



# Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI)

American University of Beirut | PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh 1107 2020, Beirut, Lebanon | Tel: +961-1-374374, Ext: 4150 | Fax: +961-1-737627 | Email: ifi@aub.edu.lb

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## Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East:

### Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy

**Sari Hanafi**

*Associate Professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Program Research Director, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and  
International Affairs, American University of Beirut*

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**The Program on Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Middle East** is run jointly by IFI and the Center for Behavioral Research at AUB. It brings together academic and policy-related research on Palestinian refugee camps from around the world. The program aims to be an open and non-partisan coordinating mechanism for researchers, civil society, government officials, and international organizations, in order to generate accurate analysis and policy recommendations on Palestinian refugee camps throughout the Middle East.

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Tara Mahfoud *Program Coordinator*

#### **Sari Hanafi**

*Associate Professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Program Research Director, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and  
International Affairs, American University of Beirut*

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## Principal Investigator: Sari Hanafi

Sari Hanafi is currently Associate Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic). He is also Research Director for the program on Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, AUB. Hanafi was recently elected to the Executive Committee of the International Sociological Association. He holds a Ph. D. in Sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales-Paris. He is the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters on the political and economic sociology of the Palestinian diaspora and refugees; sociology of migration; transnationalism; politics of scientific research; civil society, elite formation and transitional justice.

## Reviewers

Riccardo Bocco, Professor, Development Studies, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva  
Jalal Al Hussein, Researcher, Institut Francais du Proche Orient (IFPO), Amman

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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“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).<sup>2</sup> Governmentalities thus grant us one more analytical tool for understanding power as something distributed rather than wielded from above.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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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 Hussein and Riccardo Bocco, Ismael Sheikh Hassan, Alistair Harris, Taylor Long for their comments to this paper. I am also grateful to Nizar Shaban, Nazek Saleh, Akram Ijli, Raja Deeb, Hamza Khatib 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.

**Table 1: Refugee Distribution by Region as per 2009**

| Area       | Official Camps | Registered Refugees in Camps | Registered Refugees / Effective Dwellers |
|------------|----------------|------------------------------|--|
| Jordan     | 10             | 338,000                      | 1,951,603                                |
| Lebanon    | 12             | 222,776                      | 275,000 <sup>4</sup>                     |
| Syria      | 9              | 225,000 <sup>5</sup>         | 461,897 <sup>6</sup>                     |
| West Bank  | 19             | 193,370                      | 762,820                                  |
| Gaza Strip | 8              | 495,006                      | 1,073,303                                |
| TOTAL      | 58             | 1,373,732                    | 4,671,811                                |

Source of UNRWA data: [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

## 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'<sup>7</sup> (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 Gals 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 Gals 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 input (Rodríguez and Velásquez 1994: 393; 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 by the host countries. Although the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees both provide a legal framework of powers and responsibilities for the host states, in reality the situation is much more diverse. Governance practices are informal and inconsistent from camp to camp. Instead of one sovereignty, camps are ruled by a multi-layered tapestry of multiple, partial sovereignties. This study uses low Ong's definition of sovereignty, as not merely state sovereignty but also the inclusion of supranational entities and local actors that control space.<sup>8</sup> Based on that, governance actors who will be considered in this paper are: host governments, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Popular Committees (Ijān sha'biyya), political factions, traditional elite (shaykh-s, clan leaders, wujahā' village 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 officers suppose that only two-thirds are actually residing in Lebanon, perhaps up to 275,000 refugees.

<sup>5</sup> UNRWA figure: 125,009, excluding the dwellers of Yarmūk camp, which is the biggest Palestinian camp in the region, as it is not considered an official camp by UNRWA. I then added the Yarmouk population.

<sup>6</sup> 465,919 according to GAPAR (March 2009) <http://www.gapar.net/ar/statistics.html>

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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 1999:66).

## 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 Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI), at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Between 2008 and 2009, I conducted semi-structured interviews and four focus groups in the camps of Baddawi, Nahr el Bared and Ain el Helwa (Lebanon). Nizar Shaban conducted additional fieldwork in Nahr el Bared camp, Nazek Saleh in Jabal al Hussein camp (Jordan), Akram Ijli in Al Shati camp (Gaza Strip), Raja Deeb in Khan Sheih camp (Syria), Hamza Khatib and myself in Yarmouk camp (Syria) and Mustafa Hilal Sheta in Jenin camp (West Bank). See table below.

| AREA   | OFFICIAL CAMPS |
|--|----------------|
| Camps: Baddawi, Nahr el Bared and Ain el Helwa | 44             |
| Jabal al Hussein camp                          | 23             |
| Al Shati camp                                  | 47             |
| Khan Sheikh camp                               | 32             |
| Yarmouk camp                                   | 18             |

For Lebanon, the methodology goes beyond indepth interviews. Ethnographic research as well as four focus groups were carried out.<sup>9</sup> In this paper, Lebanon will receive more attention than the other case studies due to the extra fieldwork that went into it.

A number of questions were raised throughout the fieldwork. These included how the space of the camp was politically organized, whether or not there was a specific role for each of the actors regarding the governance of the camps, and the types of coordination and cooperation that are needed. Other questions included how disputes - whether they be over land, property, or business - are settled, what type of justice is used when dealing with social affairs, and what methods of reconciliation are used with regards to disputes between those inside and those outside the camps.

## 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 Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR)<sup>10</sup> and the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) respectively, that assign a camp officer who plays a major role in organizing the urban and political life inside

<sup>9</sup> A series of four focus groups of roughly four hours each were held between March and May 2009 in the Palestinian refugee camps of Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi in northern Lebanon, and 'Ayn al-Hilweh in southern Lebanon (for camp demographics, see Ugland 2003: 219-230; UNRWA 2008). The focus groups consisted of 61 adult Palestinians of diverse age, gender, relative socio-economic status, religiosity, political affiliation, and professional and educational backgrounds. Altogether, the focus groups included 23 females (38 per cent) and 38 males (62 per cent). Twenty-one participants were from Nahr al-Bared (34 per cent), 22 were from Beddawi (36 per cent), and 18 were from 'Ayn al-Hilweh (30 per cent). One focus group was made up of 18 Palestinians between the ages of 18 and 24, all of whom resided in the Nahr al-Bared or Beddawi camps. In the convening of each session, the authors sought representation from as many significant political and religious organizations within the community as possible. In attendance were members or representatives of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Fatah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Islamic Jihad, the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War (Al-Sa'iq), the Association of Palestinian Religious Scholars, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Nahr al-Bared Reconstruction Committee (NBRC), the Palestinian Women's Union, the Palestinian Youth Organization, the Palestinian Scout Association, and the popular and security committees of each camp, among others. Participants were selected based on their potential to represent others in their community and for their ability to respond to a carefully prepared series of questions related to the topics of conflict prevention and governance.

<sup>10</sup> GAPAR is endowed with real power, and is in charge of multiple tasks that include: 1- preparing records to register the names and personal status of Palestine refugees and their employment; 2. providing rations, clothing and services where Palestine refugees live throughout the Syrian areas; 3- finding appropriate employment for Palestine refugees in different fields, including self-employment and government services; 4- receiving all of contributions and grants, whether in kind or in cash provided by any donors, and delivering them to the refugees; 5- organizing the warehouses' management; distribution centers account records and all relevant works of this administration; 6- contacting all international and national organizations, official authorities, charity associations and individuals working to relieve and assist Palestine refugees; 7- proposing all measures and procedures relevant to the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Syria. See <http://www.gapar.net/en/haikal.html>.

