Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps

Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East:
Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy

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INTRODUCTION

“Camp crowdedness becomes unbearable. The size of Palestinian families is increasing relentlessly, and Iraqi migrants are invading our space. There are no green areas, or any playgrounds for kids. Yes this is painful … but nevertheless I like being here amongst my family and people. Here, I feel safe.” This is how one interviewee, a middle class Palestinian refugee, portrayed his paradoxical experience in Jaramana camp, Damascus. He describes its painful urban condition, but also the sense of comfort in belonging to a community. The camp setting has reinforced nationalism, yet when the local population stigmatizes the camp dwellers and the local authority neglects its infrastructure, the camp transforms into a ghetto, allowing a blend of nationalistic and problematic isolationistic identities to flourish.

While a few of the camp dwellers develop a sense of self-segregation, the large majority resist it. Although keen to keep the camp’s political specificity as an area populated by a forced refugee community so as to maintain their right of return (to their place of origin), they strongly denounce the transformation of their camp from a temporary space of residence to slum-like conditions without any clear mode of governance. The combination of a political space with slum-like settings raises concerns over the types of governance that may ensue; the involvement of humanitarian organizations, for example, is beneficial for providing emergency services, but what if that particular emergency situation has been drawn out for over 60 years? Furthermore, is it easier to govern a camp when it has reached slum-like conditions?

This study will attempt to clarify the relationship between power, sovereignty, and space in Palestinian refugee camps in the Arab East, by examining the modes of governance negotiated inside the camps. ‘Modes of governance’ refers to how a camp is managed in terms of its relationship with the legal authorities and local municipalities of the host country, as well as the internal relationships between the groups within the camps, especially regarding conflict resolution for everyday problems. Modes of governance, therefore, are not about political representation of the Palestinian people or camp dwellers, but rather about the administrative representation. This study focuses on the specificity of the political character of the camp and the importance of the Palestinian factions as forces who carry out the political actions of the process of the Palestinian liberation.

Looking beyond the boundaries of the refugee camps, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recognizes this type of ‘governance’ as an autonomous system over formal institutions as well as informal ones: “governance is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP 1997, 2-3).” This study recognizes the informality of governance, inspired by Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentalities, i.e. “how we think about governing others and ourselves within a variety of contexts,” (Dean 1999: 212). Governmentalities thus grant us one more analytical tool for understanding power as something distributed rather than wielded from above.

This research illustrates the need to (re)examine governance with less emphasis on the security angle, and more on the angle of segregation. The issue of segregation has become a central concept in debates about the spatial concentration of social risk and about urban/local governance.

The Palestinians in the Arab region are distributed between camps and off-camp residential areas (see Table 1). Generally speaking, Palestinian refugees show extraordinary social and economic integration outside the camps and informal gatherings. However, within Lebanon, the dynamics are much more complex.

1. First I would like to thank the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI), at the American University of Beirut (AUB), its Director Rami G. Khouri, and Program Coordinator Tara Mahfoud, for supporting this research. I am indebted to Jalal Al Husseini and Riccardo Bocco, Ismail Sheikh Hassan, Alistair Harris, Taylor Long for their comments to this paper. I am also grateful to Nozar Shiban, Nazeel Salhe, Akram Elie, Raja Dead, Hamza Khattab and Mustafa Sheta for their cooperation during the pilot phase of the research program. Thanks also to Abigail Tonge for her literature review of the UNHCR involvement in camp governance.

2. For more details about the articulation of the two levels of governance, see (Hanafi, 2010) and (Hanafi and Long, 2010).

3. For a more detailed exploration of the concept, please refer to the section related to Islamic governmentalities.
Urban/Local Governance and Sovereignty

In recent years, the understanding of state sovereignty has undergone significant changes. In addition to denoting the supreme authority within a given territory and its relation to outside powers, the concept of sovereignty has increasingly moved towards emphasizing the 'responsibility to protect' (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). In a parallel process, it has become a transfer of power to local authorities. France became a pioneer country in engaging this process in the mid-1980s. The term "local government" was associated with a formal description of powers and responsibilities of urban authorities. French scholar Le Gallo argues that the term governance suggests ... functions and actions of government, but without the idea of uniformity, rationality, or standardization. The term 'urban governance' implies a greater diversity in the organization of services, a greater flexibility, a variety of actors, even a transformation of the forms that local democracy might assume, and taking into account citizens and consumers, and the complexity of new forms of citizenship (Le Gallo 1995, 60; cited by Stren, 2000)." For the last two decades, new literature has emerged on the urban governance of cities and poor slum areas. Research in Latin America concludes that urban areas in the region are typically administered by technocrats, whose decisions rarely involve ... popular opinion (Rodriguez and Velázquez 1994: 193); cited in Stren, 2000). As we will see, this technocratic type of governance can also be found in Arab regions and in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and Syria, but not in the Palestinian territory or Lebanon. The complexities of governance in the refugee camps stem from the fact that local camp authorities are often not recognized as ... urban governments, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Popular Committees (lijân sha’biyya), political factions, traditional elite (shaykh-h, clan leaders, wujah villager elders, mukhtar-s from the pre-1948 villages), NGOs, and Iman mosques. The situation is made even more complex when UNRWA’s role is also taken into account. I would like to introduce the concept of ‘phantom sovereignty’ to describe and analyze the critical position of UNRWA.

Table 1: Refugee distribution by region as per 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Official Camps</th>
<th>Registered Refugees in Camps</th>
<th>Registered Refugees / Effective Dwellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3,188,000</td>
<td>1,951,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>222,776</td>
<td>275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>225,080(^1)</td>
<td>461,897(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>193,370</td>
<td>762,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>495,006</td>
<td>1,073,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,373,732</td>
<td>4,671,811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Although there are 422,188 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, the different waves of emigration have reduced tremendously their numbers. By extrapolating from some statistics (like school pupil numbers) UNRWA officials suppose that only two-thirds are actually residing in urban areas, perhaps up to 275,000 refugees.
5 UNRWA figures: 125,000, excluding the dwellers of Yarmouk camp, which is the biggest Palestinian camp in the region, as it is not considered an official camp by UNRWA. I have added the Yarmouk population.
6 465,919 according to GAPAR (March 2009) http://www.gapar.net/ar/statistics.html.
7 This notion emerged in the UN debates in the early 2000s as a way to render accountable the regimes and States where human rights were not respected.

Ong interprets sovereignty as flexible since globalization “has induced a situation of graduated sovereignty, whereby even as the state maintains control over its territory, it is also willing in some cases to let corporate entities set terms for constituting and regulating some domains while weaker and less desirable groups are given over to the regulation of supranational entities” (Ong, 1995, p.6).

Methodology

This research is mainly based on fieldwork conducted by the research team within camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and was supported by the Isam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Between 2008 and 2009, I conducted semistructured interviews and four focus groups in the camps of Baddawi, Naher el Bared and Ain el Helwa (Lebanon). Nizar Shaban conducted additional fieldwork in Naher el Bared camp, Nazek Saleh in Jabal al Hussein camp (Jordan), Akram Ilji in Al Shati camp (Gaza Strip), Raaj Deeb in Khan Sheik camp (Syria), Hamza Khatib and myself in Yarmouk camp (Syria) and Mustafa Hilal Sheta in Jenin camp (West Bank). See table below.

I. WHO ARE THE CAMP GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Mapping of Actors

Many actors play a role in the governance of Palestinian refugee camps. In Syria and Jordan, the State closely controls camps through specific structures: the General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR)\(^3\) and the Department of Palestinian Affairs (SPA) respectively, that assign a camp officer who plays a major role in organizing the urban and political life inside...
the camp. In contrast to this classical state control over slum areas (including camps), the situation in the Palestinian Territory and Lebanon is radically different. There is a web of complex power structures composed of popular committees, a security committee, UNRWA camp officers, notables, political factions, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO’s) popular unions and organizations11 (workers, women, engineers, etc), Community Based Organizations (CBOs)12, NGOs13 and the Palestinian Scholars’ League (mam coalition close to Islamic Resistant Movement-Hamas [hereby Hamas]). These forces vary in importance from camp to camp and from area to area. In each camp, leaders impose measures, and these in turn have a habit of changing; a consequence of a constantly shifting balance of power between these different groups. The Popular Committee, however, stands out as the most important local governing body in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territory. What is important to note is that the label “popular” may be misleading; members to this committee are not elected, rather, the title projects the strength of one group or party vis-à-vis others. The table below depicts how the importance of different stakeholders is classified according to interviewee responses. ‘Importance’ is not based on whether or not interviewees considered the actors to be legitimate, rather, if they are considered to be a governing body.

### Table 2: Actors of the Camp Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADING AUTHORITY</th>
<th>SYRIA</th>
<th>JORDAN</th>
<th>WEST BANK</th>
<th>GAZA STRIP</th>
<th>LEBANON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Committee (GAPAR)</td>
<td>Local Committee assigned by DPA</td>
<td>Popular Committee (DORA)</td>
<td>Semi-Legitimate Committee (Hamas)</td>
<td>Committees (PLO and Coalition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND LEADING AUTHORITY</td>
<td>NGOs close to Islamic Work Front</td>
<td>Facts; mainly Fatah</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Facts; Fatah or Hamas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHANTOM AUTHORITY</td>
<td>UNRWA (weak actor)</td>
<td>UNRWA (weak actor)</td>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>UNRWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISLAMIC GOVERNMENTALITIES</td>
<td>Hamas and conservative popular Syrian Islam</td>
<td>Islamic Action Front and conservative popular Jordanian Islam</td>
<td>Hamas and Tahrir party</td>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Hamas and conservative popular Lebanese Islam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Historical Development of the Actors of the Camp Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL AUTHORITIES</th>
<th>SYRIA</th>
<th>JORDAN</th>
<th>WEST BANK</th>
<th>GAZA STRIP</th>
<th>LEBANON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960s and 60s</td>
<td>Local Committee (GAPAR)</td>
<td>DPA, PLO and UNRWA</td>
<td>Jordanian state, UNRWA and notables</td>
<td>UNRWA and Egyptian military officers</td>
<td>Lebanese Military Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Local Committee (GAPAR)</td>
<td>DPA, UNRWA and partially notables</td>
<td>Israeli Defense Forces14, UNRWA and notables</td>
<td>UNRWA and Israeli Defense Forces</td>
<td>PLO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Host Authority and Local Popular Committees

The Palestinian Territory

When refugee camps in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were under Jordanian and Egyptian rule respectively, they did not figure into the national elite formation; both regimes relied largely on wealthy traditional families to instill authority; and the regimes facilitated this by appointing these individuals to available political and administrative positions (Hilal, 2002;2007).

