Universidade de Lisboa

Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território

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Hospitality Relations and Overlapping Displacements in Refugee Camps(capes) in Lebanon

Francesca Ceola

Dissertação orientada pela
Professora Doutora Jennifer Leigh McGarrigle Montezuma de Carvalho
Mestrado em Geografia Humana: Globalização, Sociedade e Território

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Júri:

Presidente: Professor Doutor Jorge da Silva Macaísta Malheiros do Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território da Universidade de Lisboa

Vogais:

- Doutora Maria Cristina Ferraz Saraiva Santinho do Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia do ISCTE-IUL
- Doutor António Eduardo Alves Martins Ascensão do Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território da Universidade de Lisboa
- Professora Doutora Jennifer Leigh McGarrigle Montezuma de Carvalho do Instituto de Geografia e Ordenamento do Território da Universidade de Lisboa

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Abstract

The ambiguous position of the Lebanese authorities towards the recognition of refugees and their formulation of the Syrian diaspora in de-politicised terms has produced a heterogeneous geography of dwelling and emplacement, where many displaced by the current Syrian conflict – including Palestinian, Iraqi and Kurdish refugees – have resorted to different informal strategies to cope with re-territorialisation in Lebanon. This dispersed refugee geography speaks to a pre-existing cartography of Palestinian refugee camps, whose complex social ecology and materiality are encapsulated by the spatial model of analysis of the *campscape* (Martin, 2015) and informed by Deleuzian assemblage theory. Through ethnographic research in the Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila (Beirut) and the collective creation of critical mapping accounts with residents of the camp, this thesis investigates Shatila's residents' understandings of the *campscape* as a collective space animated by a multiplicity of actors. By opening a fissure through the residents' discourses on the micro- and macro-politics of the camp, it was possible to cast a light on local responses, refugee-led initiatives of hospitality, and sites of friction emerging from the overlapping of displaced groups. Thus, the dynamics of refugee host and refugee guest relations were illuminated as they are performed and reproduced, from the everyday encounters of the street to the institutional confrontations over refugee benefits' eligibility. These sites of encounter and friction simultaneously highlight how refugees are not only victims of their exile but also resourceful agents producing alternative infrastructures in contexts of state withdrawal. Considering the complexity of agencies, meanings, and materials that inflect the relations moulding the irregular shapes of Shatila's *campscape* enhances our understanding of refugee spaces and refugee relationships. It also forces us to question how economic and social relations of marginal urban places reformulate the sense of cityness through an interplay of subordination, resistance and alternativity that collective mapping experiences can harness, catalyse, and empower.

Key words: *campscape,* Shatila, migrant infrastructure, refugee humanitarianism, refugee agency, assemblage

Resumo

A posição ambígua das autoridades libanesas para o reconhecimento dos refugiados e sua formulação da diáspora síria em termos despolitizados produziu uma geografia heterogénea de habitação e "emplacement", onde muitos deslocados pelo atual conflito sírio - incluídos sírios, palestinos, iraquianos, e refugiados curdos - recorreram a diferentes estratégias informais para lidar com a reterritorialização no Líbano. Estas dispersas geografias de refugiados mantêm-se em diálogo com uma cartografia preexistente de campos de refugiados palestinos, cuja complexa ecologia social e materialidade são encapsuladas pelo modelo de análise espacial dos acampamentos (Martin, 2015) e elucidadas pela teoria deleuziana de "assemblage".

Por meio da pesquisa etnográfica no campo de refugiados palestinos de Shatila (Beirute) e da criação coletiva de relatos críticos de mapeamento com os residentes do campo, esta tese investiga a compreensão dos residentes de Shatila sobre o acampamento como um espaço coletivo animado por uma multiplicidade de atores. Abrindo uma fissura nos discursos dos residentes sobre a micro e macropolítica do campo, foi possível emitir uma luz sobre as respostas locais, as iniciativas de hospitalidade lideradas por refugiados e os sítios de atrito emergentes da sobreposição dos grupos deslocados. Portanto, a dinâmica das relações entre o hospedeiro dos refugiados e o refugiado hóspede foram iluminadas à medida que foram realizadas e reproduzidas, desde os encontros diários na rua aos confrontos institucionais sobre a elegibilidade para os benefícios dos refugiados. Esses locais de encontro e atrito destacam simultaneamente como os refugiados não são apenas vítimas de seu exílio, mas também agentes hábeis em recursos que produzem infraestruturas alternativas em contextos de ausência do Estado.

A estrutura do trabalho é desenvolvida da seguinte forma. A introdução delineia o objetivo da pesquisa de investigar a micropolítica da hospitalidade no campo de refugiados de Shatila, onde a sobreposição de deslocamentos construiu uma mistura heterogénea de populações e como as relações entre as diferentes comunidades do campo de refugiados se expressam territorialmente. Posteriormente, apresento uma revisão exaustiva da literatura que começa com a exposição dos debates acadêmicos sobre a noção de "agentful refugee", onde é contestada a formulação dos refugiados como indivíduos sem raízes, estranhos às nações hospedeiras e debilmente vulneráveis às suas políticas de migração.

A teoria deleuziana sobre a “Assemblage” expande a compreensão da experiência de deslocamento como um complexo e estratificação de elementos tangíveis e de experiências vividas. Segue uma discussão sobre o espaço conceitual e físico do campo de refugiados, mais do que dos dispositivos espaciais de contenção e em espera pela solução da condição de exilado refugiado. Sugere-se que os acampamentos são espaços cujas fronteiras são porosas e cuja temporalidade suspensa é tensa pelo prolongamento da situação dos refugiados, o que permite aos residentes apropriar-se e a transformar o acampamento num espaço familiar e doméstico. Isso, por sua vez, gera um espaço de tipo cidade em contínua transformação, cuja expansão é muitas vezes facilitada pelo recuo do papel do Estado na provisão de recursos para lugares marginais, e onde a descontinuidade com o seu entorno urbano é principalmente a sua forma legal. A revisão da literatura finaliza com a revisão do conceito de hospitalidade no contexto de recursos escassos, onde a ativação de redes informais de apoio, cuidado e dinamismo econômico são trazidas pelas noções de infraestrutura migrante e de economia de transação.