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<sup>11</sup>, notables, political factions, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)'s popular unions and organizations<sup>12</sup> (workers, women, engineers, etc), Community Based Organizations (CBOs)<sup>13</sup>, NGOs<sup>14</sup> and the Palestinian Scholars' League (imam 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: Camp Governance Actors**

|                                  | SYRIA                                       | JORDAN  | WEST BANK                | GAZA STRIP                        | LEBANON                                       |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>LEADING AUTHORITY</b>         | Local Committee (GAPAR)                     | Local Committee assigned by DPA                               | Popular Committee (DORA) | Semi-Legitimate Committee (Hamas) | Committee(s) (PLO and Coalition)              |
| <b>SECOND LEADING AUTHORITY</b>  | Committee of Development (GAPAR)            | NGOs close to Islamic Work Front                              | Factions; mainly Fatah   | Hamas                             | Factions; Fatah or Hamas                      |
| <b>PHANTOM AUTHORITY</b>         | UNRWA (weak actor)                          | UNRWA (weak actor)  | UNRWA                    | UNRWA                             | UNRWA   |
| <b>ISLAMIC GOVERNMENTALITIES</b> | Hamas and conservative popular Syrian Islam | Islamic Action Front and conservative popular Jordanian Islam | Hamas and Tahrir party   | Hamas                             | Hamas and conservative popular Lebanese Islam |

**Table 3: Historical Development of Camp Governance Actors**

| HISTORICAL AUTHORITIES | SYRIA                   | JORDAN                            | WEST BANK   | GAZA STRIP                           | LEBANON                        |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1950's and 60s         | Local Committee (GAPAR) | DPA, PLO and UNRWA                | Jordanian state, UNRWA and notables                       | UNRWA and Egyptian military officers | Lebanese Military Intelligence |
| 1970's                 | Local Committee (GAPAR) | DPA, UNRWA and partially notables | Israeli Defense Forces <sup>15</sup> , UNRWA and notables | UNRWA and Israeli Defense Forces     | PLO                            |

11 For a refined analysis of these structures in Lebanon see (Kortam 2007: Ch. 2-3).

12 These organizations are often close to Palestinian National Liberation Movement- Fatah (hereby Fatah).

13 CBOs are mainly youth, women centres as well as rehabilitation centres for people with disabilities. They were created by UNRWA in the 1980s but now are quasi-financially independent having proven effective in establishing links with local and international NGOs, attracting more than US\$3 million in grants and in-kind assistance during 2002-2003 (MTP Relief and Social Services Program). (Geneva Donors Conference 2004)

14 In many camps, the social role of NGOs is much more important than that of the political factions. However, some of these NGOs are connected to the political factions. Interviewees reported a climate of mistrust towards the NGOs. Meanwhile, Hamas is increasingly playing a social role in the camps.

15 The label Israeli Defense Forces is misleading, as the military force does not simply defend Israel, but is effectively an Occupation Army and is very active in working towards the acquisition of Palestinian land. I will use the label IDF in this paper as this is how it is formally recognized.

| HISTORICAL AUTHORITIES | SYRIA                   | JORDAN                            | WEST BANK   | GAZA STRIP  | LEBANON  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1980's                 | Local Committee (GAPAR) | DPA, UNRWA and partially notables | Israeli Defense Forces and UNRWA                                      | Israeli Defense Forces and notables                                   | Pro-Syrian coalition <sup>16</sup> (factions and popular committees) |
| 1990's                 | Local Committee (GAPAR) | DPA, UNRWA and partially notables | Israeli Defense Forces (before 1994), Popular Committees and notables | Israeli Defense Forces (before 1994), Popular Committees and notables | Factions and Popular Committees                                      |

\* (Lujnet al-Islah) assigned by Hamas Movement

## 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 Israel 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 militant role in and outside the camps. However, the camps did have certain 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).<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> In spite of its ambitious mission,<sup>19</sup> DORA is marginalized by power 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 Composed 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 (Al-Sa'iqa).

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 <http://www.plord.org/english/dora.htm>.

19 DORA seeks to have the following tasks: 1- interaction with refugee communities in and 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,<sup>20</sup> as well as in fields not under UNRWA's jurisdiction; such as establishing projects and mobilizing support for services.

DORA's projects implemented in co-operation with the Palestinian Ministry of Public Works are grouped under the heading, "Emergency Aid- A Project for Every Camp", and implemented in cooperation with the Palestinian Water Authority, the Ministry of Local Government, the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), the World Bank, as well as other local, Arab, and international institutions.

Since its creation, DORA sought to establish a governance mechanism for the camps and provide some services with the help of UNRWA. Historically, and since 1991, the Union of Youth Activity Centers had set up youth centers in each camp. However, the leading governing institutions in the camps of the West Bank and Gaza have been the Popular Committees, which came about through the assistance of DORA.<sup>21</sup>

The difference in the roles played by the Youth Activity Centers (YAC) and the (technical) camp committees needs to be highlighted. The YAC were once created by UNRWA, alongside womens' centers and community rehabilitation centers, as social relief centers. However, they came to play a very clear political role during the early years of the peace process, especially after Oslo (1993) when they challenged the PLO's ability to defend their rights. They adopted the role of a pressure group, to the point where they demanded in 1996 the presence of a group specifically representing the refugees at the negotiating table alongside the PLO to ensure the protection of the refugee rights. To date, the YAC still plays an advocacy and social role. The committees play a more technical role in the general maintenance of the camp facilities and cooperate with UNRWA in these matters.

Whereas originally committees were assemblies of the traditional elite and notables (shaykh-s, wujahâ and mukhtar-s from the pre-1948 villages), they gradually developed into a political administrative structure composed of representatives from various PLO factions.

Popular Committees can still be found in every Palestinian camp. They are the equivalent of municipal administrations and are, among other things, responsible for the water and electricity supply, garbage collection, for the settling of conflicts between camp residents, and for dealing with external authorities. Composed of about 13 members, popular committee members usually have social and cultural capital. Many of them have militant (patriotic) history, have been jailed, and some have a university degree, although this is not as important as armed history (Hilal, 2007). Economic capital does not play a role in deciding popular committee members. It is worth stressing here that there are no economic enterprises to speak of within the camp, and that employed camp dwellers are employed within the labor market outside the camp or within the public sector (PNA and UNRWA). As one interviewee said, members of the economic elite do not remain inside the camps (although some continue relationships with the camps when they leave), highlighting the fact that there are no economic elites actually located within the camp (Hilal 2007).

Popular Committees are headed by a general secretary whose political alliance rotates between the current political factions; often Fatah, Hamas and Popular Front. However, after the 2003 crisis in Gaza, this rotation in some camps no longer includes Hamas due to the fact that some leaders inside of DORA insisted that popular committees should be composed only of PLO factions.<sup>22</sup>

There is also an 'executive bureau' of Popular Committees, similar to a federation that represents all the committees inside the West Bank. However, the power of this bureau is not recognized by all the camps. Instead, it tends to only represent the Popular Committee in the center of the West Bank. Before the second intifada, Popular Committee representatives used to meet regularly, while there is no real coordination currently. However, this bureau with the help of DORA, has organized some workshops to address the problems within the camps.<sup>23</sup>

20 Theoretically, 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. 302 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 their 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.

21 In addition to that, there are other committees in some camps like the Committee of Defense of the Refugee Rights in Balata which is headed by Hussam Khader.

22 Some interviewees denounced this and others justified it as a retaliation to what Hamas did in the camp, ie. dissolving the popular committee and establishing a reform committee in each camp. It was also pointed out that Hamas had imprisoned Fatah leaders and the head of DORA, Dr. Zakaria al-Agha.

23 One workshop examined the education system and discussed how to create a system to support weak students, and another workshop was created to focus on camp infrastructure and environmental problems.

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 cooption by some security groups and donors.<sup>24</sup> 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 Fara'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 Zubeidi, head of the al-Aqsa brigade, took on the role of mediator for issues concerning those within and those outside the camp. (for more details see Sheta, 2009)

**Table 4: Modes of Representation of the Popular Committees**

| CAMP         | MODES OF REPRESENTATION OF POPULAR COMMITTEES         |
|--------------|---|
| Qalandia     | Political factions, youth, women and handicap centers |
| Al Am'ari    | Political factions and notables                       |
| Jalazon      | Political factions                                    |
| Qokbet Jaber | Election  |
| Jenin        | Only Fatah  |

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.<sup>25</sup>

### Gaza Strip

In 1997, the Minister of Local Governance in the Gaza Strip established 'Neighborhood committees (Iijan al 'ahya),' 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- Iujna 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 (Iijan al-Islah). 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 altruism". 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

24 Recently, the popular committee came under attack from different groups. The head of the Popular committee (Fatah), Ali Hindi, accompanied some young people from Jenin camp to Tel Aviv to visit the museum of the Holocaust as part of the USAID and Seeds of Peace projects in the area. This visit was criticized by some of our interviewees. DORA considered this visit as a Fatah visit and therefore does not involve the popular committee.

25 It is around 20 NIS (\$5) for two years.

system of governance within the camps; regardless of names or political affiliations, these committees have been designed to facilitate camp needs through communication with surrounding municipalities and UNRWA. As a result, interviewees have expressed their relative satisfaction with them.

## Syria

Camps in Syria have a specific mechanism of local governance in comparison to the municipalities (see Deeb, 2009). However the Yarmouk camp, which is the largest camp in Syria,<sup>26</sup> has a particular structure that deserves to be addressed.

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-kyada al-gotriyya al-falastiniyya). Historically, the head of the municipality is accountable only to the Director General of GAPAR, but because of corruption charges within the baladiyya, the governorate (muhafazah) 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.

