

Lebanese American University

Youth Development and Spatial
Configurations

Socio-spatial Inequalities in Palestinian Refugee Camps in
Lebanon

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Migration Studies

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In dedication to my mother, Rola, who opened my eyes to appreciate the details of space, kept me aware of the inequalities in life, and remained to be my muse

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Youth Development and Spatial Configurations Socio-Spatial Inequalities in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Yara El Zakka

Abstract

This research explores the intersectional fields of displacement and architecture by examining the interrelationship between youth development and spatial configurations in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, more specifically in Ein El Hilweh Camp in the South of Lebanon. It aims at understanding how spatial configurations can alter human behavior, and the ways in which societal reform can take place in an urban context. Through taking Ein El Hilweh Camp as a case study and interviews conducted with youth coordinators at local NGOs operating in Ein El-Hilweh Camp, this thesis asserts that youth development in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon is hindered by the dire conditions of spatial configurations in the camps and their geopolitics. It also asserts that in the presence of fostered youth protection and capacity and skills building, youth engagement and participation in the modification of their spaces act as essential drivers of change which contribute to the reduction of urban poverty and to the development of urban strategies that can sustain their development and provide an incubating environment for them to grow during the stages of their youth and beyond. Moreover, this research suggests that the primary factor contributing to the hindered situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is the condition of permanent temporariness imposed by the state. The reduction of socio-spatial inequalities are temporary unless the integration of Palestinian refugees is fostered and their accessibility to social, economic, and civil rights, as well as the right to the city is granted.

Keywords: Palestinian Refugees, Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon, Ein El-Hilweh Camp, Spatial Configurations, Youth Development, Urban Poverty, Protection, Capacity and Skills Building, Participation, Permanent Temporariness

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List of Abbreviations

Civil Society Organization	CSO
Ein El-Hilweh Camp	EHC
Focus Group Discussion	FGD
Individual Interview	II
Lebanese Armed Forces	LAF
Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee	LPDC
Non-governmental Organization	NGO
Palestine Liberation Army	PLA
Palestine Liberation Organization	PLO
Palestinian Red Crescent Society	PRCS
Palestine Refugees in Lebanon	PRL
Palestine Refugees from Syria living in Lebanon	PRS
United Nations	UN
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	OCHA
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	UNRWA

Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

The intersectionality between social differences – which has been developing into inequalities with modern urbanization – and the spaces they occupy is capable of generating urban exclusions which hinder the equal and sustainable development of societies. The apex of these exclusions is present in the settlements of the displaced populations that are mostly engendered by conflict, specifically, as the notion of displacement is quite often portrayed as a transitory state of being. More specifically, these settlements are kept with transitory infrastructures and a spatial configuration with defined boundaries which reinforces its inhabitants' segregation from the local community, prohibiting them from engaging in the local economy, and consequently rendering them dependent on aid agencies for their basic means of survival. Youth, who are a vital asset for reaching safe, resilient, and sustainable cities are among the most affected by these socio-spatial inequalities and demonstrate a reciprocal relationship with the urban landscape.

The proposed research will explore the intersectional fields of displacement and architecture by examining the interrelationship between youth development and spatial configurations in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, more specifically in Ein El Hilweh Camp in the South of Lebanon. The research aims at understanding how spatial configurations can alter human behavior, and the ways in which societal reform can take place in an urban context. While space modifies and is modified by anyone who occupies

it, this research will be narrowed down to Youth, whom I presuppose are the primary force of change and refinement in society.

This research involves a profound and contextual understanding of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon by situating the spatial configurations within the temporality imposed by the state. It will explicate on the different variables producing socio-spatial inequalities, explicitly the geographic politics of the camps, their spatial configurations, and the underdevelopment of infrastructure, services, and facilities in these camps. The implications of the socio-spatial inequalities on youth development and protection will then be examined in an attempt to provide a clearer image of the intersection between the two. The research finally intends to derive strategies that allow youth to sustainably participate in reforming their camps, and to establish a flexible urban design prototype which adheres to the needs of the community, addresses its gaps, and enhances youth development and protection in the respective urban space.

This topic is important to address because youth are key actors in the development of societies, and their being at stake is sufficient to the deterioration of current and upcoming generations. This necessitates research to propose alternative ways through which youth can contribute to the development of their spaces, and consequently of their abilities.

An understanding of the Palestinian history since 1948 is essential in forming appropriate and contextual hypotheses that captures the historical suffering in the Palestinian community since the exodus and the vulnerability Palestinian refugees have suffered ever since. Historizing Palestinian camps in Lebanon will highlight the recurrent political, economic and social struggles and acts of exclusion that have been exacerbating the living conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon since their establishment. Therefore, it is important

to understand that the current reality of the camps is a product of cumulative historical realities. The primary focus will be on Ein El Hilweh Camp, in a period between 2018 and 2020, after the Trump Administration suspended UNRWA funding; and during COVID-19 pandemic. Findings during this period will strongly reflect the deteriorated conditions of the camps and the vulnerable condition of youth. The selection of Ein El Hilweh is strongly driven by the strict exclusionary mobility and security measures imposed by Lebanese authorities around the camp, its poor spatial conditions, and its increased number of youth at risk.

Research Questions

This research investigates the principal question: How are youth development and spatial configurations in Palestinian camps interconnected?

To answer this primary question, the two undermentioned sub-questions arise:

1. How can the spatial configurations of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon affect the development and protection of youth in the camps?
2. Accordingly, how does youth engagement reshape the urban development trajectory to a more sustainable and inclusive one, and in turn reduce urban poverty?

These questions will help unfold the primary question and allow further research to understand the restrictions set by the Lebanese authorities on reconfiguring the camp spaces, and to propose modification plans of the spatial configurations to ensure enhanced youth development and protection.

These questions are vital in understanding how the built environment can alter the behavioral scope of youth, and how youth themselves can contribute to their environment thus examining the desired interrelationship. They also suffice to determine the gaps in youth development and protection, and the aspects in which spatial configurations could be a driving force of change. Moreover, these questions will clarify the challenges and bottlenecks faced by the Palestinian community in the attempt to reconfigure their spaces and allows to navigate through them. These questions will also allow designing urban design prototypes and youth-engagement strategies.

Working Arguments and Hypotheses

Working Arguments

There is a consensus in the literature that spatial configurations are capable of altering the way in which youth live. Moreover, it is evident that youth play a vital role in shaping the spaces they occupy – being key to urban development.

Positive youth development is essential in the upbringing of youth so that they become active in their society and contribute to progressive community-building. While space is often disregarded from the interlinkage with youth development, I argue that it's essential in that it may either promote or hinder the development of youth. Space is a vital component that shapes both the activities and practices of youth that develops their capacities, and the safety and security that protects them.

In line with this interrelationship, I argue that the urban poverty present in Palestinian camps in Lebanon which continue to face exclusion and deterioration in infrastructure services and facilities is a key factor that contributed to the hindered youth development

in the camps. More specifically, Ein El Hilweh is one of the most vulnerable camps in terms of its urban exclusion where youth remain at risk. I also argue that youth participation in the modification of their spaces is essential in reducing urban poverty and contributes to their development.

Hypotheses

There exists a strong interrelationship between youth and their spatial configurations. In tackling the two most profound questions, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- A. Youth protection and development are more likely to be deteriorated when the spatial configurations in which they reside are not adequate.
- B. The urban development trajectory is more likely to be sustainable and inclusive, and urban poverty is most likely to be reduced, when youth, who receive necessary capacity building, are provided the opportunity to engage in the planning and design process.

Appropriate Methods, Justification, and Sources of Data

Case Study

The research entails a case study of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, more specifically Ein El Hilweh Camp. The exclusionary measures that are imposed against residents of Ein El-Hilweh, which are reflected through physical barriers including concrete walls, watchtowers, barbed wires and Lebanese army checkpoints in addition to the physical attributes of the spatial elements inside the camp and the strong presence of political organizations, parties and factions as well as armed individuals – all contribute to the specific choice of this camp as a case study in which youth development is highly affected.

Historical Research

Historical research was done to gain a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the formation of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon since 1948. This part of the research relies on an extensive study of the literature found on the formation and development of the camps. Using similar resources, specific research on the history of Ein El Hilweh was conducted as well.

Primary sources, archival documents

To complement the historical research and have accurate statistics, primary sources such as reports from UNICEF, UNRWA, UNDP and OCHA and were consulted in addition to the secondary sources collected. These documents were accessed online through corresponding websites.

Interviews (See Appendix B)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with youth coordinators in local NGOs operating in Ein El Hilweh Camp. They comprised 8 individual interviews, 1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and a written report from one NGO who was not available to conduct the interview. The main purpose of the interviews is to understand the individual and collective factors which shape the ways youth view and dwell the spaces of the camp, how space affects their well-being, the main challenges they face while navigating the spaces of the camp, and the facilities and services they lack which could improve their situation. These were reflected through interviewing Youth Coordinators who are aware of the aforementioned issues given their daily interaction with youth. Moreover, interviews with youth coordinators provided comprehensive and inclusive responses to the questions, reflecting the situation of numerous youth in Ein El-Hilweh, as they

immediately interact with hundreds of youth on daily basis. The interviews were held online.

Ethical Considerations and Other Challenges

Ethical challenges/dilemmas in research

Given that the subject of research is humans, the process of interviews, extraction of information, and clarity of messages are critical. Additionally, youth may be survivors of GBV, SGBV, bullying, or other types of violence, thus they belong to a vulnerable group with which communication could be challenging, especially that they experience different types of discrimination. Therefore, I interviewed youth coordinators to avoid any risk. The research does not pose any foreseeable harm on research participants. Approval letters were obtained by the NGOs and consent forms were signed by the interviewees (Youth Coordinators). Folders including research data were password-protected and accessed only by the researcher. Moreover, interview results are codified when presented. On a final note, the biases which could be generated given my connection to the Palestinian community was avoided by multiple peer reviews during the timeframe of my research and upon completion before defending it.

Other country-specific challenges

The research was conducted at a time when Lebanon was facing multiple crises, including the outbreak of COVID-19 and shortage in fuel and electricity supply among others, which added another layer of challenges. Interviews and meetings took place online. However, the shortage in electricity had the biggest repercussions on the flow of the research. This issue was challenging in the stage where interviews and meetings were

being conducted, and in the stages that followed and required electric power to draft the research. It was difficult and limited by the availability of electricity. While I was able to use the facilities of the university, I was bound by certain opening hours and the availability of electricity afterwards. This required utmost dedication to the research in terms of time to ensure taking advantage of all the times when electricity was available.

Resources and funding

The resources for this research are literary resources and reports which are available in the aforementioned sections. Given that no advanced equipment or software is needed for my research, the funding for this research was minimal. The budget was covered by the researcher.

Limitations of research

Given that the research is a case study on Ein El Hilweh Camp, some of the empirical findings and analyses may be specific to the camp rather than Palestinian Camps in general. However, the general argument, hypotheses, and conclusions may be applicable to the majority of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon which share similar conditions and are characterized by poor living and housing conditions, overcrowded and narrow streets, and deteriorated infrastructure¹. Moreover, while research on the intersection between spatial configurations and social behavior is an emerging topic in academia, research that is specific to youth development is relatively rare. Moreover, there is limited comprehensive research on the intersection between spatial configurations and youth development in

¹ Two examples of research in which the researchers derived general conclusions using a single case-study are Dorai, M. K. (2010) and Samhan, H. (2008) who used Mar Elias Camp and Burj El-Barajneh Camp respectively as case studies to explore the situation of Palestinian Camps.

Palestinian Camps in Lebanon, specifically tackling Ein El Hilweh Camp. Therefore, the findings of my research will be enriching to understand this intersection in Palestinian Camps. Finally, since field work was restricted to youth coordinators in NGOs, interviews with youth in the camp were minimal since only a few coordinators were aged between 18-24. However, the interviewees responded to the questions from a youth-perspective.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

To get both a general and specific overview of the topic at hand, this section reviews three themes in literature starting broadly with readings in which sociology intersects with architecture. The second part includes reviewed work of this intersection at the scale of youth. Finally, the literature is narrowed down to that which examines Palestinian camps in their socio-spatial dimensions and youth strategies. These themes are titled *Sociology and Architecture*, *Youth and Spatial Configurations*, *The Case of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon*, respectively. The research will be guided by pivotal publications and arguments presented by scholars in this field and aims to address the gaps in the literature review to fulfill its objectives.

Part I: Sociology and Architecture

The theoretical framework in which the fields of sociology and architecture intersect are explored from existential phenomenological, Bourdieusan, Marxist, and affordance theory perspectives, mainly relying on the work of James Gibson, Martin Heidegger, Juhani Pallasma, Henri Levebvre, David Harvey, Milton Friedman, and Pierre Bourdieu. The work of Gibson on the Affordance Theory suggests that a functional importance lies in physical environments as they may generate different behavioral patterns as their characteristics change, either supporting or discouraging human interaction. (Siramkaya & Aydın, 2017). In reference to the work of Heidegger, consciousness cannot be excluded from the world of everyday experience, as there exists an intimate immersion of one in

the world in an unbreakable unity, as the world and being-there are two phenomena that interlock and coexist as being-in-the-world. Thereby, as the existence of humans is attached to the world they live in, space becomes a definite condition in shaping their experiences as it articulates a sense of meaning to their existence. Architecture then acquires its *thingness*, whereby it becomes a thing in itself, preserving its essential characteristics but is finite in its effects based on the experience of its inhabitants (Heidegger, 1962). From here, the notion of existential phenomenology of architecture rises, providing the means to understand space in the context of behavioral research. Edward Casey emphasizes that “place is a central ontological structure of being-in-the world partly because of our existence as *embodied* beings”. (Seamon, 2000) He argues that “place, by virtue of its un-encompassability² by anything other than itself, is at once the limit and the condition of all that exists ... [P]lace serves as the condition of all existing things. To be is to be in place.” (Casey, 1993, p. 15-16, as cited in Seamon, 2000, p. 162) Building on the work of Edmond Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Gaston Bachelard, Pallasmaa formulates a theoretical position in which he associates experience with memory, imagination and the unconscious. He also builds on Norberg-Schulz’s *Phenomenon of the Space* to argue that spaces are not designed by architects for their mere physical attributes, but rather in relation to the images and feelings of their occupants – from which the effect of architecture stems (Pallasmaa, 1996). Architecture then becomes “a direct expression of existence, of human presence in the world” (Pallasmaa, 1996, p. 451) thus producing feelings and altering human behavior. Seamon also argues in this direction by emphasizing the cruciality of spatial configurations in determining the

² The inability to be encompassed

quality of living as “human beings are always everywhere immersed in their worlds, which in part is physical” (Seamon, 2016, p. 28). He also discusses the work of Karen Franck who postulates the ultimate potential of phenomenology in providing a space for dialogue between designers and social scientists because it gives attention to “the essence of human experience rather than to any abstraction of that experience and because of its ability to reconcile, or perhaps to bypass completely, the positivist split between *objective* and *subjective*” (Franck, 1987, p. 65-66, as cited in Seamon, 2016, p. 27). Lefebvre builds on his understanding of Hegel, Heidegger and Marx among others, suggesting that capitalism’s role in organizing the working life every day has expanded its control on private life through an organization of space. He highlights the uneven development and quality of social space that is allocated according to class, thus reproducing class structure and emphasizing the inscription of class struggle in space (Elden, 2007, p. 106). He argues that space is “the ultimate locus and medium of struggle” emphasizing on the politicization of space, and the existence of a politics of space because space is political. Lefebvre introduces the notion of space as a social product, meaning that a particular space is produced by the modes of production of a particular society, and sometimes produced by the contradictions in the mode of production. He thus emphasizes on the importance of the historical conditions that are linked to the modes of production of space. He argues that space is socially and politically produced, through social formation and conception. He also argues that space is viewed as perceived, conceived, and experienced through its material statics and activities, and the conceptual realms and emphasizes that the social, spatial, and temporal elements are essential to understanding and analyzing space (Elden, 2007). Lefebvre maintains the notion of space as reproductive, shaping

society and shaped by society, and therefore calls for the right of all groups, especially marginalized groups, living in a city to shape their societies in and through their respective spaces and collectively reclaim their urban spaces. (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017). Moreover, Lefebvre argues that inhabitants of a space have two main rights: the right to participation but also the right to appropriation, in the sense that urban space has to be restructured to include urban inhabitants as decision-makers along with the state. David Harvey builds on Lefebvre's work arguing that the production of justice through space and capitalist economies that affect spatial development becomes systemic and considers the right to the city to be a collective rather than an individual right. He claims that "the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization" (Harvey, 2008). Drawing on this concept, Petrescu and Trogal argue that while the right to the city is indeed a right in participation and development, it also "concerns real material rights (such as the right to housing, to public space, the rights to space) as well as the more elusive, psychological rights that Lefebvre evoke[s], such as the rights of imagination, or the right to play" (2017). In this direction, Friedman's work on Marxism and Planning Theory is also noted, where design is envisioned as "part of a larger and liberating social project" serving the cultural and social needs of a society (Crawford, 1991). Friedmann calls for radical reformations in architecture, where architects sacrifice their powers to serve the ideal clients – to empower the masses. While Friedmann's approach calls for participatory design and brings in excluded voices, his ideology is rather too radical and challenging in practice, obstructed

by political and economic forces. Friedmann himself asserts that planning exists within a struggle for “collective self-empowerment and participation” and reforming political configurations which govern the trajectory of design; however, he argues that the core of facing these struggles lies in the engagement of excluded individuals in society, through which their social power reinforces political power (Friedmann, 1989). The notion of power gains its emphasis in Bourdieu’s concepts of field and capital. In his work, the field is a social space where individuals and institutions struggle over the appropriation of capitals, and thus is constructed by the practices of individuals who engage in acquiring and attaining these capitals. Therefore, the field is one of struggle, but also a field of force whereby individuals and institutions operating within it are influenced and conditioned by its power (Jones, 2011, p. 13). Looking at architecture from these concepts, Bourdieu positions it as a “field of cultural production characterized by a range of symbolic and material conflicts” whereby architecture “as discourse, practice, and form operates at the intersection of power, relations of production and culture, and representation, and it is instrumental to the construction of our identities”. (Dutton & Mann, 2000, p. 117 in Jones, 2011 p. 167). Moreover, Bourdieu draws special attention to the role of the state in producing and reproducing the social order whereby socially and politically dominant institutions and individuals, that is those with high social and political capital led by the state, acquire a hierarchy in the field situating architecture at the intersection of economy, politics, culture and society. Questions of politics, governance, ownership, management and maintenance are also raised by Lefebvre, who also argues that privatization of urban space along with other forces and struggles limit action and agency and questions the access to spaces and the rights within them (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017).