O terceiro capítulo sobre a abordagem do trabalho de pesquisa fornece uma contextualização histórica do deslocamento de sírios ao Líbano, um estado socialmente fragmentado por uma configuração política baseada no sectarismo religioso que esteve estado na raíz das guerras civis libanesas entre o período de 1975 e 1990. O trauma do conflito afeta a política do país e permite perceber as políticas de migração libanesa sobre a diáspora síria, e gerou para eles as condições de entrada em campos de refugiados palestinos como Shatila.

Segue uma breve história do campo de Shatila, desde seu estabelecimento, durante os anos de militância palestina e liderança da Organização de Libertação da Palestina, o trágico massacre durante os anos da guerra e os anos de reconstrução quando a população se diversificou devido à chegada principalmente da migração econômica regional. O capítulo também apresenta considerações sobre a abordagem metodológica - uma corroboração de "counter cartographies" e métodos etnográficos - a observação participante e as entrevistas ganham maior profundidade por meio dos relatos cartográficos de Shatila produzidos por alguns dos participantes.

O capítulo sobre a discussão dos resultados é dividido em três seções. A primeira seção aborda o perfil intersetorial dos residentes do campo, as posições políticas multifacetadas e suas ambições migratórias. Uma distinção surge entre as pessoas deslocadas da Síria que desejam voltar para seu país de origem assim que a situação permitir; moradores de campos

de diferentes identidades nacionais que não têm os recursos para estar em nenhum outro lugar; residentes do campo que se engajaram em se estabelecer em Shatila porque significava a realização de aspirações pessoais; e residentes do campo cuja elegibilidade para o lugar foi procurar o reassentamento em mais outro terceiro país (embora raramente realizado) está na raiz de sentimentos discriminatórios e contrastes políticos no campo. A compreensão da pluralidade de propriedades que constituem o perfil dos moradores de Shatila esclarece a apropriação do ato de esperar por se tornar num esforço para administrar suas vidas. A segunda seção preocupa-se com a noção de hospitalidade e desemaranha as redes de infraestruturas informais de cuidado que, por sua forma irregular, pela espontaneidade de sua formação e alcance microscópico de ação, compõem um mosaico de infraestruturas migrantes não explicadas por medidas de atividade humanitária oficial. A análise da seção articula-se em torno de seis temas que emergiram das entrevistas como pontos focais para a mobilização e alocação de recursos materiais e sociais. A terceira seção envolve a forma física do espaço, desvelando no processo de formação e configuração não apenas vestígios do desenvolvimento arquitetónico de estruturas de tipo cidade e de espaços feitos de materiais duradouros como o cimento que contradizem a temporariedade da condição de refugiado. Mas também a afirmação de significados simbólicos, políticos e biográficos entrincheirados com as formas geométricas do espaço para marcar territórios, para fundamentar a extensão dos agenciamentos pessoais, para negociar presença e visibilidade. A seção examina três tipos de espaço - as fronteiras do acampamento, as ruas e a casa - para mapear a ecologia do acampamento e sua disseminação territorial.

A tese conclui considerando que apesar da privação de infraestruturas oficiais e da marginalização manufaturada de suas populações, Shatila é uma paisagem de acampamento feita de uma arquitetura aparentemente inconsistente que uma vez analisada aponta para a capacidade "agentful" de seus residentes para transformá-la numa infraestrutura polivalente, polimorfa e compartilhada. A economia interna desenvolvida foi e continua sendo atraente para pessoas com meios limitados de alcançar seus meios de subsistência, ela simbolicamente reforça a resiliência das populações de refugiados para suportar condições difíceis enquanto esperam para "voltar para casa", e se vale da capacidade da sua "assemblage" para ajustar-se com flexibilidade à presença transitória, influência e meios das pessoas marginalizadas que o animam.

Finalmente, considerar a complexidade das agências, significados e materiais que modificam as relações que moldam as formas irregulares do acampamento de Shatila

expande a compreensão dos espaços e das relações dos refugiados. Também nos força a questionar como as relações económicas e sociais de lugares urbanos marginais reformulam o sentido de cidade por meio de uma interação de subordinação, resistência e alternatividade que as experiências coletivas de mapeamento podem aproveitar, catalisar e dar capacidades que os empoderam.

Palavras chaves: acampamentos, Shatila, infraestrutura migrante, humanitarismo de refugiados, agentful refugees, assemblage

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1. Introduction

The departure point for this thesis derived from a long personal history of interest for the spaces and the activities that Palestinian refugees dispersed across the diverse geography of the Middle East shape and engage with. Among the countries where dispersed Palestinian refugees settle in camps, the case of Lebanon is interesting as the degree of integration with the Lebanese society that the Palestinian refugee community has achieved after seven decades in the country is very low (Dionigi, 2017). The presence of official Palestinian camps, emblems of the refugee claims to return to their homeland as well as spaces of cultivation of a national identity in exile, has historically been a visible and highly sensitive scar on the national territory of Lebanon. It has also historically been source of frictions within the fabric of Lebanon's fragmented society, torn by sectarian divisions, since it is evocative of the country's succession of conflicts and violence. As a result of the country's complex relation with its Palestinian refugee population, the securitisation of its external and internal borders has heightened. Hence, the question – in fact a few questions, that took shape in my mind were: if the Palestinian refugee camps are sensitive points in the geography of the country, what do they look like inside? How are they organised spatially and materially? What are the micropolitics of the camp? Who lives there, by force or by choice? Overlooking one of the camps in particular – Shatila – by the means of virtual mapping services, the discovery was that despite the accuracy of information from aerial footage and satellite images, the *map* of the place was just an anonymous grey polygon (Figure 1). This thesis project stemmed from these curiosities and developed into a cartographic research of the folds and creases of the space of one official refugee camp and the multiplicity of actors that animate it