In the aftermath of 1967, the Palestinian territory was governed by the Israeli military administration, as well as UNRWA. Both sought co-opted notables to cooperate with them in order to transmit orders to the population. It was the rise of the PLO that provided a political and military role in and outside the camps. However, the camps did have some autonomy as will be discussed later on. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), after its creation in 1993, began to nominate members to the municipalities outside of the camps. At the time, only Al-Fara’a camp had a committee, which depended financially and administratively on the Ministry of the local government. Later on, Popular Committees independent of the PNA ministers were created in all camps.

In 1996, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) established the Department of Refugee Affairs (DORA).15 DORA was created to address the concerns of Palestinian Refugees, wherever they reside. However, in the name of host country sovereignty, host administrations did not allow DORA to operate outside the Palestinian territory, thus considerably reducing DORA’s scope of intervention.

The two primary functions of DORA centre around the implementation of laws and resolutions issued by the Palestinian National Council (PNC), and the implementation of refugee rights and their right of return.16 In spite of its ambitious mission,17 DORA is marginalized by political struggles between the different actors inside the camps. In addition, Arab host countries do not allow the PLO to play a major role, either in terms of organizing popular committees or as an interlocutor with corresponding host countries’ administrations (DPA and GAPAR in Jordan and Syria respectively). Many actors within DORA complain about its minimal role. However, it has a more active role in terms of cooperation and coordination with UNRWA, by assisting them in identifying the vital needs of the refugees. The relationship between DORA and UNRWA varies from one camp to another. In the last decade, for example,

16 Compiled mainly of the following factions: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP-GC), Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War (Hamas)
17 DORA was activated in accordance with a resolution in the Palestine National Council (PNC) in its twenty-first session held in Gaza, Palestine, on April 12, 1996.
18 DORA has worked towards implementing the official policies according to the following basic principles: 1- supporting Palestinian refugees in the various places of residence through the co-ordination of official efforts with the Arab host governments, as well as concerned departments in the PNA; 2- supervising the refugee portfolio regionally and internationally through participation in related official conferences and meetings, in order to clarify the official policy of the PLO as well as the point of view of the refugees themselves in regard to their rights and their insistence on their right of return, and the realization of their minimum aspirations; 3- co-operation and co-ordination with UNRWA and follow-up of the services it renders to the refugees in the Arab host countries, paying special attention to the conditions prevailing in the various refugee camps, assisting in their development and the improvement of the standards of living, while relieving the suffering of the refugees residing in them. See www.dora.gov.ps
19 DORA seeks to have the following tasks: 1- interaction with refugee communities and in outside camps in order to properly perceive their problems and requirements, 2- identification of the obstacles the refugees confront in dealing with UNRWA, 3- handling and treatment of problems UNRWA faces daily in the camps, 4- coordination with UNRWA’s administration.
DORA has proactively coordinated with UNRWA on various issues, as well as in fields not under UNRWA’s jurisdiction; such as establishing projects and mobilizing support for services.

DORA’s position regarding UNRWA’s role is based on the following: 1- ensuring the continuation of UNRWA and its services to the refugees in accordance with UNGA Resolution No. 362 of 1949, by which it was created, as well as ensuring that it does not deviate from its true goals; 2- urging donor countries to provide financial support to UNRWA to enable it to fulfill its obligations to the Palestinian refugees; 3- insisting on the continuation of UNRWA and its performing duties towards the refugees, while rejecting the proposal for transferring its duties to the PNA and the Arab host countries, and rejecting its dissolution before the refugee issue is resolved justly and comprehensively; 4- coordination with the Arab States to prevent the dissolution of UNRWA activities serving the refugees residing in them, and to increase its financial support of UNRWA, particularly from the Arab Gulf States in order to broaden the base of contributions as well as to compensate for any reduction in international financial support for it; 5- maintaining a balance and meticulousness in the relationship with UNRWA and encouraging it to broaden the base of its services and developing them to meet the increasing needs of the refugees.

In brief, along with UNRWA, popular committees provide services to the refugees in the camps, including infrastructure development, and work to improve relationships outside the camps, especially with local municipalities. In spite of their importance, popular committees are delegitimized not only because of their perceived lack of representation and efficiency, but also their cooptation by some security groups and donors. In reality, there is no unified system of popular representation (see table below). For example, neither women (except for Shufat, Jalazon and Qalandia) nor youth are represented in 1990, in a conference in Farâ’a camp, near Jericho, it was decided that Popular Committees should not be selected in municipal elections, rather they should be appointed by political factions.

Since the second intifada (2000), the importance of the Popular Committee in some camps has faded in favor of armed groups. In Jenin camp, Zakaria Zubedi, head of the al-Aqsa brigade, took on the role of mediator for issues concerning those within and outside the camp. (For more details see Sheta, 2009)

Table 4: Modes of Representation of the Popular Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAMP</th>
<th>MODES OF REPRESENTATION OF POPULAR COMMITTEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qalandia</td>
<td>Political factions, youth, women and handicapped centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Am‘ari</td>
<td>Political factions and notables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalazon</td>
<td>Political factions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qalqilīb Lā`bar</td>
<td>Election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenin</td>
<td>Only Fatah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Jamil Hilal’s work (2007), the Am‘ari camp acquired political significance as a result of its location. As Fatah began to emerge as a powerful faction in Am‘ari, they developed an interest in gaining control over the youth through the channels of the Youth Activity Centre (YAC), which enabled them to consolidate their power-base by the mid-80s. The Centre, whose membership is not restricted to camp refugees, has 1500 young people and its resources depend partially on membership subscription.

Gaza Strip

In 1997, the Minister of Local Governance in the Gaza Strip established Neighborhood committees (Ijān al-‘āhya’) in order to coordinate population needs with municipalities and PNA governmental institutions. At the time, all Hamas and PLO factions agreed that Neighborhood committees would be represented by local committees (al- lujna al- mahaliyya). These committees had the right to contact governmental, non-governmental and foreign authorities to bring projects to the camp. According to many interviewees, the committees were considered a success. However, the changes in power have made a tremendous impact on the structure of local governance within the Gaza Strip. In 2002 Hamas dissolved the PNA’s Popular Committees, replacing the mukhtars with members from the Council of Palestinian Scholars (Haiit Ulamaa Falastine). The Council was to form new ‘reconciliation committees’ (Ijān al-‘ilāh). According to their founding statement, the committees were “to resolve all the problems that arise between people and to encourage a spirit of brotherhood and abstinence”. Contrary to the old reconciliation committees (supported and nominated by Fatah), which used informal clan justice, these new committees followed the official legal code of the Palestinian territory and provided a written judgment of judiciary proceedings. Essentially, the committees considered themselves as facilitating tools between the people through the use of a court which was accessible by all.

Before the power turnover to Hamas, PNA institutions in Gaza, including municipalities and Al-Shati Camp, were represented in the municipality council by one member. However, when Hamas gained power in Gaza, they replaced the Fatah and civil society figures on the municipal board, as well as the mayor, with Hamas members. The council now has 14 members, 7 of which are refugees either still living in the camp or in its vicinity. In addition, for the first time in municipality history, there are three women members within the council. What has remained paramount to both Hamas and Fatah, is the need for a sound
It should be noted that in Syria, there are official camps run jointly by UNRWA and the host authorities, and non-official camps that are non-expressed their relative satisfaction with them.

Within the Yarmouk camp, the baladiyya (municipality) is the predominant actor within the field of governance. This is a similar set up with the other municipalities, except for two main differences; firstly, some of the urban regulations applied to the camp differ from the surrounding municipalities, and secondly, the body is unelected and under the strict control of the Ba’ath Party. The Yarmouk baladiyya is composed of a technocratic body (mainly engineers, specialists in public health) and a local committee. To keep the specificity of the camp as a political setting, the local committee is under the supervision of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR), whose Director General was the former president of the committee. After 1989, the committee was placed under the tutelage of a representative of the Ministry of Local Administration, whose power is secured by nominating members of the local committee after approval by the Palestinian commander of the Ba’ath Party (al-‘iyada al-gotriya al-baladiyya). Historically, the head of the municipality is accountable only to the Director General of GAPAR, but because corruption charges within the baladiyya, the governorate (muhafez) of Damascus supervises the work of the local committee. The municipality’s main source of funds comes from the Ministry of Local Affairs and from baladiyya taxation.

In Jordan, camp dwellers vote in both national and local elections. Thus, they are represented by the municipalities where the camps are located. However, the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) appointed a committee to deal specifically with the refugee camps.

Official Jordanian policies have pushed to connect the camps to the urban localities surrounding them. What is important to note, is that none of the 13 camps (formal and informal) are located in isolated places or are geographically marginalized. This is a direct result of the signing of the Wadi Araba agreement with Israel in 1994, whereby Jordan started to provide a better inclusion policy for refugee camps in socio-economic programs (see Salah 2008). This agreement has played a significant role within the camps and has contributed to the change in Jordanian policies towards the camps and their dwellers. Many urban planning initiatives have targeted refugee camps, especially in the area surrounding Amman, which has raised the issue of resettlement of Palestinians in Jordan.

