: “Local government works, but in many countries it works best with strong support from the centre... to create an enabling environment... What is important is to ensure that bottom-up approaches to governance connect with top-down systems of decision-making.” (UN-HABITAT 2006)

This shift in thinking is well illustrated by REINHARD GOETHERT and NABEEL HAMDİ’s widely acknowledged book “Action Planning for Cities : A Guide to Community Practice.”²⁹⁹ Here, “Action Planning“ is not only understood as the product of grassroots empowerment. The authors stress need to link the needs of community with the strategic plans of government: “Action Planning can be used to improve city management by stimulating partnerships amongst stakeholders and by capacity building at all levels.” (HAMDİ and GOETHERT 1997).

²⁹⁷ “Planning for Real” was pioneered in the UK by Dr Tony Gibson, formerly of the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation in collaboration with the London School of Economics. It was first used experimentally in the east end of Glasgow in Dalmamock (1977) but has been successfully applied all over the world since that time.

²⁹⁸ Wratten, Ellen. “Bottom-up Planning for Urban Development: The Development Planning For Real Pilot Project” Source: RRA Notes (1994), Issue 21, pp.83-90, IIED London, 2001 (www.planotes.org/documents/plan_02113.PDF)

²⁹⁹ Hamdi, Nabeel. & Goethert, Reinhard. “Action Planning for Cities : A Guide to Community Practice”, John Wiley & Sons Publishers, Chichester/ New York, 1997

UN-HABITAT's "Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP)"³⁰⁰ also reflects this more balanced approach linking bottom up and top down approaches. The programme proposes concrete planning tools based on a combination of "strategy planning" and "action planning". Strategic planning is defined as follows: "*Strategy is basically about two things: where you want to go, and how to get there. It is a long term vision, concerning broad goals and general directions.*"³⁰¹ This does not mean a return to a centralized master plan that characterized centralized government planning in the developing world of the 1970s: "*With today's fast changing world of technology and international markets, lengthy engagements in strategy debate are not feasible; nonetheless, no serious business can remain successful without some sort of guiding vision and strategy. Strategic thinking and strategy guidance in the case of environmental management, are equally essential... The purpose of a strategy is therefore to provide general guidance, with a long term perspective, which allows environmental issues to be better understood and more coherently addressed. It provides a framework within which the actions and interests of different stakeholders can be brought together. What is achieved through formulation of strategies is not a dramatic turn of events, but a common vision and orientation that makes increments of action by various stakeholders consistent and compatible with the desired long term objectives of sustainable development.*" (SCP Source Book 2001). Action Planning is different from, but linked to, a strategy: "*A strategy provides an agreed set of principles and a policy framework, which guide all actors and stakeholders, whereas action plans translate this broad guidance into concrete commitments for action.*" (SCP Source Book 2001) Action plans thus operationalise strategies and can be designed and implemented by the community (but also be other stakeholders). Community action is thus firmly embedded within a broader, long term strategy. The difference between the proposed model of "strategy planning" combined with "action planning" to traditional master planning is summarized as follows:

"Statutory development plans are prepared through the bureaucratic machinery and follow established administrative procedures: they conform to top-down planning methodologies and rely on legal powers of enforcement. Strategy and Action plans, on the other hand, can be initiated, prepared, and implemented from the bottom-up by actors who have the will and the necessary resources.

• Statutory plans aim to influence economic activities and investment patterns taking place in the private and popular sectors through controls and regulatory instruments. Strategy and Action plans in contrast involve concerned actors from the public, private and popular sectors in their formulation and implementation, with success hinging on the level of commitment secured from the different actors.

• Statutory plans strictly follow existing administrative territorial divisions and traditional sectoral lines. Strategy and Action plans on the other hand can be prepared for different geographic locations and scales, as well as for combinations of sectors and administrative territories - so long as the subscribers to an action plan are addressing a common concern and are committed to implementing the plans." (SCP Source Book 2001)

The proposed methodology is characterised as being:

"purpose-specific: there is a problem of common concern to be addressed;

• actor-specific: commitments and responsibilities of implementation are clearly spelled out;

• area specific: there is a clearly-defined geographic territory to deal with;

• time-specific: actions are not open ended but are tightly programmed to be delivered in a fixed time frame;

• resource-specific: an action plan is fully costed and based on commitment of existing resources - it does not hinge on resources yet to be mobilised; and

• measurable: progress in implementation, increments of change, and impacts can be clearly tracked and monitored." (SCP Source Book 2001)

³⁰⁰ The Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) is the result of the UN's new emphasis on "sustainability" understood as a concept that does not only address the impact of cities on the environment, but also covers the cities' potential to "manage the urban environment in a way that benefits urban residents both socially and economically." (UN-HABITAT 2006/ 2007) The programme was launched at the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The programme proposes a general planning approach and planning tools that can be adapted to the level of a specific city level in collaboration with local partners to strengthen their capabilities for environmental planning and management (EPM). source: www.un-habitat.org

³⁰¹ source: SCP Source Book Series, Volume 4: "Formulating Issue Specific Strategies and Action Plans", section B1 "Formulating Issue Specific Strategies and Action Plans Conceptual Clarity: What is What?" source: www.un-habitat.org

The CIP methodology developed in the Fawwar planning pilot not only reflects the current global trend in development planning away from “action planning” as an exclusively bottom-up approach towards a combined bottom-up/ top-down approach. CIP also uses similar terminology, methodologies and tools as proposed in the Sustainable Cities Programme. Most importantly, the “Camp Improvement Plan” described in section 2.1.6 almost completely mirrors the SCP’s definition of “strategy planning”: As a result of intensive stakeholder communication (bottom-up and top-down processes), broad strategic objectives and a long-term vision is being defined. As will be discussed in section 2.2.3 (Main Unresolved Questions), many aspects of stakeholder interaction in camp improvement still need to be solved to insure the necessary integration of camp improvement plans within area, regional and national development plans. The Fawwar Action Plan as described in section 2.1.7, on the other hand, is an actor, area and time specific programme for concrete interventions in priority areas.

2.2.2 Refining the Camp Improvement Methodology: A Manual for a 7-Step Methodology

The Fawwar pilot project represented the first practical attempt to launch a community-driven, strategic planning initiative in a Palestine refugee camp context, an applied research experiment with unknown outcomes and many risks. Prior to the planning process, only a simple methodology outline had been drafted. Detailed methodologies were developed in discussion with all participants. This open approach was generally very well received by the community who felt empowered to genuinely contribute not only to discussions, but also the design of a policy that is likely to profoundly affect camp life. Nevertheless, trust had to be won anew at all stages and while facilitators did achieve to build a solid foundation of trust in the aims of camp improvement and its methodology, many fears of hidden political agendas of the camp improvement programme and mistrust of the UNRWA in general continued to haunt the process. The facilitators, however, perceived the trust building work invested in discussions with community representatives as negligible if compared to the time and effort needed to convince reluctant UNRWA staff. As stated throughout the earlier account of the planning process, the fear of ceding control, the perceived danger of the community “taking over” the Agency remained a key hurdle and many staff members continued to remain sceptical of the programme. The lack of clear West Bank senior management endorsement of the pilot project and camp improvement in general represented an obstacle that left the facilitating team in vulnerable and exposed situations in moments of conflict.

From the perspective of the commissioners of the process, the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department ICID at UNRWA’s Amman based headquarters, however, the pilot was successful. At the same time, the realistic promise of BMZ funds to implement the CIP Fawwar and to launch new camp improvement initiatives, provided an essential boost to ICID. A universally applicable tool to guide planning teams in other fields was urgently needed. In August 2007, a new contract was signed with Stuttgart University to draft a Manual for Camp Improvement based on the Fawwar experience, defining planning methodology and drafting guidelines for new camp improvement initiatives, potentially to be implemented Agency-wide. At the same time, the Stuttgart University-UNRWA was asked to uphold the momentum of the Fawwar planning process by drafting funding application and prepare pilot projects for implementation.

The manual development itself was started by critically reflecting on the Fawwar experience, make proposals for how to improve and refine the methodology and to consider how it might be applied in other contexts. Between November 2007 and June 2008, the team organised a series of UNRWA staff workshops in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Gaza Strip. These workshops were designed to provide feedback from the perspective of other fields, and also build a broader support for camp improvement amongst Agency staff. After the completion of five workshops sessions, a first draft was presented in May 2008.

The Seven-Step Methodology and the Camp Improvement Manual

Based on the initial work plan, lessons learnt from the planning process and feedback from both, community representatives and UNRWA staff, the research team defined seven key stages or methodological steps for camp improvement planning, which will be briefly discussed in the following:

• Step 1 - Initial Contact and the Formation of the Working Group

Reflecting the experience of the difficulties involved in establishing a camp-level working structure the first step of the manual is entirely devoted to providing guidelines in how to approach the camp community and set up a structure for participatory planning: *“The first step in the Manual for Camp Improvement addresses the question of how to initiate and build support for a new camp improvement project. How to prioritize amongst the many needy camps? What preparatory steps are necessary before contacting the community? How to launch the project within the camp? How to achieve buy in and active support from the host authorities and what participatory management structures should be set up on the level of the camp and within UNRWA. The chapter will introduce criteria and guidelines for each of these questions and explain the concept of forming a camp-level Working Group (WG).”*³⁰²

³⁰² source: Manual for Camp Improvement, prepared by Philipp Misselwitz in cooperation with Muna Budeiri, UNRWA-Stuttgart Cooperation, made possible by the European Commission, 2008

The section directly reflects the positive experience in Fawwar camp in forming a joint UNRWA-community management structure, which had provided a successful platform for all discussions and decision-making in the planning process. While in the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority as a host government does not get directly involved in camp affairs, the manual takes account of the dominant and controlling role of the Syrian and Jordanian host government which may insist on direct representation in the WG.

• **Step 2 - Integrated Needs Assessment**

After the formation of the Working Group the manual continues to provide guidelines for an integrated needs assessment “...in which existing resources and capacities are mapped and a broad range of needs are identified. The assessment should comprise the following components: (1) Participatory needs assessment involving the camp community; (2) Information gathering and expert analysis; (3) Input of UNRWA departments and programmes; (4) Survey of local camp initiatives and institutions. This manual section provides practical guidelines and recommendations on how to facilitate the gathering of quantitative and qualitative assessments.” Based on a critical reflection of the Fawwar experience the manual recommends a more extensive list of qualitative and quantitative surveys and assessments, both providing different yet equally valid inputs. The most important qualitative input is provided through focus group discussions designed to involve a wide range of camp residents. The manual gives practical advice on how to facilitate these discussions, build necessary trust and encourage “out of the box” thinking beyond the immediate daily needs. While focus group input generates wishes, desires, expectations, ideas and perceived problems, quantitative surveys provide needs backed by empirical evidence.

• **Step 3 - Integrated Diagnosis and Camp Priority List**

Step 3 of the manual provides “recommendations on how the various inputs gathered during the integrated needs assessment phase can be analysed and synthesized, producing a (1) Integrated Diagnosis - a broad and inclusive overview of existing assets/ potentials, as well as problems/ constraints...” The manual also introduces the new concept of a “Camp Priority List (CPL)”, which was developed in response to some significant omissions that had added to some irritation and conflict between UNRWA departments and the Working Group. The facilitating team recognized that special efforts must be made at this crucial stage to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their input is equally valued and of consequence. In the Fawwar process, the misconception emerged amongst some UNRWA staff that the team was blindly accepting the community’s wishes while ignoring other empirical evidence and established policies when defining key priorities for camp improvement. Now, the manual explains how all four inputs of the “integrated needs assessment” will be considered equally and, through a process of “intensive participation and negotiations of all stakeholders” will be combined to formulate a “Camp Priority List”, which should be formally endorsed by all stakeholders. Another new suggestion based on a critical reflection of the Fawwar process is the recommendation that CPL list should make clear, which stakeholder would be responsible for implementation of a specific item. In the crisis that had emerged over the secondary school issue, it would have been helpful to clearly state that running and programming of the school is not UNRWA’s responsibility. Now the manual clearly recommends that UNRWA is only one implementer and that camp improvement requires the joint efforts of all.

• **Step 4 - Comprehensive Planning: the Camp Improvement Plan**

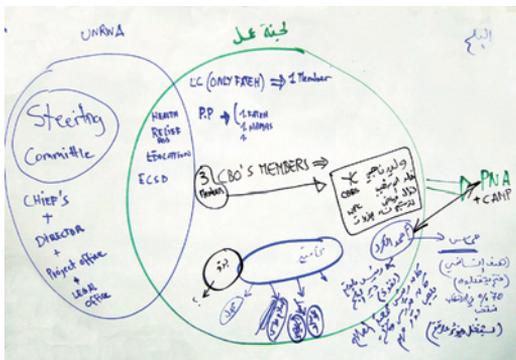
The comprehensive planning stage explains how to achieve the transition from priorities raised in the Integrated Diagnosis and Camp Priority List to the comprehensive and integrated vision of the Camp Improvement Plan (CIP): “Instead of specific solutions to specific problems, comprehensive planning is the development of a comprehensive vision setting the goals and targets for camp improvement of all main aspects of communal life for the next years to come.... At the end of the planning process stands the Camp Improvement Plan – an integrated strategic development concept including an Urban Improvement Programme and a Community Development Programme.” The manual explains the not legally binding nature of document and plans and stresses the fact that, for the time being, only communal consensus and the good will of all stakeholders can provide an effective reinforcement mechanism to ensure that its recommendations are being implemented. The manual develops the 18 strategic goals of Fawwar’s Camp Improvement Plan into a menu of more abstract and universally applicable objectives that are likely to be applicable to any camp context. The manual also provides practical advice on how to formulate text and compose drawings to ensure legibility by both experts and the camp community.



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UN Staff Workshop (Beirut, March 2008)

During 2007/ 2008 numerous workshops were organized by the UNRWA-Stuttgart team with UNRWA staff members from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Gaza Strip.



→ 275

Proposal for the Formation of a Working Group (Beirut, March 2008)

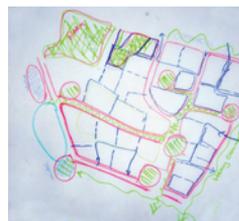
Participants were asked to brainstorm how to compose a Working Group for Shatila Camp (Beirut) equivalent to the Fawwar Working Group.