1.1. Introduction to the topic

The ambiguous position of the Lebanese authorities towards the recognition of refugees and their formulation of the Syrian diaspora in de-politicised terms has produced a heterogeneous geography of dwelling and emplacement, where many displaced by the current Syrian conflict – including Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, and Kurdish refugees – have resorted to different informal strategies to cope with re-territorialisation in Lebanon. This dispersed refugee geography speaks to a pre-existing cartography of Palestinian refugee

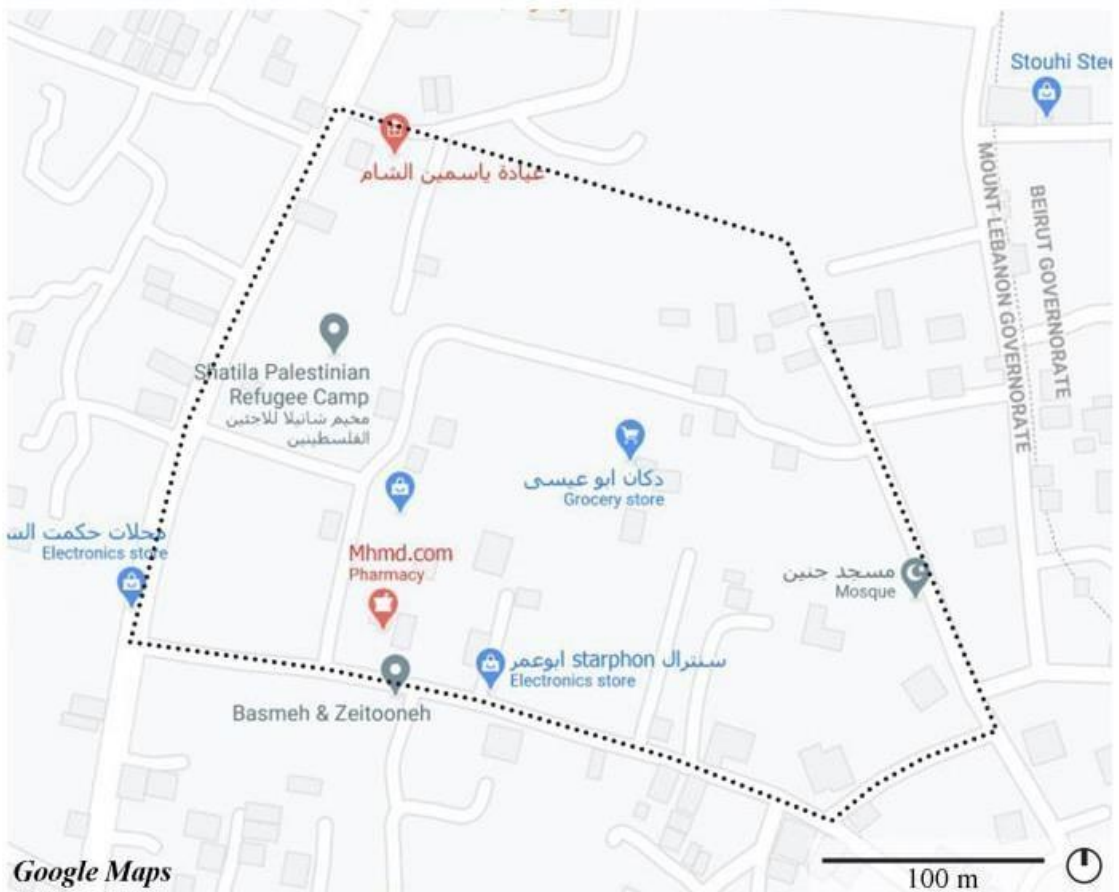
camps, whose complex social ecology and materiality are encapsulated by the spatial model of analysis of the *campscape* (Martin, 2015).

The Palestinian camps are in fact embedded in the continuum of Lebanese history in social, cultural and political ways; they are geographically hybrid as they have formally demarcated boundaries but porous borders; and they are mimetic spaces whose aesthetics have gradually and irreversibly appropriated the materiality and forms of the surrounding urban fabric. Hence, the vast literature on Palestinian refugee camps encapsulates them as complex assemblages incorporating a complexity that inflects relations, resituates camp residents, and enhances an appreciation of the irregular shapes of such landscape.