The European Commission is one of the major donors for such projects. 26

Jordan

The creation of Popular Committees in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon was based on the Casablanca Agreement of 1969. 27 Before this, the camps in Lebanon had been governed by a state of emergency and by the suspension of Lebanese laws applied to the areas outside the camps. Camps then fell under the jurisdiction of the Lebanese security forces (gendarmes and Army Intelligence - Deuxième Bureau). Between 1970 and 1982, police were not able to penetrate the camps without negotiating with the powerful Palestinian popular committees, who decided whether or not to cooperate based on a case-by-case basis. Julie Petet (1987) provides a seminal contribution to this debate that describes the use of different conflict resolution methods during the period in question. The Palestinian resistance accommodated traditional authority structures by building upon the customary forum and procedure of dispute settlement and by implementing customary outcomes. For a considerable period of time, the camps witnessed the emergence of a new elite whose legitimacy was based on the Palestinian national struggle. However, this situation changed after 1982, as participation in the struggle was no longer sufficient for someone to become a powerbroker.

After 1982, however, the PLO popular committees and security committees were almost forced to dismantle entirely, except in the South, replaced instead by committees that were seen as weaker and significantly pro-Syrian. Their weakness in the eyes of the population was cemented by their lack of financial resources, and their lack of legitimacy due to the fact that they were not made up of elected members, nor were they recognized by the Lebanese authorities.

Recent interviews conducted in Beddawi and Nahr el Bared camps revealed that the absence of a legitimate popular committee was a serious stumbling block. Here, the popular committees only survived thanks to the political and financial backing of political factions and the PLO. Since 1982, they have had very scarce resources which subsequently hindered them from fulfilling their municipal functions. Though the research conducted, we found that on the one hand the committees are lacking people with technical expertise (such as engineers, public health specialists, etc.) who would be able to provide information on urban regulations with regards to the informal extension of construction, and on the other hand, both women and youth are not represented. In addition, when it suits them, the Lebanese military intelligence and the police force use the committees...
for special favors, such as delivering wanted persons for justice, without actually providing the committees with resources or awarding them the recognition of holding local municipal power. As one resident of Nahr al-Bared camp inquired:

> When a member of the security committee earns only 5,000 L.L. (33 U.S.) per month, how do you expect me to entrust this person with the security of the camp?

Another criticized the work of the committees:

> I do not want to call it a popular committee! This is a committee of organizations, and its members are representatives of organizations and factions. There is no effective representation of the neighborhoods, professional sectors, or the elites. […] There is no form (of representative government) that promotes trust between the people and the members of the popular committee, and legitimizes the popular committee with popular support through elections…

To a lesser extent, some popular committees complained that UNRWA did not consult with them and have convened meetings with them only when the latter has had problems during the implementation of its services.

In February 2009, the Italian Cooperation for Development office started a project to connect the sewage system in the “new camp” of Nahr al-Bared to the surrounding municipality (al-Muhamar). The Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) organized a number of meetings without inviting the popular committee. In the end, the popular committee was only invited to sign the project, which it refused to do, as it had not been part of the discussion process. This is just one example of the problems the popular committee faces with regards to legitimacy and coordination with outside bodies. As a result, interlocutors have complained that many of the projects proposed by international cooperation offices and international organizations rarely meet the priority needs of the camps; instead, they tend to be driven by technical considerations, such as the kind of expertise UNRWA has, rather than the projects that are really needed by the camp dwellers.

29 It is interesting to note that as an academic discipline, “refugee studies” is mainly conceived as a study of the humanitarian condition of refugees which usually ignores their political condition. As Lisa Malik has noted, “refugee studies” has uncritically imported its main theoretical ideas, often very loosely articulated with respect to refugees’ political rights. A similar critique has been expressed by scholars such as Guglielmo Verdirame and Amin Alsaidi. In the 1990s, “refugee studies” was functionalist, and the questions it studies are shaped by the international organizations that fund it, while issues such as protection are still very loosely articulated with respect to refugees’ political rights. A similar critique has been expressed by scholars such as Guglielmo Verdirame and Amin Alsaidi.

UNRWA

The bio-power ( Foucault, 1990) exercised by humanitarian organizations has created categories for those in need with the effect of depoliticizing them. Refugees are transformed into bodies to be fed and sheltered while being deprived of their political existence. Humanitarian law is used to refer to “protected people” (See, for instance Feller et al., 2003) but current humanitarian practices focus mainly on “victims.” In this context humanitarian action is shifted from rights to welfare. In disaster areas—the space of exception—values of generosity and pragmatism obscure any references to the rights and responsibilities of the people concerned (refugees, humanitarians, organizations, international community, etc.) that would endow them with their own agency.

However, throughout the years, the activities of refugee organizations (the list is long: the Nansen Bureau for Russian and Armenian Refugees in 1921; the High Commission for Refugees from Germany in 1936; the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees in 1938; the International Refugee Organization of the United Nations in 1946; UNRWA in 1950) and up to the present, the UN High Commission for Refugees since 1951) have been limited according to their statutes to “humanitarian and social” issues while excluding political issues (Agamben 1997). With refugees often stripped of their political existence and identities and reduced to their status as individuals in need of shelter and food, as bare life, the entire refugee question has been transferred to the hands of the police and military forces, on the one hand, and to apolitical service organizations such as UNRWA, on the other.

30 For more details see (Khouri 2010; Bocco 2010).

31 One should note that UNRWA went much further during the first Intifada. It did not only advocate but also physical protection in the field (1988 creation of the Refugee Affairs Officer program and 1991’s Human Rights Observation program). These programs were discontinued in 1994. Be- sides, UNRWA contributed materially to the installation of the PM in the early days of the autonomy (see UNRWA annual reports 1994–1996) and devel- oped the camps’ infrastructure in line with the UNRWA resolution 48/46 of December 93. Furthermore, through the Peace Implementation Program which was launched in 1999, UNRWA attempted to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians under occupation on one hand, and to make the result of the peace process felt by the Palestinian refugee community on the other.

32 UNRWA organizes Host and Donor meetings once or twice every year where “casual issues” related to UNRWA’s budget and programs and projects are discussed. The 2004 Conference was of a different kind. Its aim was precisely to reach out to non-traditional donors (rich Arab countries, Asian countries, etc.) and to spur further partnership between the host countries and UNRWA. Several seminars involving non-UNRWA experts were held. However, no refugee organization or committee was invited.

33 As a sign of the change in the discourse on protection in the UNRWA, see, for example, the presentations of Lee Taktken and Anders Fange at the International Conference organized by Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, The Palestinian Refugees: Conditions and Recent Developments, on No- vember 24th, 25th and 26th, 2006. See also << www.unrwa.org >>.

34 In this line see very ill criticisms of James Lindsay (2009).
Scientists) who were sometimes known for their political activism and good relations with the community. In interviews, camp residents reported that UNRWA sought legitimization and acceptance. From the early 1990s, UNRWA increased its interaction with the camp’s new elite to become camp officers, and UNRWA avoided appointing people with express political affiliations. However, fearing the Israeli reaction in the OPT, UNRWA played a very ambiguous role in terms of promoting or diminishing the influence of notable leaders. UNRWA has played a valuable role in empowering Palestinian refugees by providing primary and vocational/technical education, health services, and sometimes employment, microcredit, and microfinance (since 1991), and more recently in providing services, but also in administering and coordinating many aspects of the refugees’ lives (for instance, mediation in case of neighborhood and social conflicts, relations with surrounding municipalities and Palestinian political factions). As a result, Camp directors are perceived as occupying a ruling position without acting accordingly. The confusion over the role of Camp Services Officers is symptomatic of the confusion over the role of UNRWA in general. Many camp residents, for instance, consider UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority responsible for the disorders in the camps. Expressing her anger at their perceived passivity, a resident posed the question: “Who can I complain to when my neighbor builds a second and third floor without leaving any proper space for my apartment?” Many internees indeed used words like “corruption,” “每个月,” “Westerners,” and “stalwart” (distant allies) to describe the situation in the camps and attribute UNRWA’s inaction as one of the major causes of it. But this resentment toward UNRWA is not a rejection of aid, rather a rejection of aid as a substitute for political action, especially in terms of camp governance (Parry 2002).

Mokhtars and Clan Structure

Historically within the camps, former notables have been invested with institutional authority and backing by UNRWA, and have been given powers of governance over the allocation of food and supplies, the physical organization of the camp and camp administration. There are three modalities where notables (wujahā’, sheikhs and muktars) wield power. In the Palestinian territories, notables are very important for conflict resolution and are consulted by UNRWA and other authorities governing the camps. In the Syrian case, notables are not the traditional elites, but a new educated strata. In Jordan, the old notables wield power, but this does not hinder the emergence of new notables. UNRWA has played a very ambiguous role in terms of promoting or diminishing the influence of notable leaders. Let us look at this issue closely.

The Palestinian Territory and Lebanon

Notables in the Palestinian Territory camps are very important. Reconciliation committees are often composed of sheikhs and local notables (muktars). They are called upon to preserve social peace and prevent vigilante retributions by individuals or clans. Hence, these committees use customary law to mediate in case of crime or injury (Hale, 2007). UNRWA has historically relied on and recycled the old notability, giving them a role in camp management and other fields, especially in the Palestinian territory. In the Palestinian territory and Lebanon, the camp population defers to imams and local notables and Mokhtars (wujahā‘), as well as to local security leaders in any quarrels or problems before going to the police. While such conflict resolution mechanisms have been partially successful in the past, refugee camps no longer enjoy harmonious communitarian structures as they have done previously. Since the end of the 1970s, we have witnessed the emergence of a new elite whose legitimacy is based on the Palestinian national struggle. This became apparent particularly in the Palestinian territory after the launching of the Oslo process, because participation in this struggle alone was no longer sufficient for someone to become a power broker.