→ 276

Stakeholder Analysis (Damascus, April 2008)

Participants were asked to prepare an analysis of key stakeholders needing to be involved in a camp improvement initiative in Syria. Based on this analysis, conflict scenarios were discussed.



→ 277 - 279

Drafting a Camp Improvement Plan (Amman, May 2008)

UNRWA staff members from the Gaza Strip were asked to develop a hypothetical scenario for a camp improvement plan in Gaza.



→ 280

**Manual for Camp Improvement
(August 2008)**

Based on the Fawwar pilot experience, the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team developed guidelines for community driven planning to be applied in refugee camps across the Near East.



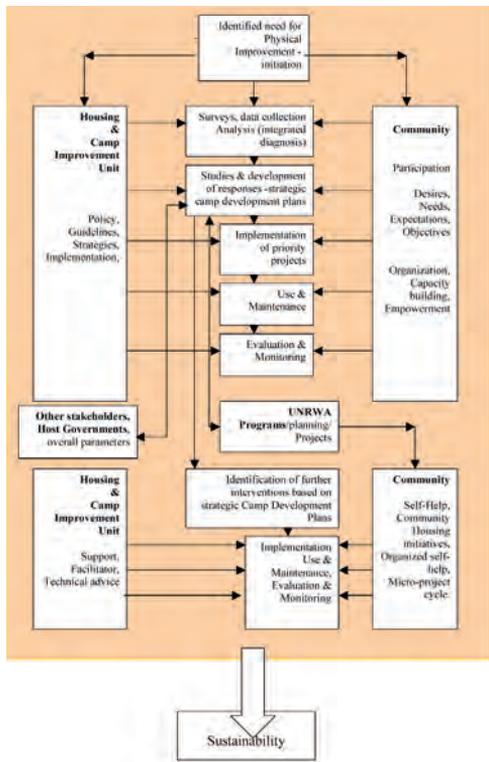
→ 281

**Structure of Manual for Camp Improvement
(August 2008)**

The 7-Step methodology:

- 1 Initial Contact and Formation of the Working Group
- 2 Integrated Needs Assessment
- 3 Integrated Diagnosis and Camp Priority List
- 4 Comprehensive Planning: The Camp Improvement Plan
- 5 Action Plan
 - Implementation plan
 - Funding plan
 - Project design
- 6 Project Implementation
- 7 Managing, Monitoring, Evaluation, Updating

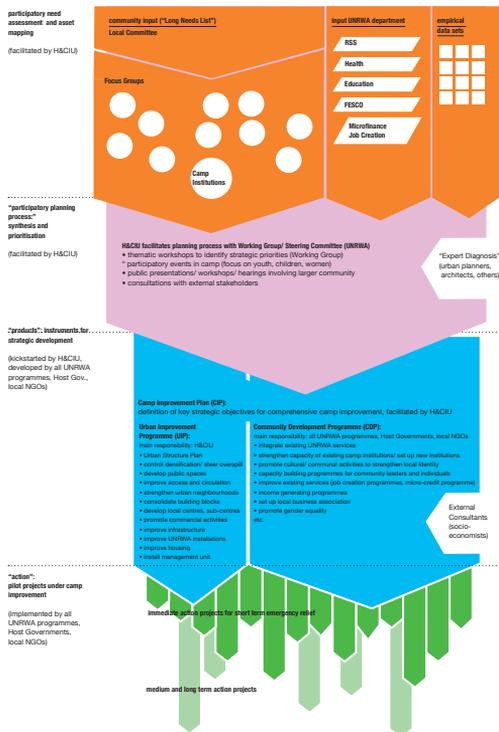
(source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



→ 282

Initial UNRWA Process Plan, 2006

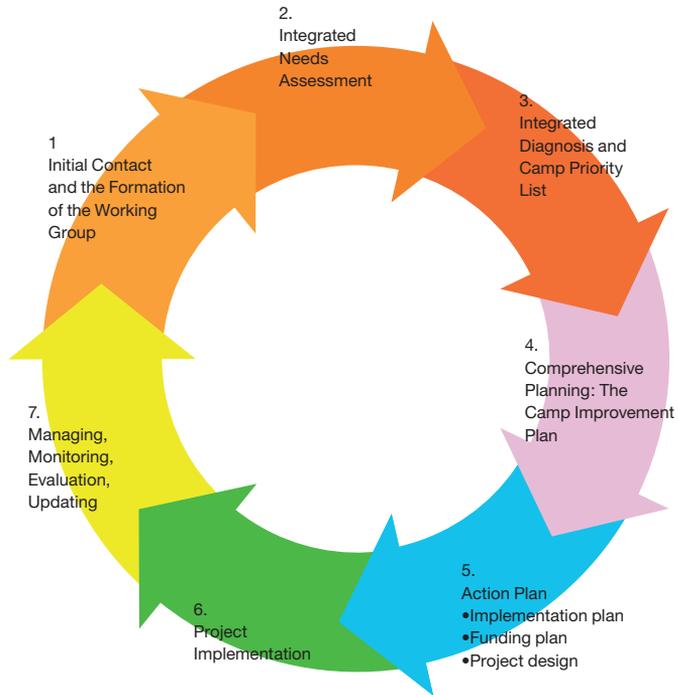
Initial concept plan developed by the Housing and Camp Improvement Unit of UNRWA's HQ Amman which served as a starting point for the definition of a planning methodology. (source: ICID, UNRWA HQ Amman)



→ 283

Revised Process Plan by UNRWA-Stuttgart Cooperation Team, Summer 2007

The new process diagram shifts the emphasis on participatory elements: need assessment and asset mapping; synthesis and prioritization and for the first time proposes the combination of "Camp Improvement Plan (CIP)" as a broad vision and "Actions" for immediate, medium and long term implementation. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



→ 284

Final Camp Improvement Process Diagram, Summer 2008

The "Manual for Camp Improvement" contains a revised process diagram in form of a cycle. Based on an reflection of the Fawwar pilot planning experience, the team defined seven key steps from initial contact with the community to evaluation. (source: UNRWA-Stuttgart cooperation project)



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UNHCR Process Management Cycle

Similar process diagrams are being used by UN agencies such as UNHCR for programme design and implementation. (source: UNHCR Standards and Indicators report, Geneva 2007)

• Step 5 - Defining Pilot Projects: The Action Plan

The fifth step of the manual provides recommendations for how to use the Camp Priority List (CPL) and the Camp Improvement Plan (CIP) in the definition of first pilot projects that could be presented to donors and, if they receive backing, could eventually become items of the first implementation plan - "The Action Plan". The manual explains that this step requires patience and pragmatic action as CIP's can only be implemented over the course of several years and through intensive lobbying work. However, by using even small funds in a strategic manner, maximizing their effect and benefit to the entire community, small steps can generate a momentum of optimism. The manual also stresses the importance of quick win projects such as awareness campaigns or participatory community events to uphold the momentum build in the strategic planning phase.

• Step 6 - Implementation

The sixth step of the manual has so far only been addressed briefly with the promise for revision once experience on the ground has been made and can be reflected upon. Assuming that the implementation of the "Fawwar Action Plan 2008" will proceed as planned, this manual step is expected to be completed over the course of 2008/ beginning of 2009.

• Step 7 - Managing, Monitoring and Updating CIPs

Similar to step 6, the final step in the manual will be completed at a later stage based on direct experience in the field. The manual stresses the need for an on-going review of operations to track whether "*applied solutions had the desired impact and are proceeding according to plan, with benefits equitably distributed to targeted groups within agreed time frames and costs.*" The manual proposes a mechanism for evaluating the success of projects and review changes in physical, spatial and socioeconomic conditions of the camp, which should inform the regular updating of the Camp Improvement Plans. In addition, the manual emphasizes that CIP projects can only be effective and sustainable if fully "owned", "looked after" and maintained by the community itself and recommends the setting up of an effective local governance structure (see also section 2.2.3 Main Unresolved Questions).

The description of the "seven steps" is preceded by general remarks on the aims and objectives of the camp improvement programme and two extensive chapters on how to build trust with the community and how to facilitate stakeholder interaction. A final part includes practical tools such as survey templates, layout proposals for reports and drawings as well as definitions of key concepts.

Resume

At all stages, the authors state that the manual is an incomplete "*work in progress*", an "*evolving document to be refined and updated as further experience is gathered on the ground.*" Thus, the manual represents a further step in a smooth evolving process from research, application to operational tools. The process had begun in 2006 with field work and surveys which lead to the formulation of a methodology outline ("briefing") defining a general approach based on concepts such as "community participation", "empowerment", "strategic planning". This approach was eventually developed into an operational "work plan" to be applied in the pilot planning project of Fawwar. Following the practical experience of working in Fawwar and the feedback from UNRWA staff and stakeholders from other fields, the initial work plan had now evolved into a universally applicable methodology. The key concepts and terminologies of the manual directly evolved in the process including the notion of the "Integrated Diagnosis", "Long Needs List", or the "Camp Improvement Plan".

Comparing the process advocated by the manual to earlier process diagrams developed by UNRWA ("Community-driven Approach for Housing and Camp Improvement"³⁰³) or the project team ("Process Diagramme for Strategic Planning"³⁰⁴), the following significant developments and changes can be noted:

³⁰³ source: Budeiri, Muna: "Housing & Camp Improvement Unit- Unit Proposal", internal document issued by ICID, UNRWA HQ Amman, August 2006

³⁰⁴ source: "Action Plan 2008", prepared by the UNRWA-Stuttgart research team on behalf of the Fawwar Working Group. Presented to UNRWA in January 2008

• From linear process to cyclical process:

Early process diagrams are represented mostly as linear processes, implying that the planning process will, once and for all, solve the camp's needs. During the applied research process and planning pilot it became clear that "camp improvement" was likely to be an ongoing and continual process with Camp Improvement Plans needing to be updated and revised on a regular basis. The cyclical process diagram included in the manual is similar to the UNHCR's "Operations Management Cycle"³⁰⁵, which is applied to internal policy and programme design.

• Emphasis on integrated development:

Initial draft papers prepared by the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department ICID almost exclusively emphasized the need for physical development. By contrast, the manual stresses the need of integrated urban improvement ("hard tools") and community development ("soft tools") to achieve sustainable camp improvement.

• Development of early stages of the planning process:

The pilot experience revealed many obstacles and hurdles, which had to be overcome in the early stages of the planning process. While earlier process diagrams underestimated this, the manual devotes three steps (Step 1 – 3) to structuring the early planning process, providing detailed guidelines and recommendations on how to build trust between UNRWA and the camp community and ensure that all stakeholders have a balanced input into the planning process.

• Emphasis on participatory aspects:

The key emphasis of the manual is on "participatory" planning. In each step tools and concepts are proposed to ensure that the community remains the key agent in driving the planning process. The manual more directly reflects the conviction that effective change cannot be imposed from the outside. Only the community itself can ultimately ensure that policies and interventions achieve the desired effect and help to build up a more sustainable camp environment.

³⁰⁵

source: Practical Guide to the Systematic Use of Standards and Indicators in UNHCR Operations, UNHCR, Geneva, 2006), page 24

2.2.3 Main Unresolved Questions

The manual is conceived as an “open-source” document and expects that all sections will be regularly revised, updated and extended to benefit from the experience of its users in all fields. This particularly applies to the final steps: “At the date of writing, pilot implementation is only just beginning in Fawwar and Neirab and vital learning experience on the ground will be accumulated and added. In its present form, the manual presents a first proposal for a methodology to achieve a comprehensive Camp Improvement Plan”. (Manual for Camp Improvement, 2008) The manual emphasises that many questions still need to be addressed before this proposal can become a fully established policy with the potential to be applied in 58 camps located in the five regions. In the following, a brief overview will be provided on such issues and themes:

• **Full internal endorsement has yet to be achieved**

At present, internal reform and restructuring process within UNRWA is still incomplete. While the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department ICID has been set up on HQ level, the five fields remain still reluctant to implement equivalent field-level structures. Some progress has been made. The West Bank field has absorbed the former research team to form a Housing and Camp Improvement Unit but the unit relies 100% on external donor support, which has only been guaranteed until 2010. The field office remains reluctant to install the unit as part of the core programmes funded by UNRWA’s general project fund. A similarly temporary unit dependent on external funds has been installed in Jordan, implementing a BMZ funded camp improvement plan in Talbieh. Syria and Lebanon has postponed the formal introduction of camp improvement units until after the two major projects, the Neirab Rehabilitation Project Phase 2 (Syria) and the Reconstruction of Nahr el Bared (Lebanon) will be completed which is expected to last until after 2010. UNRWA’s field office in the Gaza Strip has also refrained from introducing camp improvement due to the general instability of the political and economic situation, which has led to the stagnation of all major construction projects.

Despite this reluctance, the manual’s methodology is currently being directly applied at Deheishe, West Bank and Talbieh, Jordan. Essential elements of the methodology have also been appropriated for two other key projects within UNRWA, the Neirab Rehabilitation Project Phase 2, Syria and the Nahr el Bared Reconstruction Project, Lebanon. ICID considers this as a milestone and continues to advocate for a more widespread implementation of camp improvement as a core part of UNRWA’s future service portfolio.

• **Full external stakeholders endorsement is still outstanding**

In Part I/ chapter 2 of this dissertation, the large gap between UNHCR tools and policies and their application on the ground has been discussed in detail. Progressive policies such as the “Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes”³⁰⁶ fell short of being used due to the reluctance and, at times, outright opposition of host governments. Concepts such as participation, empowerment and sustainability frequently raise eyebrows amongst bureaucrats and security officials who prefer a more heavy-handed approach of control vis-à-vis refugees. Although all governments hosting Palestinian refugee camps have endorsed the recommendations of the 2004 Geneva conference (see chapter 1.2/ section 1.2.1), a similar reaction if confronted with the prospect of significant policy change remains a real possibility. As discussed in chapter 1.1/ section 1.1.2, the relationship between government and refugee population is already extremely tense in Lebanon and Palestinian’s lack basic rights. The Syrian and to some extent also the Jordanian governments have established large-scale security operations to monitor camp populations – a regime of control which effectively controls all aspects of camp life including the appointments of representatives and heads of institutions. Furthermore, one may ask why authoritarian regimes with poor human rights records and autocratic planning traditions allow for a precedent of “community driven planning”, benefiting a community that is considered a potential risk to internal stability at that?