In this context, the refugee camps of Lebanon have been called into question by the withdrawal of Lebanese authorities in the management of the Syrian diaspora. As a result of the migration restrictions enforced by the Lebanese government, Syrians have created their own alternatives by tapping into the existing infrastructures of other refugees – namely Palestinians. In Lebanon, *campscapes* thus emerge as spaces of hospitality, where the reproduction of refugee hosts-refugee guests relations questions understandings of refugees as exclusively guests of a nation state, since in some instances they become hosts for other refugee groups too (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). However, these relationships not only showcase human solidarity but are also intertwined with power equilibriums of the camps, where internal limits and group interests play an important role. In order to explore the unfolding implications of these processes and pursue an in-depth investigation, the research had to be site specific. The case of the refugee camp of Shatila, Beirut, presents an interesting combination of characteristics that rendered it the chosen candidate for this research. It is located far from the borders with Syria, where the influx of people displaced from the conflict is constantly in evolution; rather its position at the periphery of Beirut makes it attractive due to its vicinity to the economic centre. It is unfortunately famous due to the events that took place, and the reputation that it developed, during the Civil wars. For this reason, it has been object also of academic studies, thus facilitating the access and the quantity of data. Finally, its borders are not militarised, making it more easily accessible than other Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

Figure 1 In the next page, aerial view of Shatila from Google Earth (top) and Google Maps (bottom) (source: personal elaboration)

Google Earth
100 m


عيادة ياسمين الشام
Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp
مخيم شاتيلا للاجئين الفلسطينيين
دكان ابو عيسى
Grocery store
Electronics store
Mhmd.com
Pharmacy
مسجد جنين
Mosque
سنترال ابوعمر starphon
Electronics store
Basmeh & Zeitooneh
MOUNT-LEBANON GOVERNORATE
BEIRUT GOVERNORATE
Google Maps
100 m

1.2. Objective and research question

The research proposes an investigation of the micropolitics of the re-territorialisation of Syrian refugees in the campscape of Shatila, by focusing on local responses and refugee-led initiatives, in order to enhance understandings of the multiplicity of shapes of refugee hospitality and their manifestation in the materiality of the space.

The research question is addressed by pursuing the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the wider processes that have generated the local overlapping of different displacements in the camp. The research is developed in the form of an ethnographic study examining the polymorphic relations between the different communities living in the camp. Despite the fact it is officially a Palestinian refugee camp, not every dweller of Shatila is Palestinian or a refugee, hence the value of intersectionality needs to be incorporated to make sense of the overlapping displacements.
2. To explore the micropolitics of hospitality, that is, the intra-camp competitive but also complicit relations that animate and are performed within the *campscape.* The case study is grounded in spaces that have been materially deprived for decades and consistently neglected by Lebanese policy. As such, the capacity of refugee hosts to negotiate resources and territory with refugee guests cannot be regarded as uncomplex. The networks of relations resulting from efforts to compensate for the lack of official forms of care are called migrant infrastructures.
3. To enhance understanding of how the dynamics between camp residents within the *campscape* determine the territorialisation of space, conjugating the complexity of temporal *emplacement* in conditions of indeterminate exile with the emergent visibility of refugee camp residents' agency. Cartographic accounts support the analysis by marking explicitly the landscape on the map, according to the meanings attributed to space by the refugee cartographers.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

The structure of the work is developed in five chapters. The present introduction outlines the research objective of investigating the micropolitics of hospitality in the refugee camp of Shatila where the overlapping of displacements has constructed a heterogeneous mix of

populations, where the relations between the different refugee camp communities are expressed territorially. In the second chapter, I present a comprehensive literature review that begins by exposing the academic debates on the notion of agentful refugees, where the formulation of refugees as rootless individuals alien to the host nations and helplessly vulnerable to their migration policies is contested. Deleuzian assemblage theory enhances the understanding of displacement experiences as a complex stratification of tangible elements and lived experiences. This is followed by a discussion on the conceptual as well as physical space of refugee camps as more than spatial devices for containment and waiting rooms for the resolution of the exiled condition of the refugee. It is suggested that camps are spaces whose borders are porous and whose suspended temporality is strained by prolongation of the refugees' situation, which gives camp residents time to domesticate the camp space. This in turn generates city-like spaces in continuous transformation whose expansion is often facilitated by the receding role of the state in the provision of resources to marginal places. The main discontinuity with their urban surrounding remains their legal form. The literature review ends with the revision of the concept of hospitality in contexts of scarce resources, where the activation of informal networks of support, care, and economic dynamism are brought together by the notions of migrant infrastructure and transaction economy.

The third chapter presents the research approach, context and methods. It provides a historical contextualisation of the Syrian displacement in Lebanon, a state socially fragmented by a political configuration based on religious sectarianism that has been at the root of the Lebanese Civil wars (1975-1990). The trauma of the conflict affects the country's politics still today, it informs the Lebanese migration policies about the Syrian diaspora, and it generated the conditions that forced many to tap into Palestinian refugee camps such as Shatila. This is followed by a brief history of the Shatila camp, from its establishment, during the years of Palestinian militancy and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's leadership, the tragic massacre during the war years, and the years of reconstruction when the population diversified, mainly due to the arrival of regional economic migrants. The chapter also presents considerations with respect to the qualitative methodological approach – a corroboration of counter cartographies and ethnographic methods – where participant observation and interviews with experts, key actors and refugees gain augmented depth through the map accounts of Shatila produced by some of the participants.

The chapter presenting and discussing the results of the research is divided into three sections. The first section addresses the intersectional profile of the camp residents, the multifaceted political positions, and their migratory past and ambitions. A distinction emerges between different groups: first, people displaced from Syria who aspire to go back to their home country as soon as the situation allows; second, camp dwellers of different national identities that do not have the resources to be anywhere else; third, camp residents who have settled in Shatila because it meant the attainment of personal aspirations; and finally, camp residents whose eligibility to resettlement to third countries (although rarely realised) is at the root of discrimination and political contrasts in the camp. Understanding the plurality of domains that constitute the profile of Shatila's residents illuminates the appropriation of the act of waiting by turning it into an effort to manage their lives.