It is worth mentioning that the label 'baladiyya' exists only in Yarmouk camp, while other refugee camps in Syria only have a GAPAR office, which co-ordinates its work with UNRWA and surrounding municipalities. Yarmouk is not an official "UNRWA camp" and this explains why it is structured in such a way. As seen in other camps, GAPAR mandated a Committee of Social Development in Yarmouk in 2005, but it is barely active. Effectively, the Yarmouk baladiyya replaces the function of GAPAR, although in other camps in Syria, this committee has a much more crucial role.

Local committee members are selected from camp dwellers, either Ba'athists or associated with the party, and they tend to hold a university degree. As an example, the local committee currently in place is composed of five engineers, a lawyer, and a teacher. This new elite, named 'neck-tie elite' by Yasmine Bouagga (2008), differs greatly from the traditional elite, the wajahat (notables) and the mukhtars. From their seven members, five are Ba'athists and two are independents chosen by the Ba'ath party.

Except for some anomalies, the camp is constructed according to a master plan. As such, it is also well connected to the Syrian infrastructure, which include sewage, water, electricity, and the telecommunication systems. The municipality has carried out many infrastructure projects including roadway and sidewalk renovations, street lighting and maintenance of green space. Currently, the construction of a new cemetery is being overseen by an ad hoc baladiyya committee in order to find funding to buy the land. Palestinian factions like Fatah and Hamas are providing the bulk of the funds, while the remainder is being sought from the Palestinian business community.

Contrary to other camps, the presence of the Syrian state is very clear in Yarmouk, detected not only through symbols (such as posters, presidential portraits of Asad, flags, etc.) but also through the state's intervention in many aspects of life in the camps. In 1996, the Ministry of Culture opened an Arab Cultural Center in the camp, similar to centers in residential neighborhoods. Similarly, there are nine secondary schools which are dependent on the Syrian Ministry of Education. (Fadhel, 2008)

Interviewees expressed satisfaction with the functioning of the Yarmouk municipality, although they voiced their preference of an elected local committee rather than an appointed one, but they were also realistic in their expectations. One young medical doctor said: "In any case, Syrian local elections are also very controlled by the Baath Party. Independents are filtered before being accepted as candidates".

Some accused local committee members of being corrupt or just "looking out for themselves," arguing that some construction permits were granted to particular individuals, despite municipality regulations. In fact, two former heads of the local committee have ended up in prison on charges of corruption.

26 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-officially recognized as such by authorities, such as: Yarmouk (the largest refugee community in Syria), Lattakieh and Ain al-Tall (Aleppo region). In these areas UNRWA runs facilities but has no extra mandate (housing, physical infrastructure, garbage collecting). See UNRWA website. There are other refugee areas that are not recognized as specific areas at all.

## Jordan

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.

Nazek Saleh's fieldwork found that governance in Al Hussein (Saleh 2009), as well as other camps in Jordan, is under heavy control and surveillance of the Jordanian authorities and this can be explained by the problematic history between the refugee camps and these authorities. It is worth noting that contrary to other camps in the region, one cannot find any iconography showing that it is a refugee camp. Being in the heart of Amman could serve as an explanation, as the situation is quite different with the Bakka camp, which is located on the periphery of Amman. In a second status of importance, notables (wajahaa) are also playing a role in the governance but in line and under the regards of the Jordanian authorities.

Government entities, led by the DPA, mainly ensure service and security. UNRWA, international organizations, and local NGOs provide additional services. As noted earlier, there is always the presence of an UNRWA camp officer, where he serves as a "mayor" for all concerns regarding UNRWA in the camps: schools, health facilities etc. What has been noted, however, is that UNRWA's influence has diminished since the 1970s as a result of the limited role it plays regarding infrastructural maintenance. It is only recently that these organizations, in addition to the DPA, have engaged in infrastructure projects aimed at improving the living conditions in the camps.<sup>27</sup>

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 2009). 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.

## Lebanon

The creation of Popular Committees in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon was based on the Cairo Agreement of 1969.<sup>28</sup> Before this date, 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 Peteet (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 camp 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 hinder them from fulfilling their municipal functions. Through 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

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

28 Art. 2 of section 1 of the Agreement called for a reorganization of "the Palestinian presence" in Lebanon through "the foundation of local administrative committees in the refugee camps, composed of Palestinians, in order to defend the interests of the Palestinians residing in those camps, in collaboration with the local authorities and within the framework of Lebanese sovereignty".

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 50,000 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-Muhamara). 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 the different donors and/or cooperation offices have, or the fact that they can provide only small grants which do not allow them to undertake significant infrastructure projects, etc.

## 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” or, at times, “survivors” in order to sound more positive. By classifying people as victims, the basis of 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, humanitarian 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.<sup>29</sup> However, while the agency of off-camp dwellers allowed them to transgress these different layers of powers, the situation of camp dwellers is much more complex and deserves more consideration.

When reconsidering the emergence of the urban identity of the camp, it becomes clear that the identity and political status of camp dwellers are related to the very nature of the camp and to its segregation and isolation as a distinct and enclosed spatial unit. Refugees who are not camp dwellers tend quickly to establish good relationships with their host society and to

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 Liisa Malkki has noted, “refugee studies” has uncritically imported its main theoretical ideas, often on an ad hoc basis, from other scholarly domains, especially development studies (Malkki, “Speechless Emissaries,” p. 599). The discipline has often been 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 Barbara Harrell-Bond (2005), Michel Agier (2004), and Fabienne Le Houérou (2004), among others, writing about the practices of the UNHCR concerning their management of the refugee flow.

escape the status of “victims.” In the area where the camp is a ‘closed’ space, mainly in Lebanon (Hanafi, 2008), the camp forms the conditions that facilitate the use of bio-politics by the host countries and to a lesser extent by UNRWA, because refugees are gathered in a centralized and controlled place where they can be under constant surveillance. This is also applicable in the Palestinian territory, but not to the same extent. This “care, cure, and control” system has transformed refugee camps into disciplinary spaces. (see Zureik, 2003; Peteet, 2005) In the pretext of facilitating the provision of services, the camp is conceived as the only workable possible form of space, as outside the camps, the distribution of food and other services to the refugees would become almost impossible. In the Palestinian context, however, the problem does not lie only with the spatial nature of the camp, but also with the mandate of UNRWA, the main provider of services in the camp.

UNRWA was created in December 1949 by virtue of resolution 302 of the UN GA (it started its operations in May 1950) as a refugee organization specifically dedicated to the Palestinian refugees. Its UN mandate included catering for the basic needs of refugees while promoting integration in the host country, but excluded *de jure* protection of refugees or their return to their homes.<sup>30</sup> Despite its very strict mandate, in the past fifteen years, there have been cases in which the organization has acted beyond the letter of the mandate. For example, when it provided “passive protection” for Palestinian refugees during the first intifada (1987-1994).<sup>31</sup> Since a multi-stakeholder meeting in Geneva in 2004, the organization has started linking service provision to advocacy, and recently, a rights-based approach to its humanitarian mandate has been emerging.<sup>32</sup> One can notice relatively strong language used in UNRWA publications to attract the attention of the international community to the continuous plight of Palestinian refugees.<sup>33</sup> However, taking into account housing, children’s and women’s rights, and other rights does not mean that the right of return has become part of UNRWA’s advocacy strategy. In spite of the importance of UNRWA publications for mobilizing the international community, the very concept of refugees as an artifact of victimization discourse obstructs the possibility of resistance that seeks to advance their return and statehood. The United States and some of UNRWA’s European donors consider that if UNRWA goes in the direction of looking for a durable solution such as settlement and return, it will undergo dangerous politicization<sup>34</sup>, although UNHCR’s case has shown that being involved in the search for durable solutions does not conflict with an essentially humanitarian mandate (Takkenberg, 2006). As the new UNRWA discourse began to appear, Karen Koning AbuZayd, then Commissioner-General, subtly revealed the tension between what is political and what is humanitarian in her statement at the Host and Donors Meeting held in Amman on December 11, 2006:

I refer to the issues surrounding the tension that frequently appears between the preoccupations of States on the one hand, and humanitarian questions on the other. This tension is manifested in a variety of ways. One of its most striking manifestations is the contrast between the readiness of states to fund emergency responses, compared to their failure to address the questions of international law and politics that cause these emergencies. That tension is clear in the way in which the urgency to resolve underlying questions of justice and peace for Palestinians is somehow divorced from the challenge of providing for their human needs.

We believe that these tensions and contradictions can— and should—be avoided, particularly in the Palestinian arena where political, security, humanitarian, development and refugee issues are often virtually indistinguishable. The issues are too tightly interwoven to allow the luxury of a fragmented approach. An approach in which security and political questions are deemed to supersede or override humanitarian and protection issues is unrealistic and simply not sustainable.