³⁰⁶ see: “Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes”, prepared by Amadou Tijan Jallow (Consultant, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) and Sajjad Masood Malik (Senior Rural Development Officer, Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, Division of Operational Support, UNHCR, Geneva) for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Geneva, First edition issued January, 2005.

Having faced reservations or direct opposition to new policies in the past, UNRWA has learnt to adopt a cautious approach vis-à-vis host governments, with a preference on creating facts and precedents rather than attempting to discuss abstract policy sets. To some extent, the Agency relies on its sheer size and vast service portfolio to implement pilot projects and confront host governments with positive results. This strategy has also been applied vis-à-vis the manual. While internally advocating wide-spread use, officially and when speaking to external stakeholders, ICID refers to the manual as “tentative proposal...still awaiting feedback and input from all stakeholders.” The manual itself repeatedly emphasizes, that “camp improvement is not an UNRWA programme alone. Full external stakeholder endorsement is vital as sustainable camp improvement can only be achieved when all partners join efforts and commit to full cooperation.” (Manual for Camp Improvement, 2008) A recent project initiative indicates that UNRWA is making steps towards a more direct involvement of host governments, which include a new BMZ-funded cooperation with the GTZ to launch stakeholder communication on camp improvement. In the following sections, this project will be described in more detail.

• Institutionalisation of stakeholder interaction in camp improvement

Comprehensive planning requires the constant participation and cooperation of all stakeholders including UNRWA, host governments, neighbouring municipalities, camp communities or external NGOs and donors. UNRWA’s pilot efforts in Fawwar have raised many questions on roles, responsibilities and mechanisms of interaction between stakeholders when developing, managing, implementing, monitoring and enforcing CIPs. The manual states: “In order to ‘institutionalize’ camp improvement in all fields many questions will still need to be addressed, such as the definition of stakeholder roles, responsibilities during the various phase of the Camp Improvement Plan.” (Manual for Camp Improvement, 2008) The already mentioned UNRWA-GTZ cooperation project “Consolidation of Participatory Approaches in the Design and Implementation of Camp Improvement Plans (CIPs)”³⁰⁷ has been designed to address this need: “Further communication between the stakeholders and clarification of roles and responsibilities in the development, implementation and longer-term monitoring and updating of CIPs is necessary to develop a sustainable methodology for the delivery of CIPs in the medium-term. A fully developed and refined implementation model of the CIP, endorsed by all stakeholders, adaptable to the conditions of all locations, including clear guidelines about decision-making mechanisms is still missing. Furthermore it is essential to establish a new distribution of tasks and responsibilities between the different involved parties (institutions of the host countries, municipalities, representatives of the refugees, UNRWA, etc).”³⁰⁸

Key issues and questions that require stakeholder input include:

- Host government participation in the development and implementation of the CIP: Will host governments agree to respect the CIP as a general coordination framework for refugee camps and integrate their own policies within it? Who reinforces the decisions and recommendations of the CIP?
- Links between camps and their surroundings: Can CIPs also be effective planning tools for the informal overspill areas outside of UNRWA’s official camp boundary? How can old and new camps be linked?
- Integration of CIPs into national, regional and municipal planning initiatives: What dialogue mechanisms and decision-making structures are required to coordinate CIPs with planning schemes developed for the host areas?
- Status and “ownership” of the Camp Improvement Plan: How does the CIP relate to existing planning law of the host country? Will the CIP receive an equivalent status of a communal master plan?

• Building effective local governance

The Manual for Camp Improvement (Step 7) recommended the setting up of an “effective and transparent local governance” structure for refugee camps. It recognizes that only a local structure of refugee community representatives can provide an effective camp management, assuming responsibilities in the planning, implementation and maintenance of CIP related projects, to monitor progress and to reinforce CIP concepts and recommendations on the ground: “Only through building a strong sense of ownership and achieving full community identification with the proposed project plan, the implementation of measures will become sustainable.”

³⁰⁷ In August 2008, UNRWA and the GTZ signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the one-year strategic cooperation project “Consolidation of Participatory Approaches in the Design and Implementation of Camp Improvement Plans (CIPs)”, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development BMZ, project duration: 2008/ 2009

³⁰⁸ UNRWA-GTZ cooperation concept, drafted by GTZ-Office Amman, June 2008

The precise definition of the responsibilities of such a body are left open, nor is it defined what capacities are required. It also remains unclear how such structures could be formed. The manual hints at the fact that the Working Groups established in a CIP planning process could provide a nucleus for such a structure. In other instances, Local Committees (West Bank and Gaza Strip), or Camp Committees (currently appointed by the Jordanian and Syrian governments) might evolve into such structures. The manual strongly recommends that these structures should ideally be elected by the community, rather than appointed from above, thus, ensuring transparency, accountability and full identification on the part of the wider community. However, many host governments might be reluctant to allow genuine grass root community mobilization and instead chose to continue to “appoint” committees, which can be better controlled.

• **Broadening portfolio of tools**

CIPs deal with many new themes and issues that have never been addressed before. This includes the residential fabric of the camp (limiting population and building density, block restructuring, improving access and public space provision, etc.). In the past, UNRWA or host governments mostly interfered in cases of emergency only, such as conflict related destruction, or by helping Special Hard Ship cases (defined according to strict socioeconomic indicators) in shelter upgrading. New expertise and concepts for the implementation of CIPs are therefore urgently required. UNRWA as a key actor needs to broaden its tool portfolio and touch upon issues that were hitherto considered taboo. This includes the issue of compensation for assets should demolition of shelters be required to improve pedestrian or vehicular access, increase public space, restructure blocks and so forth. It is also essential to continue to pioneer new levels of community participation in the implementation phase, rather than falling back on the traditional approach of working in isolation. Beyond new partnerships in decision-making and responsibility sharing, significant progress, particularly in relation to the upgrading of the physical fabric, can only be made through the inclusion of large-scale self help initiatives. Pilot projects under the CIP can inspire initiative, set quality standards and good practice precedents. An additional challenge however is to set up new financial frameworks (low interest loans, *sharia*-compatible lending schemes, group loans, partial grants, etc.), which would help camp residents to invest their own resources into shelter upgrading.

Chapter 3

Potentials of Regional Application of the CIP Methodology

3.1

Scenario 1: Failure of Camp Improvement

The following three scenarios will speculate on the medium-term future of Palestine refugee camps. The first two scenarios assume that no durable solution in form of a comprehensive peace deal will be found in the near future while the third scenario develops a vision for the integration of existing camps into a Palestinian State as part of a negotiated solution. All scenarios will specifically focus on a highly selective range of variables concerning the camps themselves. They do not attempt to present a comprehensive vision of the situation of Palestine refugees, nor do they speculate on the details of a possible political settlement.

The first scenario describes the implications of a complete failure to launch a significant and large-scale camp improvement initiative in the five regions of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the same time, it is assumed that no peace deal has been made and the Palestinian refugee crisis will continue with UNRWA as a main agent serving the refugees, thus, the current status quo will prevail. The most likely reasons for such failure would be

- host government resistance to back the CIP methodology or a similar equivalent
- resistance of leadership of Palestinian refugee movement
- dramatic worsening of the security situation on the ground which makes planning impossible

(1) General Development Predictions for Camp Cities

• Demographic development:

In June 30, 2008, UNRWA recorded 1,363,469m refugees residing in refugee camps. The Agency also stated a crude birth rate (life birth per 1000 Population) of 32.2 (latest figure available from 1998).³⁰⁹ On the basis of these figures a demographic growth scenario can be calculated according to which 1.7m refugees would live in camps by 2015 and just under 2.0m by 2020 for the official 58 refugee camps. This enormous increase will put the existing camps under enormous strain.

The average camp size will increase from 23,600 in 2008 to 34,000 inhabitants by 2020. The 2008 average population density of 104,000 persons per km² will be up reaching almost 150,000 persons per km² by 2020. Even more dramatic are specific camps: 17 camps are significantly denser than the average. 9 camps are above 200,000. Moreover, a strong regional polarisation would occur. The most dramatic development is likely to take place in Syria and Lebanon (→ 286). The average for Syrian camps of 3,250 persons per hectare is extreme, particularly if one considered this as a gross figure. The net population density, which would exclude access lanes, open spaces and internal courtyards might even exceed 4,000 persons per hectare. An acceptable population density for self-built, evolving structures would be 500 – 1000 persons per hectare (see also discussion in Part II/ Chapter 2.2/ section 2.2.2 Building and Population Density).

• Physical spatial development:

The dramatic increase of population density will trigger huge demand for additional residential spaces. Assuming that the economy will not improve dramatically, camp residents will find it increasingly difficult to rent or buy property outside of the camp and will need to construct what they need within the camp boundaries. It is further assumed that no new camp will be set up and camp boundaries will not change.

The case studies of the three refugee camps of Amari, Deheishe and Fawwar discussed in Part II of this dissertation, generated unique data which could be used to project the development of the residential areas in the three camps. Figure → 287 shows the likely development of the built up area and the total internal floor space area, assuming that the intensity of building activities will continue in the same rate as between 1997 and 2004. The result of this calculation is a dramatic increase in the Floor Space Index in a camp such as Amari from 1.74 (average) in 2006³¹⁰ to 3.61 in 2020 and 5.88 in 2030. Horizontal expansion will reach exhaustion point at around 75% built up area, just enough to guarantee basic access via narrow pathways and lanes to private houses, as well as assuming that UNRWA installations will remain in the camp. This leaves extreme verticalisation as the only growth direction. All three camps do not represent particu-

³⁰⁹ source: www.unrwa.org

³¹⁰ source: camp survey conducted on the basis of new aerial surveys and photogrammetric plans, see also Part II/ Chapter 2.2/ section 2.2.2 Building and Population Density of this dissertation.

larly dense camps if compared to the overall average. Other more dense camps would face even more dramatic development prospects. Moreover, all the above calculations are based on averages while in reality, density is not developing homogeneously causing critical areas to reach saturation point much earlier.

As discussed in Part II/ Chapter 2.2 (section 2.2.2 Building and Population Density), a sensible “Density Limit/ Maximum Carrying Capacity” depends on many factors such as building typology, ration between built-over area and open space, width of access streets, etc. In the context of the largely self-built, evolving blocks typical for refugee camps with extremely narrow access lanes and a shrinking percentage of internal courtyards the Maximum Carrying Capacity should be defined with an FSI of 3.0. Only with a new and extended access and open space system, an FSI of 4 to 5 might be acceptable, assuming wide roads or adjacent open spaces. An FSI of 5-6 as calculated for Amari in 2030 would only be acceptable for isolated apartment towers (for exemplified Singapore).

(2) Implications and Risks

• Implications for camp communities

The obvious effect of the dramatic increase of population and building density in camps will be a serious deterioration of living quality including the average available space per person and household, environmental health issues such as natural light and ventilation. The internal infrastructure and access systems are likely to collapse. Building safety will be deteriorating, making camps even more vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters such as earthquakes or hazards. Beyond the direct impact on living quality, the scenario is seriously threatening internal social cohesion, making camp societies extremely instable vulnerable to internal crime, or the influx of militancy from the outside. In short, camps will run the risk of turning into uncontrollable urban slums. Under these conditions it is more than likely that those who can will leave the camp, triggering a new level of socioeconomic segregation and sending the camp into a further downward spiral.

• Implications for UNRWA

Under the assumed circumstances, it is difficult to imagine that UNRWA will be able to provide effective services to the camp communities. Its installations such as schools and health centres will need to be vastly increased (for which it will be difficult to find space). Moreover, the Agency will find it hard to mobilize additional donor support to match the vast predicted population increase. In effect, the per/ capita budget is likely to decrease. This will put additional strain to the relationship between the Agency and the camp community. With no effective and transparent local governance structure in place, which can cooperate with the Agency as a partner, an already sour relationship might dramatically deteriorate.

• Implications for the Camp City’s relation with the host area

It is hard to imagine how host areas will deal with their neighbours within the hyper-congested, ghetto-like Camp Cities. The environmental impact of the camps will not be contained within the boundaries. Informal building activities, waste, pollution, strain on public infrastructural systems or crime will be felt. A rapid deterioration of the relations between camp and non-camp environment is likely, with the possibility of more frequent violent clashes.

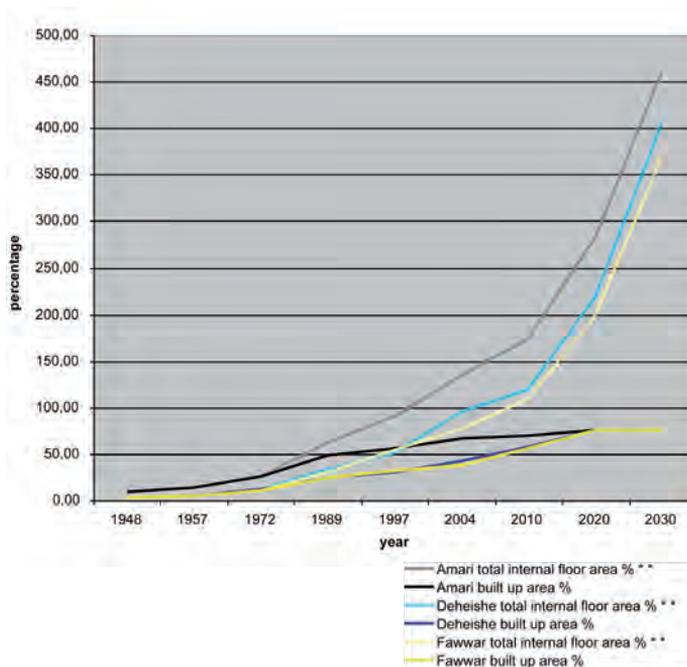
The development scenario is of course theoretical. Local circumstances and constraints are likely to make such extreme density levels impossible. In light of serious hazards or the outbreaks of conflict host governments might issue new policies, forcefully re-locate refugee population into spill-over camps or containment zones. With no mechanism in place to strategically develop solutions that are acceptable to all stakeholders including the camp community, imposed solutions are likely to ignore the interests of the community and everyday life in the camp is set to become even more unbearable. A failure of camp improvement to trigger dramatic change could therefore be considered a “worst case scenario”.