The second section is concerned with the notion of hospitality and disentangles the networks of informal infrastructures of care. Due to their irregular shapes, the spontaneity of their formation, and the microscopic and at times discrete dimension, they compose a mosaic of migrant infrastructures unaccounted for by measurements of official humanitarian activity. The section is articulated around six analytical themes – homemaking, healthcare access, schooling, religious community, economic activity, sport – that have emerged from the interviews as focal points for the mobilisation and allocation of material and social resources. The third section engages with the physical shape of space, which in the process of formation and configuration not only unveils traces of the architectural development of city-like structures and of spaces made of lasting materials like concrete – that contradict the temporariness of the refugee condition. But it also reveals the affirmation of symbolic, political, and biographical meanings entrenched with the geometrical forms of space, to mark territories, to ground the extension of personal assemblages, and to negotiate presence and visibility. The section examines three types of space – the borders of the camp, the streets, and the home – thus mapping the ecology of the camp and its territorial dissemination.

The thesis concludes by considering that despite the deprivation of official infrastructures and the manufactured marginalisation of its populations, Shatila is a *campscape* made of an apparently inconsistent architecture. However, once analysed, the latter points at the agentful capacity of its residents to turn it into a polyvalent, polymorphic, and shared infrastructure. The developed internal economy has been and continues to be both attractive for people with limited means to attain their livelihoods, it symbolically reinforces

the resilience of refugee populations to endure difficult conditions while waiting to “return home”, and it draws from the capacity of its assemblage to flexibly adjust to the transient presence, influence, and means of marginalised people who animate it. Finally, considering the complexity of agencies, meanings, and materials that inflect the relations moulding the irregular shapes of Shatila’s *campscape* enhances our understanding of refugee spaces and refugee relationships. It also forces us to question how economic and social relations of marginal urban places reformulate the sense of cityness through an interplay of subordination, resistance and alternativity that collective mapping experiences can harness, catalyse, and empower.

2. Literature review

A review of the literature on refugees which is comprehensive of the multifaceted, polymorphic and constantly changing prism that is the experience of being refugee would have to be extremely rich and complex. For the purpose of this thesis, I am suggesting a specific cut across that literature that embraces the logic of offering a glimpse of this universe by following a line that questions and subverts the most frequently encountered – in the sense of quantity – discussions about refugees. Without escaping the foundations of refugee literature, I choose to organise the literature review around three macro-concepts. The first one revolves around the refugee figure not as victim of a world order defined by national states where they are forced into a condition of uprootedness, but rather as agentful actors with the capacity to strategically adapt to changing circumstances. The second set of concepts relates to the spatiality of the camp, the refugee camp, the *campscape,* a spatial construction whose materiality and meanings intersect with the shapes of urbanity in the case of many Palestinian refugee camps across the Middle East. The third part develops the set of notions that articulate hospitality and the informal provision of care among migrant communities to create networks of relations and support that substitute modes of solidarity and familiar spaces they left behind or were uprooted from.

2.1. Refugees, urban refugees

The UNHCR "Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees" represents the key legal document for the definition and protection of refugees, which laid the foundations for the development of Human Rights law and protocols of humanitarian aid interventions. Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, also referred to as the Geneva Convention, subsequently amended in the form of the 1967 Protocol, states that a refugee is any person who

> "*owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it*" (UNHCR, 2010:14)

The governments of 26 states became signatories of the Convention, while a list of heterogeneous international labour and non-governmental organisations were also present as observers without possessing the right to vote. In the introductory note by the Office of the UNHCR to the document regarding the emergence and legitimisation of the need to formulate a framework for understanding and thus protecting “refugees”, evident reference is made to the original scope present in the original convention of availing such right to the victims of displacement in Europe as a consequence of the Second World War. Although the phenomenon of mass and forced displacement has always led humans to seek for refuge and sanctuary, the unprecedented scale of displacement in that instance seems to have urged an improvisation of a centrally standardised and subsequently globalised technique of management of displaced populations. Malkki (1995) identifies in this moment the emergence of the social category and legal problem of the modern “refugee” and the design of technologies of power for caring and controlling displaced populations through military and administrative apparatuses first, and social and humanitarian structures later. In her work, the author suggests that the formation of the legal instruments of international refugee law postulated the contemporary order of sovereign nation states. The post-war family of nations assumed national states as given thus producing the condition of existence of refugees as persons stranded between sovereigns; in turn, this subsequently served for the pathologisation and in some cases criminalisation of the refugee.

Debates in refugee studies have recognised Hannah Arendt’s work which examines modern totalitarianism as foundational for understanding the social and political category of refugee as problematic for and in perpetual tension with nationalism. Arendt explicitly places displacement in relation with a prism of political and symbolic logics of national states’ xenophobia aimed at excluding refugees from the political community, essentially depriving them of the “right to have right” and formally placing them outside the national order of things.

> “*Mankind for so long a time considered under the image of a family of nations, had reached the stage where whoever was thrown out of one of these tightly organised closed communities found himself thrown out of the family of nations altogether... the abstract nakedness of being nothing but human was their greatest danger*" (Arendt, 1973:294)

2.1.1 Refugees and the botanical metaphors

Malkki brings forth Arendt's work on the entwinement of nationalism with xenophobia, to understand it in dialogue with domesticated nationalised versions of the international community that have normalised the strangeness and externality of refugee people in opposition with territorialised national states and national identity. Drawing from a reflection on the instrumentalisation of botanical vocabulary to naturalise identity as rooted in territory, Malkki (1992) argues that the construction of displaced and "uprooted" people as pathological is the result of a historical linguistic operation. The latter has situated sedentarism and immobility as the legitimate ground for (national) natural identities, metaphysically reinforced by specifically botanical metaphors. For instance, the notion of motherland explicitly constructs each nation as a genealogical tree, rooted in the fertile soil that nourishes its spirit; the less explicit logical implication is that it is impossible to belong to more than one tree.