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 advocacy but also physical protection in the field (1988’s creation of the Refugee Affairs Officer program and 1991’s Human Rights Observation program). These programs were discontinued in 1994. Besides, UNRWA contributed materially to the installation of the PNA in the early days of the autonomy (see UNRWA annual reports 94-96) and developed the camps’ infrastructure in line with the UNGA resolution 48/40 of December 93. Furthermore, through the Peace Implementation Program which was launched in 1993 UNRWA attempted to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians under occupation on one hand, and to make the results 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’ 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 this positive change in the discourse of the UNRWA, see, for example, the presentations of Lex Takkenberg and Anders Fange at the International Conference organized by Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, The Palestinian Refugees: Conditions and Recent Developments, on November 25 and 26, 2006. See also <<www.unrwa.org.>>

34 In this line see very ill criticisms of James Lindsay (2009)

... These questions recall an important aspect of UNRWA's evolving role. I am referring to our role as a global advocate for the care and protection of Palestine refugees. This role is implicit in our mandate and in our identity as an Agency that ultimately derives its authority from the General Assembly and the Charter of the United Nations.

... We do not assume this role lightly. We are fully aware that the legitimacy of our advocacy role rests on remaining within the boundaries of our humanitarian mandate. We are cognizant of the fact that the boundaries that separate the humanitarian from the political are indistinct at best, but nevertheless real. We have no illusions about how high the costs would be if we were to stray too far, and we have no desire whatsoever to jeopardize the international credibility we have worked so hard to create and maintain. That would be a price we are not prepared to pay.<sup>35</sup>

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 being engaged in public advocacy for the protection of the Palestinian people. In spite of all these benign efforts, they have not been sufficient to get the majority of the Palestinian refugees beyond the threshold of poverty and isolation and to allow their social and economic integration into the Lebanese and the Palestinian societies in the Palestinian territory. While this cannot be attributed to UNRWA alone, I do believe that due to its mandate, UNRWA has been unable to seize the opportunity and promote some changes in the situation of the Palestinian refugees. The recent involvement of UNRWA in the reconstruction of the Jenin refugee camp after its partial destruction by the IDF in 2001 is revealing in this sense. Instead of alleviating the crowdedness of the camps by advocating for the return of some refugees to their place of origin (a third of Jenin's refugees come from the village of Zaraan, located some 17 kilometers west of the city), UNRWA pursued only two options: rebuilding the camp while respecting its boundaries and asking the Jenin municipality to allocate a piece of land to allow its expansion. Also only recently did UNRWA become vocal on criticizing some Arab host countries' policies toward the Palestinian refugees.<sup>36</sup> Because UNRWA's mandate has never included the repatriation or resettlement of refugees, the agency's 'care and maintenance' activities have been widely interpreted by many interviewees as a failed attempt to appease a population with humanitarian action in lieu of durable political solutions (See also Parry, 2002: 6; cited by Abu Zahra, 2005). In addition to the temporary UNRWA mandate precluding long term planning, and having always been financially vulnerable, UNRWA operates with different pressures on the Agency and is dependent on host country cooperation.

In all the geographical fields, and in spite of the relative dissatisfaction with UNRWA's services (Al Hussein and Bocco 2010; see also the Palestinian Association for Human Rights - Shahed's public opinion polls), UNRWA's role is crucial to the social and economic support and relief activities, through its programs running in the camp, and through its bodies such as: the Camp Service Office and the Women Program Centers (WPC). The Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme has offered a chance to readdress the relationship between UNRWA and camp communities, a relationship that has been characterized by frustration, mistrust, miscommunication and mutual misunderstandings.

Michel Foucault reminds us that our concern is not the power that stems from the exercise of sovereignty but rather the effects of power that a governmental technology generates. While UNRWA was not intended to, nor does it pretend to, govern the camps, it has gained the status of a sovereign by many camp dwellers. This is perhaps best exemplified by the ambiguous role of UNRWA's camp services officers, a camp-based staff member who historically assumes a powerful position vis-à-vis the camp community. Power which, for example, included in the past the ability to cut ration rolls for an individual who did not obey UNRWA regulations,<sup>37</sup> has now been decreased.

Historically, UNRWA would appoint these officers from among the camp community, after consultation and verbal approval from the local tribal and village leaders. This policy is doubly accommodating. By appointing a representative of the camp's new elite to become camp officers, UNRWA sought legitimization and acceptance. From the early 1990s, UNRWA increasingly appointed members of new camp elites, such as well-educated camp residents (engineers, teachers, pharmacists and scientists) who were sometimes known for their political activism and good relations with the community.<sup>38</sup> In interviews, camp dwellers often refer to this officer as Camp Director, yet in reality his official function is merely to act as a facilitator of access to UNRWA services. Sometimes their role extends a little further: if there is a problem with the camp committees or other stakeholders, he represents UNRWA and settles the problem or refers to his hierarchy. Interviews clearly showed the gap between his perceived role and his actual function. This confusion stems from the historical role played by the UNRWA Camp Services Officers (CSO) in not only

35 See [http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/statements/2006/hdm\\_Dec06.html](http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/statements/2006/hdm_Dec06.html) (last accessed September 5, 2008).

36 See, for instance, Karen AbuZayd's lecture at IFI-AUB in February 2008 at <http://dr.aub.edu.lb/mod/data/view.php?id=3&rid=215&filter=1>.

37 According to some interviewees in Baddawi camp. Interviews were conducted in early 2005.

38 However, fearing the Israeli reaction in the OPT, UNRWA avoided appointing people with express political affiliations.

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 popular committees responsible for the disorder 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 interviewees indeed used words like "chaos", "security", "unruliness", "lawlessness" (felatan amni), and "clanism" (al-asha'riya) 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.<sup>39</sup> There are three modalities where notables (wajahaa, sheikhs and mukhtars) wield power. In the Palestinian territory, notables are very important for conflict resolution and are consulted by UNRWA and other authorities governing the camp. 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 notables in the camps. 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 (mukhtars). 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 (Hilal, 2007). UNRWA has historically relied on and recycled the old notability, giving them a leading 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 Mukhtars (wujahā'), as well as to local security leaders in any quarrels or problems before going to the police. While such conflict resolution methods have been partially successful in the past, refugee camps no longer enjoy harmonious communitarian structures as they had 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 'mukhtar'; an authoritative figure who is familiar with the people and holds a predominantly bureaucratic role, but with no significant power. However, the population resisted it. Nowadays, interviewees report the return of the extended family structure. In May 2009, a man (originally from Ja'ouneh) 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 for a month in order to protect the people living in the murderer's neighborhood of Safouriyya 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. Mukhtars and religious sheikhs have played a leading role in relieving this tension.

39 This observation can be found not only in the Palestinian refugee camps but also in other refugee camps. Abigail Tonge's (2009) literature review of these camps showed a similar case in Benaco camp in Tanzania. Rwandan Hutu refugees flooded into Benaco very quickly in 1994, fleeing the advance of the RPF. Although UNHCR and WFP were ready for the refugees with food and supplies, they found that the easiest way to administer aid and serve the huge influx of refugees was to allow the existing leaders to organize the camp, distribute supplies, and generally perform many factors of governance. Although this was a successful policy, it presented a moral dilemma for UNHCR. The notables, in this case, were the political leaders of the Rwandese community, which, in many cases, were those leaders responsible for the genocide, and thus not people that UNHCR wanted to be working with or supporting. (Waters 1997; cited in Tonge 2009)

## 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)<sup>40</sup>

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 condoned 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 legitimacy (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 new "technologies of subjectivity," that is, with new ways of understanding their own selves, not just as Muslims, but as refugees. As Nikolas Rose reminds us:

Technologies of subjectivity thus exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship with what one might term 'techniques of the self' the ways in which we are enabled, by means of the languages, criteria, and techniques offered to us, to act upon our bodies, souls, thoughts, and conduct in order to achieve happiness, wisdom, health, and fulfillment (Rose 1999:11).

<sup>40</sup> This section has been mainly written with Taylor Long. See (Hanafi and Long 2010)

I contend that there are new governmentalities in the camps, which have arisen in the absence of formal authority and which ensure the day-to-day functioning of the camps. This is clear in the case of Lebanon and Gaza. However, in Jordan and Syria, the relative poverty and the demising of the power of the PLO factions also encourage these new governmentalities. In these, we can see how power has been transformed into specific practices and redistributed to new authorities, such as NGO leaders, the imams of mosques, elders in a neighborhood (wujaha'), and most importantly, to individuals.