While the literature strongly presents theoretical approaches to the interrelationship between sociology and architecture and emphasizes on its importance, literature on the practical application of these theories is negligible.

Part II: Youth and Spatial Configurations

Pallasmaa argues that “one of the most important “raw materials” of phenomenological analysis of architecture is early childhood memory” (1996, p. 450), suggesting the early onset of the interrelationship between humans and spatial configurations. There is a consensus in the literature explored (eg. Power et al., 2009; Mitchell et al., 2016; Collins et al., 2012; Saridar-Masri, 2018; Mulwa & Reudenbach, 2016) on youth being key constituents essential to the possibility of human development and urban poverty reduction “by virtue of their prominence in the world’s fastest-growing urban areas” (Power et al., 2009).

In their study on the impact of the built environment on young people, Mitchell et al. (2016) and Collins et al. (2012) conclude that youth are generally more active and social in well-designed neighborhoods, multi-use path areas and environments offering a broader range of recreational facilities. Power et al. (2009) also argue that engaging youth in urban development strategies has shown significant implications on their psychosocial and physical well-being. Moreover, Mulwa & Reudenbach (2016) argue that youth are most vulnerable when they reside in unprivileged areas, namely informal settlements, affected by poor infrastructure, services, economic opportunities, and security. This suggests that urban development must be in the utmost interest of youth to ensure their protection and development and necessitates action in underprivileged communities. Mulwa & Reudenbach (2016) also argue that the engagement of youth is essential for the

environmental, economic, and urban growth as their contributions are key in the urban development trajectory adopted by the UN whose current approach aims at utilizing youth to “achieve a positive correlation between urbanization and development, effectively placing people and human rights at the center of urbanization” (Mulwa & Reudenbach, 2016). Therefore, youth must be scaffolded to build their capacities, increase their social accountability to their spaces, and allow them to deploy their utmost potential in enhancing their environments. Upon examining the literature on youth and spatial configurations, there seems to be limited – and mostly not thorough – research which focuses on the interrelationship between youth and spatial configurations in terms of the proposed objectives, specifically in Palestinian camps, therefore reinforcing the importance of conducting this research and fulfilling its objectives.

To proceed with youth participatory research, a mixed-method is recommended to provide the adequate environment for youth engagement and capture the multispectral³ concepts and visions (Saridar-Masri, 2018). Accordingly, individual interview and FGD questions were drafted using a mixed method. Due to the limitations in my research tools which were restricted to youth coordinators, interviews with youth in the camp were minimal since only a few coordinators were aged between 18-24. However, the interviewees responded to the questions from a youth-perspective.

³ “Just as “youth” is not a homogenous concept, the participation – or the exclusion – of youth cannot be categorized in a singular way” (Mulwa et al., 2016).

Part III: The case of Palestinian Camps

This sub-section explores the relationship between social and spatial inequalities and the politics of temporariness by examining Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon from an architectural lens. It will explicate on the different variables in thus producing socio-spatial inequalities, explicitly the geographic politics of the camps, their spatial configurations, and the underdevelopment of infrastructure, services, and facilities.

A Brief Overview

Temporary settlements and the urban fabric of the city

The notion of displacement is quite often portrayed as a transitory state of being, a time of waiting, in which the arrival of refugees and their moment of displacement are conceptualized only as “static in-between statuses” (Brun, 2015). “This hegemonic view becomes crystallized into provisional statuses and forms of temporary protection or settlement, such as camps” (Meeus, Arnaut, & Heur, 2019), often portrayed as extreme spaces as their location plays host to the mundane. (Stevenson & Sutton, 2011). Hence, this politics of temporariness produces refugee camps with transitory infrastructures and a spatial configuration with defined boundaries, reinforcing its inhabitants’ segregation from the local community, prohibiting them from engaging in the local of economy, and consequently rendering them dependent on aid agencies for their basic means of survival. This is complemented by the legal establishment of the camps on “lands allocated by nation-states in negotiations with global humanitarian organizations to temporarily settle populations fleeing danger until repatriation is possible” (Fawaz, 2016).

Meeus, Arnaut, & Heur argue that the arrival of refugees, in fact, evolves in varied forms within the framework of a “lasting temporariness” – rather than ending – where

displacement becomes protracted as a result of unresolved conflicts or policies that prevent refugees from returning home, obtaining citizenship, or fleeing to another destination (Meeus, Arnaut, & Heur, 2019). Therefore, this field of political struggle that involves inhabitants, state authorities, international organizations, landowners, political movements, and other factors paves the way for the evolution of temporariness, not into permanence, but rather into “permanent temporariness”. Consequently, this is reflected by the camps’ integration into the urban landscape of the adjacent cities and is challenged by the self-organization of camp settlers “to develop often unexplored urban settings through the social production of space” (Al-Nassir, 2016); however, this doesn’t negate the fact that these spaces are still accompanied by temporary features and a temporary legal status.

Palestinian Camps in Lebanon are among concrete examples of “permanent temporary” settlements as they remain bounded by a sense of temporariness in their status and spatial configurations 74 years into their establishment, thus catalyzing the socio-spatial inequalities experienced by their residents, namely Palestinian Refugees.

The formation of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon⁴

The creation of the apartheid state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 resulted in the Palestinian exodus leading to the displacement of an estimated 750,000 Palestinians

⁴ Lebanon currently includes 12 Palestinian Refugee Camps across the country, with four camps in Beirut and its suburbs (Burj El Barajneh Camp, Shatila Camp, Mar Elias Camp, and Dbayeh Camp), two camps in the North governorate (Nahr El-Bared Camp and Beddawi Camp), one camp in the Bekaa area (Wavel Camp), two camps in Saida

to neighboring countries consequent to the Israeli occupation's ethnic cleansing, forcible eviction, massacres, and the threat and fear of being massacred implicated on Palestinians. Mainly fleeing Northern Palestine (Galilee, Haifa, Yafa and other coastal areas), around 130,000 Palestinians took refuge in Lebanon. They gathered around family ties and origins in human settlements initially managed by the Red Cross before UNRWA⁵ was established by the end of 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. These settlements which were later referred to as Palestinian Refugee Camps were dispersed across the country by the Lebanese state, in a deliberate attempt to exert easier control over Palestinian Refugees (Peteet, 1991). Moreover, Palestinian refugees were indisputably subjected to continuous displacement inside Lebanon, seeking refuge within refuge, as a result of the continuing Israeli invasions, the Lebanese civil war, the war of the camps and other massacres whose repercussions were most prominent in the expunction of four Palestinian camps and the recurrent destruction of others.

area (Ein El-Hilweh Camp and Mieh Mieh Camp), and three in Tyre district (Burj El-Chemali Camp, El-Buss Camp and Rashidieh Camp). During the civil war and the war with Israel, Palestinian camps suffered immensely, especially in Beirut and suburbs, and the South of Lebanon. Three camps (Tal El Zaatara Camp and Jisr El Basha Camp in Beirut and Nabatieh Camp in the South) were destroyed, and a fourth camp (Gouraud Camp in Baalbek) was evacuated.

⁵ UNHCR was established roughly one year after UNRWA was founded in response to the European Refugees post World War II.

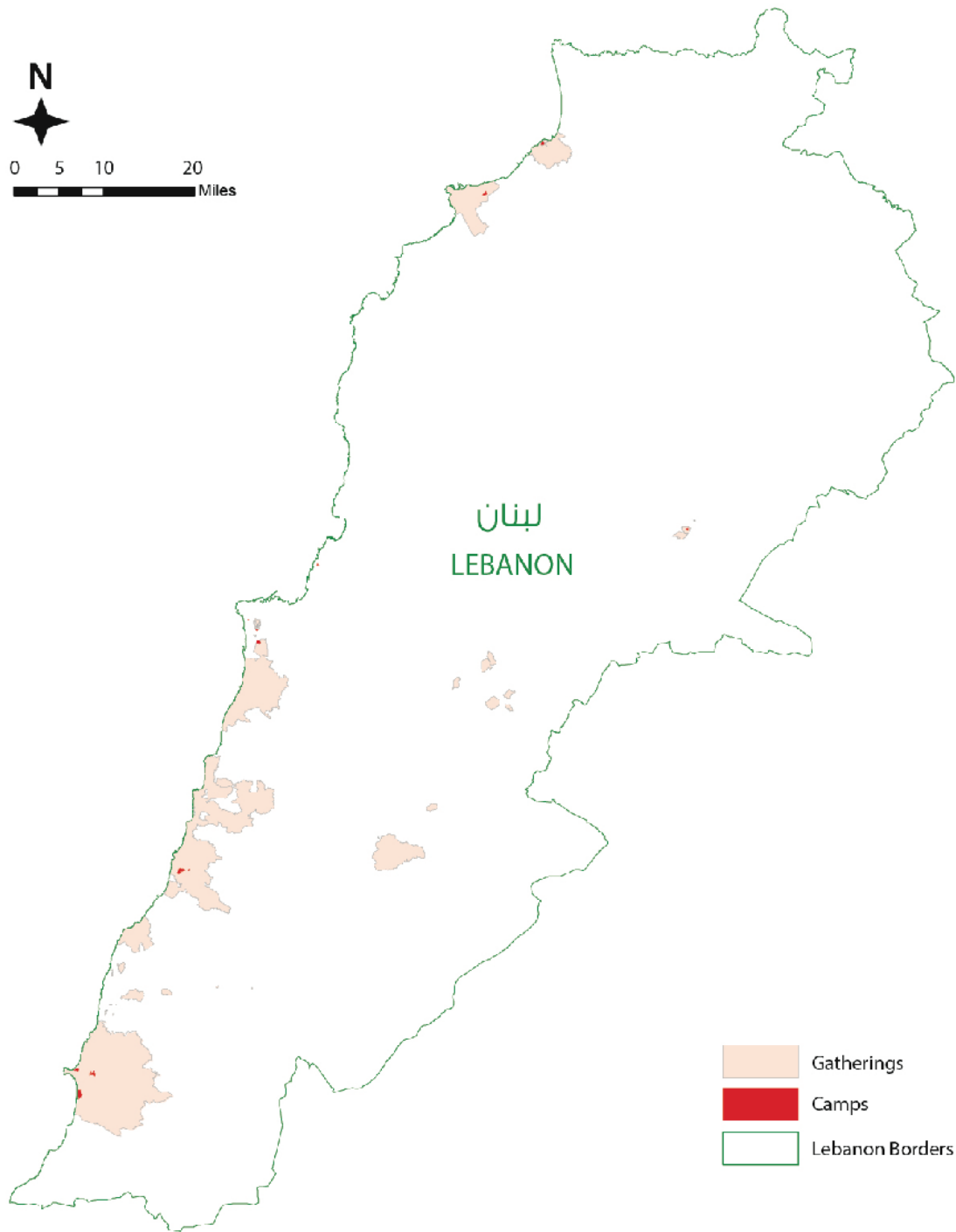


Figure 1 Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon

The governmental prospect on Palestinian Refugees

The Lebanese-Palestinian relationship remains undoubtedly the most fragile and complex in the Middle East region. This complexity stems from multiple factors which are either

consequent of or serving foreign policies and colonialist agendas. Not only is the arrival of Palestinians to Lebanon locally challenged, but it is also strongly tied to a foreign perspective vision for Lebanon affecting its structure and inducing principles of sectarianism in politics and society. The fundamental demographic factor directly impacting this relationship is the sectarian imbalance Palestinian Refugees may inflict on the demographics of the modern Lebanese state (Siklawi, 2010). These prevailing notions of sectarianism and classicism pushed the local governing authorities to classify Palestinian Refugees by occupation and class, thus dividing them horizontally. As a result, Palestinians belonging to the upper and middle classes as well as Christian Palestinians were able to live freely across urban areas and maintain their socio-economic status (Siklawi, 2010, p. 599). Moreover, in the attempt to boost the Christian minority in Lebanon, almost 50,000 Christians and select number of wealthy Muslim families were also naturalized as Lebanese between 1950 and 1960, particularly during the presidency of Camille Chamoun in 1951 (Siklawi, 2010). This resulted in the marginalization of Palestinians belonging to the lower class who were impoverished and placed in camps, also resulting in the collective view of Palestinian Refugees as *primitive Muslim* – fueling them to react against these discriminatory measures. With the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the early 1960's onwards, which was later considered the formal representative for Palestinians, political tension was provoked in the region and in Lebanon specifically, with the PLO's major ramifications being most prominent in the 1967 war as they established military units to fight *Israel*, causing a strident controversy to grow in Lebanon between parties supporting versus parties opposing Palestinian militancy in Lebanon. Consequently, the Cairo Agreement was signed in 1969

between Lebanon and the PLO, aiming at empowering Palestinians economically, socially, politically, and militarily in Lebanon in return of restricting the presence of PLO rightfully to inside the camps. In addition to Palestinian militant presence, foreign regional intervention played a key role in destabilizing the Palestinian-Lebanese relationship. The tension between the Palestinians and the Lebanese authorities was exacerbated as Jordan expanded the PLO's operations in Lebanon and centralized the "Arab"-*Israeli* war in Lebanon⁶. Moreover, Syria had a remarkable role in destabilizing the situation in Lebanon by sending troops from the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in support of Palestinians during the 1973 attacks, paving the way for regional intervention. During this period, several parties in Lebanon were exorbitantly forming an anti-Palestinian movement in Lebanon which reached its peak in the country's civil war in 1975 which witnessed phalangist massacres performed in "East Beirut" met by immense Palestinian vengeance against the Christian town of Damour. While the presence of Palestine refugees was considered by the majority of actors in the Lebanese political game as a foreign and destabilizing element, they frequently joined forces with the Palestinian factor whenever it was in their favor in unsettled circumstances (Besson, 1997).

These political dimensions altered the society's view on Palestinians, leading to severe racism and discriminatory acts which will be discussed in the following section.

⁶ See (Siklawi, 2010)

UNRWA's applied framework in Lebanon and the Status of Palestinian refugees⁷

The non-cooperative governmental position and the political tension in Lebanon has been impeding UNRWA's work as it continues to struggle to provide for Palestinians. Besson suggests that UNRWA's presence in Lebanon is fundamental amidst the complexity of the governmental prospect on Palestinian Refugees, especially that the Lebanese authorities are keen to avoid the integration of Palestinian Refugees in the Lebanese society (1997).