The arborescent genealogical form of thought of nations and national identities has been pinpointed by Deleuze and Guattari, who have extensively worked on Western thought, criticising the relationship between the construction and the territorialisation of knowledge. Although I will get into more focussed comprehension of this process of epistemological genealogy in paragraph 2.1.4, it is important here to understand the importance of the recognition and domination identified by the two authors of the imaginary of the tree, the roots, and the foundations for much Western knowledge (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:18). Envisioning the arborescent conception of nation and the rootedness of culture in the national ground through the lens of the two philosophers is fundamental for reconsidering the relation of national states and stateless refugees as inherent of a purposely produced and hegemonic thinking perpetuated by the arborescent – rooted, therefore sedentary - nation state. Although refugees are not per se nomads, their condition of mobility and supposed temporariness automatically transforms into diversity – where diversity formulated within nationalist sedentary perspectives easily resonates with pathology.

Malkki (1992) stresses the role of much refugee literature in reinforcing the immanent condition of uprootedness of refugees with a process of essentialisation of refugees as "dangling roots". As such, they threaten to wither and their capacity of loyalty to a homeland erodes irreparably - therefore they are untrustworthy. The syllogism relies on the premise that culture is rooted, territorialised, and inherent to a specific place; hence, as refugees are

torn loose from their culture, eradicated and therefore anomalous if not pathological, they necessitate a spatial therapy. Refugee camps evidently materialise this: they are a technology of care and control, essentially power extended in space, for the management of "people out of place" (Malkki, 1992:34). Insight into the complexity of meaning and signification of the refugee camp is at the heart of the discussion of section 2.2. At this point though I wish to emphasise the relation of the refugee figure with spaces purposely delimited, designed, and constructed for them. Not all refugees reside or have ever experienced refugee camps; the UNHCR attests that out of 79.5 million refugees worldwide, 6.6 million live in refugee camps (UNHCRa, UNHCRb, online). Thus, refugee camps are not to be generalised as quintessential of every refugee experience; however, they are of great importance to the narrative of refugeedom and its problematic place in global debates.

The conceptual practice of space segmentation is a useful artifice to simplify by codifying and to enhance meaning. The case of refugee camps in this sense represents a spatial device deployed by nation states to immobilise mobile bodies, possibly provide them with humanitarian aid, and importantly keep them under surveillance (Agier, 2002, Oesch, 2020). This operation synthesises two simultaneous tensions. On the one hand, there is the visibility of refugees as externalities in a host state, on the other hand the emplacement of them in a temporary "home". The latter especially lends itself to be read through the botanical metaphor, once again, of grounding. From the sedentary nation state perspective, the territorialisation of the refugee "problem" through the instalment of camps resonates strongly with Appadurai's argument that anthropologists' writing about groups belonging to parts of the world distant from the metropolitan West have performed an incarceration of – in his case *native* - culture to certain places.

Appadurai (1988) retraces the genealogy of the idea of the native as the product of a history of ethnographic anthropological practice that has established the intellectual and moral confinement of native cultural units to specific locales. Researchers, anthropologists, and administrators' coming to observe the places of the "natives" have implied that the "native" is immobilised in that place by their belonging to it, where immobility is not so much physical but especially ecological. Their boundedness to a place is directly proportional to the circumstances and possibilities that the place permits, thus inscribing the ideological confinement of natives in the technological adaptation to the environment and material mastering of its concreteness. Evoking Levi-Strauss' terminology, Appadurai asserts that by representing natives as scientists of the concreteness of a place – the latter entailing the

specific flora, fauna, topology, economy, and settlement culture – they (natives) are thus produced as inherently attached to that place (1988:38). As a result of this ethnographically reinforced tradition of representation, natives seem to be constrained geographically by their own ontological and metaphysical dimensions rather than by necessity or circumstance. Interestingly for comparison with the refugee case, the author concludes by highlighting that the rhetorical power of the image thus created rests upon the capacity to create a credible link between the internal realities of the lives of the native, and external preoccupations and wider discursive needs of the metropolitan Western centres of production (or sponsors) of knowledge.

Similarly, once refugees are successfully stranded in the refugee camp – thus territorialising their refugee identity in an alien but legitimately and formally circumscribed space, technical and bureaucratic interventions enter the camp regularly and discipline the social organisation of the camp's internal landscape as much as its relationships with the exterior. The complex of social and humanitarian actors present inside the camp acts out the same role of the anthropologists critiqued by Appadurai: they observe and research the reality inside the camp, and formulate a mediated description of it for the exterior. In this sense, the refugee is created and produced by the modern technology of humanitarian relief: refugees inside camps are helpless victims of displacement, dependent on the modern infrastructure of aid (Harrell-Bond, 1986, Turner, 2006). Hence the refugee identity becomes grounded inside the camp, where the possibilities offered by the camp's ecosystem are presented as being the only available for people who do not belong – who do not have the membership to the national citizenship. The reduction of refugee life to bare life explored by Agamben (2000), conceiving refugees as essentially vulnerable to the biopolitical power both of the host nation and of the refugee camp's aid actors, underscores the interpretation of refugees being ecologically incarcerated in the camp by necessity and subsequently by adaptation. However, Bochmann (2018), inspired by Foucault's work on the disciplining role of prisons, posits that the dependency of refugee camp residents from the infrastructures of aid is not metaphysical nor imminent, rather it is the result of the prolongation of refugeedom over time. The scholarly approach that stemmed from Agambian takes of refugee lives are debated as attesting to the institutional articulation of refugees as passive recipients of aid (Ramadan, 2008). Much recent literature contests this by instead recognising refugees' agentful and resourceful ways of dealing with the constraints of life inside camps, developing economic activities, and maintaining

transnational relationships that perforate the geographical limits of the camp and its hosting nation (Aqra, 2018, Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska, 2019).