This phenomenon should also be seen in parallel with the revival of conservative Islam in the region. In Damascus, Gaza, Amman, Tripoli, Sidon and to a lesser extent in the West Bank cities, groups such as Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, the Muslim Brotherhood, and several locally established salafist groups have been competing with municipal authorities, and sometimes, with secular camp leaders, for bases of social support. One youth from Beddawi commented on this: "There are schools in Tripoli, and there are many students from the camp who study at these schools, such as Al-Hidaya al-Islamiyya of Sheikh Abdullah al-Shahhal and Al-Sahab Islamic Foundation, the schools of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Islamic University, which has now shifted to Hamas control."

These new manifestations of a conservative and urban Islam in Lebanon, in such close proximity to the camps, have made a distinct impression on many Palestinians. By welcoming camp residents into their midst socially, by accepting Palestinians in their religious colleges, and by popularizing conservative Saudi satellite media such as Iqra, Al-Majd, and Al-Nass in their geographical locales, these actors have provided many Palestinians with new frames of reference to discuss their situations. As a result, more and more Palestinians have begun to turn to Islamic authorities rather than the PLO or other political authorities for answers to their questions and for assistance. For example, as one focus group participant observed: "Regarding matters of marriage, divorce, and problems between neighbors, even problems on a political level – all these have witnessed involvement by the imams of mosques, who have played a role in calming things down."

Unable to turn to municipal or larger Palestinian authorities to solve their problems, camp residents have been compelled to seek mediation in highly individualized ways such as these. Camp residents have begun to rely more on shared notions of morality and ethics – particularly, Islamic ones (ikhlaq) – to promote norms for acceptable behavior. As a result, sheikhs, imams, and other "morally sound" persons, like the wujaha', have been granted much of the authority that, twenty years prior, belonged to secular political organizations like the PLO. As Dean reminds us: "Notions of morality and ethics generally rest on an idea of self-government. They presume some conception of an autonomous person capable of monitoring and regulating various aspects of their own conduct" (1999:12).

In this sense, specific interpretations of Islam – not just shari'a but also ikhlaq – appear to have begun to function as "mentalities 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).

It is, as Rose reminds us, "through self-reformation, 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 soul." 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 morals" 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, cursing, homosexuality, child abuse, drug use, pornography, prostitution, and sexual harassment.

It was the revitalization of Islamic values, however, rather than the legitimization of a specific political authority, which was proposed most often as the solution to these problems. As one woman from Baddawi summarized: "For example, while there are young men getting drunk during Ramadan, you have other young men praying all night long. 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 unveiled – 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 praying at 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 low."

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 group were divided in their opinions. Some favored a secular authority like the PLO of decades past, while others voiced a preference for a religio-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 being 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 Lebanese and Palestinian, thus begetting conflict.

## II. URBANITY OF THE CAMPS AND RELATION TO THE MUNICIPALITY

While the Palestinian refugee camps are well connected socially, economically, and urbanely 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, the unplanned transformation of the built environment – over six decades – has given rise to complex and ambiguous "urbanised camps" (like Agier's "Camp Cities", 2008) that are both congested and slum-like, yet have commercial centres, markets and neighbourhoods.

### The Palestinian Territory

Contrary to the ideologically driven claims of two Israeli anthropologists, Emanuel Marx and Yoram Ben-Porath, who perceived the Palestinian refugee camps as a normal urban space undergoing a process of assimilation into the syntax of the city, (Marx 1971) the camp is an entity that carries with it the weight of the history of the Palestinian exodus and resistance, and it is very difficult to pretend that it is just another normal space.

The PNA's position toward this issue is very complex. While the PNA has developed some projects for the camps, the camps are still conceived as enclaves under the responsibility of the international community and in particular, of UNRWA. In fact, the PNA reinforced the division of space into refugee and non-refugee areas by excluding the camps from urban or infrastructural projects. For instance, the recent committee that supervises the work on the master plan issued in 2001 for three municipalities (Bireh, Ramallah, and Bitonia) ended up without any representative from the three refugee camps located in the area. Thus, the

question is not how many projects the PNA has executed in these camps, but the fact that these camps are considered even by the PNA as spaces of exception without agency. The representatives on such committees are elected by the residents who live in the area for which the master plan is designed, and hence this particular plan will reflect the power relations between the three towns without giving a voice to the refugees. This lack of representation is consistent with the fact that in general, camp dwellers in the West Bank do not vote and are not represented in the Palestinian political bodies.

Society in the Palestinian Territories is highly fragmented. Its separation reflects its naturally fragmented geography, the traditional division between villages and city dwellers, the dissection of Palestine into the West Bank and Gaza as a result of 1948 War, in addition to further forced fragmentations introduced by the occupation regime. But it is also a result of the reproduction of differences between refugees and local residents and between those who returned to the territories after the Oslo Accords and all the rest. Culturally and socially, refugees in the territories are relatively well integrated into society when they live off camp, but much less so when they live inside the camps. When one looks at lifestyles and class membership, the evidence is clear. For instance, 40 percent of the refugees living off-camp have at least one family member married to a non-refugee, as opposed to 20 percent of camp dwellers.<sup>41</sup> Sandi Hilal, in her work on the Dehisha camp, has demonstrated the complexity involved in resolving problems of land ownership between this camp's two neighboring villages, Doha and Artas. Five people have already been killed in fighting associated with this conflict.<sup>42</sup>

This ambivalence and de-legitimization has an effect on the social identity and self-identification of the refugee camp dwellers. Local camp identity becomes a decisive factor in producing both local and national identity. Thus, although the Shaml survey found that a vast majority of camp dwellers were proud of their camp identity, some, notably those in the Shufat camp, hid from their colleagues the fact that they lived in the camp. Any minor social dispute between city people and camp dwellers has a tendency to escalate quickly, as demonstrated in the clashes between people in Kalandia camp and Ramallah during 2001 and 2002. Many years of double marginalization from the Israeli military authority, on the one hand, and from the PNA and local Palestinian authorities on the other, have made these areas resemble the many slums around the world—the suburbs of Paris, for instance. Thus, one cannot understand the problems of refugee camps unless one studies them as urban sites.

Finally, the camp dwellers deeply sense their marginality and wish to transform their camps into something better. According to the 2003 survey by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR),<sup>43</sup> half of the refugees surveyed would not mind being settled outside their camps and would accept radical improvements to their camp. Specifically, 87 percent wanted to vote in municipal elections (if the camp is based inside the city—and three-quarters wanted to do so if it is based outside), and about half favored enlarging the camp within the city limits.

Moving the debate of urbanisation from the "outside" to the "inside", Philipp Misselwitz and Sari Hanafi (2010) examined the lessons learnt from a participatory intervention project seeking to redefine the built environment in the West Bank refugee camp of Fawwar. The participatory camp-improvement process was both difficult and conflictual but helped redefine the residents' relationship with UNRWA and externally imposed aid programmes in favour of a more participatory decision-making process.

It is only very recently that some camps have been connected to the city and their leaders are now allowed to participate in its governance. This is the case of Jenin camp where both the Deputy Governor of Janin District, Abdel Razak Abu Haija, and the Mayor, Ali Shati are actually from the camp. What is new in this process is that for the first time, refugees in the West Bank, like detainees and ex-prisoners in Israeli jails, have sought to organize themselves as a separate group, lobbying for their own cause.

### Lebanon

Camps vary in their connection to the urban tissue of the city. Although marginalized and segregated, generally they are still interconnected with the urban environment through the different forms of spatial and economic mobility (see Dorai 2006; 2010 for the Buss and Mar Elias camps).

While the camps in Jordan, Syria and Gaza Strip are economically and socially integrated (while preserving their specificity), this is not the case for the camps in Lebanon and in the West Bank. There, the refugee camp has emerged as a heterotopic place in the Foucauldian sense of this term (Foucault 1986); an area economically connected but socially disconnected from the urban tissues in the neighboring areas. But this heterotopic place is not characterized merely by its isolation from its surroundings, but rather by different spatial sets of urban rules projected into the same spatial unit (for instance, being out of

41 Survey conducted between January 16 and February 5, 2003, targeting 1,498 Palestinian in the Palestinian territory.

42 Interview with Sandi Hilal, January 2006.

43 PSR'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>.

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 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, subsisting "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.<sup>44</sup>

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 propagating violence outside the confines of the refugee camps.