Moreover, the power struggles which has been affecting Lebanon have placed UNRWA in a very critical position as it struggled to maintain its neutrality and impartiality,

⁷ It is important to acknowledge that UNRWA's mandate and objectives remain influenced by foreign policies, US in particular, despite its status as an apolitical organization. The agency's work is strictly tied to policies that fit foreign schemes and serve their best interests. Hence, the presence of UNRWA has been actually set to accomplish certain objectives, which in fact have not yet been completely met despite its 23 mandate renewals. This also means that UNRWA has been enduring the different political consequences of its mandate as it operates in a highly conflicting setting. UNRWA's position as a humanitarian aid specialized agency diverges to exist within a highly politicized context and attain a political attribute that may compromise humanitarianism to satisfy foreign political agendas and frameworks. The agency's humanitarian aspect also seen to be compromised in dealing with the governments of the host countries, as UNRWA's mandated role may be negotiated upon to maintain a non-conflicted relationship with the host state, thus affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the protection of Palestinian Refugees.

incapable of fully implementing the programs it was mandated to provide for Palestinian refugees.

Nonetheless, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are denied their basic rights as a result of the constant efforts put by the state to exclude them, keeping them in a *permanent state of temporariness*. They are denied access to public social services, particularly of which are access to healthcare, educational, and emergency services and facilities⁸. Moreover, the vulnerability of Palestinian refugees exacerbates as they are faced with legal

⁸ Violation of Articles 22, 25 and 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 22: Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social, and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 25.1: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Article 25.2: Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.1: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

restrictions on employment which is the primary obstacle to their integration into the labor market, given that these constraints on labor rights and property ownership are enforced on them in Lebanon specifically among Arab countries⁹. In addition to the prohibition of Palestinians from owning property as per the amended property law in 2001, they were also no longer able to transfer their preowned property to their children¹⁰. Moreover, discrimination against Palestinian Refugees is also institutionalized in the amended labor law which bars them to exercise more than 30 syndicated professions. Not only does this reduce employment rates, but it also limits opportunities to work in more vulnerable, low-skill, informal jobs. Together with these constraints, the decline in adequate educational

⁹ Violation of Articles 17 and 26.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 17.1: Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

Article 17.2: No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 26.2: Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

¹⁰ Lebanon's third periodic state party report states: The issued property law (Decree 296) in May 2001, prohibits Palestinian from the ownership of property and deprives them of the right to transfer their already purchased apartments and deeds to their children. The Lebanese government considers the Law in harmony with its opposing stance to the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

services serves as a means to increase unemployment and illegal labor. As a consequence of these restrictive measures, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon tend to rely almost entirely on UNRWA as the primary provider of social services and education (Fincham, 2012) supported on field by local and international NGOs which complement its services. This has placed an immeasurable pressure on and obstructed UNRWA's programs, transforming the agency's status from a complementary humanitarian aid agency to a service provider.

Today, Lebanon's twelve refugee camps host an estimated 180,000 refugees, constituting around 45% of the population, in addition to 29,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) and a large population of marginalized Lebanese, as well as other nationalities such as Iraqis, Egyptians, Sudanese and Bengalis (UNRWA, 2020). Therefore, Palestinian camps are overcrowded with poor housing conditions and deteriorated infrastructure, met by unemployment, poverty and lack of access to justice. UNRWA operates 65 schools benefiting 36,960 students, one technical vocational education and training and youth program (TVET) benefiting about 900 students, 27 primary health facilities with 1,037,962 annual visits, Relief and Social services with 61,673 social safety net beneficiaries and 8 woman-centers. UNRWA's Protection program is heavily challenged by the restrictions of movement, documentation, and discrimination PRS face, and the already deteriorated conditions PRL face. Moreover, the Lebanese government's restrictions imposed on UNRWA's construction activities limited its Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program to the reconstruction of Nahr El-Bared Camp after its destruction in 2007 and restricted its work to structural rehabilitation of existing shelters and buildings within the officially recognized camps. This becomes a fundamental

problem as the population residing in the camps continues to increase with a demand for new health, education, and relief buildings. Moreover, the limited budget UNRWA operates under as well as the restrictions of the government on any attempt of economic independence have prohibited the agency from delivering microfinance programs in the country.

Thus far, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon continue to live in unenviable situations and are “perhaps the most unfortunate and destitute grouping of Palestinian refugees in any Arab host country” (Suleiman, 2006). They are stripped from almost all human and civil rights, and continue to experience spatial, institutional, social and economic marginalization. They have become prolonged refugees who are “confined to camps or segregated settlements where they are partially dependent on humanitarian assistance and often live in dire socio-economic circumstances” (Hanafi, Chaaban, & Seyfert, 2012). In so, Palestinian refugees are regarded as demographic artefacts in a transient state of being, denied the right of citizenship and any form of decision-making beyond the boundaries of the camps. Accordingly, they are only capable of deploying their (bounded) agency by imposing their imprints on their camps, which “complicates the permanent temporariness of encampment, that opens up a temporality between the permanence of the built (camp) and the temporariness of the political condition (refugeehood)” (Abourahme, 2014 in Al-Nassir, 2016). Nevertheless, the demographic weight of Palestinian camps and their

economic, social, and political characteristics enabled them to become the genesis of unexpected cities which generally integrate themselves distinctively in urban areas¹¹.

Hence, as Palestinian refugee camps are “intimately bound up with a temporality of liminality and enduring temporariness” (Ramadan, 2013), their spatial configuration remains contingent, where the “ever-moving relationship between temporality and materiality” (Meeus, Arnaut, & Heur, 2019) provokes social inequalities, specifically when examined within the urban fabric of the cities encircling them. The question of urban configurations thus becomes crucial in examining the inequalities present in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon¹². These socio-spatial inequalities stem from the geographic characteristics, spatial configurations, the underdeveloped infrastructure, services, and facilities, and they hamper livelihoods through their economic ramifications.

Socio-spatial Inequalities in Palestinian Refugee Camps

With the concentration of urban poverty and urban marginalization over time, urban segregation becomes inevitable in human settlements characterized by the accumulation of economic, infrastructural, ecological and social deprivation. The inhabitants of these

¹¹ For example, Nahr El-Bared Camp was a business trade hub in the North for Palestinians and non-Palestinians and it is highly believed by the Palestinian community that its destruction was an attempt to break its positive sprawl into the city and the integration of Palestinians.

¹² Gatherings adjacent to these camps are deprived from infrastructure projects and improvement programs, given that they do not fall under UNRWA’s mandate and receive minimal to nil aid from the municipalities responsible for their maintenance.

settlements often lack basic facilities, living materials, adequate public spaces, non-defective infrastructure, maintained roads and pavements, and recreational spaces. Moreover, Nowosielski argues that the notion of spatial segregation is most likely to be strengthened by its racial and ethnic character (2012). The temporal dimension characterizing the Palestinian exile to Lebanon, the geographical development of Palestinian Refugee Camps, and the varying scale of mobility in these settlements allows them to become urban areas, which are isolated and fall under the abovementioned categories. Hence, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are characterized by a “strong local integration linked to a rapid urbanization of the [host country] parallel to a strong segregation due to the socio-political and legal context (Dorai, 2010).

Political geographies and boundaries

Contrary to the common perception of a refugee camp as an isolated space located at the peripheries, Palestinian Refugee Camps are in fact non-isolated, but rather closely connected to the urban and rural areas that extend beyond the limits drawn for the camp. Nonetheless, the urban sprawl of these camps does not necessarily lead to their development as the majority of the camps originated in underdeveloped areas. On the contrary, the camps often tend to merge with informal settlements that clench to the boundaries of the drawn areas.

In what follows, a concrete example will be drawn by examining the urban expansion of Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp. Originally established on an empty lot distant from the city center, the camp managed to integrate itself over the years to become a major part of the urban texture of Beirut. This informal expansion resulted from the demographic pressure on the urbanized camp and the growth of economic opportunities, as refugees

from other camps attempted to relocate inside Shatila but were often thwarted by both the government attempting to control the movement of Palestinians between camps, and the residents unwilling to receive newcomers. The extension of Shatila camp is also evident in that the repercussions of the 1982 Massacre which claimed the lives of not only those residing inside the camp but stretched to impact residents of the adjacent neighborhood of Sabra where the camp had sprawled and was met by several attempts to be massively extinguished.

On the other hand, the geopolitical situation of the camp in the underprivileged suburbs of the city was a major factor to its integration in the city's "misery belt", which is defined by Martin as "an axis of low-income and informal settlements surrounding Beirut's city center" (2014). The implications of poverty and informality on the illegal trades in any human settlement are difficult to overlook. Halabi explores the threatened Palestinian moral order by the intensified moral corruption which results from the the informal expansion of the area below the poverty line causing a rise of illegal merchants in the camp and Sabra market renowned for drug-dealing, cheap pirated pornographic material, and sex trade (2004). Not only is this threatening to women, children and youth, but it also sets the ground for a culture of illegality destabilizing the camp's already troubling security situation. Therefore, as shared by the rest of Palestinian camps in the country, the location of the camps in the suburban informal and underprivileged part of the cities plays a major role in the social inequalities Palestinian refugees face as an implication of the spatial configurations.

Examining the geographic situation of Palestinian camps in Lebanon challenges the biopolitical imagination that depicts camps as isolated spaces, well demarcated, and

impermeable (Meeus, Arnaut, & Heur, 2019). However, Palestinian camps are located in closed spaces, which should be crucially defined in distinction to isolated spaces in the context of a camp. While isolated spaces are entirely secluded from the city, closed spaces are capable of being informally integrated in urban and societal terms, but are not regulated by the host country, rather having an internal governance body.

Given that each camp in Lebanon poses its specificities, the following examples highlight the notions of a more-strict “closed camp”. These camps are met with more strict restrictions on mobility and accessibility. This portrays them as constant threats or triggers to the adjacent areas.

In an attempt to isolate the Palestinian camps South of Lebanon as well as Nahr El-Bared¹³ in the North, the Lebanese army have placed checkpoints at camp entrances and prevented foreigners from entering the camps without a permit. Moreover, physical boundaries were established by the Lebanese authorities, and were extreme in particular camps such as in Ein El-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps, where they were gated with concrete barriers in an

¹³ These tight measures in the North followed the Nahr El-Bared conflict after which the camp and its adjacent area was considered by the Lebanese authority to be a military zone. Nahr El-Bared Conflict took place in 2007 between the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Fatah al-Islam militants. The violence persisted over three-month left the camp, displacing most of its residents and turning the camp into an uninhabitable jumble of perforated concrete. It caused the death of a total of 168 LAF soldiers, more than 220 militants and more than 20 civilians, while more than 200 people remain in custody on criminal charges stemming from the conflict.

attempt to *secure* the area in an apartheid-like regime. This left a countless number of Palestinians bounded by walls that segregate them from the city and guards who obstruct their mobility. These walls and guard towers also contribute to “producing a landscape that spatially encodes ethnic segregation between the [Lebanese and Palestinian] communities” (Fincham, 2012). The Lebanese authorities have aggravated the restrictions on mobility of Palestinian Refugees by requesting them to obtain permits to cross into the area monitored by UNIFIL in the South of Lebanon. This restricted the mobility of Palestinians and greatly affected their businesses (Hanafi, Chaaban, & Seyfert, 2012).

These forms of inequality are factors which cause the refugees to remain in the peripheries in areas that confine their main zones of comfort and differences (Fawaz, Gharbieh, & Harb, 2009). Therefore, camps organized as strict closed spaces “constitute urban enclaves or satellites located at the urban periphery, lacking in green spaces, and with poor access and poor housing” (Hanafi, Chaaban, & Seyfert, 2012).

The geopolitics of the camp signifies that urban marginalization is strictly entwined with social exclusion – both associated with hierarchical inequalities and a set of excluded rights, duties and obligations to later encompass economic, social and political marginalization as well.

Spatial configurations

The extreme difficulty, and almost impossibility, to own property beyond the boundaries of refugee camps has “squeezed subsequent generations of Palestinian refugees in the confined space that are refugee camps, transforming these areas to slums” (Hanafi, Chaaban, & Seyfert, 2012) as the majority had no choice between “being trapped in the

overpopulated refugee camps deprived of their human right to adequate housing” (Suleiman, 2006) and exiting the camps to rent over-priced apartments where they are at a higher risk of being segregated outside the borders of their *safe spaces*. The consequential overpopulated and informally planned attributes of the refugee camps produce a set of socio-spatial inequalities that distress the residents’ daily lives.

The configurations of the camp spaces will be examined at the camp level (*urban planning*), the cluster level (*urban design*), and the dwelling space (*architectural features*) in an attempt to portray subsequent social inequalities as a product of spatial formations.

Urban planning

In 1950, the UN planned a layout of a grid system which divided the camps into defined zones and housing units in its attempt to regulate the scale of the Palestinian camps following the 1948 Exodus and the settlement of Palestinians in various areas in Lebanon. The grid consisted of three-by-four-meter asbestos rooms which were placed in demarcated 100sqm plots entitled as “right-of-use” for one refugee family. This division allowed refugees to have ample dwelling spaces within the camp yet was a means of controlling their expansion given that they were prohibited from building beyond the demarcated plots which would be considered as spatial violation. However, the absence of private amenities inside the camp pushed refugee families to construct their own inside their plots, thus “rapidly saturating the horizontal plane in the 1960s–70s and initiating horizontal encroachments beyond the plot in the form of *Attabat*” (Maqusi, 2017). As these intrusions became difficult to continue building, vertical stairs were introduced as a new architectural element that facilitated vertical expansions. These alterations produced narrower, irregular street with random multi-story buildings that jeopardize the security

of the camps and interfere with the proper passage of light between buildings. This urban expansion was adopted in almost all camps; however, the specificity of each camp is maintained following its historical, demographic and geographical context. In further depiction of what preceded, the following three case-studies will be presented portraying the variations in urban modifications in correspondence to the former three contexts respectively in an effort to examine the social inequalities resulted by spatial configurations.

In the case of El-Buss camp, Palestinian refugees expanded their settlements taking into consideration the historical context. Developed around the former Armenian camp, the first subdivision of the Palestinian camp is composed of terraced three-story houses creating a dense neighborhood occupying a pre-existing urban space with streets that separate houses being narrow and tortuous. As the camp began to expand, the second main subdivision of the camp housed building units that are more spread out, occasionally having a second floor, and some of which have a private garden. However, with the influx of more Palestinian refugees in 1967, and Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria post 2011, the camp became overpopulated; however, the distinctions between the two subdivisions can still be made. Therefore, inequalities within the same camp are distinguished throughout its historical expansion, as residents of the less-dense area had wider footprints, more access to green areas, and wider streets that serve as public spaces, in contrast to the overcrowded population that is also closer to the sea, therefore subject to a higher risk of damage and insecurity.

The case of Beddawi camp illustrates the social inequalities generated as the urban planning of the camp evolved with demographic change. Unable to expand horizontally

beyond its original plot of land, the camp grew vertically to accommodate the displaced refugees from other Palestinian camps, including “El-Nabatieh camp, destroyed by Israeli air raids in 1974; Tel El-Zaatar Camp, razed to the ground in 1976 by Lebanese Christian militias and the Syrian army; and Nahr El-Bared, shelled and bombarded in 2007 by the Lebanese Army in clashes with the Fatah al-Islam militant group” and lately refugees from the ongoing Syrian conflict (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Qasmiyeh, 2020). This resulted in narrowing down alleyways, balconies, expanding thresholds and doorsteps, and intertwining clothing lines and electrical cables.

In Burj El-Barajneh, the development of urban planning and the multiple drawbacks of the informal expansion discussed reflect the construction in relation to geographical restrictions. The sloped site of Burj El-Barajneh naturally allowed for informal vertical expansion with minimum provision to pedestrian access with minimal or no setbacks (Samhan, 2008). Moreover, the steepness of the slope posed difficulty in accessibility, which was often facilitated by stairs that neither provide access for disabled persons nor vehicular access. The rise in heights and the conversion of green spaces to buildings in response for the increasing population (Feldman, 2015) create dim, insecure and narrow passages which threaten the safety of residents. The development of the urban setting in Burj El-Barajneh Camp leaves its residents with a varied set of inequalities in their everyday life in the camps, including tortuous street patterns and hierarchy of spaces and circulation paths.