UNRWA Field of Operation	Average population density prediction for 2020
Syria	325,000 pers./ km2 (3,250 pers./ ha) (including large non-camp refugee concentration)
Lebanon	170,000 pers./ km2 (1,700 pers./ ha)
Gaza	117,000 pers./ km2 (1,170 pers./ ha)
Jordan	94,000 pers./ km2 (940 pers./ ha)
West Bank	68,000 pers./ km2 (680 pers./ ha)

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Estimation for average population densities in camps per region in 2020

source: www.unrwa.org and data kindly provided by UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department, HQ Amman. The estimation was based on a 2008 population figures and cured birth rate data. The error margin might be considerable, however, since UNRWA does not have reliable figures for actual population residing in camps. UNRWA's registered refugee numbers do not take into account that fact that many refugees (sometimes up to 20% have left the camp to reside outside its boundaries but continue to be registered. At the same time, the figures do not take into account the influx of non-registered persons, which, in the case of Shatila camp can amount up to 40% of the actual camp population.



→ 287

Estimation for average building densities in camps per region in 2020

The projection graphs were calculated on the basis of archival map analysis for built up area (1950s, 1970s, 1997s, 2006) and an assumption on the total internal floor areas (the 2006 total floor area is based on accurate survey results). The graph shows the expected building density increase assuming that construction activity will continue in the same pace as between 1997 and 2006.

The graph assumes that horizontal expansion (built up area) will have to come to a halt at around 70% (assuming that a minimum of open space of 30% is required to allow for basic access to houses). Building activities are then expected to lead to an even more dramatic verticalisation. The Floor Space Index indicated could reach to 3.5 to above 4.5, expressed in the sharp rise of the graph.

3.2

Scenario 2: Camp Improvement Planning without a Durable Solution

The second scenario will speculate on the potential of a large-scale camp improvement planning initiative to divert the catastrophic outlook of the above scenario. Firstly, the scenario assumes that camp improvement will be institutionalised and funded in such a way that key strategic objectives of camp-level CIPs can be addressed such as building and population density, access and circulation systems, infrastructure, public space and many community development concerns. Secondly, the scenario assumes that in the absence of a durable solution, UNRWA will continue to be a major agent delivering core services to Camp Cities, but operating on the basis of a radically redefined relationship with the camp community - a significant shift of responsibilities from UNRWA to community structures.

In some ways, this scenario represents the “best possible” interim scenario for refugee camps, applying SUSAN BANKI’s concept of “*local integration in the intermediate term*”³¹¹ (see also Part I/ chapter 2.2) not as a “durable solution” but as an interim solution. Reflecting on Kenyan camps, BANKI had argued that the ability of refugees to freely participate in the economic and communal life of the host region does not necessarily mean to abolish their status of refugees. Instead, full participation in the civil life of a host country is considered an essential human right, which should not compromise the political right to return or receive compensation. Applied in practice, this concept could lead to a radical reconceptualization of Palestine camps as “Integrated Camp Cities”, which fully partake in the social and economic life of the host environment. In view of the many hurdles and obstacles, as well as open questions cited in the previous chapter, the proposal may seem radical and perhaps unrealistic from today’s perspective. However, a more global perspective shows that such a re-conceptualisation is not only needed but also possible. Alternative models for self-sustainable, rural settlements for refugees that fully engage in social and commercial life of the host area have been tested and implemented in an African context since the early 1980s and are currently being revived. Other examples such as the Sahrawi camps in Algeria show that the development of a democratically elected, bottom up camp government is possible even under very harsh conditions.

(1) Addressing Unresolved Questions

A precondition for a large-scale application of the CIP methodology would be to find workable solutions for the main unresolved questions as defined in section 2.2.3. In the following, a vision will be proposed of how two key aspects - local governance and institutionalized stakeholder interaction - could be solved:

•Establishing Effective Local Governance: Camp City Municipalities (CCMs)

This outline for a local governance structure for Palestine Camp Cities is based on the following assumptions: (1) Only by placing the “beneficiaries” in the driver’s seat of the planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes, a developmental approach can be genuine and sustainable. Participatory community development requires the ability to identify, prioritize (and eventually manage the solutions to) problems in a participatory manner. (2) The best way to promote sustainable development is for it to be managed by the community of the camp itself. The process of bottom up, beneficiary-led development requires a capacity for communities to organise themselves in a more effective way and take on key responsibilities. The worst way to promote sustainable development is through repeated, ongoing, “humanitarian emergency interventions” of externally determined “aid”.

The average population size of Palestine Camp cities is approximately 35,000, which is equivalent to the size of a small town. Sustainable camp governance should therefore learn from municipal management and should adapt it as a model. For the first time, this approach was proposed by a team of consultants around PIET GOOVAERTS (2006) advising UNRWA on the development of Camp Improvement Initiative.³¹² Like municipalities GOOVAERTS argues, CCMs should be led by democratically elected individuals, transparent, accountable and regionally integrated into the national structure of the host government. The already existing West Bank Local Committees would be predestined to evolve into CCMs. Indeed, their experience in delivering communal services and representing the community’s interest forms would be a good starting point and could serve as a model for the other countries. New functions within camp improvement could include:

³¹¹ source: Banki, Susan, “Refugee Integration in the Intermediate Term: A Study of Nepal, Pakistan, and Kenya”, 2003; Crisp, Jeff, “Who has counted the refugees?”, 1999

³¹² Goovaerts, Piet. Graves, Goeff, Neumann, Wolfgang. “Consultancy to Assist in the Development of The Concept, Policies & Strategies For the New UNRWA Camp Development Approach”, Smooth Managing, Amman, 2006

- Facilitation of strategic planning process leading to a CIP, definition of priority projects for implementation, monitoring progress and revising CIPs
- Leading and coordinating role in the implementation of projects
- Direct implementation of projects
- Reinforcement of decisions and recommendations made by the CIP (through the issuing of “building permits” the building codes defined in the CIP could be reinforced and building density controlled)
- Monitoring progress, evaluation and updating CIPs

CCMs therefore assume “ownership” of the CIP. For key decisions (Camp Priority List, Camp Improvement Plan, definition of projects for implementation etc), however, the involvement and agreement of other stakeholders - including a mechanism for larger community input - is necessary.

Like ordinary municipalities, Camp City Municipalities will need to remain accountable not only to those they serve (camp residents), but also to higher authorities. Like ordinary municipalities, Camp City Municipalities will need to be part of a regional and national development planning. Key decisions cannot be made in isolation but will require the participation and consent of UNRWA, host area stakeholders and national governments. It is also likely that key external stakeholders will insist on monitoring the effectiveness of the CCM, transparency of the election process, decision-making and spending. The setting up of CCMs will be a gradual process. UNRWA could aid this process by providing trainers in community mobilisation for an institutional capacity building process. Any camp improvement initiative should aim to set up CCMs. Budgetary control could be gradually passed on from UNRWA to CCMs in accordance with strict performance evaluation criteria for good governance.

• Institutionalizing Sustainable Stakeholder Interaction

Camps will not solve their problems within their “walls” but need to be connected to the “outside world”. Sustainability will depend on their economic and social connections to their environment. Moreover, the legal and political authority of host governments, the role of UNRWA and other stakeholders will make it necessary for Camp City Municipalities to engage in an institutionalized mechanism of stakeholder dialogue and joint decision-making mechanism. It is not only a legal requirement but a vital interest for camp communities to lobby for every outside help and assistance they can get. The following proposal represents a general vision for stakeholder roles and interaction on three levels - national, regional, local :

(A) Country-wide Committee

An overall coordinating committee for camp improvement could meet on a monthly basis and include representatives of UNRWA, the host authorities and the camp community. Without overstressing the limited resources of stakeholders, such meetings could set the general direction of camp improvement, monitor progress, make key decisions, and delegate to other relevant bodies.

(B) Area-Wide Committee

Similar in purpose to the above model, but more specifically directed towards the needs in particular areas and sub-regions, specific area-wide coordinating committees could be set at monthly intervals.

(C) Camp-Level Cooperation

Host government participation could also be sufficiently ensured at the newly set-up CCM. This has been standard practice in Jordan and Syria. This would most probably require a camp resident to be nominated as host government representative.

(2) From Camp Cities to “Integrated Camp Cities”

A successful, large-scale application of the principles of camp improvement will inevitably lead to a radical transformation of the present Camp Cities. The programme offers the opportunity to “pioneer” a new typology of refugee settlement, which will be in structure, outlook and organisation different from any other type of refugee concentration, an urban environment in which refugees assume nearly full civil rights but continue to preserve their political status as refugees (i.e. non-nationals). The spatial and physical characteristics of the emerging “Integrated Camp Cities” might be as follows:

• **Camp boundary:**

The CIP would acknowledge the already existing informal overspill and strive to integrate old camp and new camps, which would continue to blur UNRWA's official camp boundaries. If CIPs would indeed operate across these boundaries, their impact on the daily life of refugees would further diminish. It will be more and more difficult to differentiate camps from their urban or suburban surroundings. Camp borders however are likely to continue to define effective property boundaries (inside the boundaries the 1948 lease arrangement will prevail while outside ownership will be regulated in accordance with host government law).

• **Growing Camp Cities:**

Radical interim solutions to decrease population and building density will need to be found. In most cases, such solutions must be found outside camp boundaries. Whether boundaries will be formally expanded or not, large-scale construction activities will take place within and beyond the already existing informal overspill areas. This will lead to perceived expansion of the camps and might involve the introduction of social housing schemes and new building typologies such as or high-rise apartment blocks.

• **Diversification:**

Devolving decision-making power away from a centralized Agency such as UNRWA or Camp City Municipalities, as well as the development of camp-specific CIPs will lead to a growing diversification of Camp Cities. Factors such as context and location, local characteristics and potentials, local initiative and skills will be assume a new importance and will change each camp in different ways. Indeed, it is likely that Camp Cities, like municipalities, will find themselves competing with each other over resources, aid from donors or host government programmes.

• **Camp Cities as local centres and development engines:**

Successful CIPs will fuel local development and may put Camp Cities in an advantageous position over nearby villages or towns who do not receive international donor support. Already today, the gap in access to education, health services or aid programmes can be felt. In isolated rural locations, Camp Cities have already become economic centres and may gain increasing importance as regional development engines. The influence of CCM-managed camps on their host environment might also extend to inspiring a reform process of political and administrative structures, encourage residents to demand greater transparency, accountability and direct participation in planning processes.

UNRWA's role vis-à-vis camps will inevitably change as responsibilities are passed on to CCMs and other stakeholders. This might help the Agency to better household with its budgets and more effectively deliver core services such as education and health care, which will need to be expanded in accordance to the projected natural population increase. With the full implementation of a developmental approach, UNRWA will be called upon to provide other skills such as capacity building, training, monitoring, advocacy work on behalf of camps, which will lead to a significant internal reforms.

(3) Risks and challenges

Camp improvement will not "solve" all humanitarian, social, economic and political problems faced by refugees on a daily basis. Budgets to implement CIPs will be limited and donors will be increasingly difficult to attract in the context of a failure to find a durable solution to the refugee crisis. Some of the serious challenges and risks involved in this scenario include:

- Risk of losing donor support in the absence of peace negotiations and the prospect of a comprehensive settlement.
- Camp communities might be inclined to continue to be wary of "normalisation" processes and self-impose limits on reforming and transforming Camp Cities.
- The development gap between Camp Cities and host areas might increase leading to social and political tensions and host government reluctance to approve "unlimited favours" to camp communities.
- Each host government might embrace camp improvement to a different degree, furthering polarisation between regions such as Lebanon and Jordan.
- The "competition" between camps might also lead to negative effects, such as an increasing polarisation between camps (some camps will do well and while other will fall behind).

3.3

Scenario 3: Transition From Camp to City?

The third scenario assumes a situation in which a political peace settlement has been negotiated or enforced and a Palestinian State has been set up in areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. Following the precedent of the 2006 withdrawal and evacuation of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip instigated by the then Israeli Prime Minister ARIEL SHARON, most dispersed settlements have been evacuated from the West Bank. In the following, I will outline a possible development scenario for Camp Cities focussing on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

(1) General Development Predictions for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

• General Population Growth and Housing Requirements

The last comprehensive development scenario for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was prepared by the Palestinian National Authority in 1998, at a time when a peace deal seemed imminent. Some of its predictions shall be used here: According to the 1998 Ministry of Planning “Draft Regional Plan for West Bank Governorates”³¹³, by 2020, the Palestinian population of currently 2.3 million in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is estimated to increase to 3.8 million. This includes the assumption that about 780,000 refugees currently residing in Lebanon, Syria or Jordan will be repatriated and absorbed into the West Bank. The report also estimates that the existing built-up areas of the West Bank – living space characterized by scattered, decentralized low-density development will need to be doubled by 2010 in order to accommodate the projected population increase (MOPIC 1997, page 25). This means that until 2010, the existing housing stock of 238,000 units (1998), of which 18,000 were located in refugee camps would have needed to be increased by an additional 250,000 to 280,000 units.

The Gaza Strip has an area of 365 km² with a built-up area of 15 per cent of the total, and a population of approximately 1.4 million (2007), a number, which is expected to double by 2015. The 1997 “Draft Regional Plan - Gaza Governorates”³¹⁴ anticipated the repatriation to Gaza of 590,000 returnees by 2015. The plan estimated that the need to rehabilitate run-down housing and provide housing for returning refugees resettling from camps would call for 266,000 new residential units by 2015. This figure may be broken down as follows: 186,000 units for population increase; 51,000 units for resettled refugees; and 29,000 new units for urban renewal.