Syria

Syrian authorities have been particularly interested in creating a new elite, based on education and political allegiance. What is interesting is that these authorities were willing to use family leaders but only for the position of ‘mokhtar’; an authoritative figure who is familiar with the people and holds a predominantly bureaucratic role, but with no significant power. However, the population resented it. Nowadays, internees report the return of the extended family structure. In May 2009, a man (originally from Jalo’rwa) was killed by someone from another neighborhood after the two had engaged in a dispute. The murder led to quarrelling between the two communities, prompting the Syrian police to intervene and maintain a heavy presence in the area in order to protect the people living in the murderer’s neighborhood of Safouinya from possible reprisals. Such events are rare in Yarmouk, as one policeman reported. Our interlocutors were surprised to find tribal solidarity had suddenly revived in the camp. With poverty rates constantly increasing, the resulting instability and threatening circumstances cause kinship to take on new meaning. Mokhtars and religious sheikhs have played a leading role in relieving this tension.

38 According to some internees in Baddaww camp, interviews were conducted in early 2003.
39 However, fearing the Israeli reaction in the OPT, UNRWA avoided appointing people with express political affiliations.
Jordan

Camp notables, and in particular Mukhtars, are not always chosen from the same group as before the exodus from Palestine. Jordan’s recognition of Mukhtars falls half way between the Palestinian Territory and Syria. The Jordanian system both recycles old notables and empowers young Mukhtars. Mukhtars become quasi-governmental employees in the Ministry of Interior. Camp dwellers can apply for this job and then the DPA conducts an investigation among the camp dwellers to ensure that the applicant is acceptable to the population they will represent.

Previously, camp notables lived inside the camp, but Al Hussein camp has a Mukhtar who lives outside the camp. The majority of Camp Services Committee members also do not live inside the camp. Interviewees have expressed concern that this does not encourage community participation.

Governmentalities of Islamism(s)

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank as well as the state of Palestinians inside Lebanon has fostered governance crises within the camps. As stated before, in Lebanon, after the departure of the PLO leadership in 1982, the existing popular and security committees were replaced with pro-Syrian committees, which were weak and contested by the majority of the camp dwellers and which virtually lacked their own financial resources. They were not permitted to develop their own effective police programs or to participate in legitimate security functions. Regarding day-to-day regulation of behavior, therefore, camp residents resorted to new, informal, and alternative structures of governance, self-policing, and auto-conditioning to keep the peace and preserve order.

The conservative Islamic environment of the camps, coupled with constant policing and surveillance by the factions, has thus far succeeded in deterring most of the sorts of crime that one might find in a similarly impoverished Lebanese neighborhood, though at the same time, it also seems to have enabled some of the factions themselves to commit other sorts of crimes. For example, as Nahr al-Bared residents are keen to point out, their society accepted Fatah al-Islam in their midst for several months, because the group appeared pious and was effective in preventing crime and promoting good Islamic behavior.

Many witnesses in Nahr al-Bared confirmed that some imams condemned the spiritual (if not the armed) presence of Fatah al-Islam in the camp during their Friday sermons. However, after two clashes between the population and Fatah al-Islam fighters in the spring of 2007, at least two imams interceded on behalf of Fatah al-Islam, as they were “pious faithful people.” Islamist movements are, to some extent, welcomed in the camps for their ability to preserve the social order in the absence of other regulatory authorities. Because no Palestinian authority recognized by both Palestinians and Lebanese as legitimate and sovereign actually exists, Palestinians have been forced to adopt alternative—but less effective—ways of maintaining order in the camps.

Following Michel Foucault, the notion of governmentality allows us to consider some of these many alternatives to conventional modes of governance. It allows us to go beyond classical theories of sovereign power, such as Weber’s typology of the forms of domination, which limit ‘legitimate’ power to institutions of the state. Weber (2008) identifies three pure types of legitimation (traditional, charismatic, and legal), which he maintains must emerge relationally in some variation or combination within a given community in order to ensure its sound functioning. Long and myself argue that the conventional modes of governance present in the camps today do not derive adequate legitimacy from these to govern effectively (Hanafi and Long, 2010) in contrast to Weber’s conceptualization, there exists within governmentality studies the notion that governance and state power are not necessarily the same.

Governmentality as a theoretical tool permits us to consider the ways Palestinian refugees in refugee camps in the region have produced knowledge about themselves, their environment, and how their situation has changed over time and, furthermore, to examine how these changes have created new mechanisms for regulating camp residents’ behavior. Specifically, the discourse of Islamism, principally as it has been articulated by Hamas and its allies, has provided Palestinians in Lebanon with an ideology through which the accumulation of moral capital thus becomes a way of standing out, of setting oneself apart from one’s peers, and ultimately even a way of commanding respect and authority in the camp. Fundamental to the notion of governmentality is the idea that power is distributed, not merely centralized as in Weber’s conceptualization. Power is distributed throughout the society, and it is thus possible for camp residents to have some measure of control over their own lives. This is particularly important in the context of the displacement and trauma experienced by Palestinian refugees. In this sense, specific interpretations of Islam—not just shari’a but also ikhlaq—appear to have begun to function as “metanarratives of governance” or governmentalities, for camp residents. Anthropologist Michael Jensen, in conducting fieldwork with a Hamas soccer team in Gaza, observed how “the creation of sound Muslims at the individual level” was accomplished through the physical conditioning of one’s body through sport; it was the physical alteration of one’s body through the “care of the self” that marked one out as Islamist (Jensen 2009: 5). The soccer players Jensen interacted with also adopted new styles of dress and new ways of talking about themselves as distinct, in a moral sense, from other Palestinians in Gaza (Jensen 2009: 5).

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It is, as Rose reminds us, “through self-reformulation, therapy, techniques of body alteration, and the calculated reshaping of speech and emotion, we adjust ourselves by means of the techniques propounded by experts of the self.” Islamism, as articulated by Hamas, literally as a science of the soul, has transformed the way many Palestinians, especially young men, construct their sense of self. It has brought to the forefront the idea that an “economy of moral capital” can order societies in the absence of traditional hierarchies. The accumulation of moral capital thus becomes a way of standing out, of setting oneself apart from one’s peers, and ultimately even a way of commanding respect and authority in the camp.

Substantiating this, focus group participants in Lebanon placed a great (arguably hyperbolic) emphasis on the threat of moral degeneracy to the continued well-being of their society. Some said that the dilemma of dwindling Palestinian political authority reflected a crisis of substantive moral purpose, while others lamented that Islamic conceptions of good governance and righteousness were not being followed. There was a general consensus among participants of all ages and in each of the camps that moral degeneracy was a problem. Specifically, these complaints had to do with drinking, smoking, consuming and this is something that I don't remember the older generations ever had. In other words, there is a positive progressive improvement in the camp, and in all the camps, hopefully, perhaps even the entire Islamic world.”

Islamism was seen by many as the only solution to the Palestinians’ problems in the region, as political solutions had been
closed to them through the unwillingness of the Lebanese state to work with the Palestinian community in good faith. Focus group participants also cited a number of examples of the ways in which residents – especially young residents – behavior had changed for the better as a result of increased piety. Specifically, some also pointed to how the rise of Hamas to prominence in their camp (at the expense of Fatah) had precipitated this. For example, discussing this, one woman said “You felt that Fatah had a very strong presence [in Baddawi before]. Seriously, whenever I walked uncovered – I have only recently started wearing the veil – it was a normal thing if we walked in the market without the veil. After Hamas came to the camp, religious discipline increased, religious awareness increased, and the number of religious lectures increased.”

In addition, a man from Nahr el-Bared was happy to report “Everyone here talked about the rising numbers of young people who have recently gone back to the mosques. Also, many are participating in religious ceremonies and in the Friday prayer on religious occasions during Ramadan.”

Another Nahr el-Bared resident argued “Before, we had one mosque; now there are fourteen. Doesn’t this have to do with religion? Every year, two or three pilgrimage trips are organized either for hajj or umra. Isn’t this related to values and ethics? Aren’t such trips increasing? Now, honestly, I believe that compared to the number of people, the crime and delinquency rates are lower.”

Taken as a whole, however, participants across the interviews and the focus groups in Shati’ camp in Gaza and Baddawi and Nahr el-Bared camps had conflicting ideas about the role that religion and religious movements should play in the administration of the camps. For example, when asked whether politics and religion should be kept separate in government, participants in the youth focus groups were divided in their opinions. Some favored a secular authority like the PLO of decades past, while others voiced a preference for a religion-nationalist government, like that endorsed by Hamas. Only a few, however, endorsed the full implementation of shari’a. In Shati’ camp the polarization is very strong between pro-Hamas and against Hamas.

What participants agreed upon was that Islamism had emerged in the last decade, for better or worse, as a new and powerful force in the camps. For some, it brought out the best in people, compelling them to behave in “sound” and “Islamic” ways, abating violence, delinquency, and moral degeneration while simultaneously abetting increased cooperation among neighbors, better regimes of health, and improved social services. On the other hand, some Islamist factions seem to have brought with them new problems, the foremost of which has been the inability to integrate with existing or historical modes of governance, both Palestinian and local, thus begetter conflict.

II. URBANITY OF THE CAMPS AND RELATION TO THE MUNICIPALITY

While the Palestinian refugee camps are well connected socially, economically, and urbanly to the city surrounding them in Syria and Jordan, the picture is mitigated in the Palestinian Territory and Lebanon. In these two areas, and generally speaking, that to pretend that it is just another normal space.

The Palestinian Authority’s survey was conducted between January 16 and February 5, 2003 targeting 1,498 Palestinian refugee households distributed among 150 localities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. See http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/index.html.