<sup>44</sup> For more details, for instance, the police station in Yarmouk 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 often 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**

| Camp Locations | Police Stations                             | Location of Police Stations        | Police Stations Serve                              |
|----------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Syria          | Exist                                       | Always at the entrance of the camp | Camp and surrounding area                          |
| Gaza Strip     | Exist                                       | Often at the entrance of the camp  | Camp and surrounding area                          |
| Jordan         | Exist                                       | Always at the entrance of the camp | Sometimes camp area and sometimes surrounding area |
| West Bank      | Do not exist                                | N/A                                | N/A  |
| Lebanon        | Exist only in the Nahr el Bared Master Plan | Planned to be inside the camp      | Planned to serve only the camp area                |

**Table 6: Police Stations in the Camps in Jordan**

| Camp Locations        | Police Stations | Location of Police Stations   | Police Stations Serve                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Al Hussein            | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp only                                   |
| Wehdat                | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp, Al Ashrafiey, Wehdat and Um Al Heeran |
| Baqa                  | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp (mobile police bus); main police station is located in Ain el Basha | The mobile police bus serves the camp only  |
| Azme Al Mufti (Husun) | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp only                                   |
| Irbid                 | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp and the town of Al Husun               |
| Suf                   | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp only                                   |
| Gaza / Jerash         | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp only                                   |
| Zarka                 | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp and surrounding area                   |
| Hiteen / Shniler      | Exist           | At the entrance of the camp   | Camp only                                   |
| Al Talbieh            | Does not exist  | N/A   | Serves the camp and the village of Giza     |

### 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 Ijla (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 (Iijan al-ahyaa) have played a major role in this particular area. Furthermore, dating back to 1995,

the PNA formed municipal councils for the camps outside of the city, such as in Braij, Maghazi and Nuseirat. These councils were elected in the last municipal election. Camp refugees in Gaza are entitled to participate in municipal elections but not in the West Bank. This allows the PNA to maintain control over municipal regulations and facilities.

The municipalities surrounding the camps have worked hand in hand with UNRWA in improving the camp infrastructure. Together, they have built streets, contributed to the development of the certain extensions, which have subsequently spread out to adjacent areas outside of the camps, and thus fall within the mandate of the respective municipalities. However there are some political commissars who raise from time to time the issue of al-Tawteen (resettlement), criticizing the role of the municipality, while preferring to keep the camp in a state of exception. However, these views have become a minority in the camp.

The following sections are drawn from Akram Ijla (2008)'s report contextualizing the camp development and some elements of its governance system.

## Camp Development

The camps of Gaza were established outside of, and relatively far from their neighboring cities. The camps were inaugurated as human settlements in 1952 whereby the Egyptian administration was in charge of the security of the camps, and UNRWA was in charge of all forms of service delivery (health, environment, education, aid, and food and nutrition centers). The camps were initially established as temporary human settlements, and did not follow the urban planning systems of their neighboring cities. In 1984, the camps witnessed an upsurge of economic growth which was associated with the economic boom of Israel (as camp construction workers were allowed to work in Israel), and the prosperity of the camps was indicated by the highest per capita income in the area. This coincided with an Israeli policy towards the camps which purposefully created chaos and ignored all aspects of order in the camp, leaving it without a governing structure.

The increase in income alleviated the living conditions of the refugees, and was associated with an increased awareness and breaking of the barrier of fear with the authorities. This led the inhabitants of the camps to demolish their homes and build concrete multi-story ones (normally three stories high) thus expanding at the expense of public land. This was done through the use of empty spaces between the houses, as well as main and side streets, resulting in a state of arbitrary construction and ad hoc acquisition of public land. The lack of organization of public spaces and construction patterns was accompanied by a state of legal disorder and absence of authority and law enforcement. However, the camps were able to maintain social order through the presence of a parallel or shadow authority comprised of community notables, camp leaders, and reform committees. The economic boom, coupled with the lack of respect for the law of an official ruling power, led to the prevalence of wild urbanization in the camp, and the resort to customary law. One of our interviewees reported:

"... This boom led to a dramatic change in the spatial configuration of the camp while maintaining a somewhat schematic and overpopulated structure... The Israeli Army would issue demolition notices, but would overlook their implementation, which led people to ignore these non-enforceable notices and resume with the building and expansion... the period between 1980 and the onset of the first Intifada in 1989 was the golden age of demolishing homes and reconstructing new ones..."

It is worth mentioning that the camp was subject to the law of the Egyptian rule which imposed severe restrictions designed to prevent any development within the camp. This was done under the pretext that the Egyptian administration did not want the camp to become a permanent residential neighborhood. One of the interviewees reported:

"Under the Egyptian rule, the camp was bound by the scheme developed by UNRWA; the Egyptian government was keen on upholding the suggested urban planning structure. It used force and enforced severe punishment on anyone who violated the sanctity of the streets or the space allocated for the foreseen expansion of the camp. The Municipality of Gaza under the administration of Mayor Moneer El Rayes refused to provide the camp with water, sewage systems, or electric power... he (Mayor Rayes) also refused to install potable water pipelines in the area besides the camp... the camp was entirely dependent on water pumps for provision of potable water where each block had its own pump... electric power was not allowed in the camp under the Egyptian rule..."

The camps emerged as a primary target for the IDF after the occupation of 1967 where the refugee population witnessed a massive arrest wave. However, the IDF had not yet entered the camp; this led people to begin with the process of ad hoc expansion and building annexes to homes, in addition to smuggling construction material into the camp. The camp was under curfew at

night, and it was sometimes enforced during the day; a matter which forced people to build toilets and kitchens inside their homes, and which led 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 guerilla fighters (Fedayeen). This led 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 guerilla 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 these 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 (Iijan al-ahyaa) 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 municipal office 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’s main role is one of service provision. It is noteworthy that the old committee was keen on 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 it is in. 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, initiating 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...”

He continued: “It is true that we (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<sup>45</sup>

In this section, I will take the new development concerning the new governance plan for the Nahr al-Bared camp as a starting point to discuss the Lebanese authorities’ vision concerning the Palestinian refugee camps in general. 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 prevailed<sup>46</sup>), neighborhood committees, an assortment of prominent notables, religious figures and some NGOs.<sup>47</sup> Nahr el-Bared should be taken as an interesting case study to demonstrate how several grass-root committees, 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) discusses<sup>48</sup>, 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.

<sup>45</sup> Some parts of this section have been written with Ismael Sheikh Hassan. (Hanafi and Sheikh Hassan 2009)

<sup>46</sup> This pro-Syrian coalition is known as *Tahaluf al-Qiwa al-Falastiniyya* (Alliance of Palestinian Forces or APF)

<sup>47</sup> These NGOs included: a community-managed women’s program centre, a youth center and a number of NGOs active in Nahr el-Bared, including Al-Najda, Beit Atfal al-Sumud, Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, the Khaldieh National Association, and Community-based Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) for the disabled.

<sup>48</sup> Are Knudsen showed how the political fall-out of the crisis entrenched the dichotomisation of the political landscape in Lebanon and produced two opposing ways of understanding the 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 benefits are largest in Sunni-majority cities where the Palestinian-issue speaks to the Sunni “street” and being perceived to control the “refugee file” is a tactical advantage.

## The Vienna Document

The Vienna conference was organized on July 23, 2008 by the Austrian government, Lebanon, the Arab League, UNRWA and the European Union (EU) in the aftermath of the destruction of the Nahr el Bared refugee camp (NBC) in 2007. A document was compiled by the Lebanese government in collaboration with the LPDC, its consultants and what was to be later known as the NBC Recovery and Reconstruction Cell (RRC). The Vienna document put together several technical studies which had been prepared by UNRWA, the Nahr el Bared Reconstruction Commission for Civil Action and Studies (NBRC), UNDP and the World Bank. In addition, the firm Khatib & Alami presented a unified and comprehensive vision for the reconstruction as well as an estimate of the total cost. In spite of Palestinian officials’ endorsement of the document, Palestinian political representatives only played a symbolic role in its actual preparation, due largely to the fact that there lacked sufficient technical experts within the PLO to actually conduct, co-author, and prepare such a study. This vacuum was filled in part by the various civil society initiatives, NGOs and experts who played an active role in the collection of data and lobbying, using formal and informal channels as well as participatory mechanisms. The political implication regarding questions of security and governance in the document were authored entirely by the government and its consultants in the absence of any Palestinian counterpart.

The Vienna document proposes “[...] establishing a transparent and effective governance structure for Nahr el-Bared camp - this includes enforcing security and rule of law inside NBC through community and proximity policing” (p. 46). In addition, it requests donor funds for “capacity building and technical assistance to the (Lebanese) Internal Security Forces (ISF) aimed at introducing community and proximity policing into NBC” (p. 48). The document further explains that “community policing in NBC context entails the presence inside the camp of a culturally and politically sensitive ISF that will work to reduce the fears and tensions that existed prior to and after NBC conflict. Such type of policing will promote community engagement, partnership and proactive problem solving. The above security arrangements for NBC was agreed upon with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. [...] Building trust between the ISF and the NBC community would encourage camp residents to be more supportive and forthcoming in reporting community problems and security issues. Police officers would engage in various types of community activities (youth schemes, community programs, etc.) to foster a closer relationship with the residents of the camp. A closer partnership between the ISF and the community would ultimately help make the rebuilt NBC a safer place and would promote a successful security model for other Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The ISF police officers will be exposed to the political history of the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon, and will be trained to better understand the cultural and social specificities of the Palestinian community. Moreover, officers will be trained on problem solving, conflict resolution, and communications skills.”