• From Refugees to Citizens

According to the above quoted data, by 2015-2020, a Palestinian State is therefore to be expected to have approximately 6.6m residents, of which about 1,370,000 would be repatriated refugees from Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. If one also counts the 700,000 – 800,000 refugees that already live in camps located in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip themselves the new State will need to integrate about 2.2m former camp dwellers. The draft regional plan assumes that Israel’s willingness to grant a return to towns and villages within its territory would be extremely limited and more or less a symbolic gesture. It would therefore remain a challenge for the newly formed Palestinian State to integrate these two refugee groups, a) those refugees residing in the camps already and, b.) the new arrivals from the other Arab host countries.

• The End of UNRWA

A comprehensive peace deal will have radical implications on UNRWA. The Agency in its present form will cease to exist. It is likely that the Agency’s infrastructure and enormous staff of key departments such as Education, Health or Infrastructure and Camp Improvement will be absorbed into Palestinian National Government Ministries or new municipal structures within the camps themselves. It is also likely however, that the UN will continue to play a major role. Sister organisations such as UNDP or UNHABITAT will take over some core responsibilities presently assumed by UNRWA, or that a smaller special UN body will be created which will assist the PNA in the process of gradual take over, continue to coordinate international support and projects such as urban rehabilitation.

• General Spatial Development Predictions

³¹³ source: Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Planning (MOPIC) (1997) Draft Regional Plan for the West Bank Governorates, Ramallah: MOPIC

³¹⁴ source: Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Planning (MOPIC) (1997) Draft Regional Plan – Gaza Governorates, Gaza:

As soon as political and security conditions become more stable, the process of migration from villages to cities is likely to accelerate. This particularly applies to the West Bank, where the ongoing military and civil occupation artificially slowed down the urbanisation process. Young families are likely to search for opportunities to build up livelihoods in the three already existing urban conurbations of Ramallah/ East Jerusalem/ Bethlehem in the centre, Nablus in the north or Hebron in the south, all located along the main north-south artery that follows the mountain ridge - Road 60. The triple city of Ramallah-Al Bireh and Bitunia has already grown at a spectacular rate in recent years as the most attractive economy across the West Bank. It is unclear if national plans will be able to steer this development to achieve a more balanced development process to prevent a likely polarisation between centres and periphery. A significant factor might be the appropriation of the physical infrastructure of the many Israeli settlements (more than 40,000 housing units) and military facilities dispersed within the West Bank, which could offer attractive housing opportunities for Palestinians.

Due to the specific territorial constraints within the Gaza Strip, the entire territory has already been urbanised and is set to become one of the densest areas in the world. The 1998 “Draft Regional Plan – Gaza Governorates” advocated a “Two Core Cities” development model, which proposed that Gaza City and Khan Younis should absorb more than one half of the area’s projected population growth, including 30 per cent and 70 per cent of returnees respectively. The draft plan’s proposed two centres with high population densities would then maximize the utilization of the remaining land for agricultural use and environmental protection including existing aquifers. The refugee camps and urban villages that dominate the middle region, as well as the small cities and towns that presently characterize both northern and southern extremities, should ideally be limited in their future growth. Again, it is unclear whether a stable political authority will be in place capable and willing to implement this development vision.

(2) From Camp Cities to Urban Centres

What are the implications of the above-cited predictions onto the physical and spatial structure of the present camps in the West Bank and Gaza? What will happen to camps once they cease to be special zones under the protection of UNRWA, defined by an official camp boundary? Some refugees and displaced Palestinians may choose to move between the different countries as part of a politically negotiated contingent of returnees absorbed by Israel. Others will be given compensation and therefore have the economic means to leave the camps for cities and villages. However, it is extremely unlikely that more than a few smaller refugee camps may eventually be abandoned, for the following reasons:

- It is likely that many households particularly in more centrally located camps that are well-placed for employment will choose to stay and continue to invest in the physical, social and economic assets that have already been accumulated.
- As the case studies discussed in Part II have shown, many camp residents have already invested in property within the informal overspill areas around camps. They consider themselves as rooted in the local area and are unlikely to want to start from the beginning in another location.
- The huge demand for housing in the West Bank due to natural population growth and the absorption of repatriated refugees will make abandonment and demolition of camps wasteful and unrealistic. Camp residents themselves are likely to want to sell their assets to their neighbours or new arrivals should they choose to leave the former camp area. The complete absence of public and social housing initiatives in Palestine has caused tremendous needs for affordable housing.

KHALIL NIJEM, former Director General of Spatial Planning within the PA Ministry of Planning confirms that the 1998 Draft Regional Plans for both West Bank and Gaza Strip also assumed the integration of the existing camp fabric, rather than favouring a demolition: *“The planning including refugee camps, on the other hand, is concerned with upgrading and integrating the existing refugee camps into the urban and rural structure of West Bank and Gaza after an agreement is reached between the Palestinians and Israel. The PPI [Physical Planning Initiative] aims at drafting a proposal for an urban regeneration plan of refugee camps in WBG including the assessment and formulation of policy/strategic options for this process. MOP’s [Ministry of Planning] ongoing work in this area includes in-depth analysis of existing refugee camps, including the typology of camps, types of land, quality of housing, variations in socioeconomic status as well as analysing various scenarios for the upgrading and integra-*

tion of camps in order to develop policies and programmes for their rehabilitation and integration."³¹⁵ Based on this approach, the following three alternative development scenarios could be applied to former refugee camps, depending on their location within region (central or peripheral) or the immediate local context (land resources with development potential and local economy):

a.) Full Integration into Existing Cities

The first scenario assumes that former camp areas will not be demolished but fully integrated into the political and administrative system of the host area. This scenario is particularly likely for camp areas located in urban contexts, such as the West Bank camps of Amari, Qalandiya, Deheishe, Aida or Beit Jebreen, or camps around Gaza City and Khan Younis. Former camps would simply become new urban quarters within existing towns and cities. The challenge here would be to achieve full social, economic and cultural integration to avoid these areas to become ostracised slum neighbourhoods. As the case studies discussed in Part II of this dissertation indicated, many conflicts already exist between no-camp and camp populations and prejudices against refugees are deep-rooted. The experience of the community-driven Camp Improvement Programme with its integrated physical and developmental approach could be utilized and CIP's could form the basis for "Strategic Integration Plans" based on the equal participation and "ownership" of former camp communities and their none-camp neighbours.

b.) Former Camps Become Nuclei of New Urban Centres

The second scenario might be particularly relevant to camps located in more isolated rural or semi-urbanised contexts. Following positive experience from African refugee camps that have become regional centres, these camps could be transformed into independent municipalities. Boundaries of these municipalities should include all informal overspill areas and, if possible, empty land as a development resource including land and structures of evacuated Israeli settlements. In some cases, smaller villages or dispersed Palestinian settlement clusters should also be absorbed. The new cities could play a major role in the shouldering the absorption of repatriated refugees from Lebanon, Syria or Jordan and are even likely to absorb villagers who will arrive as part of the general urbanisation process. The challenge will be to prevent the emerging of second class "refugee" cities. Significant state investment will be required to establish the needed infrastructure and public institutions, to provide for employment opportunities and make these new cities sustainable.

c.) Urban Villages

The third scenario might apply to very isolated camps such as Fawwar, Aida or Deir Ammar. With below 10,000 inhabitants, these former camp areas will be too small to form independent municipalities. Their peripheral and isolated location makes significant population influx less likely. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the physical fabric of the camps will remain largely intact as refugees have invested in houses within and outside the camp boundaries. In some ways, these camps anticipate the likely future constitution of most Palestinian villages, which are already undergo processes of accelerated urbanisation. A new governance models for both, urbanised villages and former isolated camps will be required. Village councils may be able to learn from the experience of Camp City Municipalities set up during camp improvement.

Hurdles and Challenges

Apart from the particular challenges already cited above, the following general questions will need to be addressed:

- Land ownership: A national solution is required with regard to the ownership of camp lands. Most of the West Bank camps were established on private land holdings on the basis of how already outdated lease agreements. With property prices soaring, most Palestinian families will insist on being reinstated as rightful owners. Compensation according to present real estate prices will be unfeasible in locations such as central Ramallah or Bethlehem and would absorb huge funds.

³¹⁵ source: Nijem, Khalil. "Planning in support of negotiations: The refugee issue", in: Brynen, Rex. El-Rifai, Roula (eds.). "Palestinian Refugees - Challenges of Repatriation and Development", a joint publication of I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd and the International Development Research Centre, London, New York, Ottawa, 2007

• **Property ownership:**

Apart from the land ownership, the ownership of shelters needs to be solved. Refugees already perceive themselves as owners and engage in buying, selling and renting activities. UNRWA other hand insist on a legalistic view that refugees do not own these properties. Again, a national solution will be required and could form a part of the Israeli-Palestinian peace deal: Refugees could become rightful owners if they agree to accept ownership as part of a general compensation package for refugees. It is likely that this issue will be unpopular and contested by the refugee community.

• **Rehabilitation of old camps:**

In all of the three development scenarios mentioned above, the rehabilitation of the social and physical fabric (decreasing population and building density to acceptable standards, introduction of public space and communal facilities, improvement of access etc.) will continue to pose a huge challenge for all stakeholders for decades to come. The risk of camps becoming urban slum areas remains high. UNRWA's camp improvement programme should therefore be followed by a national rehabilitation programme, which could be implemented in partnership with UN organisations and will rely on international funding.

• **Setting up public housing programmes:**

So far, no public housing initiatives exist within the Palestinian Authority Area. This is not simply a political omission. Traditional Arab Palestinian culture strongly favours private ownership over renting. However, it is unlikely that the vast challenges of absorbing hundreds of thousands of repatriated refugees could be solved without a large-scale national housing programme. Also the urban congestion of the former camp areas will only be solved through the introduction of compact housing typologies, as opposed to dispersed private dwellings and family apartment housing which is currently the only accepted new building typology.

Part IV

Conclusion

Chapter 1

Lessons for Urbanised Refugee Camps World-Wide

What lessons can be learnt from the case study research and pilot planning experience in Palestine Camp Cities for other refugee situations? Is UNRWA's camp improvement initiative an approach, which could be transferred to other urbanised refugee concentrations? Can the Camp Improvement Manual be applied directly or in a modified form to enrich the tool portfolio of globally acting humanitarian agents such as UNHCR? This chapter is an attempt to reflect on the above questions and speculate on the relevance of experience and developed methodologies beyond the Palestine refugee context. Two questions shall be briefly discussed at the outset:

• **Are Palestine Camp Cities comparable to other refugee camp situations?**

The combined interpretation of data obtained from UNHCR, UNRWA and original data gathered during field work in the West Bank suggests that camp urbanisation with its negative effects such as congestion (population and building density leading to declining living conditions) or positive effects (raising education levels, health standards, trade and exchange with host areas etc.) can also be observed in UNHCR administered camps. The data for most of the 152 larger refugee camps served by UNHCR (above 5000 inhabitants) indicates that urbanisation has taken place (see PART I/ section 1.3.2). The unspecified additional number of smaller camps is likely to follow the same trend. No evidence could be found for how many IDP camps are served by UNHCR, local governments or NGOs but given the fact that in 2007, 51m IDPs were recorded worldwide, it is likely that camp numbers would near 1000, again, most of them are likely to have been exposed to some degree of urbanisation. With some certainty it can therefore be stated that camp urbanisation is a global phenomenon. The degree of urbanisation that has taken place in Palestine Camp Cities might be unsurpassed by others (due to factors such as duration of camp situation, size of camps, degree of humanitarian assistance, integration in host societies etc.), but this does not exclude the possibility of comparison. Each camp situation is conditioned by a series of unique local, political and cultural factors. But in many ways, Palestine Camp Cities could be regarded as a "sign of things to come" for other protracted camp situations. Comparability also extends to refugee or IDP concentrations not classified as "refugee camps". As discussed in Part I/ section 1.1.2 many other assisted and self-assisted forms of refugee concentrations exist worldwide. The largest percentage of "persons of concern" to UNHCR (48% or 8.5m) lives in "urban" settings. Some have dispersed and camouflaged themselves amongst host city populations. But research has shown that refugees tend to form informal clusters, some of them in the scale of towns and cities, which, although unrecognized, are very similar to urbanised camp situations.

• **Who might benefit from such a knowledge transfer?**

It could be assumed that between 15m and 20m displaced persons worldwide live in urbanised concentrations comparable to those described above and are thus affected by varying degrees of urbanisation:³¹⁶

- (1) The approximately 1.5m UNRWA registered Palestine refugees who live in refugee camps or large un-recognized refugee concentrations.
- (2) 3.8m persons of concern to UNHCR, (registered refugees and IDPs) who live in UNHCR camps.
- (3) An estimated number of between 5m and 8m displaced persons assisted by UNHCR (classified as "urban") who live in large urban clusters.
- (4) Approximately 5.5m displaced people who (in addition to the 3.8m refugees cited above) live in protracted refugee situations as defined by USCRI (→ **040, 041**).
- (5) An unspecified additional number of unrecorded displaced persons in urbane clusters.

While this figure might still be negligible today if compared to the current global slum population of nearly one billion (see also discussion in chapter 2), the potential beneficiary community who could directly benefit from knowledge transfer is still significant. The most likely refugee community to benefit would be displaced persons of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Here, cultural affinity, shared language (for most Arabic is a common language) and geographical closeness to Palestine Camp Cities would make direct benefit possible. 34% (or 10.8m) of all persons of concern to UNHCR reside in the MENA region, ranging from Afghan refugees living in Iran, the vast number of over 4m Iraqi refugees that now resides in Middle Eastern cities such as Amman or Damascus or nearly 1m IDPs in Sudan's capital of Khartoum.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ As discussed in Part I/ sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.3 the overall figure is likely to dramatically increase.