While the camps in Jordan, Syria and Gaza Strip are economically and socially integrated (while preserving their specific identity), the PA has developed some projects for the camps, the camps are still interconnected with the urban environment through the different forms of spatial and economic mobility (see Darai 2006, 2010 for the Busan and Stara Gracac camps).

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the municipality urban regulation but regulated by informal negotiations between the neighbors. These different formations coexist without either of them being derived from or reduced to the other. They constitute a space of tension revolving around deviation, marginality, and contradiction: a space of total control in which acts of resistance and transgression nevertheless take place. In the Palestinian territory, the disconnection of the refugee camps from their environment happened gradually and was accelerated by local elections from which the refugee camp’s dwellers have been excluded. Having the significance of a gray zone of ambivalence, neither completely internal nor entirely external to the society at large (or both internal and external at the same time), these closed spaces are extraterritorial, not truly belonging to the place, subtending “in,” but not being part of “the” space that they physically occupy.

III. POLICE STATIONS

In refugee camps throughout the world, the host state usually takes the role of policing the camp. Police address all kinds of disputes inside the camp. However, this is often done in cooperation with refugee-organized security forces. For example, in camps in Tanzania, the police are subordinate to and cooperate with the internal camp security forces that are administered by the refugees’ Camp Committees (International Crisis Group, 1999:14). Similar cooperative agreements exist for refugee camps in Kenya and India.

Police stations in Palestinian refugee camps vary according to host country (see tables for all countries and specifically for Jordan). In Jordan, Syria and Gaza there are often police stations situated at the entrance of the camp, that serve areas both inside and outside the camp. As a result, law enforcement is for the refugees and local population equally. This means that there is no specificity of the camp and because the camp is often so crowded, the respective ministries of interior have decided to place police stations at the entrance.44

In Jordan, some police stations were repeatedly burned down when there were problems between the population and the Jordanian authorities. This led the Jordanian officials to change the location of the police stations to the entrance of the camps. Since the arrival of the PNA, the police have not been able to penetrate the camps without negotiating with the powerful actors within the camps, who will then take the decision as to whether or not to cooperate. This approach is also illustrated by the PNA in the West Bank, where there are no police stations in the camps. In Lebanon, there is currently a temporary police station that the ISF has created inside the Adjacent Area (also known as the New Camp) of Nahr el-Bared. Interviews in Nahr el-Bared have shown that camp dwellers assume that in exchange for submitting to the rule of law, a package of individual rights, such as the right to work and to own property will be leveraged. In this case, the whole meaning of a police station will be transformed.

In all the other areas in the region, the idea of a police station has not alarmed camp dwellers because they know that they are treated equally by the law and that they are not governed by a state of exception or suspension of law. History has shown that to substitute a police station for power can bring victory, but its price could be very high for it is not only paid by the vanquished, it is also paid by the victor. The much-feared boomerang effect predicts that the rule of violence will end by accelerating by local elections from which the refugee camps’ dwellers have been excluded. Having the significance of a gray zone of ambivalence, neither completely internal nor entirely external to the society at large (or both internal and external at the same time), these closed spaces are extraterritorial, not truly belonging to the place, subtending “in,” but not being part of “the” space that they physically occupy.

44 For more details, for instance, the police station in Faimous camp is at the entrance of the camp and serves this camp and the area of Masaken where Syrian population lives. In Gaza, police stations are rarely located in the centre of the camp, but when they are at the entrance. The stations serve all the surrounding areas whether they are located in the camp or outside of it. For example, in Gaza, there is a middle-class district which is located near the camp and its inhabitants solve their problems through the Al Shati refugee camp police station. Yet, the southern part of Al Shati refugee camp is served by “Al Abbass Central Police station” which is located in one of the more upper class neighbourhoods in Gaza.

Table 5: Police Station as a Means of Law Enforcement in the Camps in the Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Locations</th>
<th>Police Stations</th>
<th>Location of Police Stations</th>
<th>Police Stations Serve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>Always at the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp and surrounding area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>Often at the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp and surrounding area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>Always at the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Sometimes camp area and sometimes surrounding area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bank</td>
<td>Do not exist</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>Planned to be inside the camp</td>
<td>Planned to serve only the camp area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Police Stations in the Camps in Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Locations</th>
<th>Police Stations</th>
<th>Location of Police Stations</th>
<th>Police Stations Serve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Hussein</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wehdat</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baqa</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp (mobile police bus), main police station is located in Ain el Bashir</td>
<td>The mobile police bus serves the camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azme Al Mufti (Husun)</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burd</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp and the town of Al Husun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suf</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza / Jerash</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarka</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp and surrounding area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiteen / Shniler</td>
<td>Exist</td>
<td>At the entrance of the camp</td>
<td>Camp only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Talibeh</td>
<td>Does not exist</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Serves the camp and the village of Gaza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. GOVERNING THE CAMP: TWO EXCEPTIONS

Having so far discussed the modes of governance in refugee camps in the region and the relationship with the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the way the law has been enforced through police stations, it is clear that the relationship between space, power and sovereignty is very complex. Host authorities have opted for certain formulas that retain the camp’s identity as a political space, but at the same time facilitate the life of the camp dwellers’ everyday life. However, two models deserve further development: one of extraordinary inclusion of the camp into the city: the case of camps in the Gaza Strip, and one of problematic exclusion, where a camp is legally marginalized to the point of becoming a space of exception.

The Gaza Exception

Based on research conducted by Akram Jia (2008) in the Al Shati refugee camp, the camp is shown to be part of the fabric of Gaza city. The physical development of the camp grows in ways that match the camps’ social and economic fabric. Palestinian factions, and particularly Hamas and Fatah leaders, have connected the camps to their surrounding municipalities. The camps’ Neighborhood Committees (Ijlan al-’ahyaa) have played a major role in this particular area. Furthermore, dating back to 1999,
night, and it was sometimes enforced during the day, a matter which forced people to build toilets and kitchens inside their homes, and which lead to the further narrowing of the streets.

Israel did not mind this random expansion until it realized that an overpopulated cluster could become dangerous and serve as fertile soil for anti-occupation militant activities. This is why Israel constructed wide streets inside the camp - in order to undermine its capacity as a resistance-harboring environment. One of our interviewees reported:

“... The Israelis had felt the danger of the arbitrary construction but did not want to intervene at first as the camp was seen as UNRWA territory. But the situation had developed to render the camp a safe haven for combatants and guerrilla fighters (Fedayeen). This lead Sharon in the early 70s to take certain security measures such as constructing wide streets that divide the camp and facilitate the processes of entering and exiting it. Another similar measure was fencing rogue blocks or blocks which guerrilla fighters came from. This was done by building high fences, some up to four meters. Each block was locked up in a huge prison with one gate controlled by the occupation”

In another interview, it seemed that the IDF aimed at creating urban chaos and social disorder in the camp so as to exacerbate the factors that would drive people out of the camp:

“... Israel was creating chaos in different aspects of people’s lives such as making drugs available to youth, and starting fights between families as a result of the expansion of houses on the expense of the streets (until the streets of the camp nearly disappeared). One of the most significant issues of daily quarrel between the people of the camp was expanding homes on the expense of, or against the will of one’s neighbor. It was up to the local mayors to resolve those conflicts who would dodge the expansion problem by coating it with the cover of national loyalty. They justified the narrowing of the streets as a means of protecting the resistance through preventing the Israeli Army’s tanks from entering the camp. It was therefore easy to silence any voices that opposed the process or were damaged by it.”

Neighborhood Committees

Neighborhood Committees (lijan al-ayhaa) were formed in 1997 in accordance with a decree issued by the Minister of Local Governance (at the time, it was Saeb Erekat) stipulating the formation of Neighborhood Committees, subsidiary to the relevant municipality of all Palestinian cities and camps. The decree clearly states that the committees should be formed through the municipalities. According to Akram Ijla (2008), DORA, alongside other political factions, failed in several attempts to form neighborhood committees that had the ability to operate outside the sphere of the municipalities. This was due to the following reasons:

1. The decision from which the official authority of the committees was derived is taken with the support and coordination of the municipality which thus cannot be ignored.
2. (The Ministry of) Local Governance does not have the ability to finance projects or fund neighborhood committees as they do not fall under its authority.
3. (The Ministry of) Local Governance does not have the mandate to turn Neighborhood Committees into independent municipalities.

The success of Neighborhood Committees is attributed, according to Ijla (2008), to their non-political nature as they are not a space for political representation. Instead, they perform a social and service delivery function, and aim to improve people’s lives. In other words, their role is to manage the daily lives of the camps. Such committees include only one representative from each political faction, no matter how big or small; other members are the notables of the camps and other significant community members. In addition, competency and personal capacities are important elements of the selection criteria of committee members.

During that period and for the above reasons, the camp witnessed one of the most significant waves of service development which was backed by the municipality of Gaza. The Chairman of the Neighborhood Committee and a representative from Fateh says, “... In the period ranging between 1997, when we took charge of the committee, and the Hamas coup in May 2007, we were able to implement several projects and provide a wide array of services. We had an excellent relationship with UNRWA and all ministries of the Palestinian Authority, especially the Ministry of Works, Housing, Land Authority, Local Government, and..."
Social Affairs, in addition to all security agencies, especially the police.”

In October 2007, the Al Shati Camp Committee was dismissed in order to be replaced by another Neighborhood Committee comprised of Hamas members. The Chairman of the new committee attributed the replacement to the changing reality in the Gaza District where the government is predominantly Hamas, and so is the newly appointed Municipal Council. He added that having the government, the Municipal Council, and the committee belong to the same political party facilitates and better integrates the committee’s work due to a unity of goals, beliefs, and work method. Hamas’ understanding of the committee’s function is in line with that of the former members as it agrees that the committee is to work in supporting the old committee’s old plan of establishing partnerships with all official bodies and unofficial stakeholders. It viewed itself as part of a system and followed its decisions. The Hamas committee has a clear position on the issue of integration of the camp/neighborhood into the city in it. It states that camp improvement and integration does not negate or undermine the main issue at hand which is the Right of Return and other relevant international resolutions.