2.1.2 Refugee agency

This thesis' objective is to foreground an understanding of refugees' agency in shaping the environment they live in, the proposal of Bochmann (2018) to examine refugee camps' social orders from a micro-scale angle rests at the heart of this investigation. Although still considerate of the fundamental role played by the "humanitarian industry" inside refugee camps, the author illuminates the opening generated by interpersonal relations inside the camp as constructive of a much more complex matrix of power and sovereignties. By restituting centrality to the refugee and to their capacity to create possibilities inside the camp, the decomposition of the essentialised notion of refugee as rootless and a helpless product of displacement criticised by Malkki (1992) is completed. The agentful figure of the refugee whose identity is mobile but strategically adaptative, changing and situational, converses with the concept of rhizome that draws on a botanical vocabulary too, formulated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). According to the two authors "to be rhizomorphous is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:15). As refugees are understood by this point as conscious of their own stateless condition and of being guests of a foreign nation that disposes of them as pawns in bio- and geopolitical games, the analogy with the rhizome enhances the comprehension of refugees' strategic manipulation of their situation. By recreating roots in camps - simulating the same process by which nation states legitimise their own cultural identity and simultaneously confuting the equation between nativity and nationality that underpins them, refugees reconfigure the camp as a space for activity rather than passivity.

With specific reference to Lebanon, Dionigi (2017) compiles a comparative analysis of the diverse refugee communities that over the last century have arrived and settled there to explain their different experiences of the host nation. The author intersects the state specific social and historical character with three spheres (politicisation, religious identity, and socio-economic status) to assess the faded degrees of inclusion or segregation that Armenian, Kurd, Iraqi, Palestinian and Syrian refugees have achieved. The study reaches two important conclusions: firstly, that profiling the specific character of statehood, in this case of Lebanon, greatly enhances comprehension of the state-refugee relation as

multidimensional and much more complex than a crude binary opposition. Secondly, that in Lebanon the degree of politicisation of the different refugee groups has been fundamental in determining the degree of inclusion or segregation in the country, while religious identity and socio-economic status have been influential but not sufficient factors. Relevantly for the point emphasised above, by politicisation Dionigi refers to the "process of transition from humanitarian subjects as 'refugee' (mainly recipient of aid, characterised by 'needs') to a political agent who engages with political dynamics of the host country" (fn 10, 2017:116). The activation of the political agency of the refugee opens a fissure in the carefully knitted fabric of nation state sovereignty – quite spectacularly in the case of Lebanon whose state consolidation has been debatably friable (as will be evident from the historic and geopolitical context chapter 3). Although the Lebanese state has set in place an administrative and bureaucratic structure that denies access to national citizenship to refugee populations (exceptions are made for the longest present Armenians and Christian Palestinians), refugee groups have played crucial roles in recent modern national history, some of them often from specific places - the refugee camps (Ramadan and Fregonese, 2017).

Contextually, Sanyal (2014) advances the proposal to reconsider the theorisation of refuge from an architectonical perspective. Since the spatial configuration of refugees' emplacement in foreign sovereign states has acquired much more complex forms than that of formally installed refugee camps, interrogating the architecture of refugee spaces offers insight into the meanings of refugeedom. This angle allows us to visualise what being a refugee in interaction with the surroundings means from a situated point of view: that of the non-citizen refugee living in refugee places. As usually host nations negotiate the establishment of well bordered supposedly temporal refugee spaces with humanitarian agencies, the author points out that twenty first century camps have either merged with urban spaces or have come to mimic the architectural aesthetics of slums. She suggests that by illustrating the ways in which refuge policies leave space for the evolution of camps into slum-like places through informal practices. The appropriation by refugees of their own space represents a contestation to their extraneity to national citizenship by producing an urban citizenship.

Pertinently, Aqra (2018) coins the expression "agency of deconstruction" to encapsulate the urban citizenship imbued with political aspirations of individual Palestinian refugees in relation to everyday practices. Such agency is rooted in the person's perception of their

surroundings and the way they establish relations with it. It presupposes personal political and historical conditions which generate the impulse for unmaking predefined notions of space. By deconstructing function, history, and sociality of corners, windows, streets, borders, even totality, of the refugee camp and thus stripping it of preconfigured meanings, space is momentarily reduced to its abstract, absolute, mathematical form – which the refugee can then appropriate and invest with her own signification. In this instance of momentary appropriation where the refugee turns to herself – not the rest of the city dwellers, or to the other refugees – her agency illuminates the camp space with the promise of citizenship and a claim to rights.

A foundational aspect of the current thesis is understanding how the agency of deconstruction unfolds over time through formal and informal practices inside the camp. By this I mean understanding that individual's agency alters not only the physical space but also its moral, political, and social dimensions; the summation of the individual actions then generates a collective momentum that sensibly transforms the camp. Disputing descriptions of refugeedom offered by macroscopic reflections on the figure of the refugee and positioning of the refugee within world maps drawn by and representative of nation states, I focus more on the microscopic meaning and individual acts. Paying respect to Bochmann's work that successfully discloses the existence and importance of intra-camp relations, and adopting Aqra's focus on the individual prisms of refugee agency, I develop this work spanning between scales. Although the fieldwork and subsequent analysis examine a specific circumscribed refugee camp and the intertwinement of refugee lives with it and with each other, the discussion always remains sensitive to "the multiplicity of attachments that [refugee] people form to places through living in, remembering, and imagining them" (Malkki, 1992:38).