³¹⁷ source: www.unhcr.org

In the following, two specific aspects for potential knowledge transfer will be explored:

(1) Learning from Field Research in Palestine Camp Cities

Beyond perfecting the planning of emergency structures or the design of specific functional buildings such as community centres or schools, architects or urban planners are rarely involved in refugee camps. Moreover, no significant systematic and holistic research into the urbanisation of refugee camps has been conducted beyond Palestine camps. The complex interrelationship between physical/spatial as well as socio-cultural factors in the formation and evolution of refugee camps is largely unknown. The extended field work conducted as part of this dissertation as well as the UNRWA-Stuttgart pilot research project and could serve as a reference point and conceptual and methodological model to accumulate necessary baseline knowledge for other camp situations:

a.) Development of a generic survey template/ checklist to revise data gathering and management systems and effectively measure and monitor camp urbanisation

Part II of this dissertation proposes a set of methodologies and indicators for measuring positive and negative aspects of camp urbanisation based on empirical evidence. These are far more specific and extensive than indicators currently collected by either UNRWA or UNHCR. Even if similar in-depth research may be unrealistic in most situations (lack of resources, accessibility, etc.) a set of core methodologies and indicators could be distilled to inform a “survey template” and basic “checklist” that could be used to develop an “expert diagnosis” of camp urbanisation in a specific camp, identifying key problems and issues to be addressed in programmes and projects. This checklist could also help to revise current data collection and data management systems, which are currently, if at all existent, unsuitable to inform effective policies to tackle the many challenges and build on the opportunities related to camp urbanisation. The checklist would call for data (partially represented in plan) and would require the following surveys:

Spatial-physical surveys	Indicators
Land use survey/ zoning analysis	Location and extend of functional zones
	Presence of programme/ activity clusters
	Identification of centres/ sub-centres
Building density survey	Location and extend of
	• hyper congested zones
	• saturated zones
	• zones with development potential (defined in accordance with locally defined
	“maximum carrying capacity” depending on local factors such as building material, construction types, topography, size of camp, availability of external public space. cultural traditions)
Micro surveys (e.g sample blocks)	Location and extend of high risk zones/ buildings
Access and circulation survey	Street hierarchy
	Inaccessible zones
	Emergency evacuation scenarios (earthquake, fire, external threat, etc.)
Public space survey	Availability of private and public open space
Technical infrastructure survey	Areas with no or substandard water supply, electricity, drainage, etc.
	Areas exposed to flooding due to insufficient drainage
Contextual survey	Overspill areas
	Connectivity to surrounding villages/ towns
Sociocultural cultural surveys	Indicators
Institutional survey	General degree of camp mobilization
	Location of main camp institutions (definition of institution is cultural specific)
	Scope of programmes
	Effectiveness of institutions
Educational survey	Degree of literacy, school attendance
	Access to basic and higher education
Qualitative interview with community reps.	Existing conflicts and resolution models

Socioeconomic profiling	Indicators
Population survey	Population size and density
Household survey	Employment statistics
	Main areas of employment
	Household income
	Households with special needs/ hardships
Economic survey	Location and extend of commercial activities
Economic interaction	Trading activities with surrounding context

b.) A new “language” for understanding the challenges and potentials of urbanised refugee camps

In Part I (sections 1.2.2 and 1.3.2) as well as Part II (section 1.2.2) the limitations of definitions and categorizations currently used by humanitarian agencies is limited and unable to capture the specific realities on the ground. It was already stated that a new “language” and terminology is urgently required to understand and monitor camp urbanisation. The broad concepts proposed by AGIER (2008), PEROUSE/KAGWANJA (2000) or JACOBSEN (1997) which were introduced in section 1.3.3 have guided and informed the research process undertaken for this dissertation and continue to help to shift the ambiguous and hybrid state of urbanised camps into the focus of politicians, donors, and humanitarian and development agencies. The in-depth studies of Palestine Camp Cities based on the adaptation of analytical tools and concepts borrowed from the rich tradition of research into informal settlements and slums could serve to substantiate these broad conceptual models. The terminology, definitions and standards applied in this dissertation are transferable to other refugee camp situations and could inform a conceptual framework for the analysis of urbanised camps as well as for operational policy design.

c.) Stressing benefits of applied research projects for academic discourse and operational policy design

International humanitarian agencies rarely commission large-scale research projects and have a notoriously insufficient capacity to build up an “institutional memory” needed to drawn strategic conclusions from research projects. Frequently, research is considered an unaffordable “luxury”. As a consequence, policy design is frequently reactive and rarely based on an in-depth understanding of complex and ambiguous local situations. Even within UNRWA, the applied research project managed by Stuttgart University was unique and the internal distribution of research results remained limited. It is hoped that the unique process that characterised the UNRWA-Stuttgart project, leading from baseline research, pilot testing to policy design could serve as a model and reference point. In email exchanges and telephone conversations with UNHCR staff members, the high interest in such a project was evident. It is hoped that in the future, large humanitarian agencies such as UNRWA or UNHCR will become more open to the collaboration with research institutions such as universities or international think tanks. Within the urban research community, refugee camps remain largely under researched and limited to ethnographers and urban sociologists such as AGIER (2008), PEROUSE/ KAGWANJA (2000) or JACOBSEN (1997). Architects or planners have yet to discover urbanised camps as an important field for applied research projects and this dissertation hopes to trigger interest and stress the urgency and need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the processes that trigger camp urbanisation and to propose visions of transforming precarious environments into dignified and stable settings.

d.) Palestine Camp Cities reveal potentials and dangers of camp urbanisation

The urbanisation process of Palestine camps is far advanced if compared to most refugee camp situations. This applies to both, the positive aspects of urbanisation and negative ones. The in-depth case studies and research experience in Palestine camps could serve as a key reference point for the development of long-term development scenarios for other camp situations, as well as for the development of long-term strategic responses. In the following, some of the most important potentials and dangers of camp urbanisation are listed:

• Recognize potential of camps as local development engines:

Numerous examples of camps in the Near East (such as Deheishe) provide detailed insights how camps can have a positive effect on their host environment. They engage in a multitude of social and economic relations with their neighbours and therefore stimulate local development. A better awareness of this fact can help international agencies to lobby for more host government support for the establishment of camps.

• **Recognize camps potential “Trojan Horses” promotion emancipation, participation and human rights in the host societies and beyond:**

The in-depth study of grass-root community mobilization and institution building in camps such as Dehe- ishe not only confirm MICHEL AGIER'S (2008) thesis of the inevitability of the emancipation of the political subject in the context of camps (see section 1.3.3). The positive effect of camps on their host societies is therefore not limited to physical or economic development. Sheltered by the presence of international agencies Palestine camps also showed the potential of camps to actively contribute to and promote the building of a strong civil society solidly rooted in the grass roots. International agencies frequently shy away from engaging in this process, arguing that they should maintain neutrality and in reality put in place many unnecessary obstacles in the way of stronger community participation. Here important lessons could be drawn which apply to UNRWA as well as UNHCR and other international bodies alike. The evidence gathered in the three case study camps suggests that if humanitarian agencies would embrace local community mobilisation and encourage its maturing process into effective and inclusive local institutions (models of good governance), camp communities could become “Trojan Horses” for cultural and political changes and reform in their host societies and beyond. This also applies to the role of families/ tribes, the role of women, the right for individuals and nuclear families to make informed and independent decisions. Trained in international education systems within camps and gathering experience on effective local governance within local institutions, camp refugee have the potential to become part of a new intellectual elite that will profoundly influence host societies as well as their countries of origin should they be allowed to return.

• **Recognize potentials and dangers of humanitarian presence:**

Positive and negative lessons can be drawn from the humanitarian mission of UNRWA. Some of the (justified and/ or unjustified) criticism against the agency voiced by host governments, donors, the camp community or the State of Israel have in part already been discussed in Part II, section 1.1.1. Amongst the negative aspects is UNRWA's tendency to behave and act like state within a state, building up a parallel system of education, health care or access to aid programmes which increases the separation between refugees and non-refugees and sometimes can fuel jealousy and local conflict. In the case of the Gaza strip, the destabilizing effect of UNRWA (serving almost 70% of the total population) on the political system of the Palestinian National Authority during the 1990s is still evident. Another negative aspect is the passivity and dependency that can result from decades of top-down relief provision. Similar to most conflict areas in the world, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict shows reveals the weakness of international humanitarian bodies to protect effectively camp communities from external violence. Positive aspects, however, include the fact that the presence of humanitarian missions does provide some form of stability and continuity through the services they provide and aid programmes on offer. While unable to prevent violence, humanitarian missions have developed effective reporting mechanisms in case of attacks on camp populations, which can generate important international pressure on the conflicting parties and in some cases, even intervention. Furthermore, Palestine camps across the Near East show that international presence can encourage the emergence of more democratic grass root institutions and participation, enclaves, within the context of authoritarian and autocratic rule.

• **Alarming prospect of congestion and poverty**

Last but not least, Palestine camps above all reveal the dangers of uncontrolled and unguided urbanisation. They are among the most congested areas in the world, share most indicators that define slum areas. Learning from Palestine Camp Cities therefore means also to be faced with evidence of an alarming development prospect (signs of things to come) for camps across the world if no appropriate steering mechanisms can be found.

(2) Learning from the CIP Methodology Developed for Urbanised Palestine Camp Cities

Could the „Camp Improvement Plan (CIP)“ methodology outlined in Part III of this dissertation applied to refuge camps worldwide? Lessons from operational experience of piloting a community-driven planning process in Fawwar camp and developing a planning manual for UNRWA could help to inform the development of similar programmes and policies in other camp situations for the following reasons:

a.) Palestinian Camp Cities as “make-or-break” laboratory for the development of strategies and programmes vis-à-vis Camp Urbanisation

As already stated, Palestinian camps lead the way in urbanisation processes of refugee camps and in some way anticipate the future constitution of many camps around the world. Palestine Camp Cities are therefore a natural laboratory for developing and testing new approaches. Furthermore, UNRWA receives significantly higher per capita funding than UNHCR or any other humanitarian mission. It is not certain whether the international community will continue to support the “privileges” enjoyed by Palestine refugees (if compared to other refugees around the world). In the short time, this puts additional pressure and responsibility on UNRWA to spend funds wisely and take a leading role in policy reform. While UNRWA has been lagging behind UNHCR and other UN bodies in the past, its camp improvement initiative is unprecedented and could put UNRWA in a pioneering role.

b.) Recognition of importance of introduction of urban planning to camp environments

Part I/ chapter 2 of this dissertation discussed the origins of internal reforms within UNHCR since 2000, in particular the re-introduction of concepts such as self-sufficiency, sustainability of programmes, or the rights-based approach. With several years delay, UNRWA is currently in the process of introducing a similar paradigm shift. Camp improvement is taking a leading role in this and regularly receives praise and highest evaluation marks from UN and external monitoring bodies. Camp improvement is not only in line with goals and standards set by the UN. In fact, many aspects of the participatory methodology are very similar. Camp improvement however uses such tools for a new goal: the introducing, for the first time, of comprehensive and integrated urban planning to a camp context. This opens the possibility to not only introduce participation to design, monitoring, evaluation of aid programmes. The CIP methodology extends community participation into the participation in the shaping of the built environment of the camp understood in a holistic way. Through successful application, the CIP methodology can show that strategic urban planning and the application of concepts such as sustainability onto the built environment does not have to compromise the political rights of refugees but instead could be regarded as an important human right. The CIP methodology therefore also offers a bridge between camp contexts and the analytical tools and globally applied concepts adapted developed vis-à-vis informal settlements and slums.

c.) Working paradigm for the integration of camps (in the intermediate term)

The CIP methodology shows how concepts by leading researchers (AGIER 2008, PEROUSE/ KAGWANJA 2000, JACOBSEN 1997 or BANKI 2004) mainly developed in response to African camps could be translated into a practical approach to planning and the development of operational guidelines. The declared aim of Fawwar's camp improvement plan and the CIP manual is to build multiple links between camp communities and their neighbours, set up mechanisms of joint planning and cooperation and develop an effective local governance and management structure which is integrated into the host government system. At this moment in time, it is still unclear if UNRWA will be successful in institutionalizing camp improvement across the Near East but first successes indicated that camp improvement is set to revolutionize the relationships and mechanisms of interaction of all stakeholders. A success of UNRWA could be an important precedent and reference in similar efforts undertaken by UNHCR vis-à-vis host governments.

Conclusion

Despite many unique aspects and differences that undoubtedly exist, this dissertation argues that “learning from Palestine Camp Cities” is not only possible but also an urgent necessity. Both, UNHCR and UNRWA, as well as many other globally acting agencies and governments are facing potentially similar contexts and should build much closer strategic links in order to address the challenges ahead. Refugee numbers are almost certainly set to rise with increasing frequency of natural disasters related to climate change which will cause mass displacement from areas threatened from flooding, draught or erosion. Likewise, the number and variety of armed conflicts causing displacement and suffering around the globe will further increase, every increasing the number of refugees “stuck” in protracted refugee situations (see Part I/ section 1.3.1) with no durable solution in sight. On the other hand, the economic stagnation currently faced in the First World is unlikely to change the strict asylum policies and IDPs and refugees are likely to be forced to remain close to the source of displacement. In short, refugee camps or camp like situations are likely to house more and more displaced persons. The average life time of camps³¹⁸ will further increase, so will congestion and poverty and other negative aspects or urbanisation. All this only illustrates the urgency to develop practical models and visions for how to transform existing camp settings into stable and liveable settings in which refugees enjoy human rights to the fullest degree.

For historical reasons discussed in this dissertation, UNRWA and UNHCR have remained separate agencies with few official contacts. This divide has become a major obstacle in facilitating knowledge transfer and strategic cooperation. The largely self-imposed isolation of UNRWA has had many negative effects in the past (such as delay of necessary reform). But also for UNHCR, the failure to directly learn from the largest and oldest refugee crisis and the Camp Cities that emerged across the Middle East poses a mayor omission. For the sake of the global refugee community it is hoped that the unhelpful and dangerous separation between UNRWA and UNHCR can be overcome in the near future. This would open the possibility to jointly evaluate current successes and failures of UNRWA’s current Camp Improvement Initiative, to refine the programme and adapt it to other urbanised camp situations around the globe.

³¹⁸ Data obtained from UNHCR on 152 camps above 5000 inhabitants currently served by the Agency reveals a current average lifetime of 26 years.