The Chairman of the committee reports, “... the committee was restructured in accordance with the new make-up of the municipal council... we have a good relationship with the municipality and the different ministries, but we unfortunately do not have any relationships with UNRWA, international organizations or donors... we serve as an intermediary between the municipal council and the people... we bring forth people’s problems to the municipal council and try to facilitate the municipality’s work whenever possible... our decisions do not have a binding force as people can choose to reject them... our role is providing advice rather than enforcing laws, implementing large-scale projects, or setting a camp’s organizational structure... we also serve as intermediaries between the people and the government as the latter provides us with food, aid packages, and funding for the restoration of some homes which were damaged by the rain... the Ministry of Social Affairs provides us with thousands of food packages which we distribute to needy people of the camp... we, the members of the committee are from the people, and we seek to alleviate their problems which are our own...”

In one paragraph, it continued: “It is true that some of the members of the committee are supportive of the organization of the camp, we do not have any political motives to deny this fact... Hamas clearly states that camp development does not undermine the political rights of refugees... we are clear on that, but people are accustomed to the lack of organization in the camp; forcing the issue would instigate a negative reaction... still, we are supportive of organizing the camp. I want to emphasize that such a project should be initiated by the municipality and not the committee as it does not fall within our mandate.”

The Lebanese Exception

In this section, I will take the new development concerning the plan for new governance of the Nahr al-Bared camp as a starting point to discuss the Lebanese authorities’ vision concerning the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The Nahr el-Bared crisis served as an opportunity to establish a new relationship between the Palestinian and the Lebanese authorities, but it also revealed the weakness of traditional Palestinian political factions in managing the crisis.

In Nahr el-Bared the current actors are: a popular committee (composed of representatives from all political factions in principle, but historically, the Coalition prevailed45), neighborhood committees, an assortment of prominent notables, religious figures, and factions operating on a wide scale, and NGOs which came to be seen as an active new face of civil society in Nahr el-Bared. The complexity of involvement was demonstrated by how several (governmental, non-governmental, civil society, and grassroots) initiatives, initiatives, commissions, and advocacy groups became involved in the reconstruction, adopting a more prominent role in the camp’s scene. In reality however, the Nahr el-Bared crisis highlighted the weakness and ineffectiveness of the popular committee and the Palestinian factions. Using the “refugee file” for internal use to talk, as Are Knudsen (2010) discusses46, the Lebanese government decided to institute a new model of governance in the camp, the details of which will be demonstrated later on, based exclusively on the principle of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces’ (ISF) control and surveillance, ignoring the genuine issues of everyday life in the camp, all the while without consulting and dealing with the current actors in Nahr el-Bared.

Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy

45 Some parts of this section have been written with Irsam Sheikh Hasan (Parah and Sheikh Hasan, 2009)

46 This pro-Syrian coalition is known as: Tebetul al-Quds al-Palestiniya (Alliance of Palestinian Forces or AIP).

47 These NGOs included: a community-managed women’s project programme, a youth center and a number of NGOs active in Nahr el-Bared, including Al Naaj, Beirut Art Centre, Al Marzouk, Ghasan Nowira (Cultural Foundation), the Wadadhi National Association, and Community-based Rehabilitation Programme (CRP) for the disabled.

48 Are Knudsen showed how the political fall-out of the crisis entrenched the dichotomisation of the political landscape in Lebanon and produced two versions of the story of the Nahr el-Bared disaster and how to resolve it. Knudsen argues that the Nahr el-Bared disaster was exploited for political gain. This is because the “refugee file” is a sensitive political issue and being able to control the national dialogue on this issue is a political asset. These strategies are based on the underlying majority in many cases in Lebanon, specifically the Nahr el-Bared issue, is the Sunni “street” and being perceived to control the “refugee file” is a tactical advantage.

49 Although the PLO objected to the concept of community policing during an official meeting with the UNPAC head then ambassador Mekki, a few days before the Vienna conference, no changes were made to the document. This conclusion is based on the discussion that was held during a meeting between Ambassador Shalal Malikian (UNPAC) and Ambassador Abbas Zale (PLOC) in the Grand Serail-Baalbek in February of that year and the letter to his partner concerning the meeting. The latter to his partner concerning the meeting. The letter is dated 5 April 2009. More details see Read also from the UK police in http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/neighbourhood-policing/Variables.
crime-infested ghettos; whatever crimes took place were contained and the violators prosecuted. Based on our fieldwork research, there were tremendous problems in the management of these formal and informal forms of governance, which include the issues of conflict and corruption. However, there were no grounds for excluding these local actors. Creating a real Palestinian-Lebanese partnership is based on respecting, building and developing the camp’s local political and social structures in an effort to develop clear and transparent mechanisms for the interaction with the Lebanese, and this is clearly not achievable through teaching the “political history of the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon (and …) their cultural and social specificities” to Lebanese Internal Security Forces officers, as the Vienna document has formulated. Essentially, over the status quo that preceded the conflict was maintained: arbitrary checkpoints, barbed-wire fencing, and controlled movement in and out of the camp through mandatory permissions for all Palestinian residents. Shortly after the battle was concluded, the cabinet of ministers approved the building of a military base at the edge of the old camp. In February 2009 the cabinet of ministers issued another decree to establish a naval base on the coast of the camp’s beach. In spite of these added installations, both the LPDC and ISF continue to lobby for instituting a police station inside the old camp. To draw a clearer picture, the density of the space in question is one of the highest in the world, with 1,700 buildings squeezed into a 190,000 sqm area, housing 200,000 refugees. There were other options that were deemed more sensible and respectful to the community, such as locating the police station at the edge of the camp, but these options have been vehemently rejected by the Lebanese authorities. It almost seems as if it were a political statement to assert their absolute power over the camp.

The Vienna conference proposal unilaterally introduces a new actor into the camp. The principal question is why should policing conducted by the Lebanese authorities be introduced into the camp before determining what the status of the Palestinians in Lebanon is? Interviewees have pointed out that the security of the camp is not the outcome of the absence of a Lebanese policing force. Rather, one of the main problems pertaining to security and policing is the nature and coordination mechanism of jurisdiction between Palestinian structures and the Lebanese state with regards to the camp and its environs. Since the expiration of the Cairo Agreement (1969), the terms of reference between the two parties have remained ambiguous at best. As a result, the most noble and legitimate interpretation of the camps is this; a legally suspended space where military intelligence has governed it in a state of exception.

**Popular Committee: Double De-Legitimization**

The Lebanese state’s de-legitimization of the Popular Committees was neither new policy nor practice. “Camps are not under the responsibility of the Lebanese state” claimed a senior officer in the Lebanese Internal Security Force (May 2009). This claim de facto does not have any meaning. The cooperation (albeit often with coercion, a sort of cooption) of the popular committee with the Lebanese military and police authorities makes the refugee camp perfectly under the control of the Lebanese State. Interviews with members of Nahr el-Bared’s Security Committee spoke a great deal about the absence of an external political cover, and how Lebanese military intelligence disempowered them and treated them merely as informants and implementers of their orders. As one of the members testified: “If any citizen from the camp was in trouble, if he had wronged someone and the Security Committee jailed him, he would sue and would become a fugitive of the state. I have been jailed three times by the government … I am working for my people! I have no problem as long as I am serving my people. But if the state jails me three times because of complaints, then what? Once a thief complained about me and had me jailed.”

Other interviews showed that Lebanese military intelligence and the Internal Security Force used the Security Committee when they needed favors, like delivering wanted persons for justice. Yet they were never honored with a return favour, the authorities never gave them the acknowledgement nor resources of a local municipal power. The ISF still resorts to recruiting local informants who lately use their connections to the security apparatus to exert influence and mediate immigration. After the crisis in Nahr el-Bared, this practice intensified through the recruitment of collaborators, focusing specifically on disenfranchised youth, as one member of the popular committee pointed out. However, the problem cannot be reduced only to the external factors. Recent fieldwork in Ain el Helwa, Baddaw and Nahr el-Bared camps revealed that the absence of a legitimate Popular Committee was a serious stumbling block for many of our interviewees, as it portrayed the committee as being unrepresentative and weak. Historically, Popular Committees were dependent on the political and financial backing of the PLO and various political factions. Since the transfer of the PLO’s leadership from Beirut to Tunisia in 1989, their resources have been scarce, and with the passage of time, the camps became among the most dense urban areas in Lebanon. Many Nahr el-Bared camp residents performed both as informal and formal labor. “There is no outside for the Nahr el-Bared camp, perhaps one crime only and it was unintentional, where a kid murdered another, and the investigation proved it as did the committees.”