Urban design

While the urban design of Palestinian Refugee Camps varies as they are unique in their expansion and planning, they, in principle, suffer from similar inequalities due to the

massive urbanization and overpopulation in all camps, and the repercussions of the Syrian war and the Lebanese economic crisis. At the cluster level, the poor conditions are reflected in the lack visual and physical privacy due to the narrow streetscapes, the clustered house layouts and shared roofs as a result of informal growth, and the absence of public spaces at the ground level. The vertical expansion of the housing units introduced mezzanines and balconies providing very minimal light passages to the streets and minimal distance between opposing units in which residents' privacies are not fully respected, despite the efforts attempted by residents to shift windows and doors from facing one another – or in some cases building double windows and doors to create a sense of privacy. Moreover, the clustering of space minimizes the possibility of having outdoor spaces in housing units, such as balconies or terraces, which leads families in the same apartment to share the roof of the apartment. This invades the privacy of families in various ways, and also induces gender inequality whereby women are frequently *forced* by conservative husbands to suffocate indoors and not allowed access in the presence of men. Socio-spatial inequalities are thus created as the density of the camps increases, thus intensifying the drawbacks of the urban design.

Architectural features

Through examining the smaller scale of the camps, the density of the urban scale seems to be reflected at the dwelling level thus intensifying the former and worsening the living conditions. This is particularly reflected with the increase in population inside the camps as families begin sharing their barely tolerable apartments, which comprise one or two private areas at most. Although the camps' housing units vary in size, the vast majority of the buildings fall into this category. Moreover, the housing units mostly suffer from poor

natural lighting and ventilation which reduces the spatial quality of living and impacts the health of residents due to the lack of proper sanitation and moisture control.

Reflecting on the different scales, the development of the spatial configurations in Palestinian Refugee Camps appear to have a major impact in determining the living quality of camp dwellers. Whether on the urban, the cluster, or the architectural level, the formation of spaces in these dense areas have induced inequalities between the Palestinian refugees and neighboring areas, within the camps themselves, and even between dwellers whose *privileges* – in spite of being underprivileged as a collective group at the urban scale – vary in the dwellings that shelter them.

Infrastructure and construction

As UNRWA has been facing the largest financial predicament since its establishment, the hardships faced by Palestinian Refugees has been exacerbating. This is complemented by the increased pressure on the already limited services and infrastructure caused by the increase in population, especially after hosting a large number of Syrians and PRS (Ullrich & Abu-Sharar, August 2020).

However, the underdevelopment of infrastructure in Palestinian refugee camps are mainly the ramification of multiple restrictions and limitations exercised upon Palestinians by Lebanese authorities. Palestinian Refugee Camps have been considered since their establishment as temporary settlements whose conditions slightly improved over time as the Lebanese authorities allowed the replacement of tents which could not withstand the harsh natural conditions by mud houses with zinc roofs (in an attempt to restrict their vertical expansion). With the arrival of the Palestinian Liberation Organization who began

governing the camps in the 1970s, Palestinian refugees were able to improve their living conditions by building more durable concrete units. These units, however, fail to comply with building codes and standards and are not sustainable given their informality, their rapid construction in fear of reversing the right to build, and the dreadful economic conditions of the Palestinian refugees over time that disabled them from acquiring durable construction materials.

The restrictions by the Lebanese government on Palestinian refugees have also complicated the development and enhancement of infrastructure. The Lebanese government strictly forbids the reconstruction of the camps that were totally demolished by the multiple massacres and invasions which resulted in the displacement of refugees (within their country of refuge) and the overpopulation of camps after 4 were totally wiped out. Moreover, the Lebanese army imposes obligatory restrictions on individuals who want to perform any reconstruction inside the Southern camps through a special permit which is difficult and nearly impossible to be obtained¹⁴. This often leads to further

¹⁴ Violation of Articles 13.1 and 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 13.1: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

Article 25.1: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

investigation by the Lebanese army to verify that building materials¹⁵ are not being smuggled, mainly through erecting checkpoints adjoining the camp entries as building without a permit is punishable by arrest and detention and smugglers end up paying high fines for an absurd amount of construction material. These limitations have been key in the abysmal progress of the camps' social and physical conditions due to which Palestinian refugees suffer from underdeveloped infrastructure (Sanyal, 2014).

The conditions of the El-Buss, Rashidieh, Burj El-Chemali, Ein El Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps in the south and Burj El-Barajneh Camp in the suburbs of Beirut are therefore deteriorates, where the camps in the south are guarded by the Lebanese Army Forces, and the latter is often monitored by the Internal Security Forces. This leads to the rise in heavily scrutinized living conditions where access to goods, services and employment are further restricted, spatially demonstrated by the presence of checkpoints at camp entrances, as well as by the closure of secondary roads which connect the camp to their surroundings (Ullrich & Abu-Sharar, August 2020; Dorai, 2010)

Aside from this, Palestinian refugees continue to suffer from extreme shortages of water and electricity by which it becomes compulsory to obtain power and water from private entrepreneurs. While *importing* water tanks and private generators require special permits in the above-mentioned camps (South and Burj El-Barajneh) – depriving their residents of the mere rights of living – camps with more facility of supplementing these services

¹⁵ These include cement, rods, sand, tiles, aluminum, paint materials, wood and iron doors and windows, glass panels, water pipes, electrical wires, water tanks, as well as generators.

endure the consequences of often dangerous infrastructure. For instance, the configuration of the water and electrical supplies in Shatila's urbanscape poses continuous threats as water pipes and rain, together with dangling isolated electrical wires, often electrocute many adults and children to death or chronic injuries (Halabi, 2004).

The restrictions placed by the Lebanese authorities prevent Palestinian camps from implementing vital developmental projects that improve their despondent conditions; however, they also increase the risk of injury and endanger the lives of those residing the camps, living under roofs prone to collapse during harsh weather conditions.

Facilities and services

Palestinians are still denied access to numerous public social services, especially access to healthcare, educational, and emergency services and facilities. Given that UNRWA Health Program only delivers primary health care services, and the aid provided to Palestinian refugees to access secondary and tertiary health care services has been decreasing with the shortage of funding, Palestinian refugees suffer from healthcare that is hardly adequate¹⁶. Nonetheless, the limited structural and spatial capabilities of the facilities to accommodate the rising number of refugees dependent on Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and UNRWA services often result in overcrowded spaces, delayed services, and extreme difficulty in transporting patients, especially with the

¹⁶ Alongside UNRWA's 27 primary health centers that span across the country, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) operates 9 clinics that cover some of the camps and 5 secondary health care hospitals whose free-of-charge services have been as well declining with the scarcity of funds.

mobility restrictions in some of the camps. This is met by the absence of tertiary health care which renders Palestinian refugees – often unable to settle their bills in the public or private hospitals providing this type of care – indebted, beholden to parties that finance them, and prone to engage in illegal trades to keep the lives of their families.

Most recently, the spatial configurations of the camps substantiated themselves to be an added factor in the decline of hardly-adequate health standards inside the camps, namely in the COVID-19 outbreak that alarmed the camps with limited health services and public spaces that ensure the practice of social distancing.

Unquestionably, the declining services inside Palestinian camps are further deteriorated by the limited capability to provide high-quality education. The massive number of PRL and PRS children enrolling in only 65 UNRWA schools exceeds the initial capacity of the established schools. Consequently, classes are often overcrowded, in many cases reaching 50 students per class. The limitations of the space does not allow schools inside the camps to entirely include spacious indoor classes and outdoor playgrounds relative to the student capacity, and almost lack any presence of green spaces, all which keep playgrounds heavily occupied with minimal recreational spaces and converts classes into *winterized* indoor playgrounds on rainy days due to the limited sheltered spaces. The educational status of Palestinian refugees is more problematic beyond the elementary levels – as UNRWA’s mandate insists that it only provides elementary and preparatory education – whereby secondary education is hardly attainable given the difficulties young Palestinians encounter in accessing secondary schooling (Suleiman, 2006). Therefore, Lebanon is the only field where UNRWA operates secondary schools, however very limited in number, projecting new obstacles faced by Palestinian youth. For instance, Palestinian refugees in

the South have access to only one high school, located in Rashidieh Camp, indicating that youth from the other camps must traverse non-camp areas to reach it, experiencing different forms of segregation on their way to receive adequate learning, of which is daily investigation at the checkpoints.

Furthermore, the absence of higher educational facilities and the presence of only one vocational training center towards the South limits the opportunities in receiving reputable degrees with the costly admission to private universities – despite UNRWA’s and other parties’ attempts to secure scholarship and aid that barely suffice – and the difference restrictions in receiving vocational trainings very far from *home*. The implications of such drawbacks are immensely present in increasing dropout rates and illiteracy levels, child labor, early marriage, underqualified (and unqualified) graduates, and other forms of social inequalities which hinder child, youth and adolescent development – highly consequent of the limitations of the space and its accommodated facilities.

Economic implications of socio-spatial inequalities

The social inequalities provoked by the deterioration of urban configurations present significant economic challenges to the dwellers of these spaces and are further intensified by severe economic implications. These economic implications have most recently shown that the vulnerability of the Palestinian refugees residing in camps could effortlessly be life-threatening. Their safety inside their houses is threatened by the poor infrastructure which in turn is tied to their economic poverty. Their safety is additionally jeopardized due to the fact that their survival is contingent on precarious daily labor in the informal sector. This was prominent during the COVID-19 outbreak as they posed a higher risk of contracting the virus, as well as during the economic crisis whereby the lack of future

prospects or opportunities places their safety at risk. “In essence, the Palestinians in Lebanon were reduced to a form of ‘bare life’ sustained mainly through UNRWA aid” (Sanyal, 2014).

The literature examining socio-spatial relationships in Palestinian camps primarily focuses on camps in Beirut, which adds to the necessity of conducting academic research on Ein El Hilweh Camp. Literature found on the subject however remains outdated when considering a timeframe between 2018 and 2020. Therefore, this research aims at producing updated literature which contributes to studies on Palestinian Camps, specifically Ein El Hilweh, in the scope of displacement and architecture.

Part IV: Conclusions

The different literature reviewed on the intersection between architecture and sociology suggest an inevitable interrelation between the two and the importance of architecture given its prominent effect on the well-being of space-dwellers, the formation of their identities, the production and reproduction of culture, and its existence within political, economic and social struggles. Fostering cultural and social networks through urban development, as well as strategies and frameworks is attaining more importance in literature but also in practice.

The literature reviewed on youth and spatial configurations emphasizes that youth development can be hindered in spaces that are not safe and well-designed, with no equitable access to resources and in communities which lack youth participation –

whereby the presence of these factors builds their capacities and enhances their development.

In examining the operation of the politics of temporariness in Palestinian Refugee Camps, it is evident that there is a violent opposition by the Lebanese authority towards a permanent resettlement or implantation of Palestinians in the country, translating into restrictive policies regarding social, economic and civil rights of the Palestinians, often violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and exerting “intense demographic and economic pressure on the limited space of the camps themselves” (Sanyal, 2014). Whether the position on resettlement is rejected by Palestinians who insist on the right of return whereby the camps are political claims of return is not examined in this paper; however, with second, third, fourth and fifth generations being born in Lebanon in a span of 74 years, the sense of belonging varies between a romanticized thought and an ardent reality.

Refugee camps have demonstrated that they have become de facto urban centers given their demographic and social weight, despite their de jure prohibition. Where boundaries between the cities and the camps are indistinguishable, space plays a critical role in the articulation of rights among refugees – especially youth. The Lebanese authorities embed restrictive measures on the daily lives of Palestinians in the effort to keep the spaces in which they dwell marginalized and segregated, attempting to socially exclude Palestinians and deny them the ability to integrate into the economic activity of the country around them. The Palestinian camps are both one with and yet remain separate from the urban environment. Therefore, socio-spatial inequalities are present in refugee camps and are produced by the geographic politics of the camps, their spatial configurations, and the

underdevelopment of infrastructure, services and facilities in these camps. The camps and refugees also suffer the economic implications of the socio-spatial inequalities thus produced.

The settlement of refugees could extend to traverse the expected temporality and their final destination could be bound by their countries of origin, their initial host countries, or other host countries. It is crucial to challenge the notion of refugees as only waiting to become citizens (again). It is important to signal that to support refugees is to recognize the fluidity of temporariness as a dynamic process. To empower refugees must mean granting them civil and economic rights, recognizing the transnational character of their identity, and radically improving the urban conditions of their space (Hanafi, 2008). Therefore, they should be considered “actors who contribute, through their initiatives and coping strategies, to the development of the cities that host them” (Doraï, 2010) and the plan of managing refugees must “strengthen their own resources and self-reliance and avoid creating dependency” (Stevenson & Sutton, 2011).

In attempting to answer whether urban rehabilitations are sufficient to improve the livelihoods of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, it is important to take into account the physical, socio-economic, and the cultural fabric of the camps as well as the refugee as an individual seeking to acquire social, economic and political capital. In doing so, it becomes evident that urban rehabilitation needs to be complemented by social, economic, and political governance in which the refugees can take part.

It is also crucial to note that the rehabilitation of a space does not contradict with the anticipated desire of or right to return. The nature of refugees as dynamic individuals in space and time, means that they are able to dwell within differences of temporalities

without detaching from their initial space of reference. Instead, it is vital that these refugees maintain their dignity and the ability to acquire decent living standards by integrating into the host societies as productive individuals sharing the responsibility of maintaining the development of their host country. Most importantly, this emphasizes being granted the right to participate in developing the urban fabric where they settle in ways that ensure their development and protection, and accordingly leads to a cohesive developed urban sprawl into the cities of the host community which reduces the isolation of spaces inhabited by refugees and the socio-spatial inequalities that emerge as a consequence. Moreover, this includes contributing to the economy of the host community at a multispectral level by engaging in the labor market and increasing productivity. Only in doing so are refugees able to improve both their social as well as spatial conditions and reduce socio-spatial inequalities.

Chapter Three

Case Study of Ein El Hilweh Camp

Brief Overview



Figure 2 Palestinian Refugee Camps and administrative boundaries

Located 3KM south-east of Saida, Ein El-Hilweh Camp was established in 1948 by the International Committee of the Red Cross to accommodate Palestinian refugees from Northern Palestine as a consequence of the Israeli occupation with an estimated original population of 9,000 Palestinians. UNRWA began operating in the camp in 1952. The camp occupies an area of 1KM² within its officially recognized borders, with 8 adjacent areas¹⁷ occupying an additional 0.5KM². Although the population of Ein El-Hilweh Camp varies between different sources, Ein El-Hilweh Camp is the biggest camp in Lebanon among the 12 officially recognized camps in terms of population, given that its adjacent areas are geographically intertwined within its fabric (ACTED, 2018). It is estimated that approximately one third of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon resides in Ein El-Hilweh Camp (UNRWA, 2018). The camp's population has increased over time especially with the displacement of Palestinian Refugees from Tripoli during the civil war and after the 2007 conflict in Nahr El-Bared Camp, and fiercely during the Syrian 2011 war. According to the 2017 population and housing census in Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon, the camp hosts around 32,768 individuals mainly including Palestinian refugees from Lebanon (PRL), Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), Syrians, Lebanese, as well as individuals with other nationalities (Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Central Administration of statistics, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018), whereas UNRWA estimates in a recent report the number to be 48,214 (UNRWA, 2018); however this number reaches 80,000 in reports published by the United Nations Office for the

¹⁷ Al Ta'meer Al Tahtany, Al Sikkeh, Al Taware'e, Baraksat, Bustan Abu Jameel, Bustan Al Quds and Uzo, Jabal al-Haleeb, and Fadlo Wakim.



Figure 3 Palestinian Refugee Camps in Saida Area

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Relief Web International. (OCHA, 2017). Unofficial estimates are also higher and reach 100,000 to 120,000 as a huge uncounted number of Syrian refugees settled in the camp after the start of the Syrian civil war (Nilsson & Badran, 2019). This increase in population placed a burden on the already overcrowded urban landscape, also heightening the struggle over the limited resources

inside the camp.

Similar to all camps, UNRWA still provides essential services (including health care, education, some relief, and social services as well as shelter and infrastructure services) inside the officially recognized camp but does not administer or police the camp; however, adjacent areas are not entirely serviced by UNRWA since they fall beyond the officially recognized boundaries of the camp, and municipal service coverage to these gatherings is limited¹⁸ (ACTED, 2018). UNRWA is not responsible for providing basic urban service

¹⁸ The camp is located in the Darb Es-Sim, Mieh Mieh, Saida Ed-Dekermane municipality, part of the Saida District and South Governorate.

– such as water, sewerage, solid-waste management, or road networks – outside the physical boundaries of the camp, and urban services provided by municipalities are “politically difficult, as most residents are living informally, and assistance could be interpreted as a step towards ‘permanent resettlement’.” (OCHA, 2017). UNRWA provides elementary and preparatory education through a network of seven schools, as well as secondary education through one school. Moreover, UNRWA’s health services include only two primary health-care centers which provide general consultations, specialists’ consultations, mother and child health care, dental care, laboratory services and basic X-ray (UNRWA, 2022). Residents in Ein El-Hilweh Camp resort to organization-led clinics and hospitals inside the camp for secondary and/or tertiary care, mostly Human Call Association followed by Al Aqsa Hospital. Moreover, an estimate of 25 NGOs operates inside the camp and adjacent areas, in addition to 3 UN agencies: UNRWA, UNICEF and UNDP (OCHA, 2017).