Chapter 2

Possible Wider Impact on Urban Planning in Impoverished Urban Environments

Can the study of Palestine Camp Cities and the CIP methodology offer lessons and potential applicability beyond refugee environments? In the final section of this dissertation I would like to situate the research and planning experience within the more general discourse on planning in impoverished urban environments. The section will provide a brief summary on the role of refugees and refugee camps within the global urbanisation process, followed by a comparison between camp urbanisation and other informal urbanisation processes. Finally, I will speculate on possible lessons to be learnt from the CIP methodology for planning in other urban environments.

(1) Impact of Forced Displacement on Global Urbanisation Processes

"The evidence lies in the colonial settlements and forced displacements of previous centuries that have become the metropolis of today. The trading companies of Europe considered themselves temporary occupants of undeveloped territories focused on the extraction of wealth without the long-term investment of city building. They did not intend their forts, residential cantonments and roads as foundational plans for the exponential growth of the sprawling contemporary cities of Madras, Calcutta. The African cities of Ibadan, Nigeria second in size only to Lagos, or Mbuji-Mbaji the third largest city of former Zaire, originated in the displacements of population from wars among indigenous as well as European empires." (DEBORAH GANS and MATTHEW JELACIC, 2006)²¹⁶

The global number of recorded displaced persons of 67m (refugees and IDPs) seems negligible if compared to the total urban population (3.17 billion in 2005), the total slum population (more than 1billion) and the enormous rate with which cities continue to grow.²¹⁷ In reality, however, the figure of 67m is the result of particular definitions and systems of recording displaced persons through local governments or international agencies. As stated in Part I/ section 1.1.3 many displaced persons remain unrecorded and therefore invisible. Moreover, the difference between IDPs/ refugees and the vast numbers of "economic migrants" is blurred and rather artificial. The decision to search for a new life in cities nearby or abroad, for instance, is often the result of complex combinations of economic, political and social reasons. The decision to "seek refuge" may be the result of a desperate attempt to leave an impoverished and backward countryside rather than a direct security threat. The general rationale which serves to differentiate "forced displacement" from the economic migrants how decided to leave "voluntarily" – rarely accurately reflects the complex situation on the ground. Whatever reasons and motivations, new arrivals are "displaced" from their traditional settings and culture and struggle to adjust to their new urban environments.

This said, forced displacement as a result of armed conflicts or natural disasters has always been an import factor triggering population movements and, considering future challenges such as global warming, might become even more important in the future. Forced displacement has always been inextricably linked to the history of cities, leading to their growth through refuge influx or their decline, or triggering the construction of entirely new cities. Historical and contemporary examples are numerous. Religious groups such as Huguenots or Jews have contributed to the growth and prosperity of Europe. Many US cities would not exist without Eastern European fleeing programs. Other examples include the forced relocation of black South Africans into townships, the forced eviction of Kurdish populations in southeastern Turkey that led to the rapid growth of medium sized cities such as Mersin or Dyabakhir, and even remote Istanbul or Izmir. More recently, Iraqi refugee movement has added huge populations to neighbouring Middle Eastern Cities such as Amman, which already had a population of 70% registered Palestine refugees. Most major African cities include vast portions of forcefully displaced. As already stated, climate change triggering draught, erosion, floods and rising sea levels threaten entire regions and is likely to force relocation of entire cities. All these examples show that displaced populations can be a factor impacting on urbanisation processes of particular cities and regions.

²¹⁶ Deborah Gans and Matthew Jelacic, "The Refugee Camp: Ecological Disasters of Today, Metropolis of Tomorrow", Exhibition Catalogue, Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, 2006

²¹⁷ UNHABITAT estimates that about one third of the world's urban population live in slums. For 2005, 997,000,000 slum dwellers were reported. For 2010, UNHABITAT estimates a number of 1,115,000 and for 2010 1,392,416. Source: "State of the World's Cities 2006/2007" report, quoting an earlier source: United Nations Report: "Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (1998) and World Urbanisation Prospects", 2003 Revision; for further info also: <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/habrrd/statprog.htm>

(2) Refugee Camps as Catalysts for Urbanisation

“Refugee camps, which are tantamount to cities without citizens could well become the legitimized cities of tomorrow.”
(DEBORAH GANS and MATTHEW JELACIC, 2006)³¹⁸

The vast majority of the world’s recorded and unrecorded displaced persons become urbanites (see UNHCR statistics, Part I/ section 1.1.3). Only 22% currently live in refugee camps or camp-like situations. The following section speculates on the impact of this comparatively small group of 15 and 20m camp dwellers.

UNHCR does not collect precise statistics on the location of camps but the closer study of Palestine camps conducted under this dissertation shows that camps tend to fall into one of three location categories (rural/ under populated/ unpopulated; periphery of cities or conurbations; camps or cluster of refugees within cities). Depending on their location, camps can trigger new or accelerate existing urbanisation processes, each with distinct characteristics. None-Palestine camps are likely to follow the same pattern.

Urban and suburban camps

Urban or suburban camps or camp-like situations are most difficult to research and their impact on the surrounding cities can often not be precisely measured. As Palestine Camp Cities have shown, in urban or suburban environments, it is often impossible to clearly differentiate between camp, informal overspill, informal refugee concentration and the surrounding urban context. The same phenomenon is likely to characterize other camp situations around the world. As “urban refugees” (whether living in camp-like situations or not) they can have a major impact on cities, boosting their populations and economy. Some of the possible effects and examples have been listed above. A further, more in-depth discussion of such effects is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Camps in rural or unpopulated areas (border areas)

The history of Palestine camps and also current statistics obtained from UNHCR shows that most camps are located close to the country of origin, i.e. close to the national border between host state and country of origin, even though, in many instances, border areas are underdeveloped and even unpopulated environments (desert, swamps, mountainous area). The following main factors are at work:

- Reduced distance from/ to place of origin (many refugees prefer to remain close to their place of origin to return at the earliest possible time)
 - Many host governments prevent refugees from penetrating into the interior of the country or political or security reasons
 - Kinship relations frequently extend across border areas (particularly in Africa or Asia); the host population tends to be more welcoming
- The global map located 152 recorded UNHCR camps with populations above 5000 (→ 042) shows indeed “strip-like” camp concentrations along national borders, such as
- border areas of Thailand
 - border areas of Pakistan (tribal region Waziristan)
 - eastern Tschad
 - eastern Sudan
 - along the Great African Rift Valley from eastern Sudan to Zambia
 - Arab states bordering Israel

Interestingly, UNHCR records the distance of camps from the border. Statistics is available for 146 out of 152 camps, which show that most camps have been set up less than 100km, many below 10km from the border. 8 camps are directly located at the border point.

Most of the above cited border areas are traditionally rural or unpopulated desert environments, i.e. areas that have not experienced processes of “natural” urbanisation. Through the arrival of refugees, a development process sets in which includes the construction of camps (residential building and service installa-

³¹⁸ Deborah Gans and Matthew Jelacic, “The Refugee Camp: Ecological Disasters of Today, Metropolis of Tomorrow”, Exhibition Catalogue, Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, 2006

tions such as hospitals and schools), access roads, airports, logistics centres, infrastructural connections. As PEROUSE AND KAGWANJA (2000) showed, many camps quickly adopt characteristics of regional centres and market towns, attracting the influx of local populations and numerous trading activities. This development process is indistinguishable from urbanisation processes, funded by the international community. As discussed in Part 1/ section 2.2.3, many local governments have already recognized camps as catalysts for the development of remote rural and unpopulated past and, and UNHCR, explicitly uses the argument that camps can have a lasting positive impact on their host environment.

The general effect on the regional development can indeed be very significant triggering an irreversible urbanisation process. It provides access and infrastructure to remote areas, blurs the artificially imposed national borders and leads to the construction of hitherto missing facilities housing and servicing an amalgamation of foreign refugees, internally displaced persons, international aid workers, host government officials and local opportunists arriving from nearby villages and towns. Checkpoints or camps slowly become cities. Many camps are there to stay for an uncertain period of time. Even if camps disappear they rarely disappear without a trace. A UN-HABITAT staff member reported on several cases when UN-HABITAT took over abandoned camp structures built for refugees and adapted the remaining houses and facilities for local villagers.³¹⁹

This border area urbanisation fuelled by refugee movements seems to be at odds with the predominant trend of global urbanisation: the formation of mega cities and large urban conurbations. Is border area urbanisation therefore sustainable? Can camps really become the “cities of tomorrow” as GANS and JELACIC (2006) enthusiastically claim. Further research and in-depth case studies are necessary to answer this question sufficiently. However, similar border area urbanisation processes have already observed by numerous architects and scholars such as TEDDY CRUZ and his concept of “Border Urbanism” developed in relation to the vast growing urbanisation of the Tijuana and San Diego areas divided by the Mexico-US border.³²⁰ CRUZ stresses the productive potential of border areas in facilitating social, cultural and economic exchange and slowly erode artificially imposed separation lines.

(3) Positioning Camp Urbanisation Within the General Discourse on Informal Urbanisation

The case studies of Palestine Camp Cities reveal that the urbanisation process of camps tends to take place in an informal, bottom-up fashion, which position camp urbanisation within the global context of informal urbanisation. The following section attempts to discuss main similarities and differences between informal urbanisation processes within camp environments and informal slum neighbourhoods.³²¹ What characteristics are shared? What challenges are faced by both? As camps vary tremendously across the globe, the following observations are based on the study of Palestine Camp Cities only.

• Physical and spatial characteristics

Informal building techniques, materials, rules and patterns of growth hardly differ between most Palestine Camp Cities and informal slum neighbourhoods of the same region. Similar is also the result of physical urbanisation leading in many instances to high densities and congestion. Palestine Camp Cities on the whole tend to be denser than slum neighbourhoods, with obvious implications on environmental health and structural risks. In both cases, however, the physical fabric tends to be extremely vulnerable and it is a key challenge to secure the safety of dwellings, reduce density, provide public spaces and improve infrastructural systems.

³¹⁹ interview with Reinier Thiadens, August 26, 2008

³²⁰ Teddy Cruz is an associate Professor at the school of architecture at Woodbury University in San Diego where he founded the Border Institute (BI) dedicated to research on border urbanism.

³²¹ Informal slum neighbourhoods refer to urban neighbourhoods without secure tenure that fulfil the UN-HABITAT definitions of “slum” as defined in the “State of the World’s Cities 1006/ 2007” report.

• **Legal framework and ownership**

Most differences occur in the initial stages of the evolution of camp and neighbourhood: While informal neighbourhoods lack any legal framework, camps are established on the basis of official agreements between host government and humanitarian agencies. Camps dwellers have a de facto “security of tenure” guaranteed by the presence of humanitarian missions. The risk of eviction and forced demolition is low. A clear regulation of ownership is absent in both contexts. The most important step in the integration of informal neighbourhoods is therefore the legalisation of ownership – a step that is contested in camps for political reasons. Informal neighbourhoods therefore have a clear possibility of full legalisation and integration. Camps on the whole do not.

• **Socioeconomic characteristics**

Part I/ section 1.3.3 has already stated that camps match most of the indicators defined by UN-HABITAT for slums. Broadly speaking the following applies: Camps tend to absorb the weakest and least able of refugees and those who do not have access to alternative support structures such as extended family or tribal networks or personal savings. Informal neighbourhoods also absorb new arrivals without start up capital. While some informal neighbourhoods evolve into enclaves of extreme poverty and congestion (slums) others consolidate into lower middle class and middle class neighbourhoods. Most camps so far lack this development option.

• **Absence of formal steering mechanism of urbanisation process**

Urban planning tools, legal frameworks or building codes that could steer the urbanisation process of camps have not been developed. Refugees exploit the “power vacuum” that emerges through the ongoing misunderstanding between humanitarian organisations and host governments institutions on roles and responsibilities. International agencies tend to argue that they are only responsible for the provision of basic services and indeed their mandate tends to be very limited. Most host governments consider camps as “blind spots” on the territorial map of their country and try to interfere as little as possible beyond issues of security. Informal neighbourhoods. The initial urbanisation process of informal neighbourhoods also suffer from the absence of state or municipal agencies. Instead, private agents or land mafia are controlling parcellation and layout. Municipalities tend to “react” by providing roads and infrastructure at a later stage. After consolidation and legalisation, the now formal neighbourhoods are subjected, in theory, to building codes, which, however, are only rarely reinforced.

• **Presence of international agencies and access to free services and aid programmes**

A key difference between camp and informal neighbourhood is the presence/ absence of international aid agencies. Many refugees and IDPs enjoy free access to health care and education. They qualify for cash assistance, emergency aid programmes and mostly enjoy some form of “protection” which guarantees a basic human rights. Residents of informal settlement and slums do not enjoy these “privileges” or most basic “protection”. The frequently stated downside of the presence of the international aid structure is the nurturing of dependency, which has been discussed in depth in Part III of this dissertation.

• **Coping mechanisms and rights**

Slum dwellers lack access to international aid, but enjoy, on the whole, the rights of full citizenship and access to the labour market. In many countries (event in the Palestine refugee context) refugees do not enjoy these rights and do not have the possibility of slum dwellers to become self-sufficient (for many slum dwellers this possibility however remains theoretical, and their access to reasonably paid labour is hindered by other factors such as lack of education/ professional qualification, discrimination, or general unemployment).

(4) Strategies for Rehabilitation: Applicability of CIP Methodology to None-camp Contexts?

The above aspects show that urbanised camps and informal slum neighbourhoods are facing many similar challenges: to stabilize the socioeconomic base, improve living quality, to introduce good governance models on a micro scale and to integrate the hitherto separated and excluded areas with their urban surroundings to name a few. The CIP methodology is an attempt to develop a strategies vis-à-vis Palestine Camp Cities. How does this methodology compare to the vast and extremely diverse spectrum of strategic planning tools that has been developed for informal slum neighbourhoods since the early 1960s? Does camp improvement offer new lessons that could be useful for none-camp contexts?