In spite of the fact that the various Palestinian civil society entities sensed that such a document was being prepared, it was only made public a few days before the inauguration of the Vienna conference, by which point it was already printed and distributed amongst the donors. The Palestinian embassy received the document at the same time as the other donors.<sup>49</sup> Funding for training Lebanese ISF officers was budgeted at 5 million US dollars, and the American team started training the ISF according to the principles laid out in the Vienna document in mid 2009.

## Governance as Counterinsurgency Policing

The Vienna conference document clearly reflects within the (somewhat brief) governance section the continuation and further development of an existing policy. Authored by Lebanese policy makers and their consultants, it is framed in the language of partnership and community policing, despite the fact that no consultations with the local community took place. Community or neighborhood policing is used in some countries with the assumption that community interaction and support can help control crime, with community members helping to identify suspects, detain vandals and bring problems to the attention of police.<sup>50</sup> The fact that there were no consultations with the community nor requests for its cooperation, led some of our interlocutors in Nahr el-Bared to the conclusion that the plan was more of a “counterinsurgency policing that has nothing to do with community

policing”. Others suggested that “such policing cannot be implemented on a refugee population that has been denied their basic civil rights”. If community policing is meant to control crime, Nahr el-Bared was, according to our fieldwork and interviews, not a

<sup>49</sup> Although the PLO objected to the concept of community policing during an official meeting with the LPDC head (then ambassador Mekkawi) 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 Khalil Makkawi (LPDC) and Ambassador Abbas Zaki (PLO) in the Grand Serail-Beirut in February at the request of the latter to voice his concerns over the community policing proposal in the Vienna document. This happened a few days before attending the Vienna conference. However, none of the Palestinians presented an objection during the conference.

<sup>50</sup> For more details see Read also from the UK police in <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/neighbourhood-policing/?version=3>.

crime-infested ghetto; whatever crimes took place were contained and the violators prosecuted.<sup>51</sup>

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, 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 20,000 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 authority 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 manageable 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 make 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 ultimately use their connections to the security apparatus to exert influence and deploy intimidation. 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, Baddawi 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 Lebanon to Tunisia in 1982, their resources have been scarce, and with the passage of time, the camps became among the most dense urban

51 Many interviewees have agreed that the Nahr el-Bared camp enjoyed a relatively low crime rate. One said: “There was no crime in the history of al-Bared camp, perhaps one crime only and it was unintentional, where a kid murdered another, and the investigation proved it as did the committees.”

configurations in the world, forcing the popular committees to gradually lose their capacity of dealing with them effectively.

The Vienna document does not mention providing resources, capacity building or assistance to re-empower Popular Committees. In Nahr el-Bared, the disempowered Popular Committee has played only a symbolic role in the reconstruction, whereby the swarm of international NGOs, development agencies, UN agencies, and government agencies present have been involved formally and directly. In early 2009 for example, one donor proposed to provide equipment for sanitation and waste removal which would be shared by the municipality of Muhamara and Nahr el-Bared’s Popular Committee. However, due to the fact that the committee has no legal status in Lebanese law, the contract for joint-ownership could not be drafted.<sup>52</sup>

Looking beyond the scarcity of means at their disposal, as well as the absence of expertise and systematic de-legitimization from the Lebanese state, the Popular Committee also suffers from fundamental problems at the level of representation. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s most refugees were affiliated to political parties and movements that had more or less democratic processes in electing their leadership; Popular Committees included members from the various political groups in each camp, and thus were representative of the camp’s population. Moreover, there was space allotted to unions and to a member from a liberal profession, such as an engineer or teacher. With the steep marginalization of party politics and dramatic reduction in the numbers of active party affiliation, the committees no longer represented the camp’s population appropriately, and their legitimacy was further undermined from within. In 2009, a new committee was established in the PLO offices in Beirut focusing on preliminary plans to reform the popular committees in Lebanon.

Some Palestinian organizations explored alternative options. For instance, Ghassan Abdallah (2009: 8), General Director of the Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO), suggested adopting the municipal policing experience in Lebanon and adapting it to the human security concept. For him, “the popular committees present in the camps would be elected directly by the residents, linked to the neighboring municipalities and become integral parts therein. They would also operate according to the same governance and electoral regulations that rule the councils of the municipalities. Such a procedure would put an end to the designation quotas imposed by the political factions. The civilian police members would be selected among the residents of the camp and would respond to the elected popular committee. Consequently, just as it happens to the municipalities, the elected popular committees would be ruled by the legitimate authority that is represented by the Ministry of Interior Affairs and Municipalities. A cooperation formula might be attempted between the representatives of the legitimate authority of the Ministry of Interior and the civilian police of the camp - based on the human security concept and the experience of community policing. This does not necessarily mean that the presence of the ISF police in the surroundings of the camps should be discontinued.”

### 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<sup>53</sup>. 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 a work 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 organizations like UNRWA, on the other. The Lebanese state has sustained a status quo (of sorts) by juggling the inclusion/exclusion duality, 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 writ 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, essentially allowing political questions to be treated as a matter of law. When Palestinians lobbied to be granted basic civil rights

52 Eventually, the Popular Committee refused to be part of that project. The major reason was the conviction that such projects were designed to undermine them and empower the municipality.

53 Palestinians are subject to many taxes related to trade and employment like other Lebanese.

as refugees, the government claimed the question did not pertain to the law, rather to the political makeup of the country and the cautiously 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 reconstruction 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, 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 including them as a security threat, as “something” to be contained and subjected to strict control and surveillance. As a result, tensions between Lebanese and Palestinians would continue to mount, the factions would carry on in their struggles inside the camps, and these “spaces of exception” would continue to present a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and security. This is what the International Crisis Group has aptly referred to in a recent report in 2008 as “nurturing instability” (International Crisis Group, 2009).

In spite of this, Palestinians in Lebanon continue to cope in remarkable ways. By drawing on their shared history, their common experience as refugees, and the motivating force of Palestinian nationalism, and by relying on strong moral and ethical norms, which in recent years have been underpinned by Islamist discourse, they govern themselves in the absence of any real, legitimate governance system as best they can.

## V. FOUR MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

Having compared the current governance models of the Palestinian refugee camps in the region, I will demonstrate that they revolve around three particular models: exclusion; control and surveillance; and a top-down approach. As an alternative, I will propose a fourth model that is inspired by Porto Alegre’s municipality.

Foucault (1995), followed later by Shamir (2009), invoked two modalities of power that arose between the 17th and the end of the 18th centuries in response to the treatment of lepers and the plague. Leprosy was treated by a logic of segregation, exclusion and “great confinement”. Back then, lepers were excluded from the city and locked away in leper colonies through laws and regulations, and were rendered invisible through “exile enclosure” before being left to die en masse and anonymously.

In contrast, the plague, a contagious disease that spread rapidly and killed scores of people, set off a new method of response based on spatial partitioning. This methodology involved multiple separations and individualizing treatment. Quarters, streets and housing were under close scrutiny, surveillance and control, whereby each resident would have to present themselves to inspectors. Segmentation prompted the rise of bio-politics where statistics were used to assist governments in refining control and surveillance techniques.

Both the separation of lepers and the segmentation from the plague were techniques adopted in the middle ages, but unfortunately they are still practiced when dealing with ‘undesirables’ in today’s day and age. Refugee camps in Lebanon are treated as spaces needing surveillance, as well as spaces of exception and exclusion; spaces are ordered, divided and managed by strict enclosures. The proposed new governance model, which is based primarily on counterinsurgency policing in the camp, is a way of treating the camp like a plague-stricken colony in the middle ages. Governance becomes a way of moving from a leper stricken-colony where the affected should be invisible to a state of hyper-visibility, where everyone is a potential suspect that will be registered when they enter and watched while inside the camp.

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 influence of the notables in the camps.<sup>54</sup> 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 distasteful experience of locating Rwandan genocide participants in Benaco, and the disastrous situation of refugee camps being used by various rebel groups as bases for operations in Rwanda, UNHCR attempts at mitigating 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. Because 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 segmentation. 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 that offers 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 Sol in Brazil, a city which consists of 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 process started in 1989.<sup>55</sup> 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’<sup>56</sup> (Bruce 2004: 5).