Sovereignty: Art of Inclusive Exclusions

Although camps in Lebanon can be easily compared to the size of towns (varying from 10,000 to 80,000 people) they are managed without municipal structures. In interviews, people often used words signifying arbitrariness and chaos. This said, while camp residents are excluded from the realm of municipal planning and service-provision, they are at the same time included with regards to questions of security and taxes. These paradoxical implementations of the law are characteristics of the space of exception, specifically in uncovering how power structures define the relationship between the space of the camp and the space of the city. While under the Refugee Convention of 1951 refugees have the right to work without requiring a work permit, in Lebanon, Palestinian refugees are barred from practicing liberal professions, and are required to work a permit even in the case of manual labor. After sixty years and three generations, Palestinian refugees cannot be considered within the category of “foreigners” whom, in Lebanon, are usually temporary migrants. Reduced to their status as individuals in need of shelter and food, the governance of their bare-life has been transferred to the hands of the police and military on the one hand, and to apolitical relief organisations like UNRWA, on the other. The Lebanese state has thus continued to impose a new form of sovereignty, to be articulated in the logic of dual nationality, subverting the legal with the political and vice-versa. In other words, the Lebanese authorities are excluding Palestinians from the rights and benefits they ought to enjoy as residents of Lebanon while simultaneously including them as a security threat, as “something to be contained and thus subjected to strict control and surveillance. This is often done under the guise of either the war of law or political imperative. For example, while the Lebanese state has endorsed international humanitarian laws and Arab League decrees pertaining to refugees, “for political reasons”, these laws and regulations are at best overlooked, and at worst violated. The Lebanese state implements the state of exception by all means except specifically using the recourse to law, 52 Eventually, the Popular Committee refused to be part of that project. The major reason was the conviction that such projects were designed to empower the municipality. The conflict between the Nahr el-Bared camp enjoyed a relatively low crime rate. The camp is not conducive for the Popular Committee.

53 Palestinians are subject to many taxes related to trade and employment like other Lebanese.
essentially allowing political questions to be treated as a matter of law. When Palestinians lobbied to be granted basic civil rights as refugees, the government claimed the question did not pertain to the law, rather to the political makeup of the country and the casually gauged balance between confessional groups.

The question of governance in the camps is chiefly the task of overseeing the camps population, committees, factions and organizations. Before talking about state sovereignty, which is a very legitimate claim, this space needs a basic municipal power. The establishment of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) in 2005 was a positive first step, after years of conflict, to try and bridge the divide between both parties (Brynen, 2009). Some work has been done in the direction of non-ID Palestinian refugees (those without any recognized, official documentation such as passports or identity cards), and the recon-struction of Nahr el Bared. But until 2010, it has made little progress on the front of law reform to redress the legal discrimination against Palestinians. The general dysfunction of the Lebanese state, which in these years has witnessed massive demonstrations and protests, is a war with Israel, sectarian violence, a boycotted government, political infighting, a presidential vacuum, and two highly contentious cabinet formations – has prevented it from taking any initiative on the much needed reform of its policies. Instead, it has left the Palestinians to be fed by UNRWA and guarded by the army until such a time as parliament – the only governmental body capable of licensing meaningful reform – sees fit to weigh in on the issue. The recent law reform – although a step in the right direction because it was addressed through parliament rather than being issued as a ministerial decree – still does not address the key issues of Palestinian rights, namely the right to free employment (Palestinians are still barred from professional employment and still require a work permit), social security, and ownership rights.

Many interviewees pointed out that for the foreseeable future, indicators for them suggested that the Lebanese state would continue excluding Palestinians from the rights and benefits they ought to enjoy as residents of Lebanon while simultaneously not addressing the key issues of Palestinian rights, namely the right to free employment (Palestinians are still barred from professional employment and still require a work permit), social security, and ownership rights.

From the two modalities of powers, exclusion and partitioning, I move to a new modality that is encouraged by UNHCR. Since the early 1990s, UNHCR was convinced that governing the camp required local participation. Prior to that, UNHCR played a very ambiguous role in terms of promoting or diminishing the presence of the notables in the camps.55 However since the 1990s, UNHCR became more systematic, promoting community participation and organizing elections. According to Tonge (2009), emphasis on participation can be seen in Tanzania. Looking at UNHCR’s influence on the physical organization of camps in Tanzania, it is apparent that UNHCR is downplaying traditional authorities within the camps. After the disastrous experience of locating Rwandan genocide participants in Benaco, and the disastrous situation of refugee camps organized by various rebel groups in Burundi, UNHCR attempts to mitigate the influence of former political parties and notables in these camps was striking. In Simon Turner’s description of Burundian refugee camps in Tanzania and Shelley Dick’s description of Congolese camps, both explained UNHCR’s implementation of a system by which UNHCR created an entirely new leadership in the refugee communities. In these camps, UNHCR insisted on setting up tents in controlled arbitrary grids, and assigning refugees to plots based on order of arrival as opposed to home community. In Burundi and the Congo, UNHCR also implemented this method of organization, basing community elections on this layout. By each voting block was made up of people from many different villages, it was unlikely that former notables would be elected. Instead, camp committee representatives were often younger men, who were both competent and represented a change in the authority structure (Turner 2006: 321; Dick 2002: 9–12, cited by Tong, 2009).

This model was a crucial improvement to the previous models of exclusion and segregation. However, I would qualify the UNHCR approach as a top-down model where the role of participation and election is set from above. UNRWA may adopt UNHCR’s emphasis on governance within the camp, rather than avoiding the issue. UNRWA should not be merely a phantom sovereign. After observing the mechanisms of the above mentioned models, I would like to set up an alternative model based on participatory publics, which is inspired by the municipality of Porto Alegre in Brazil’s participatory budgeting. Participatory publics are comprised of organized citizens who seek to overcome social and political exclusion through public deliberation, the promotion of accountability, and the implementation of their policy preferences. These publics are the actors of the participatory budgeting, in Lebanon a new deliberative format which incorporates citizens into a year-long decision-making process based on the negotiation and deliberation of public goods. Participatory budgeting is described as a new type of decision-making system in which citizens have the authority to vote on general revenue streams and on specific policy outlays (Wampler and Avritzer, 2004: 293).

Porto Alegre Participatory Model

Porto Alegre is the state capital of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, a city which counts roughly 1.2 million people and is the core of a metropolitan region with a population of around 3 million (Bruce, 2004: 4). The participatory governance model implemented in Porto Alegre in 198956 There are two ways by which the population can participate; either territorially in one of the 16 city regions where they live or thematically, relating to subject matter. The UN has nominated Porto Alegre as the Brazilian city with the ‘best quality of life’ (Bruce, 2004: 5). Recognizing the successes of Porto Alegre, my suggestion is that Palestinian camps adopt thematic forums which address housing, infrastructure, services, water and electricity supply, education, health, sustainability and environment improvement, economic development, and culture. In the thematic meetings, the assembly should then discuss the top four priorities out of a list of

54 In some cases, UNHCR actually supports the notables’ influence in the camps. In Kikouka, UNHCR cooperates with the SPA as a legitimate source of authority, to the point where Fereidoun and Hamidi-Band state that SPA officials were treated as the sole legitimate voice of the Dinka community (2001: 261). However, in many other situations, UNHCR actively downplays notable’s authority, and creates other sources of authority. In the case of the Tanzanian camps it is important to note that the camps are located within a conflict with the judiciary system that UNHCR supports. UNHCR attempts to implement the Tanzanian judiciary system, where the sentence for rape is 10 years in prison. Both UNHCR and the Tanzanian government have attempted to encourage refugees to report the rapes to their authorities as opposed to the community el-

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56 The city has registered some notable achievements in recent years, credit for which is often attributed to the existence of the participatory budget. The city is considered to have the best publicly owned bus service in Brazil (Bruce, 2004: 6). Increase by nearly 50% (budget resources for investment went up from US$54m in 1992 to US$70m in 1996). Defying pressure to privatize public services, the city is considered to have the best publicly owned bus service in Brazil (Bruce, 2004: 6).
Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy

VI. CONCLUSION

The topic of governance in Palestinian refugee camps is commonly misrepresented and misunderstood. For some it is first and foremost a security issue, a state of exception that turns camp spaces into security places, overturing normative rules of deliberation, accountability, social contract and human rights. For others, it is seen as a state of normalcy. For the purpose of this study, we define governance as a set of tools (similar to municipal structures of administration) that are or can be used in order to enable camps to attain a certain form of relative urban and socio-economic normalcy, while retaining the specificity of the political status of the camp.

This process of ‘securitization’ is spread from decision makers to the population, which then creates the view that refugee camps are security islands and areas of crises. As a result, such a view forms a twisted impression of how camps should be governed, essentially cementing the top-down management approach as the ‘ideal’ mode of governance, despite the fact that it increases patronage and decreases the possibility of management-sharing and negotiation amongst autonomous actors.

Drawing on different models of camp governance, this working paper opted to propose an alternative model inspired by the Porto Alegre municipality participatory budgeting. It showed how social citizen participation, policy-making, and the creation of new institutions interact to contest the political practices of clientelism and patronage that have long dominated camp politics. The long-standing ideas of the segregation and self-segregation policies in refugee camps have created high spatial concentrations of social risk. Security approaches transform social risk into political risk. Instead of calling for improved social and economic policies, distinctive urban areas are confined more to virtual or physical enclosures with military check points as a result of the emphasis on security. While spatial target policies are important, they are only temporary and should be replaced in favor of empowering the Palestinians with a new status, namely being protracted refugees with full refugee rights. In a region which is governed by a spectrum of regimes, from authoritarianism to liberal democracy (a democracy minus the respect for minority and refugee rights), refugee camps have become an exceptional site of isolating undesirable people. Paradoxically, authoritarian regimes, being nationalist, have isolated the camps much less than countries with illiberal democratic regimes.

Palestinian camp dwellers have encountered difficulties of social and economic integration in Lebanon. This is indicative of a generally fragile legal status, which in turn encourages exploitation. This last hypothesis deserves some development. Following Pierre Bourdieu’s work (1998), social actions possess different forms of capital (social, symbolic, cultural, ethnic, etc.). Bourdieu (2000) recognizes that social capital reflects socio-economic status, which is used in the perpetual drive to enhance status. Through their strategic actions, people attempt to accumulate capital that can be converted into social capital. The role of the state in this endeavor is crucial. According to Paul Tabar et al. (forthcoming), the role of the state is to validate forms of political status, being nationalist, have isolated the camps much less than countries with illiberal democratic regimes.