The security situation in Ein El-Hilweh is also distressing. It is majorly affected by being a “microcosm of the Palestinian political universe” with all political organizations, parties, and factions in constant tension for leverage, as well as the hideout of fugitives and extremists from the LAF inside the camp (OCHA, 2017). Therefore, recurring incidents of armed conflicts break out inside the camp threatening the safety of the camp residents and hampers their mobility inside the camp, entering and exiting the camp, and their accessibility to services.

These security concerns have led the Lebanese authorities to take extreme measures by constructing an isolation concrete wall with watchtowers and barbed wires. The construction began in November 2016 and was interrupted several times due to the

opposition by Palestinians in the camp, however it was resumed until early 2020 with the beginning of the economic crisis. The Lebanese army isolated the smaller unbuilt part with barbed wires and thus no part of the camp was left unfenced. This wall was thought to promote racism, division, and the culture of estrangement and hatred rather than providing security. Some thought it was tightening the noose on the camps to purge the country from Palestinian refugees (Al Tahhan, 2016). Moreover, the wall built restricts the freedom of movement of people within the camp (especially non-IDs), and from/to the camp, and prevents any integration within the fabric of the city. This affects their protection, mental and physical health, and their access to many services outside the camp. These security measures also hamper businesses activities in the camp as it halts the easy movement of people and products from/to the camp. Moreover, during the construction phase, the Lebanese army installed electronic gates at four entrances of Ein El-Hilweh on June 12th, 2018 (Palestinian Return Centre, 2018). The outrage of Palestinians inside and outside the camp have led the authorities to remove these gates replacing them with multiple checkpoints (Naharnet Newsdesk, 2018).

Moreover, the Lebanese army enforced administrative security restrictions on the entry of construction materials to the camp, requiring camp residents to obtain a permit – which is almost impossible, and thus constraining shelter improvements and infrastructure rehabilitation (Hanafi, Chaaban, & Seyfert, *Social Exclusion of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Reflections on The Mechanisms That Cement Their Persistent Poverty*, 2012). Ein El-Hilweh Camp suffers from structural unsafety, where the majority of buildings are affected by moisture problems due to large damp patches and roof leakages. This is heightened by the random expansion of buildings which doesn't comply with safety

standards and threatens the ability of the dire infrastructure to accommodate the population inside the camp. Moreover, Ein El-Hilweh Camp is characterized by road inaccessibility, where 16.4 km of the 22.1 km of roads in the camp are pedestrianized because their width is less than two meters and do not accommodate for 4-wheeled vehicles (this puts patients at serious risks in cases of emergency). Moreover, the estimated surface area of the camp is 0.6 km² as buildings occupy more than 0.3 km² of the total area of the camp – leaving the population density to be around 80,155/km² (UNRWA, 2018). This results in small and overcrowded shelters, poor living conditions including lack of privacy and quietness, and over-burdened infrastructure.

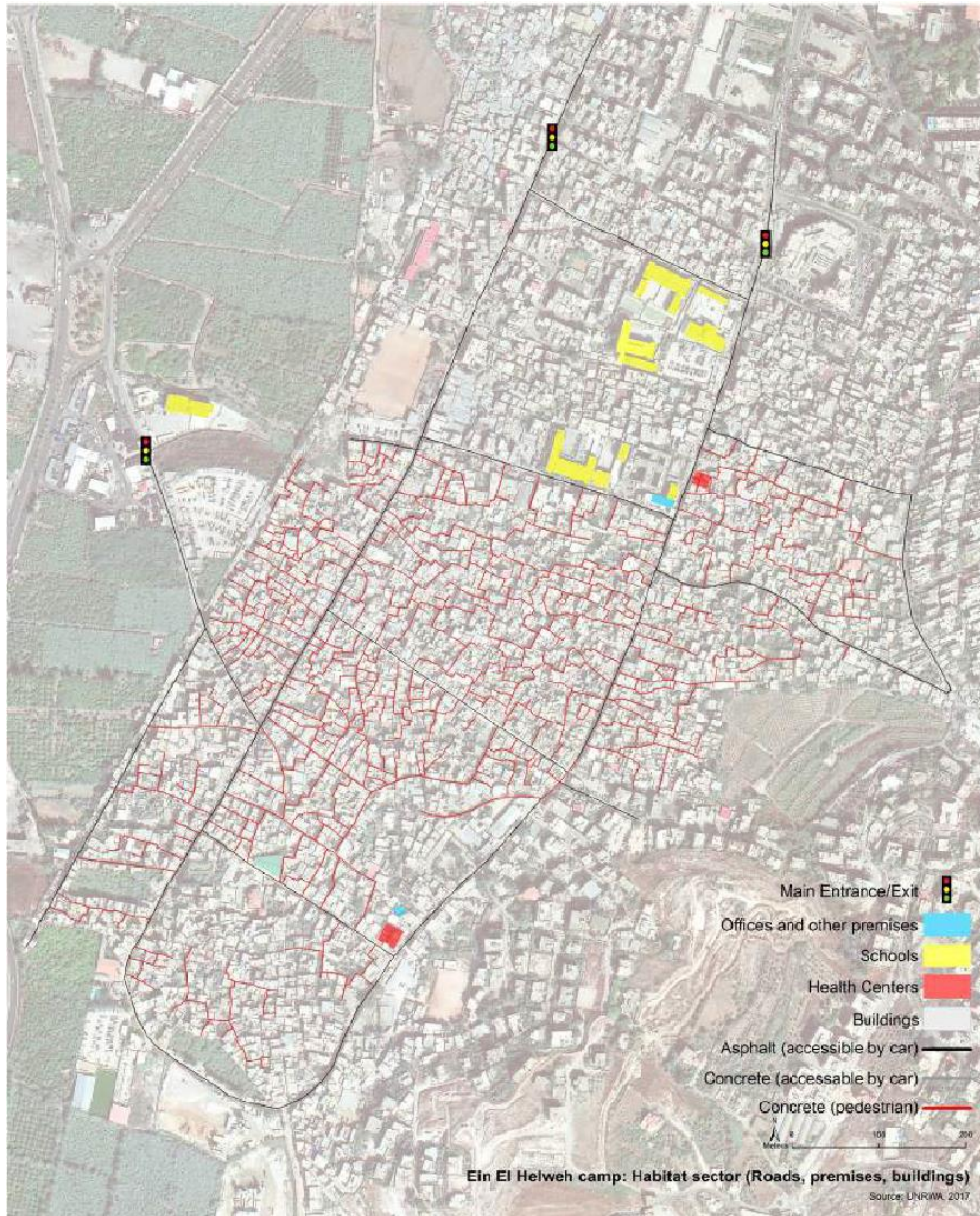


Figure 4 Ein El-Hilweh Camp

This demographic pressure along with the urban situation demonstrates a serious concern in terms of environmental health. This was flagged with the outbreak of COVID-19 inside the camps. Despite the alarming number of cases with coronavirus and the efforts of different actors to maintain quarantine levels, the movement in the camp remained normal, and the market (the *souk*) which considered a lifeline for many families remained

busy (Abo al-Oula, 2020). The levels of hunger and poverty in the camp were more alarming to its inhabitants than being infected with a virus, and the spatial configurations in the camp did not help with social distancing. Palestinian refugees are among the marginalized population who are suffering the most from the ramifications of the economic crisis happening in Lebanon and exacerbating since 2019 with the devaluation of the Lebanese Lira, crisis in the banking sector and restricted access to the money, increased employment rates, deflated wages, and a hyperinflation in livelihood. The effect of the pandemic amidst this situation has been to increase the unemployment rate amongst Palestinian workers from 60 to 90 per cent (Nasreddine, 2020). This also coincided with UNRWA's financial crisis caused by Trump's decision to cut the entire US budget in addition to donor countries failing to meet their commitments which caused a massive scarcity in services provided by UNRWA.

This difficult situation resulted in a large increase in drop-out rates among youth due to economic poverty and limited employment opportunities. The economic situation in addition to the increased hardships with the arrival of almost 6,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria also caused an increased use of drugs, also leading to increasing levels of violence (Nilsson & Badran, 2019). This is exacerbated with the misguidance of youth and the limited resources for other forms of expression. The camp has limited recreational spaces for youth, consisting of a few libraries, two football fields, two small-sized pools, a small park, a few playgrounds at some NGO centers, and a few basic gyms. Moreover, the concrete wall and barbed wires have cut through countless buildings, rooftops, compounds, and empty spaces. For instance, the concrete wall at the southern part of the camp has cut through a former recreational space which included a swimming pool, two

football fields, a children's park, and a car parking, which had to shut down because it is no longer easily accessible by car or foot, and a watchtower was also built overlooking that area.

Interview and Focus Group Discussions Findings

The interviews were conducted in April and May over a period of one month. Eight individual interviews and one focus group discussion were conducted with youth coordinators from five local NGOs operating in Ein El-Hilweh Camp. All the informants provided complete answers to all the questions. However, the director of a sixth NGO specialized in working with children and youth with disabilities preferred answering some of the questions in writing rather than delegating a staff member for an individual interview. The names of the informants will be kept anonymous. The names of the informants from the individual interviews and FGD will be labeled chronologically as Informant-number-II, and Informant-number-FGD respectively.

The interviews and FGD were thematically divided into three parts: (1) protection, (2) capacity and skills building, and (3) participation. The findings of these interviews will be presented thematically but will be analyzed using an intersectional lens.

Protection

The compiled answers of the 8 informants from the individual interviews signified that female youth feel unsafe while walking around the camp alone during the day, while male youth feel neutral while walking around the camp alone during the day. The average feeling of safety for females ranked 2.68, while that for males ranked 3.18 with 1 being very unsafe and 5 being very safe. This aspect of protection is more severe during the

night, where both female and male youth feel unsafe walking around the camp alone during the night, with female youth feeling very unsafe. The average feeling of safety for females ranked 1.68, while that for males ranked 2.375 with 1 being very unsafe and 5 being very safe. The elements which induce the feeling of unsafety to youth were primarily indicated by 50% of the informants from the individual interviews as well as informants from the FGD to be the presence of weapons, armed individuals and political organizations, parties and factions. The barracks and offices of the political organizations, parties and factions are situated in almost all neighborhoods between homes which threatens the safety of youth who may not be able to escape in the case of frequent armed conflicts between parties bounding the neighborhood or may not be able to return back home from another neighborhood. “Sometimes, we get stuck in the middle of it, and we wouldn’t know where the slap which could kill us would come from. At other times, staying on the streets would be safer than returning back to our homes” (Informant-4-FGD, 2022). This is exacerbated by the absence of an evacuation mechanism inside the camps in case of armed conflict and physical violence. Moreover, the physical branching of these offices also contributes to the psychological instability of the camp residents, especially with the increasing phenomenon of politically recruiting and arming youth. The spatially-prominent political elements are also complemented with the political definition and division of spaces, whereby politically-affiliated youth or those with politically-affiliated parents may be threatened or subjected to violence when they are present in neighborhoods opposing to these affiliations, and apolitical youth may be forcefully recruited, threatened or subjected to violence when they are present in politically-defined neighborhoods which constitute the majority of the camp. Moreover, as noted by 25% of

the informants from the individual interviews and informants from the FGD, this element was followed by the prominence of drug dealers and internet cafes (cybercafes) which are considered to be hubs for substance use and dealing, the informal buildings and random architecture which produce dim and narrow alleys, overcrowded streets and unorganized traffic – especially motorcycles, as well as the checkpoints at the camp entrances and the concrete wall surrounding the camp which eradicate quick escape points. Mosques were also noted to be unsafe, where “even these places of worship which are meant for spiritual nourishment are being turned into the exact thing which takes this feeling away as they become bases for militant and political recruitment” (Informant-1-FGD, 2022). In addition to the architectural elements of the camps and the nature of their occupancy, the protection of youth is also affected by cultural barriers, stigmas and disparities, and the deep-rooted patriarchy.

All of the informants were either aware of youth who experienced physical, verbal and sexual harassment and violence inside the camps or have experienced it themselves. In general, incidents of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence were more frequent during the night. Victims of sexual harassments, abuse, or violence are mostly females, while victims of verbal and physical violence are mostly males. The dim and narrow alleys of the camps as well as the overcrowded streets ease acts of verbal, physical and sexual harassment, abuse, and violence. This is paired with the absence of an evacuation mechanism and quick escape points. Moreover, political organizations, parties and factions seem to obscure these incidents as reported by 25% informants from the individual interviews as well as informants from the FGD. “Politically affiliated individuals who are harassers and abusers are protected by their reference authorities who

have physical presence and offices, and own cameras in the streets. They shield these harassers and abusers in their neighborhoods and/or obscure or delete the footage” (Informant-1-II, 2022). The political definition of spaces also contributes to incidents of physical violence, due to “trespassing” of youth from one neighborhood to another. Moreover, the design of the roads also contributes to incidents of unintentional violence such as vehicle crashes and consequent conflicts. “Because of the narrow streets, my friend was once carrying her daughter in a stroller and a man crashed it with his car. The baby was severely injured, and the man was physically beaten” (Informant-6-II, 2022). Additionally, several incidents of violence at the checkpoints were also reported. The informants also indicated that the prominence of drugs in the camps acts as an accelerator for harassment. “We don’t advise youth to avoid certain areas in the camp because all the areas in the camps are unsafe. However, we advise youth to be careful and stay at home when there are conflicts, especially at night” commented one of the informants advising youth to avoid certain areas (Informant-1-FGD, 2022). “The simplest life necessities are not present inside the camp. The only breather is the street”, they added.

Informants from the FGD expressed that a fraction of youth have spoken about these hindering factors and the status of the protection but actually languish in this area. This is due to three noted reasons. First, the fraction of youth who publicly express their frustration with the situation and call for change are thwarted by the dominant prevalence of political organizations, parties and factions who are decision-makers. Second, the majority of youth are hopeless about the dire conditions they live in and are thus either neutral or join political parties in the hope of alleviating their poverty. Third, a notable fraction of youth is proudly politically affiliated and are thus not dissatisfied with the

situation, but rather specifically proud of the political dominance in the camps. Nonetheless, concrete actions have not been entirely taken yet, taking into consideration that attempts to tackle the issues of protection have been stalled by decision-makers. The main obstructions were noted to be the political organizations, parties and factions inside the camp which are very powerful and also possess influence through indirect channels such as the Popular Committees, the Inhabitant Committees, and the Security Committees – all which are meant to be impartial, with the first two meant to be apolitical. The camp becomes largely politicized, which makes it difficult for youth to also initiate solutions due to the fear of retaliation and death. “If they try to get in the way of political organizations, parties and factions, their lives would be worth one bullet”, one informant from the FGD said (Informant-2-FGD, 2022). Moreover, one informant added that there hasn’t been any serious decision to tackle the problems of safety inside the camp by these committees themselves either, referring to the situation as “the fox guarding the henhouse” (Informant-4-FGD, 2022).

While the informants indicated that there are no radical solutions to the factors which destabilize the camp’s peace and safety and hinder youth protection, several entry points were proposed as an attempt to control these factors. Enhancing the security inside the camp is the most notable entry point from the individual interviews and the FGD, where 37.5% of the informants from the individual interviews as well as all informants from the FGD proposed establishing a clear impartial security body which acts as a reference and regulator inside the camp responsible for maintaining the safety inside the camps by organizing the ways the spaces are occupied. This body would be responsible for regulating the use of weapons, control the physical presence of the political organizations,

parties and factions, and ensure the streets are safely accessed. Moreover, informants from the FGD noted the important role of the Lebanese security apparatus in cross-checking and clarifying the names of wanted individuals inside the camps to reduce the abuse of youth by political organizations, parties and factions and Lebanese authorities. Due to the enclosing of the camp and the fear of crossing the checkpoints, youth who are mistakenly thought to be wanted, or those who get the impression that they are wanted due to the lack of legal knowledge and/or word of mouth, develop an imprisoning perception of the camp. They either engage in mischief, drug-dealing and crime, or are “subjected to the worst types of abuse from the Lebanese army as well as the political organizations, parties and factions in the camp” who take advantage of their fear and feeling of weakness and the need to be protected (Informant-1-FGD, 2022). This entry point is met with establishing and empowering youth protection committees, as well as youth-friendly urban planning strategies noted by 25% of the informants from the individual interviews. These strategies encompass facilities and infrastructure such as accessible and wide roads, lighting and electricity, and mobile networks, in addition to youth-friendly spaces such as public libraries, cinemas and theaters, sports clubs and gymnasiums (especially for women), and cultural/educational clubs and centers. Additionally, informants emphasized on the role of youth neighborhood committees, the importance of income-generating opportunities for youth and their families, and the importance of NGOs and CSOs work in the fields of youth development. They also stressed on the crucial role of schools and parents in guiding youth where to go inside the camp, raising awareness, and in monitoring their movements, especially at night. Finally, they expressed the urgent need of controlling what (and who) is smuggled inside the camps including drugs, weapons, cash, and wanted

individuals. Not only does this affect youth development, but one of the informants expressed that even children are subjected to abuse and life-threatening commands through transporting drugs, bullets and grenades, therefore being “logistically armed” (Informant-1-FGD, 2022).