Recognizing the successes of Porto Alegre, my suggestion is that Palestinian camps adopt thematic forums which address housing, social services, water and electricity supply, education, health, infrastructure 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 budget headings and should elect one delegate for each thematic area. It is these delegates that will make up the camp Popular

54 In some cases, UNHCR actively supports the notables’ influence in the camps. In Kakuma, UNHCR cooperates with the SPLA as a legitimate source of authority, to the point where Verdirame and Harrell-Bond state that SPLA officials “were treated as the sole legitimate voice of the Dinka ‘community,’” (2005: 261). However, in many other situations, UNHCR actively downplays notables’ authority, and creates other sources of authority. In the Congolese refugee camps mentioned above, the traditional justice system of punishments and trial is in conflict with the judiciary system that UNHCR supports. UNHCR attempts to implement the Tanzanian judiciary system, where the sentence for rape is 30 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 elders, with varying degrees of success. (Dick 2002: 22; cited by Tong 2009).

55 This process started when the Workers’ Party came to power. However, the municipalities who adopted the participatory budgeting are not only those in which the Workers’ Party dominates, survey evidence indicates that fifty-one of the 103 cases are in municipalities whose mayors are not from the Workers’ Party. Although participatory budgeting has been successfully disseminated to 103 municipalities, Brazil nevertheless has over 5,000 municipalities. (Wampler and Avritzer 2004: 291)

56 The city has registered some notable achievements in recent years, credit for which is often attributed to the existence of the participatory budget. Between 1989 and 1996, the number of households with access to water services rose from 80% to 98%; percentage of the population ; service by the municipal sewage system rose from 46% to 85%; the number of children enrolled in public schools doubled; in the poorer neighborhoods, 30 kilometers of roads have been paved annually since 1989; and because of a new transparency affecting motivation to pay taxes, revenue has increased 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)

Committee, a permanent yet semi-voluntary body consisting of nine elected members which will represent all the Palestinian political factions, as well as be responsible for managing the governance process within the camps. In addition, it should gather once a week and be tasked with combining and reconciling the priorities addressed in the thematic meetings. This committee should also be charged with translating the general demands discussed at community meetings into specific proposals. If the members are not elected from the body of thematic delegates, extra representatives can be chosen, especially ones specializing in security issues.

An executive who prepares the budget should also be chosen from the Popular Committee. The host country will adopt a Council of Popular Committees (CPC), which will be composed of the heads of popular committees, a representative from the high councils of the Palestinian factions (which is composed of the PLO and tahaluf coalition), a representative of UNRWA, as well as two representatives from the Ministry of Local Affairs (one to address municipality issues and the other for security issues). The tasks of the CPC should include coordination between all of the camps; discuss debates previously raised in assemblies; combine issues raised within the different communities; offer technical and economically viable solutions to problems raised by citizens; the location of funds for such projects; and finally, the CPC should seriously discuss the security issues within the camps. The CPC should meet once a month and should be assisted by UNRWA to foster planning and technical unity.

Furthermore, resources should be divided according to a weighting system that combines the subjective preferences of citizens with objective quantitative criteria.

In practical terms, each camp should hold two rounds of forums in order to address camp themes. For example, citizen groups could meet in January, just before the first round of formal assemblies, to register demands and mobilize the community to select theme delegates. The first round of meetings between the citizens and the executive will follow in February, in the presence of the head of the council of popular committees, to review the investment plans of the previous year, discuss proposals for the new year, and to elect delegates for future deliberations. Between the first and the second rounds (January- April), informal preparatory meetings could be held to discuss demands for investment in sectors as presented by the various community associations (political factions, unions, NGOs, etc.). These demands could then be ranked on an ascending scale from 1 to 5 by the participants of the forum.

The role of CPC's executive should be to aggregate together points earned through two other criteria: i) need; measured by how much access a camp has had to a particular service, and ii) population size. The maximum points that can thus be attained are 15; 5 points if a camp has had less than 20% access to a service, 5 if it has more than 15,000 inhabitants, and 5 if people rank it top on their list of demands.

With regards to funding, local funds should be assigned to cover the wages of municipal servants and the cost of projects. Budget should be covered by: 1- refugee municipal taxes, 2- governmental funding (from VAT and other taxes paid to the government), 3- UNRWA, and 4- international donors. It is very important that refugees pay municipal taxes to feel the ownership of this process and to turn them from passive into conscious social citizens<sup>57</sup>.

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 (Iujneh ahali al-mukhayam) was elected but quickly aborted after few months by a political faction that felt threatened by its legitimacy (see also Kortam 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 2006).

Finally, some of the initiatives within the principal of the Porto Alegre Model are not completely new to the camps, especially within Dheishah camp in the Palestinian Territory, and the Nahr el Bared camp in Lebanon. The efforts towards

<sup>57</sup> Social citizenship is different from nationality. In many countries like in Europe or in Syria, refugees and permanent residents enjoy social citizenship without being nationals.

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 (NBRC).<sup>58</sup> 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.

## 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, overturning normal 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 illiberal 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 actors can 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 capital and to set the 'exchange rates' of conversion. This is important, not just because of the ways in which it structures the fields of significant social power— the political field, the juridical field, and so on (Bourdieu 1998: 41), but because it also shapes the forms of conversion in everyday life. Having said that, Lebanese authorities seem to hinder the conversion of refugees' ethnic and symbolic capital into social capital by setting a low exchange rate, through confining refugees to a slum area, criminalizing them and dealing with them as security subjects. This hyper-visibility as criminal or invisibility in the city is apparent in the politics of fear vis-à-vis the refugees. The donor community's emphasis on community participation becomes meaningless if the state does not set an appropriate exchange rate in order to legitimize the outcome of this form of participation.

UNRWA, traditionally, and like any other humanitarian institution, considered refugees to be needy victims. Parallel to the failure of acknowledging the urbanization process that transformed tent cities into complex built environments, is also the failure of acknowledging the desire of traumatized and voiceless victims to become emancipated subjects, especially after some sort of

<sup>58</sup> The idea came jointly from local inhabitants and some people from NBC and a group who had already helped several cities in South Lebanon (such as Bint Jbeil and Aita al Shaab) in their reconstruction.

normalcy 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 fuels 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.<sup>59</sup> (Misselwitz and Hanafi 2010)

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 UNDP, 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.<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup>

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 governmentality,” 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.<sup>62</sup> 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 Porto Alegre’s model of participatory governance in refugee camps.

<sup>59</sup> Two promising signs have appeared in Lebanon. First, UNRWA has developed new job descriptions for Area Officers, requiring more qualifications and bestowing them with more power on the ground, including inside the camps. Second, in March 2009, UNRWA established for 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.

<sup>60</sup> 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.

<sup>61</sup> 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.

<sup>62</sup> Manal Kortam’s work (2007; 2010) in Lebanon confirms this.

### To Lebanese Authorities

- Camp governance should deal with three inextricably related aspects: legitimizing local governance (popular committee), giving rights to Palestinians as refugees, and reinforcing the rule of law through appropriate means like police stations.
- Regulating Palestinian weapons and policing the camps should be discussed and implemented after addressing the question of Palestinian basic civil and socio-economic rights.
- The government of Lebanon and the PLO should sign three protocols: one on the relationship between popular committees and the Ministry of Local Governance; a protocol on the relationship between popular committees and the surrounding municipalities, and one between popular committees and the Lebanese in charge of the security in the camps.
- 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.).
- 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.

### To Lebanese Political Parties

- Tawtīn is the scarecrow which has been used by different political parties to generate a public phobia against the basic rights of the Palestinians. This sort of populism is very harmful for the future relationship between Lebanese and Palestinians.
- Political Parties should propose draft new legislation which will end the discriminatory regulations against the Palestinian refugees.

### To Lebanese Municipalities

- Municipalities should provide refugee camps in their vicinity services like electricity, water and other environmental necessities.
- 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 camps.

### 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.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> See (Loescher and Milner 2008: 356)

- Currently UNHCR operates in the camps and organizes initiatives for refugee participation in governance, and it is a good sign that the new UNRWA officers came from UNHCR. They have the opportunity to transmit UNHCR experience to the Palestinian refugee camps.
- Help PLO and the High Council of Palestinian Factions to establish a technical unit in order to prepare all files related to the presence of the Palestinian refugees in the host countries, especially in Lebanon.

### To DORA, PLO and Palestinian Factions

- Waiting for the day where 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 PLO 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.
- Improve the effectiveness of popular committees in the camps by immediately merging committees in camps that have more than one committee.
- Provide financial means for the good functioning of these committees.
- Providing 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 sectorized 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.

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