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Finally, some of the initiatives within the principal of the Porto Alegre Model are not completely new to the camps, especially within Dheisheh camp in the Palestinian Territory, and the Nahr el Bared camp in Lebanon. The efforts towards reconstruction in urban planning have been strongly approved by UNRWA’s new Housing and Camp Improvement Unit which advocated for a different approach and convinced UNRWA into taking on a full partnership with the Nahr El Bared Reconstruction Commission for Civil Action and Studies, a grassroots organization with technocratic experts (NBC). This initiative has emerged with the support of social scientists claiming the public sphere has all but disappeared, destroyed by the market (Wolfe, 1989) and colonized by the media (Putnam, 2001). Similarly, it challenges what has been perceived in past decades as the passivity of some refugees who have been socialized into the role of a victim.

In essence, this model is not very different from the bylaw of the popular committees, established by the PLO in 1969. Article 2 from this bylaw stipulates that, “1- the popular committee will be elected from a general assembly, 2- this committee will be helped by experts in needed fields, 3- establishment of sub-committees according to the need of each camp, 4- the work in the popular committee is in voluntary basis and it is not a paid position, 5- the number of each committee proportional to the size of each camp (PLO, 1969).” However, the bylaw does not mention the composition of the general assembly.

It is very interesting to note that despite the fact that interviewees do not feel adequately represented by the appointed popular committees, the attitudes vis-à-vis the election of popular committees change whether the informants are leaders or regular people. Fearing the ‘Gaza syndrome’, civil society leaders and activists are aware of the eventual problems that may arise if there are disputes over the results of the election and argue in favor of a consociational arrangement between the different political factions, as well as civil society leaders, at least for a transitional period. Some bitterly remember the experience that took place in Shatila camp in 2001, where a Neighborhood Committee (lujneh alah al-mukhâyam) was elected but quickly aborted after few months by a political faction that felt threatened by its legitimacy (see also Karam, 2010). Concerning the population in the camp, we have found that they are in favor of elections. This result is similar to the recent fieldwork of Samaa Abu Sharar (2009: 25) and a survey conducted by Shahed - Palestinian Association for Human Rights, three years ago, which ascertained that the wide majority of camp dwellers in Lebanon (93%) are in favor of electing Popular Committee members (Shahed, 2008).

The success of the initiatives, within the principal of the Porto Alegre Model are not completely new to the camps, especially within Dheisheh camp in the Palestinian Territory, and the Nahr el Bared camp in Lebanon. The efforts towards reconstruction in urban planning have been strongly approved by UNRWA’s new Housing and Camp Improvement Unit which advocated for a different approach and convinced UNRWA into taking on a full partnership with the Nahr El Bared Reconstruction Commission for Civil Action and Studies, a grassroots organization with technocratic experts (NBC). This initiative has emerged despite social scientists claiming the public sphere has all but disappeared, destroyed by the market (Wolfe, 1989) and colonized by the media (Putnam, 2001). Similarly, it challenges what has been perceived in past decades as the passivity of some refugees who have been socialized into the role of a victim.
of acknowledging the desire of traumatized and voiceless victims to become emancipated subjects, especially after some sort of normality of life in the camps has set in. However, currently, UNRWA is aware of the importance of empowering the refugees.

Our fieldwork reveals the misunderstandings between UNRWA and refugees that characterize the current status quo. Because of its mandate, a humanitarian organization like UNRWA has historically understood its role as a temporary relief provider to a temporary group of victims, carefully avoiding taking on a wider governing role. At the same time, most refugees have effectively assigned UNRWA a key role, holding it responsible for problems in the camps that go well beyond the realm of its mandate. As argued before the resulting “phantom sovereignty” of UNRWA is based on this fundamental misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities, which leaves a problematic void, contributes to the sense of permanent emergency and exception, and further mistrust and suspicion. Decades of internal and international outmigration of the most educated and capable among the camp dwellers – keen to escape the trap of passivity and over-reliance on relief – has left camp communities in vulnerable conditions.

Ultimately, the situation can be reversed by developing effective, democratically endorsed camp governance structures that represent community interests and can lead to camp improvements. UNRWA may choose to accept and engage with existing representative structures, overcome its paternalistic approach and sometimes institutional arrogance, and carefully assist and strengthen camp governance.58 (Misiolwit & Hanafi, 2018)

As announced before the Lebanese Prime Minister Office created the LPDC in 2005, which is a very good sign of its willingness to improve the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The donor community has played a major positive role in supporting the LPDC. However, they have reinforced an imbalanced structural relationship with their Palestinian counterpart. While donors such as the UNRWA International Development Research Center (IDRC) and some Western embassies have supported the technical team of LPDC, there is no support for any equivalent team on the Palestinian side. Instead of empowering the weaker Palestinian side, they inadvertently contribute to disempowering them. Donors do support Palestinian civil society, but only selectively, reinforcing the NGOs at the expense of the unions and the PLO's popular organizations.60

Although they cherry picked their approach, they still attempted to adopt policies that depoliticized the Palestinian sphere by neglecting of the Popular Committees, largely due to the committees’ political affiliations.61 At the macro level in both Lebanon and the Palestinian territory, the United States and the European Union continue their approach in addressing the policing of camps as counterterrorism operations within lawless structures, which perpetuates the undemocratic governance of the security sector and undermines state building and post conflict reconstruction (Sayigh 2009).

Our fieldwork shows the leading role of the Popular Committee in the governance of the Palestinian Territory and Lebanon, followed by notables and Iman mosques. We witnessed two processes of Popular Committee management: first is “stovepiping”, a vertical, rigid management style, resulting from personal or factional loyalty and clientelism with camp dwellers; and second, “Islamic governmentalism,” which is based on morality, solidarity and management from below in everyday life. This fieldwork also demonstrates the quasi failure of NGOs or popular organizations to play a significant role in this process, as seen in the fragmentation of NGOs, the absence of networking, and weak coordination between all those involved.62 This was clearly revealed not just in Lebanon, but in all of the five areas in which the research was conducted.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the interviews the research team has conducted, we can formulate the following recommendations:

**To All Host Countries**

- Facilitate Porte Alegre’s model of participatory governance in refugee camps.
- Involve PLO office, High council of Palestinian Factions, Palestinian factions, popular committees and grassroots organizations in decision-making concerning the camp's governance by holding regular meetings.
- Political Parties should propose draft new legislation which will end the discriminatory regulations against the -
- Parliament should adopt a law clearly defining the notion of naturalization (tawteen) that will restrict tawteen to the acquisition of Lebanese citizenship and/or the right to vote.
- All interviewees (different stakeholders in the camps) expressed that they do not see security reasons to keep check points in the entrance of some Palestinian camps (Nahr el Bared, Ain el Helwa, al-Buss, etc.).
- UNRWA, the Lebanese government and donor community should conceive projects which benefit both the camps and the -
- Municipalities should provide refugee camps in their vicinity services like electricity, water and other environmental -
- Municipalities and popular committees should work hand in hand to fundraise for joint projects.
- To Syrian Authorities
- Camp committees should be elected by camp dwellers.
- Allow broad representation of all factions and more consensual decision-making in the governance of the -
- To Donor Community, UNRWA and INGOs
- UNRWA, the Lebanese government and donor community should conceive projects which benefit both the camps and the area surrounding the camps.
- UNRWA and other aid organizations should have a dual strategy. First, they must implement projects to directly benefit the host community. Secondly, they can institute projects to provide information about the actual benefits that the host community receives as a result of hosting refugees. By doing this, projects will be successful, and the host communities will be less resentful to the presence of the refugees.63

59 Two promising signs have appeared in Lebanon. First, UNRWA has developed new job descriptions for Area Officers, requiring more qualifications and Bertowith them with more power on the ground, including inside the camps. Second, in March 2009, UNRWA established the first time an NGO Forum whose objective is to coordinate the activities of NGOs working in the refugee camps. Sub-sectoral forums were also created: one for the education sector and another for the health sector.
60 These organizations represent Palestinian group interests. I note particularly the importance of the General Union of Palestine Students and the General Union of Women Students. Other organizations are for professionals, such as the General Union of Palestinian Medical Doctors and the General Union of Palestinian Engineers. Recently, the Hamas movement has established many parallel organizations under the label of “league” (League of Palestinian Students, of Engineers, Medical Doctors, etc.). They are also active.
61 UNICEF is one of the donors that has supported the popular committees. Recently, UNRWA started helping the Nahr el Bared popular committee by providing a technical assistant.
62 Manal Kortam’s work (2007; 2010) in Lebanon confirms this.
63 See (Loescher and Milner 2008: 356)
To DORA, PLO and Palestinian Factions

- Waiting for the day when elections inside the camps are possible, it is important to establish a unified political command responsible for inter-factional coordination in each camp. For the Palestinian territory, popular committees should not only be PLF factions nor Coalition factions but for all the factions present on the ground.
- Reform the popular committee to not only be representative of political factions but also of women, technical experts, and youth.
- Reform the organization currently in charge of law and order in the camps (Armed Struggle Organization – El-Kifah El-Musallah) by ensuring broad representation of all factions and more consensual decision-making.
- Provide financial means for the good functioning of these committees.
- Improve the effectiveness of popular committees in the camps by immediately merging committees in camps that have more than one committee.
- Improve the effectiveness of popular committees in the camps by immediately merging committees in camps that have more than one committee.
- Provide technical training for the popular committee members as well as for security agents in the camps.

To Palestinian Civil Society and Camp Dwellers

- All organizations, Unions and NGOs should participate in the governance of the camp.
- Create a sectoral coordinating body between different civil society organizations.
- The new plan of governance requests full participation of the refugees in this process, which should be done through involvement in the forums.
- Ownership of this process means that refugees should pay for the services they receive from the municipalities. UNRWA could cover the cost for families who are under the Special Hardship Programme.

Ownership of this process means that refugees should pay for the services they receive from the municipalities. UNRWA -

- Providing technical training for the popular committee members as well as for security agents in the camps.
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