Capacity and skills building

During their free time, the majority of male youth spend their time on the streets drinking *nargile*, in front of stores, in the markets, or playing online games in internet cafes or card games in coffee shops. It was noted that these internet cafes and coffee shops are a cover-up for substance use and dealing hubs. It was also noted by two informants from the individual interviews that male youth constantly stare at people passing by, especially females. Moreover, male youth also spend their free time playing football when feasible, and or spend their time using social media platforms and playing games on their mobile phones. On the other hand, the majority of female youth spend their time at home or on the rooftops with friends or family members according to all informants from the individual interviews and from the FGD. They also spend their time watching TV at home, using social media platforms, and playing games on their mobile phones. Female youth have the interest to engage in outdoor activities but do not have the freedom due to cultural and religious barriers imposed by their parents and surrounding family and neighbors, or because they feel unsafe being outdoors. A lot of female youth unenthusiastically spend their free time in the mosques learning the Quran or religious lessons, or in specific NGOs because these facilities are their only way out of their homes. Nonetheless, a modest fraction of youth resort to NGOs and CSOs to spend their free time engaging in extracurricular activities such as life skills sessions, digital training, and recreational

activities. A notable number of youth (males and females) also engage in community-based and youth-led initiatives and campaigns, as well as other volunteering activities; however, several NGOs were noted to take advantage of these youth for political recruitment. In general, while a number of youth in Ein El-Hilweh engage in productive activities, the vast majority are unemployed, hopeless and wish to immigrate.

Youth face several obstacles while navigating the camp and at its peripherals, which makes it more difficult to perform the activities necessary for their capacity and skills building. Inside the camp, youth are challenged by the narrow and crowded streets which are overpopulated with people and vehicles and are violated by business owners who extend their shops outwards and occupy a huge part of the main streets. Moreover, the difficulty of natural lighting and the absence of electricity causes most alleys to be dim and unsafe. The roads' infrastructure also contributes to the challenges faced by youth, as there are plenty of stolen or broken gutters, holes, bumps, sewage systems, excavations, isolated and unprotected electric wires, and other dire infrastructure conditions which makes walking around the camp more difficult. Additionally, youth may face neighborhood disputes or armed conflict due to the prominence of armed individuals on the streets and between the houses. Female youth may also face a lot of verbal harassment but are mostly threatened by substance users and religious men. At the peripheries and entries of the camp, youth are faced by checkpoints where "entering the camp feels like they are at the crossing between Palestine and Israel" (Informant-3-FGD, 2022) in addition to the concrete wall which encloses the whole camp along with the towers. "We call it the Berlin wall", one of the informants from the FGD commented (Informant-4-FGD, 2022).

Despite these challenges, informants from the individual interviews and the FGD proposed activities that are crucial for skills and capacity building. Among these, the most prominent is sports activities including football, basketball, mixed martial arts, yoga, weightlifting and fitness as noted by 75% of the informants from the individual interviews, as well as all informants from the FGD, along with cultural activities including poetry recitals, music events, theater and cinemas, and arts competitions as noted by 62.5% of the informants from the individual interviews. Activities such as volunteering and community initiatives, humanitarian and social enterprises, vocational training, income-generating activities, training on life skills and digital skills, career guidance, MHPSS and recreational activities were also noted. Additionally, informants emphasized on the importance of having Youth hubs and clubs, cultural clubs, libraries, and a safe space for discussions and self-expression. Informants from the FGD expressed that economic stability is crucial for youth to perform capacity and skills building activities, because “youth who are working to secure their livelihoods do not have time to think of these activities” (Informant-1-FGD, 2022).

Due to spatial, political, cultural, social and economic reasons, youth cannot perform all of these activities inside the camp or do not have access to the facilities enabling them to do so. All the informants from the individual interviews and the FGD indicated that space is the most major obstruction which prevents (1) the design and implementation of many activities such as environmental campaigns and outdoor scouting activities, and (2) the construction of many facilities such as fitness and sports centers, swimming pools, cultural centers, co-working and studying spaces, libraries, green spaces, and gardens – all which are essential for youth development. The number of empty spaces which could

be invested are limited in Ein el-Hilweh Camp. The camp is overcrowded and overpopulated which minimizes the public space as the streets are being narrowed down by the day and congested with vehicles. When the camp was built, it was designed to provide each family a reasonable space to live in, with spacious streets between the buildings. However, as the families remained and expanded in the camp for over 74 years, these spaces became overcrowded with limited spaces for activities. The limitations in space are exacerbated by the concrete wall and barbed wires sieging the camp and preventing horizontal expansion. In addition, the infrastructure is overstretched due to the overpopulation and massive increase in spatial configurations since it has been designed which restrains new construction and/or rehabilitation work. The only available outdoor spaces are the streets which are unsafe and/or inadequate, and the few empty lots which could be invested are politically defined or controlled. For example, youth play football on the streets but are subjected to verbal harassment from the neighbors, armed individuals, and shop owners. Moreover, the restrictions set by the Lebanese authorities on the entry of construction materials and the strict measures taken at checkpoints at the camp's entrances obstructs any attempt to alter the spatial configurations inside the camp. Therefore, most spaces available for youth to build their skills are inside the NGOs and CSOs centers; however, as they need to go through certain roads with strong armed presence to reach the, many families may not be comfortable with their children (specifically females) going there, so they forbid them from going to the NGOs to begin with. Moreover, the division of the current spaces is not well-designed. For example, the football field is surrounded by houses, an office for a political organization and a generator shop. Similarly, a small-scale garden is surrounded by houses almost entirely. The public

spaces are thus suppressed and bounded by random architecture. On the other hand, due to the spatial limitations, youth who are inclined toward activities that are not “conventionally gender-associating” are pressured to abstain from performing these activities in the camp because the space is limited and overcrowded and they cannot “hide” from performing these activities (Informant-2-II, 2022). The strong physical presence of the political organizations, parties and factions also attracts youth to perform other activities that are not vital for their development. Moreover, one of the informants commented that the priority is for political offices, markets, and mosques.

The general atmosphere inside the camps is demotivating and depressing with urban poverty being a root cause to the situation. Aside from spatial limitations and restrictions, parents exert pressure on their children (specifically females) to stay at home and fear extreme outcomes from the interaction with other youth or what “NGOs would feed them”, such as religious extremism or extreme open-mindedness. This is complemented by female youth who are victims of cultural and social barriers imposed on them to drop out of school, informal education, and extracurricular activities once they reach a certain age towards the end of their adolescence years. Therefore, with minimal other facilities, youth who end up staying at home are deprived from building their skills and capacities.

The NGOs interviewed provide many of the services and programs crucial for youth development mainly revolving around life skills, vocational trainings¹⁹, and digital skills,

¹⁹ It is worth noting that a minor number of female youth enroll in vocational training which are traditionally perceived to be for men. On one hand, a few NGOs offer modernized vocational

but they are neither able to provide not support and advocate for several activities which mainly require a wide or outdoor space. Moreover, NGOs and CSOs that are dedicated for youth development are limited and have minimal resources to sustain and/or expand their activities and programs. For instance, one of the NGOs opens its playground for different teams of youth who are not beneficiaries at the centers to play per a weekly schedule. While this NGO tries to accommodate as many teams as possible, the ratio of youth to opportunities at performing sports activities is extremely large.

Consequently, a fraction of youth resort to facilities outside the camp for extracurricular activities provided they have the capacity and privilege to go outside the camp since there are noted challenges. First, the checkpoints at the entrances of the camps and the long queues they cause make it very difficult and unbearable for youth to enter and exit the camp on a regular basis – especially youth who believe they are wanted by the Lebanese authorities. For example, if they have cameras with them and would like to practice photography outside the camp, they will struggle to bring the cameras back in at the checkpoints because it's forbidden. Second, the transportation within and outside the camp has become very costly especially with the devaluation of the national currency. Third, youth are not aware of the opportunities they have outside the camp due to the limited exposure to “the outside”. Finally, youth struggle to fit in outside the camp due to the cultural stigma imposed on them and the (physical and social) boundaries they are framed within. Therefore, the majority of youth prefer to stay inside the camp. However,

training. On the other hand, female youth either face cultural challenges or are not guided and oriented towards non-traditional fields of work.

the facilities outside the camp which compensate for their lack-of inside are mainly football fields²⁰, basketball courts, fitness centers and gyms, as well as various restaurants, beaches, swimming pools, malls, and natural reserves and forests. Informants from the FGD indicated that the spaces and the culture outside the camps are different and therefore youth would have developed healthier habits if they were outside the camp. The cultural flexibility outside the camps provides more freedom for youth to explore different lifestyles such as inclusive coffeeshops and working spaces, the availability of safe spaces to explore talents in arts & crafts, music, and fashion with less cultural stigmas, and positive interaction with neighbors. Moreover, the spatial advantage mainly lies in the availability of spaces for pedestrians, gardens and green areas, the availability of sports facilities for both males and females, the availability of specialized centers for specialized services, and better accessibility to infrastructure – mainly internet, water, and electricity.

As noted by all informants from the individual interviews and the FGD, the skills and capacity building of youth is affected negatively by the limited resources to enhance, including the socio-spatial inequalities inside the camp among others. Youth are deprived of spaces and activities which allow them to express their opinions, release their stress and suppressed emotions, and attain new skills and hobbies. The limitations and restrictions on spatial configurations obstruct having a nurturing and incubating society in which youth explore and develop their skills and hobbies and turn their daily lives into a trite routine: home, street, home. The political control over the available spaces also

²⁰ There was a football field adjacent to the camp, but when the Lebanese army built the wall around the camp, the field became outside the camp.

limits youth's options to spend their free time productively and constructively thus hindering their development. For example, there is one football field that is controlled by/affiliated with a certain political organization. Therefore, youth who are politically neutral cannot enter and play in this field (Informant-1-II, 2022). The presence of armed individuals and drug dealers also exposes youth to unhealthy experiences, abuse and violence and drags some of them into being armed and/or substance-use/dealing, especially that there is no other space for them to hang out, or at least they are forced to encounter these experiences on their way home. The streets are home for all different groups of society making it extremely hard for youth to escape this toxic environment. The dealers are always on the streets. On the other hand, the geographical characteristic of Ein El-Hilweh Camp resembles a wide yet narrow prison. "Youth feel outcast and imprisoned inside the camp as if they are seized by the Israelis" said one of the informants from the FGD (Informant-3-FGD, 2022).

Moreover, the spaces inside the houses also contribute negatively to their development. There are limited spaces between buildings (less than one meter) which affects the privacy and the serenity youth need for work or reflection. "When you open the windows, you don't even see the sky or anything green" commented one informant from the individual interviews when describing their house (Informant-1-II, 2022). Another informant complemented this by saying

We cannot even go out to the balcony. For example, my balcony had a sea view. But then Fateh built a 3-story office building and an adjacent building where they train dogs. They blocked the view (even this is considered luxurious compared to other houses in the camp), and the

dogs are always barking at night. Therefore, we don't have a breather from the camp, we can only see streets or adjacent buildings. We cannot work or study or sleep quietly. There is always noise from children and youth playing on the streets, or from neighbors next doors. We don't even have privacy at our homes (Informant-6-II, 2022).

Moreover, the cultural barriers, also being a consequence of dire spatial conditions, plays a role in hindering youth development, especially for females. The distribution of big families over the small spaces creates a sense of tribal cultural barriers that stand in the way of youth development (Informant-5-FGD, 2022). “Let’s look at female youth who stay at home 24/7 because of their parents. How will they gain any social skills if they don’t have a social circle wider than their families?” says one of the informants from the individual interviews (Informant-8-II, 2022).

Unfortunately, one of the informants from the individual interviews indicated that youth are hopeless and desperate. They do not have any glimmer of hope that they could develop themselves (Informant-4-II, 2022). The spatial design of the camp now destroys youth instead of developing them, another informant from the individual interviews adds (Informant-1-II, 2022).

NGOs and CSOs are trying to provide youth with the necessary resources to foster their development but are faced with multiple challenges, notably the environment being toxic and obstructing these efforts, the large number of youth whom cannot be absorbed by the NGOs and CSOs, as well as the deterioration of UNRWA’s services in the fields of youth

and spatial rehabilitation which exerts immense pressure on NGOs and CSOs to fill in the gaps.

Participation

The majority of the informants from the individual interviews emphasized on the important role of youth in reducing urban poverty through different channels, whereas one informant thought they do not have a role in doing so due to the spatial limitations and restrictions, and the political dominance over property and decision-making processes. “The only possible solution is to rebuild the camp from scratch which is illogical. Currently, the services and facilities at CSOs or NGOs are the only entry point to any reform” they said (Informant-6-II, 2022).

The informants from the individual interviews and the FGD also emphasized on the importance of youth participation in all stages of development because they are a driving force of change. The majority of youth have a less traditional mentality independent from politics, bearing arms, and isolation. Their disconnection from the history of wars enables them to induce this modern mentality and utilize their potential inside the camps via businesses, initiatives, and campaigns – especially when it comes to implementing a youth-friendly and child-friendly approach. Involving youth in decision-making was noted to be crucial to their participation. “If you want to develop a community, you need to engage the community in the decision-making process and allow them to participate in all stages of development” one informant commented (Informant-5-II, 2022). The main entry points to decision-making were noted to be through their representation as members in the Popular Committees and in neighborhood committees which currently lack the presence of youth. According to one of the informants, this is the most effective way for

youth to have an impact on their community as the voice of youth cannot be heard unless they are in a position of power (Informant-1-II, 2022).

Moreover, youth require trainings on life skills and interpersonal skills including public speaking, communication, adaptability, conflict-resolution, problem-solving, and teamwork as well as technical trainings on proposal writing, budgeting, and urban refinement, whereby they can effectively use their skillset to implement change in their communities. They also need consistent guidance from concerned individuals and institutions to implement activities in the camp. An exchange of knowledge between residents inside and outside the camp is also considered an asset in this regard. “The only way for them to develop their communities is to develop themselves”, commented one of the informants from the individual interviews (Informant-8-II, 2022). It is also essential that youth are provided the safe spaces to think positively without being influenced by or abused by political organizations, parties and factions. “Youth always feel the need to be protected inside the camp and this is why they resort to political organizations, parties and factions. They feel that being armed would protect them while in fact it adds to their unsafety and instability. This fear limits their capacities” commented one of the informants from the individual interviews (Informant-1-II, 2022). Consequently, youth participation requires an encouraging, motivational and inspiring environment so youth have hope in change. This could stem from serious research which guides youth on practical steps towards reducing urban poverty, support from parents to engage in community work, support from residents outside the camp, and success stories from fellow youth. Lastly, youth need to be provided the opportunity to participate and lead in refining the camp’s infrastructure and spatial configurations through various activities

starting with raising awareness on urban poverty, breaking the stigma on community work, and introducing the concept of youth participation in urban refinement – through door-to-door campaigns, community-based campaigns, and social/cultural programs engaging all age-groups in the camp. Additionally, informants from the individual interviews and the FGD proposed environmental campaigns and initiatives including cleanup activities, installing garbage bins, afforestation and greening activities, green roofs and green walls initiatives (such as productive plants which would reduce the cost of food), as well as sustainable agriculture and farming initiatives (such as vertical spaces for poultry). They expressed the need for green areas which increase levels of comfort and well-being, provide spaces for youth to release their frustrations and engage in social and cultural events, as well as provide them with economic opportunities. The informants added infrastructure-enhancement projects such as repairing and widening roads, water refinement, sewage system repair and organizing public transportation. In addition, designing spaces for recreational activities for youth and children²¹, rehabilitating existing spaces including NGOs and CSOs centers, as well as rehabilitation and collectivizing of houses were noted. However, youth need the technical support of NGOs and CSOs, UNRWA, UNICEF and other concerned IOs as well as sustainable monetary and material support from reliable entities and donors. Moreover, the majority of the informants from the FGD added the importance of income-generating opportunities and employability programs as an important entry point to reduce urban poverty as they provide youth with

²¹ Children play on the streets between roads or in small alleys where they are prone to be subjected to verbal violence, physical violence, abuse, and physical unsafety. This affects their development later on as youth

economic stability and optimism. A few examples stated by informants from the FGD which could concretely be refined are (1) two football fields which need rehabilitation (grass, lights, seats/benches, lockers, bathrooms), (2) an empty parking lot which could be transformed into a recreational space for youth and for children (games and small refreshment stands), (3) an abandoned lot could be transformed into a garden, and (4) a vertical expansion one of the NGO's rooftops to become a space for youth activities including a small screening space, youth-friendly recreational facilities, and a fitness zone.