If compared to the vast resources that have been mobilized for slum improvement efforts by international bodies such as UN-HABITAT (established already in 1978), globally operation institutions such as the GTZ, national governments, municipalities and a vast number of think tanks, camp improvement seems to be negligible. Since the UN's launch of the Millennium Development process in the 1990s and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by world leaders in 2000³²², slum upgrading has become a central focus of development policies worldwide. It is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of the vast number of initiatives, approaches, methodologies, pilot projects and reports that have subscribed themselves to pursuing the ambitious goals for slum rehabilitation laid out by the UN. The concept of rehabilitating urbanised camps on the other hand is still new, still contested, and will take years to mature as a methodology for community-driven strategic planning. As already discussed in Part III/ section 2.2.1, the methodology is not fundamentally new. The combination of "strategic planning" and "action planning" is similar to the methodologies recommended in UN-HABITAT's "Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP)".³²³ Is camp improvement merely a highly specific variation on an already well known theme?

It may seem premature to discuss "lessons" and possible applicability when CIP is still evolving and has not yet been backed up by concrete evidence and experience on the ground. In the following I would like to speculate on some aspects that differentiate CIP from other methodologies used that could be of potential interest to planners and policy makers dealing with slum upgrading efforts in the future:

• Lessons from tackling extreme challenges

Palestine Camp Cities are extreme environments that are considered to be amongst the most congested and impoverished urban neighbourhoods in the world. As set Millennium Development Goals for slum rehabilitation look unlikely to be met and slums are likely to become more numerous and congested, Camp Cities may prove as important laboratories and testing grounds for strategies that will be needed in similarly extreme slum environments in the future.

• Potentials of comprehensive UN mandate

Slum upgrading efforts are in reality often modest in scale, interventions realized symbolic, lack necessary power to reinforce policies and goals. Programmes rarely last for more than a few years and are "spread thinly" across cities. Rio de Janeiro for instance has developed ambitious programmes for Favela upgrading but considering that the municipality is confronted with more than 700 Favelas, the impact of the programme in specific neighbourhoods will be very reduced. The mandate, resources and strong presence that UNRWA or UNHCR has in camps is unique and could facilitate concerted and comprehensive rehabilitation efforts of unique scale. The possibilities for a comparatively transparent internationally run body guided by UN standards to influence a rehabilitation process from the early planning stages to implementation and long-term monitoring are unique. Best practice models in the field of architecture, planning and good governance could be implemented to a standard and effect that will be hard to match in an ordinary municipal slum context.

• The "Trojan horse" factor: promoting best practice in crisis areas

Slum upgrading programmes in ordinary cities are still rare and rely on a "golden match" of political vision

³²² UN-HABITAT's "State of the World's Cities 2006/ 2007" report on the Agency's work since 2000: "Much of this work is now focussed on monitoring progress in attaining Millennium Development Goal 7, target 11 on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020"

³²³ The Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) is a joint UN-HABITAT/UNEP facility established in the early 1990s to build capacities in urban environmental planning and management. Source: www.unhabitat.org

and financial resources provided by states or international agencies such as UN-HABITAT or World Bank. Only few visionary municipalities manage to combine these factors. Under autocratic regimes, the rule of war lords or in conflict areas such “enlightened” programmes are virtually impossible. Refugee camps are located in such areas and form safe areas of stability and in many cases already successfully promote international standards of human rights including concepts of community empowerment and participation in planning processes. Camps could therefore initiate best practice models in regions where the political and economic preconditions required for slum rehabilitation are not present. The most obvious potential for copying elements of the CIP methodology is the Near East, neighbouring Arab countries and even Turkey where participatory planning still remains a rare exception.

In conclusion it could be stated that camp improvement breaks new ground not in terms of methodological innovations, but in terms of the environment it can be applied to: Camp Cities which are amongst the world’s most congested and impoverished urban environments, located in the most instable and violent regions of the world. Camp improvement can only mature to a fully functioning working tool if stronger connections are built amongst UN sister agencies such as UN-HABITAT, UNRWA and UNHCR. The lack of information flow and sharing of experience amongst these agencies is alarming. Only if cooperation is improved, lessons can be learnt from camp improvement and other camp upgrading efforts. Mutual dialogue and exchange serves the interests of both, camp populations and slum populations.

Part V
Technical Appendix
*Glossary of Frequently
Used Terms*
Abbreviations
Bibliography

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Disclaimer

The following definitions are sourced from multiple references have been prepared for this dissertation and do not necessarily reflect the views or working definitions of UNRWA or other organisations.

Part I –

Technical Terms Referring to the Urban Fabric of Camps

Average Living Area

The average space available for a person, a household or inhabitants of a dwelling (calculated on the basis of the net living area).

Building Block

An area of joined dwellings, separated by public lanes or streets.

Building Area

The total area of all private plots, including houses, courtyards, and gardens – sometimes also referred to as “gross building area”.

Built-up Area

The sum of the footprint area of all buildings, excluding public and private open spaces (such as streets, gardens, courtyards, etc.) – sometimes also referred to as “net built-up area”.

Floor Space Index (FSI)

The total “building mass”. The FSI is calculated by multiplying the value of the net built-up area (external wall measurements) by the average number of levels, and dividing the result by the value of the gross building area. Sometimes also referred to as “plot ratio” or Geschossflächenzahl (GFZ).

Geschossflächenzahl (GFZ)

See Floor Space Index

Gross Building Area

See Building Area

Gross Living Area

The total sum of all indoor space (gross value calculated using external wall measurements), including circulation spaces, storage, small-scale commerce, animal shelters, vacant spaces and spaces still lacking internal finishes.

Grundflächenzahl (GRZ)

See Plot Coverage Ratio

Informal Expansion

Refers to built up area, which is mostly inhabited by registered refugees and is located beyond UNRWA’s official boundary. In contrast to the “spill-over area” (see definition in this section), informal expansion areas often do not differ in density or building form from the neighbouring towns or villages, but their residents consider themselves primarily as refugees and retain their primary social, economic and cultural contacts with the camp.

Micro Study Block

Area of the camp, which has been chosen by the research team for a house to house survey

Official UNRWA Camp Boundaries

Boundary that defines the official territory of a refugee camp. For full discussion on legal framework see Adwan Taleb “Real Estate Sector inside the Refugee Camps in West Bank”, Appendix R1 to this research report: “UNRWA recognized refugee camps in West Bank are situated on land that was originally allocated and designated by the Jordanian government to establish habitation for the refugees, and the UNRWA does not rent or own the land. At the same time, UNRWA has the right to transfer its rights of use of the camp lands to the refugees. This means that the refugees in the camps do not “own” the land on which their shelters were built, but have the right to “use” the land for residence. Also, the landowners do not have the right to ask the UNRWA or the refugees about the land or the rent of the land because the legal relation in this context is with the host government.” (A Taleb). The term “Official UNRWA Camp Boundary” is used in this research report to emphasise that on the ground, the actual boundary can no longer be recognized due to informal building activity beyond this line.

Shelter

Common reference to residential structures in camps. Officially UNRWA awards the “right of use” to its residents, but in reality, residents consider their shelter as a property which can be rented or sold.

Spill-Over Area

Refers to built up area which is mostly inhabited by registered refugees and is located beyond UNRWA’s official boundary. In contrast to the “informal expansion” (see definition in this section) spill-over areas are immediately adjacent to the main camp and do not differ significantly in density or building form.

Part II –

Terms Referring to Camp Governance, Population, and Social Structure

Camp Code

Is part of UNRWA’s registration system. It is part of the Family Registration Number (8 digits) found on the Family Registration Card and which includes information regarding refugees and their respective camps. For example, Family Registration Number: 1-4-5-0-3999 can be broken down as such:

- 1 is for the Field Office: WB
- 4 indicates the Area: Jerusalem
- 5 indicates that the family is in a camp
- 0 indicates the name of the camp: Shu’fat
- 3999 indicates the name of the head of the family

The current Registration System is being modified with Individual Registration Numbers being added to the cards.

Household

Usually refers to all individuals who live in the same dwelling; i.e. all the persons who occupy a single housing unit. This may include more than one family and multiple income-earners [UNDP]

Head of Household

An individual in one family setting who provides actual support and maintenance to one or more individuals who are related to him or her through adoption, blood, or marriage [Legal Dictionary].

Hamule

Family clan; a group of families under patriarchal lineage structure

Hosh

Arabic for “courtyard”, a space traditionally surrounded by buildings or a compound traditionally inhabited by members of the same family or clan.

First Intifada

(1987–1993) Intifada is the Arabic for ‘shaking off’ though it is more contextually translated into rebellion and is seen by Arabs as a valid term for popular resistance to oppression [wiki]. The First Intifada started in 1987 after 20 years of military occupation and was largely a non-militarised and non-armed uprising that involved civil disobedience, general strikes, demonstrations, and violent confrontations with the Israeli army. It continued for 6 years despite draconian and repressive ripostes and only ended after the PLO and Israel signed the Oslo ‘Declaration of Principles’ which seemed to usher in the possibility of genuine reconciliation and just settlement.

Second Intifada

Began 2000, also known as al-Aqsa Intifada is very much the product of the dashed hopes and dishonest bartering that characterized the post-Oslo period in general and the Camp David negotiations in particular. Palestinian frustration and anger had already spiralled as under the cover of a ‘peace process’ settlements, checkpoints, bypass roads and a sophisticated system of territorial control all grew and expanded. The breaking point came with Ariel Sharon’s provocative visit to al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000; over the next 5 days 50 Palestinian civilians mainly children would be shot down while demonstrating. This time the Palestinian uprising would be almost wholly armed, prompting violent Israeli repression that in March 2002 involved the temporary re-occupation of all Palestinian cities. More than 4000 Palestinians and 1000 Israelis have lost their lives.

jame’iah

Arabic term for society or association (often used to describe women’s networks or “Private Savings Associations”)

Nakba

Nakba, which means ‘catastrophe’ in Arabic, is the Palestinian name given to the event of 1948 in which almost a million Palestinians were displaced in the wake of the creation of the State of Israel.

watan

Arabic for “homeland”

Right of Return

The Right of Return relates to the non-binding UN General Assembly Resolution 194 passed on December 11, 1948, which recommended that the Palestinian and Jewish refugees should be permitted to return [to areas from which they were displaced] under the condition that they be willing to live in peace with their neighbours. The text of its Article 11 resolves “*that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours 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...*” [Wikipedia]. In Palestinian society, the Right of Return, has become a cornerstone of the calls for justice.

ta’tbih

Arabic term for “normalisation”, used to negatively denote the establishment of relations or collaboration with Israeli institutions or groups before the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the end of the occupation.

tawjihi

Arabic for the official high school graduation examinations

UNRWA-Registered Refugees

Refers to UNRWA’s operational definition of Palestine refugees as persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Significantly, the UN maintains separate and distinct definitions of the word “Refugees” for 1) Palestinians who left Palestine (including present-day Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza) in 1948 and 2) those who did so in 1967. Palestinian refugees from Palestine are classed as both the individuals who left their homes and any descendants of those individuals. This stands in contrast to the UN definition of refugee as it applies to displaced persons connected with territories other than those of the State of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza; in the latter case it refers

only to those individuals who were forced to flee – not to their lineal descendants. The UNRWA definition is meant solely to determine eligibility for UNRWA assistance. Under General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of December 11, 1948, other persons may be eligible for repatriation and/or compensation but are not necessarily eligible for relief under the UNRWA's working definition. Thus a person who is not, or who has ceased to be, regarded by UNRWA as a refugee for the purpose of receiving relief, may still qualify as a refugee by the common definition.

Israeli Separation Wall

Referred to mostly as “Apartheid Wall” by Palestinians and “Separation Fence” by Israelis, is a massive concrete wall being built mainly inside the occupied West Bank and that is projected to stretch to over 700 km. The wall snakes through the West Bank incorporating illegal Jewish settlements and expropriating massive amounts of Palestinian agricultural land. Israel justifies the Wall as a necessary security measure, while Palestinians contend that such measures would be better served by building it along the green line (the de facto border).

ABBREVIATIONS

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Government Ministry)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBRC	Community Based Rehabilitation Centre
CCM	Camp City Municipality
CDP	Community Development Programme
CIP	Camp Improvement Plan
CPL	Camp Priority List
CSO	Camp Services Officer
DAR	Development Assistance for Refugees (UNHCR Programme)
DFID	Department for International Development (British Government Office)
DLI	Development through Local Integration (UNHCR Programme)
DORA	Department of Refugee Affairs at the PLO
DPA	Jordan's Department for Palestinian Affairs
FECSSO	Field Engineering and Construction Services Office
FSI	Floor Space Index (see Glossary)
GAPAR	Syria's General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees
GFZ	Geschossflächenzahl (German for "Floor Space Index", see also Glossary)
GRZ	Grundflächenzahl (German for "Plot Coverage Ratio", see also Glossary)
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (German Technical Cooperation)
H&CIU	Housing and Camp Improvement Unit
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICID	Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department (UNRWA)
IDF	Israeli Defence Force (also referred to as Israeli Military)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
IUED	Institute Universitaire d'Etudes du Developpement (Graduate Institute of Development Studies, University of Geneva)
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank)
LC	Local Committee
LRT	Local Research Team
MCSP	UNRWA's Micro-credit Community Support Programme
MENA region	Middle East and North Africa region (UNHCR operational area)
MMP	UNRWA's Microfinance and Microcredit Programme
MSF	Medicins Sans Frontiere
MTP	UNRWA's Medium Term Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
RAD	Refugee Aid and Development (UNHCR Programme)
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RSS	an UNRWA's department, Relief and Social Services programme
SCP	Sustainable Cities Programme (UN-HABITAT programme)
SIAAL	Städtebau in Asien, Afrika und Lateinamerika (Department of Urban Planning in Asia, Africa, and Latin America), University of Stuttgart
SRS	Self-reliance Strategy (UNHCR policy goal)

ST	Steering Committee (meeting of heads of UNRWA departments at West Bank Field Office to monitor Fawwar pilot process)
UIP	Urban Improvement Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USCRI	United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
USP	Urban Structure Plan
WB	West Bank
WBFO	UNRWA's West Bank Field Office
WG	Working Group (camp level forum including community representatives, local UNRWA staff and stakeholder delegates) developed for the Fawwar pilot process
WPC	Women's Programme Centre
4Rs	Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction (UNHCR policy goals)

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