All of the informants from the individual interviews indicated that participating in these activities would enhance youth development in the society. The act of participating in community-driven activities is key to improving their physical and mental health, and a motivation for youth to initiate activities and influence others once their work is recognized and successful. These activities will boost their confidence and belief that they are drivers for change in their communities, and they will aspire to reach higher goals. Moreover, as they become an essential part of the change in their communities, the different aspects of the camp will be enhanced in the best interest of youth and their development.

In spite of that, youth are faced with multiple obstacles and challenges that makes it difficult for them to participate in refining the camp's urban design. Most notably, urban refinement is among the most difficult interventions in Palestinian camps, namely in Ein El-Hilweh Camp due to the strict measures taken by the Lebanese authorities regarding the entry of construction materials at the checkpoints, and the difficulty in obtaining a permit to perform any construction work inside the camp. Moreover, one of the informants

expressed that youth are always in a state of struggle and challenge as they are deprived from their basic rights – notably the right to work. Moreover, the lack of spaces is a major challenge to urban refinement activities. Youth struggle to find spaces for the implementation of their ideas, especially with the inability to expand beyond the bounded area of the camp. “It feels like we are living in a box. Our ambitions are limited by this space. There is literally always a wall in your face” one of the informants commented (Informant-5-II, 2022). This comes in hand with the lack of safe spaces as well. One of the respondents commented that even the minimal spaces which could be refined may not be safely transformed into youth-friendly spaces. The political factions and entities in the camp prevent the implementation of independent projects suggested by youth and are rather more interested in interfering to endorse the project, stop the project, or change the project for personal objectives/gains. Youth often face a lot of political and social pressure by these entities, verbal and physical threats, and threats at gunpoint. This is reinforced by the strong presence of political organizations, parties and factions between the houses and in all neighborhoods. Additionally, the need for leverage from different political organizations, parties and factions to implement activities that extend over several neighborhoods (which are by default politically defined or controlled) minimizes the area of coverage due to the obstacles youth face in securing these permissions. They end up shrinking their activities and bounding their spaces. Moreover, several informants reported that certain political entities and politically affiliated NGOs plagiarize projects suggested by youth and take credit for them, which demotivates youth from sharing their thoughts and ideas in public. Youth also feel that their role and capabilities to induce change in their communities is undermined/belittled by decision-makers in the camp. A

major challenge is also the lack of basic resources in the camp. Ein El-Hilweh Camp demonstrates a prominent example of urban poverty. This has several major impacts on urban refinement and youth development. First, the lack of monetary and material resources directly affects the feasibility of these activities. Second, this incapacitating environment deprives them the chance to be creative and innovative²². “Had youth been able to explore their potential, there would have been innovation in development” an informant commented (Informant-5-II, 2022). This also affects the perception of their role in the community. The concept of youth participation in urban refinement is not fostered. Therefore, they are internally challenged to take the lead in any attempt to reduce urban poverty. Third, the financial and economic situation exacerbated by the financial crises in Lebanon, and the dire living conditions inside the camp diverts their attention towards securing their basic needs through labor, but also through inadequate channels in many cases. This is met with the desperation of youth and their hopelessness about implementing any change in their communities. Furthermore, youth are also challenged by cultural barriers and traditions such as the stigma on community work from friends, family and neighbors, the restrictions on female youth, and peer pressure or bullying. Lastly, the security situation in the camp and the limited safe spaces for youth to plan activities constitute major challenges.

50% of the informants from the individual interviews as well as some informants from the FGD expressed the difficulty in overcoming these challenges, especially with the weak

²² The majority of youth end up working in the service sector because they are deprived of the economic luxury to continue their education or pursue other careers.

implementation of protection policies for youth inside the camps, the strong political influence on decision-making, and the different aspects of the continued refugeehood of Palestinians in Lebanon. On the other hand, the rest of the informants expressed the possibility of challenging these obstructions provided youth are given the safe spaces, full endorsement, resources, opportunities and motivation.

While NGOs and CSOs are the major providers of youth programs, the informants from the individual interviews expressed certain limitations which thwart their ability to deliver holistic and sustainable services. Primarily, all NGOs expressed the lack of spaces to operate and expand, and spaces to implement large-scale activities such as recycling, sports, afforestation, and marathons – be it the lack of rooms, halls, playgrounds and yards at the centers, or the limited outdoor space inside the camp. Moreover, they are challenged by the lack of adequate infrastructure which fails to cater for the overpopulation. Aside from that, NGOs lack the authority to lead solely on large-scale spatial configurations as this is the primary responsibility of UNRWA. Additionally, 4/5 NGOs expressed the inability of most NGOs and CSOs to be financially and politically independent which affects the sustainability of resources and the process of decision-making – respectively and alternately. The majority of NGOs and CSOs are dependent on donor countries and International Organizations to fund their projects. This obstructs having sustainable long-term programs and rather limits the work of NGOs and CSOs to short-term projects instead which do not deliver a full service to youth (sometimes worsening their situation as they feel left in the middle of the road), and also prevents the follow-up with youth and tracking of youth development. Moreover, these projects are conditional to donors' regulations and comply with their interests – which are not always youth. On the other

hand, the political affiliations of the majority of NGOs and CSOs, or the political control and influence over their programs affects the autonomy and quality of programs and prevents the recruitment of experts, who fall through the cracks of political affiliations and nepotism. “Even NGO directors don’t have the final say because the first and last word is for political leaders behind these NGOs” one informant from the individual interviews added (Informant-6-II, 2022). A few informants from the individual interviews indicated that many NGOs are pre-conditioned to be politically affiliated, therefore they also reach out to their beneficiaries as a type of political recruitment. The programs shift to serving political interests rather than children and youth. The spatial limitations along with the funding situation affects their ability to expand their geographical area of coverage and their beneficiary target. Therefore, a large number of youth remains marginalized. Moreover, it was indicated that NGOs and CSOs lack behind in terms of collaboration, networking and referral mechanism strategies. “There is rather an atmosphere of competition”, one of the informants said, adding that “youth end up benefiting from non-complementary or repetitive services rather than a holistic program” (Informant-3-II, 2022). Finally, the security situation of the camp acts as an inhibitor to the work of NGOs and CSOs on ground.

Protection, Capacity and Skills Building, and Participation Nexus

Given that the three dimensions of youth development are interrelated, strategies to foster youth development need to encompass the three dimensions. In this direction, informants from the FGD proposed the following complementary strategies to foster youth development in the camps. To begin with, they proposed establishing polarization and

guidance mechanisms to direct youth towards NGOs and CSOs so that they are empowered to start implementing change in the society. These would encompass (1) establishing youth hubs to implement effective outreach programs, especially to youth at risk, so they resort to the facilities of NGOs and CSOs rather than channels which hinder their development, (2) establishing a working group specialized for guiding youth to NGOs and CSOs, (3) delivering continuous and sustainable long-term development programs and (4) targeting all age groups, not only youth, to foster children and youth rights and provide a holistic cycle of development. Moreover, informants from the FGD proposed establishing Youth Leadership Programs in the NGOs and CSOs which provide youth with the opportunity to implement change in the camps and direct their potential and strength in the best interest of the camp situation. This is complemented with the provision of technical, material and monetary resources for youth to implement spatial-rehabilitation initiatives at a neighborhood level. Moreover, some of the informants suggested establishing a gradual architectural rehabilitation strategy by designing programs that target family apartments and provide small-scale rehabilitation services implemented by youth, thus also providing youth with income-generating opportunities. In the effort to provide youth with safe spaces to explore and develop their interests and skills, informants suggested opening the centers of NGOs and CSOs after working hours for youth. Vertical and green expansion of the centers was also a prominent suggestion. Moreover, informants emphasized engaging female youth in programs and opportunities through a comprehensive strategy. This involves (1) establishing safe spaces for women and female youth, (2) positive parenting programs that advocate for gender equality, youth development and participation which are complementary to youth programs, (3) gender

equality programs for boys and male youth to foster safe spaces, and (4) activating protection strategies. The cultural barriers and traditions make it extremely difficult for many female youth to leave their houses, continue their education, and enroll in programs at NGOs centers. Therefore, a collaboration between NGOs/CSOs and parents is needed to establish a trust system and an outreach mechanism, as well as to impact parents positively towards encouraging their children to participate in decision-making activities and strategies. This comes in hand with inducing gender equality in the camps and emphasizing the importance of having mixed spaces for all genders inside the camp²³. MHPSS services for families are also essential given that violence (especially gender-based) is increasing due to poverty and drained well-being, which also leads youth to resort to self-harm channels with the lack of spatial possibilities. Therefore, establishing specialized working groups to secure income-generating opportunities for youth and their families is essential to reduce urban poverty, violence, and provide youth with the privilege of engaging in extracurricular activities. Moreover, for effective delivery, there needs to be a service mapping visible for youth and networking between NGOs and CSOs. Informants proposed a collaborative approach between all NGOs and CSOs to complement their services and establish referral mechanisms. Furthermore, a dialogue needs to be established and continued between the network of NGOs and CSOs and the political organizations, parties and factions inside the camp to ensure youth protection at

²³ Previous youth-led initiatives which included having spaces for both females and males have been rejected because it's geographically and culturally very difficult to concretely address these issues and youth may be subjected to violence.

all times, especially during youth participation and implementation of activities inside the camp. This also includes collaboratively working with the committees in the camps to maintain its security and safety. These security interventions are vital to the application of protection policies and strategies that foster a safe environment for youth to develop themselves and their communities without being subjected to violence of any type. Finally, informants stressed on the importance to advocate with International Organizations (UN agencies) on the Youth Strategy for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon as well as to reduce the strict measures taken by the Lebanese authorities on the entry of construction materials and ease the difficulty of obtaining construction permits.

Finally, all the informants from the individual interviews and the FGD noted that the downsizing of UNRWA's services due to the suspension of funds by Trump is a huge factor to the multiple crises in EHC and all Palestinian camps. UNRWA has the most important role in youth development and field infrastructure and camp improvement through being the primary service-provider for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

In addition to all the aforementioned challenges and socio-spatial inequalities, persons with disabilities face harsher challenges as they navigate (or attempt to) the spaces inside the camps. Their socio-spatial experience is mostly characterized by the absence of inclusive and safe spaces which accommodate persons with disabilities.

As noted by an informant from an NGO specialized in working with children and youth with disabilities, youth face additional challenges such as the inability of people with physical impairments to independently move within the narrow and overcrowded alleys inside the camp which are also full of potholes, road bumpers and broken gutters. This is

also worsened by the lack of convenient and safe public transportation for persons with disabilities, and the dire infrastructure inside the camp. These obstructions prevent many of them to reach several educational, medical and health institutions, and other service providers. There is also a lack in recreational and safe spaces that are equipped and accessible for people with disabilities (such as ramps, specialized learning tools, electronic recreational platforms). Moreover, youth with disabilities suffer from more exploitation and violence from their peers due to limited number of inclusive programs – as well as verbal, physical and sexual harassment, abuse, and violence from others. These incidents are more challenging for youth with disabilities due to the added challenges on their reflexes and ability to react, both medically and spatially.

The informant also stressed on the importance of developing youth with disabilities as it is a means of their inclusion and participation within their communities, especially when they gain motor, social and cognitive skills in addition to their protection, capacity and skills building, and participation.

Data Analysis

The findings from the individual interviews and the FGD suggest that socio-spatial inequalities are immensely present in Ein El-Hilweh Camp and are primarily affecting children and youth. The sectors of youth protection, capacity and skills building, and participation are characterized with relatively weak provision and are intertwined with the dire conditions of spatial configurations inside the camp and the adjacent areas.

The architectural and urban setting inside the camp and adjacent areas – including all its urban elements: buildings, roads and infrastructure contribute negatively to the

development of youth in a tridimensional manner. First, the main architectural factors contributing to the weakened protection of youth are characterized by overcrowded, dim and narrow streets which decrease the visibility of verbal, physical or sexual harassment, abuse, or violence. In addition, the limited personal space inside the houses leads to domestic violence. Moreover, these urban conditions ease substance dealing and substance use. Another important factor which affects the protection of youth is the numerous vehicles in narrow streets. Second, the main architectural factors contributing to the weakened capacity and skills building of youth are the presence of unhealthy spaces youth resort to, such as cybercafes, coffeeshops and the extension of shops and cafes to the street. Third, the main architectural factors contributing to the weakened participation of youth are the strong presence of political offices, as well as the aforementioned elements which contribute to the unsafety of the camps.

On the other hand, the absence of space is an equal factor which affects youth development. The safety elements which enhance youth protection such as youth protection networks, youth protection centers, safe spaces for youth at-risk (especially females) are either not strongly present inside the camp or are few with limited access. Moreover, the absence of safe spaces and youth friendly spaces forces youth to resort to other unhealthy facilities, such as the streets, coffeeshops, cybercafes, or restricts some of them from going out of their neighborhood circle. Youth are also challenged by the lack of adequate infrastructure which fails to cater for the overpopulation, and the lack of spaces to intervene in – which is an obstruction to any attempt at participating in spatial rehabilitation or construction.

These factors which are key contributors to the underdevelopment of youth in Ein El-Hilweh are also met by the definition or control over spaces, which affects the feasibility or accessibility of youth to facilities and services. The political dominance over the spaces mostly determines “who gets what” and “who goes where”, which prevents a large number of youth from receiving specific services, leads to dispute or armed conflict, and provokes hatred and rage among youth. Moreover, the definition of spaces discourages many parents from sending their children, mainly females, to NGOs/CSOs and other recreational spaces inside the camp.

The security measures taken by the Lebanese authorities including the concrete wall besieging the camp, the barbed wires, the checkpoints at the main entrances of the camp, the smaller checkpoints at multiple small entrances of the camp, and the watchtowers encircling the camp exacerbate the situation of youth protection, capacity and skills building, and participation. The absence of an easy and quick evacuation mechanism threatens the lives and well-being of youth in incidents where they are trapped in armed conflict, followed by an individual or a group of individuals, as well as incidents where their health is at-stake. Moreover, youth are unable to resort to facilities outside the camp due to the long queues at the checkpoints, the closure of the camp due to multiple security incidents, and the harassment faced at the checkpoints. The enclosure of the camp is also a prime factor to the inability of spatial horizontal expansion and integration with the fabric of the city, which affects youth in multiple ways. Recreational facilities and youth friendly spaces are very difficult and nearly impossible to build. In addition, the communication and knowledge exchange between youth inside Ein El-Hilweh and youth outside the camp and adjacent areas is minimal unless with former residents in the camp.

This form of isolation creates a cultural barrier between youth inside and outside, inducing a sense of fear and protection for cultural exchange from both sides. Moreover, youth's spatial perception of the camp as an imprisoning space besieged with a concrete wall similar to the ones Israelis build increases their desperation, demotivation, and hopelessness. This situation also drives a modest amount of youth to engage in acts of mischief inside the camp. Therefore, not only does the suppressed physical freedom of youth affect their accessibility to services and facilities, but also alters their perception of space and inclusion, induces feelings of otherness, and affects their well-being. The geopolitical characteristics of the camp and adjacent areas, as well as the view of the Lebanese authorities on Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are key contributors to the socio-spatial inequalities and the hindered development of youth inside the camp and adjacent areas.

Not only are the spatial factors which affect the development of youth bound by their form or structure, but also in the ways in which they are defined (politically, religiously), occupied, and used. The function of the space has equal importance as its form in the pool of youth development. The transformation of mosques and a few NGO/CSO centers into spaces for political recruitment, the transformation of coffeeshops and cybercafes into drug-dealing areas, the transformation of streets into smoking hubs, political offices, and places for armed individuals, are all examples of how spaces may become unsafe when they divert from their initial functions and gain threatening attributed functions. Moreover, the enclosing forms of architectural elements may be used to obscure their function.

Further to the abovementioned factors which contribute to the underdevelopment of youth in Ein El-Hilweh, the population density affects the provision of enough services for youth and many fall behind as a result of inaccessibility, nepotism, political affiliation, and other forms of prioritization. Moreover, urban poverty and social inequalities are a major obstacle when it comes to youth development. The majority of youth are engaged in securing their livelihoods rather than building their skills and capacities, participating in volunteering and non-income generating activities. This demotivation is also met by fear of retaliation or hopelessness due to the political dominance over services, facilities, and decision-making process which make youth feel enervated to participate in their community.

While both males and females are subjected to harassment, abuse or violence, victims of sexual harassments, abuse, or violence are mostly females, while victims of verbal and physical violence are mostly males. Moreover, individuals who do not conform to a certain gender norm are victims of all kinds of harassment, abuse, or violence. On another hand, female youth are expected to remain at home, and thus their main areas of interaction are limited to their homes, their friends' homes, or the roofs of the apartments of their families, friends, or neighbors during summer. Male youth are less societally restricted and thus in addition to the aforementioned, their main areas of interaction are outdoors, including cafes or coffee shops, their neighborhoods, but mostly on the streets smoking *nargile*. Male youth have more freedom to explore the space inside (and outside) the camps, while the spatial experience of female youth is more constrained. This segregation in space occupancy embeds an element of unsafety, especially when female youth are walking alone in the presence of male youth sitting in front of shops and houses.

The spatial restriction of females is also a consequence of the lack in safe spaces for females, or the lack of a safe route to these spaces. In addition, the public participation of female youth is obstructed with cultural and societal traditional perceptions on females, especially in positions of power, and thus acts as an obstacle to their engagement and participation in youth committees, neighborhood committees, inhabitant committees and popular committees. This is especially the case because the current authorities inside the camp are older men with a traditional mindset. Moreover, female participation in activities and volunteering campaigns is at many times met with objection and assault because of the nature of physical activities such as cleaning or planting. The nature of activities female youth participate in are linked to the cultural perception of the way females are to occupy spaces. Therefore, the encounters of youth generally vary according to their gender, and with female youth being the most vulnerable. This variation impedes the development of female youth in a more accelerated manner and puts them at risk.

Moreover, the socio-spatial experiences of youth with disabilities seem to be the most vulnerable and severe amongst youth in Ein El-Hilweh Camp. They are faced with multiple challenges including navigation of space, accessibility to services and centers, and a demeaning social stigma which affects their natural development negatively and worsens their vulnerable situation in Ein El-Hilweh.

Moreover, Non-IDs (and many Palestinian Refugees from Syria) in Ein El-Hilweh are among the most vulnerable group in terms of spatial experiences as they are unable to “cross borders” at the checkpoints, and their accessibility to facilities and services inside and outside Ein El-Hilweh remains very difficult, and at many points impossible.

On another note, the situation of youth in Ein El-Hilweh Camp is in the first place a situation they do not have control over. The characteristics of Ein El-Hilweh are determined by historical, political and sectarian factors, the repercussions of the civil war, cultural barriers and traditions, and a massive economic crisis – all which current generations are suffering from and have nothing to do with. Youth do not have a choice in the places they wish to go to or the activities they perform. The activities they are engaged in and the spaces they occupy is mainly due to the absence of other alternatives. While the activities performed by youth differ based on the different factors discussed, the majority of youth are not constructive or productive in their free time but are rather engaged in a very trite routine. This also embeds the culture revolving around these activities, which hamper the societal view of youth, their view of themselves, and most importantly entrenches a stigmatized role for youth females that obstructs their development.

However, building the skills and capacities of youth, and providing them with a protected environment to participate in decision-making processes largely expands the possibility of change. The role of youth, who are mostly updated with the advancement of this generation, and who are mostly opposers of the deep-rooted cultural barriers, is crucial in reducing the socio-spatial inequalities in Ein El-Hilweh Camp. Moreover, the exposure of youth to “the outside” is a driver for positive change.

Finally, the solutions and strategies proposed are not radical, but their implementation is capable of reducing the socio-spatial inequalities youth face in Ein el-Hilweh and is therefore capable of fostering youth development by enhancing their protection, increasing their capacity and skills building, and encouraging their participation. The

proposed strategies rely on funding, advocacy, and a supporting entity to encourage their implementation.

Chapter Four

Conclusions

The intersectionality between youth development and spatial configurations in Palestinian camps is majorly corresponsive in the same direction – in that both youth development and spatial configurations affect one another either positively or negatively.

The spatial configurations of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon are generally negative contributors to the development and protection of youth inside the camps. Palestinian camps suffer from high levels of urban poverty as they face exclusion and deterioration in architectural elements and in infrastructure services and facilities. Youth have limited spaces to engage in constructive and participatory activities, and their safety and security is constantly prone to be threatened. The dire conditions of the urban setting inside the camp act as an obstruction towards the protection, capacity and skills building, and participation of youth thus hindering their development.

However, in the presence of fostered youth protection and capacity and skills building, youth engagement and participation in the modification of their spaces act as essential drivers of change which contribute to the reduction of urban poverty and to the development of urban strategies that can sustain their development and provide an incubating environment for them to grow during the stages of their youth and beyond.

Therefore, the case study of Ein El-Hilweh confirms the suggested hypotheses which indicate that youth protection and development are more likely to be deteriorated when the spatial configurations in which they reside are not adequate, and that the urban

development trajectory is more likely to be sustainable and inclusive, and urban poverty is most likely to be reduced, when youth, who receive necessary capacity building, are provided the opportunity to engage in the planning and design process.

Youth protection, capacity and skills building, and participation are cross-cutting areas of intervention which are co-dependent for youth development. Therefore, any programming for youth needs to ensure the provision of the three for a comprehensive and cyclical approach. Moreover, programming should also involve parents who are vital actors in implementing social and behavioral change in the community, thus providing a growth-friendly environment for their children to develop, and for their youth to transition into constructive adulthood. It is essential that a collaborative approach including all actors in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon (NGOs/CSOs, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNDP, popular committees, security committees, inhabitant committees, Political Organizations, parties, and factions, parents, children and youth) is taken. Moreover, it is important to intensify the support to the most vulnerable groups of youth in Palestinian camps: female youth, youth with disabilities, and non-IDs. Youth are drivers of change in the community, and an utmost effort needs to be exerted to ensure that this group of individuals are empowered to enhance their communities.

The development of youth is hindered by the lack of space and presence of space. The urban setting of Palestinian Camps in Lebanon plays a significant role in reducing the levels of protection, and obstructing capacity and skills building and the opportunities for youth engagement and participation. Urban planning and design inside the camps is crucial to improve the living conditions of its residents. This includes infrastructure refinement, traffic congestion control, urban expansion control, shelter and building

rehabilitation, optimization of indoor and outdoor spaces to the best interest of children and youth – including youth-friendly spaces, green roofs, green walls, green areas, recreational areas, and cultural centers. This is complemented by ensuring that all residents – including the most vulnerable, are able to access and benefit from these facilities.

The geopolitics of the camps are essential factors contributing to their dire conditions. Therefore, a comprehensive attempt at urban refinement needs to include an effort to liaise with the Lebanese authorities to reduce the strict security measures imposed on the camps which halts the mobility of numerous individuals inside the camp and encourages the presence of wanted individuals. It also restricts attempts at rehabilitation and new construction. It is important to note that the security situation in Palestinian Camps is part and parcel of that outside them, as these areas remain part of the cities they are located in. The integration of Palestinian camps within the fabric of the city is essential to improving the livelihood of Paletinians, the economic cycle of the host state, fostering healthy communication between all residents in Lebanon, and to reducing the levels of discrimination and segregation against Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

Urban planning and design should also be embedded in a manner which empowers and engages the community in the process, improves their knowledge on socio-spatial inequalities, and embeds the culture of change. With the deteriorated economic situation, youth volunteerism and youth-led initiatives seem to be less feasible unless supported by NGOs, CSOs, or International Organizations. The urban poverty inside Palestinian Camps in Lebanon is worsening, leading the majority of youth to either drop out of education or fill their free time securing their livelihoods. Activities that are not income-generating

become the least priority for the majority of youth who are unable to leave their work, despite the social impact of these activities on their community. Therefore, income-generating programs are essential for youth, especially those who drop out of education, to ensure that they are securing their livelihoods in safe and non-abusive ways. Moreover, designing these programs to induce urban refinement is key to reducing both social and spatial inequalities.

The interrelationship between social inequalities and spatial inequalities is inevitable. However, in a context of urban poverty, the spatial aspect cannot be tackled unless the social culture of urban refinement is induced in the community. Moreover, it is also crucial to address the importance of political stability inside the camp to ensure that socio-spatial inequalities are addressed in a non-obstructive environment, and that youth development is fostered with fewer challenges. This requires an enforcement of law to ensure and maintain the security and safety of the Palestinian Camps in Lebanon.

In the absence of state actors, UNRWA is perceived by Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon as *the reference state* which provides them with primary services and responds to their needs. With the current financial crisis UNRWA is facing, and its anticipated continuity – if not worsening, NGOs and CSOs with the support of IOs and donors are trying to fill a huge gap left by the downsizing of UNRWA’s services. However, NGOs and CSOs do not have the capacity or accountability to replace UNRWA – just as UNRWA, despite its continuous effort, is also bound by the hosting state. In the current situation, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and Palestinian Camps in Lebanon are entirely dependent on non-state actors as they are faced with continued temporality.

Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon demonstrate an exemplary case of permanent temporariness. The dire conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and the Palestinian Refugee Camps have been exacerbating as Palestinians have been living in temporary conditions since 1948, paying the price of international, regional and local politics. They are neither able to live in settling conditions or attain a settling status in Lebanon, nor able to leave Lebanon - becoming permanent refugees. This temporality is the prime reason for their situation – namely in the course of this study, it hindered youth development and deteriorated urban conditions. Despite the loopholes and entry points to enhance the situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, the continued temporality imposed by the state on Palestinian Refugees and the continued exclusionary measures which are worsening their livelihoods make it extremely difficult for any form of mending to the situation. Therefore, any attempt at reducing the socio-spatial inequalities in Palestinian Camps in Lebanon is a temporary solution unless Palestinians in Lebanon are no longer considered by the state to be more than a transient influx of individuals waiting for return, but rather an integrated community who has access to social, economic, and civil rights, and most importantly a right to the city.

On a final note, further in-depth research could explore each factor contributing to the deterioration of urban space or the hindering of youth development through in-depth exploration. Moreover, to provide a more comprehensive methodology, interviews with NGOs/CSOs, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNDP, popular committees, security committees, inhabitant committees, Political Organizations, parties, and factions, parents, and most importantly – youth, could be conducted as they are all main actors involved in the situation in Palestinian camps.

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Appendix A

Concepts

In what follows are the main concepts which were relied upon in the research.

Capacity and skills building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, and resources of a targeted population (United Nations, 2022). This was operationalized by studying and measuring services and facilities offered to youth, and simulations of their soft and hard skills.

Permanent temporariness is the state of living in conditions that prevent refugees from settling in the host area yet are long-term or permanent settlers in these temporary conditions (Masri, 2020). This was operationalized by studying the case of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who have been living in temporary conditions for 74 years: they are neither able to live in settling conditions or attain a settling status in Lebanon, nor able to leave Lebanon - becoming permanent refugees.

Spatial configurations are the spatial patterns in which landscapes are designed at an urban, cluster and architectural level. This was operationalized by studying and measuring density, connectivity, fractal dimension, recreational facilities, public spaces, and green spaces.

Urban poverty is the set of economic, social and health difficult conditions in an urban setting (Cano-Hila, 2020). This was operationalized by studying and measuring employment rate, livelihood, housing conditions and chronic diseases among youth.

Youth development is the process in which youth are provided opportunities to build their resilience and strength as they grow up. This was operationalized by studying and measuring dropout rates, illiteracy levels, child labor, and the levels of youth protection, capacity and skills building, and youth participation.

Youth participation is a constructive approach in which youth participate in the processes of the development of their communities. This was operationalized by studying and measuring youth's participation in councils, FGDs, community building events, and representational bodies.

Youth protection is the protection of youth from verbal, physical and sexual harassment, abuse or violence. This was operationalized by studying and measuring youth's experiences of harassment, abuse or violence, and their participation in psychosocial support programs.

Appendix B

Research Tools

The following questions were also translated into Arabic and were reviewed and approved by my advisor and the IRB.

Individual Interviews (45-60 minutes)

Protection

1. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being very unsafe and 5 being very safe), how safe do you think youth feel walking around the camp alone during the day?
2. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being very unsafe and 5 being very safe), how safe do you think youth feel walking around the camp alone at night?
3. If you can remove three things from the camp for youth to feel safer, what would they be?
4. If you can add three things to the camp for youth to feel safer, what would they be?
5. Are you aware of/did you encounter youth who experienced any type of physical harassment or violence while walking in the camp? (Optional)

Capacity and Skills Building

1. How do youth at your NGO spend their free time?
2. What are some activities you think are crucial for youth development?
3. Are youth able to perform all of these activities inside the camp? If not, why?
4. What are the services you provide at your NGOs for youth development?
5. Do youth resort to facilities outside the camp for extracurricular activities?
6. Do you think the urban design of the camp affects the availability of these services and activities? Why?
7. Do you think this affects youth development? Why?
8. What are some programs you think are essential for youth but are not feasible in the camp due to its urban design?

Participation

1. Do you think there is a role for youth in reducing urban poverty and enhancing youth development? If yes, how?
2. What type of activities do you think allow youth to participate in reducing urban poverty?
3. Do you think participating in these activities would enhance youth development in the society?
4. What would youth need to participate in such activities? Capacity building and resources?
5. What comes in the way of youth participation in refining the camp's urban design? How can they challenge that?
6. Among those stated above, what do you lack as a local NGO? Is it affected by space?

Focused Group Discussion (150-180 minutes)

These are open ended discussions with possible follow-up questions.

Protection

1. What do you think are the most unsafe elements inside the camp?
 - a. Did you or youth ever speak about this issue?
 - b. What solutions do you propose?
 - c. Is there any action that has been taken in this regard? If not, why do you think so?
2. Do you encourage youth to avoid certain areas? Why (?)
3. From a spatial perspective, what strategies would you recommend as local NGOs to foster youth protection?

Capacity and Skills Building

1. How do you think youth development is related to how the camp is spatially designed?
 - a. Do you think their well-being is affected by the design of the camp?
 - b. What are some activities you think are crucial for their development?
 - c. Do you think youth would have developed different habits if they were outside the camp? What could these be and why can't they do them inside the camp?

2. What are the challenges youth face on daily basis while navigating the camp? Inside the camp? At the peripheries? (Add physical challenges and reaching youth friendly spaces for PwD)
3. Where are youth's main areas of interaction? Why do you think they choose these places?
4. Do you encourage youth to avoid certain areas? Why (?)
5. From a spatial perspective, what strategies would you recommend as local NGOs to foster youth development?

Participation

1. What comes in the way of youth's participation in refining the camp's urban design? How do you think they can challenge that?
2. What type of activities do you think allow youth to participate in reducing urban poverty?
3. What capacity building and resources would youth need to participate in planning?
4. In groups of 2: Take 10 minutes to identify design elements for a part of the camp you choose and how you choose to refine them.
5. From a spatial perspective, what strategies would you recommend as local NGOs to foster youth participation?

Glossary of Terms

Lebanese Armed Forces: The military of the Lebanese Republic

Non-IDs: Palestinians who arrived in Lebanon in the 1960s and do not hold formal, valid identification documents because they could not register with the Lebanese authorities and are not entitled to IDs issued and recognized by Lebanon

Palestine Liberation Army: The military wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Palestine Liberation Organization: A Palestinian nationalist and political organization founded in 1964 and is the umbrella political organization representing Palestinians and includes multiple factions

Palestine Refugees: Persons 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 (UNRWA, 2022)

Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon: Plots of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government in Lebanon to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs (UNRWA, 2022)

Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Palestine refugees initially living in Lebanon who are registered with UNRWA and the Directorate for Palestinian Refugee Affairs (DPRA)

Palestinian Refugees from Syria living in Lebanon: Palestine refugees affected by the Syria crisis who fled to Lebanon as of 2011

UNRWA: “a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection, and microfinance” (UNRWA, 2022).

Youth: Young individuals whose ages range between 18 and 24 years