2.1.3 The multidirectionality of movement and overlapping displacements

The case of Shatila presents us with an extraordinarily rich plurality of cultural, ethnic, and political identities of refugee camp residents. Although great internal diversity is not unique to the Shatila camp, the case serves to shed light on the necessity of acknowledging and incorporating this plurality in discussions on refugee camps. Furthermore, it poses the question of how the diversity of identities among refugee camp residents has come to be a prominent characteristic of camps – as reported extensively by this and other ethnographic

research on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and pertains to many other camps around the world (Martin, 2015, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016, Yassin et al., 2016, Chamma and Zaiter, 2017). Tracking the historical regional context offers a clue as to how the camp of Shatila has transitioned from being a homogeneous Palestinian camp to a highly diverse space over the last three decades. An overview of the trajectories that led thousands of people to Shatila should encompass especially the internal displacements that resulted from the Lebanese civil wars and the conflict with Israel in 2006, the diaspora caused by the Iraq and Syria wars, but also economic migration from Syria and various parts of Asia. Although the notion of migration trajectory (Schapendonk et al. 2020) implies somehow the idea of linearity, it incorporates it within a more complete understanding of migration as made of segments pieced together by individual's experiences and narratives.

Mapping the multiple displacement trajectories that converge in one place – the refugee camp in this case - entails abandoning the conception of the latter as being an isolated space, and rather highlights its spatio-temporal relationality with the "outside" (see paragraph 2.2.3). The accumulation of displacements generated by intersecting conflicts, the protraction of the condition of exile (or displacement) condition, and the accessibility to the camp for consecutive waves of displaced people force us to reconsider camp residents. They are not only refugees responding to their own displacement through temporary emplacement, but also necessarily responding to the displacement of others. While this aspect of refugees' relationality to other refugees is the focus of in-depth reflections in paragraph 2.3, the attention is drawn here to what Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016, 2020) calls *overlapping displacements*.

Examining how the diaspora to Lebanon, not only of Syrian nationals, but also of the refugee groups that had resettled in Syria reminds us that secondary and tertiary displacement are common individual and collective experiences, the author identifies two intersecting dynamics of multiple displacements. First, refugees' journeys rarely have a linear trajectory that leads to safety and asylum; rather, they often experience displacement more than once in their lives – as individuals and as groups. This has been the case for instance for Palestinian and Iraqi refugees who had originally sought sanctuary in Syria but were displaced along with Syrian nationals by the 2011 war, thus experiencing once more displacement to Lebanon as well as to many other countries. Second, refugee groups who come to share the physical space of the camps with other displaced people, generate identities, practices, and behaviours in relation to other groups that literally embody an

overlapping of displacements. The author stresses that under certain circumstances the cohabiting, initially opposing, identities of “refugee-seeking-protection” and “refugee-offering-support” merge as membership to the camp and roles shift. The case of Baddawi camp in the North of Lebanon is exemplary in this sense: established in the 1950s as a Palestinian refugee camp with a population of 15,000 and now an integral part of the urban surroundings, it saw its residents double almost overnight in 2007 when the fighting between Fatah Al-Islam and the Lebanese army destroyed the nearby Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp. As a result of the destruction, its displaced refugee population poured into Beddawi where it was received and mostly settled (UNRWAa, online). While at the time this community could have been labelled as ‘internally displaced refugees hosted by refugees’, their position switched to that of hosts, together with the historically established refugee community, in receiving the people displaced from the Syrian conflict a few years later, including Palestinian and Iraqi refugees.

According to Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016), the multi-directionality of movements and the ongoing cycles of displacement just described unsettle general assumptions that refugees are guests of a host nation, where integration and segregation with the local population are the heart of problematic relations (see Carpi and Şenoğuz, 2018). Rather, fieldwork from within the camps unveils the dynamics at play in the encounters of newly displaced groups with established refugee groups of similar or different cultural, ethnic, and historical characteristics in spaces of refuge that they come to share. The author is suggesting a different perspective for comprehending spatialities of displacement and the blurred categories of host and guest that is appreciative of the situated positions of refugees and displaced people. Relationships between refugees hosting refugees are not to be idealised since they are also framed by power imbalances, processes of exclusion, and hostility (see Ramadan, 2008). Not everyone has the same access to spaces, services, and resources as this is dictated by an internal hierarchy founded on the fact that to offer hospitality entails “having always been there”, therefore having the power to delimit the space available to the Other. Although these tensions are common and perhaps inescapable, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) asserts that they are complexified further by external interventions that might challenge or disrupt refugee-refugee relations by creating differences and hierarchies.

Illustrating the case of Beddawi camp in Northern Lebanon again, the author points out that Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria can receive support and access resources provided by UNRWA in the camp – whose funding is increasingly strained by global

geopolitical string-pulling. On the other hand, non-Palestinian refugees arriving from Syria (among them Syrians, Iraqis and Kurds) are registered with UNHCR. This means they are entitled to a wider range of services and programmes, supported by the better funded UNHCR infrastructure, and importantly have the possibility to be referred for resettlement to third countries (we will see in the Discussion that this is a critical point). The separation of refugees based on national identity – Palestinians and non-Palestinians in this case - generates an artificial differentiation between people who were one "people" in Syria and have fled the same conflict. The important consequence is that they receive different forms of assistance and are entitled to different types of durable solutions for the condition of refugee. Similarly, some internationally funded assistance programmes of food vouchers heightened tensions between different groups in the camp: as they were handed out to Syrian refugees, the vouchers were only expendable in (Lebanese) stores outside the camp and not in shops inside the camp – run by Palestinians, Syrians and Kurds. While initially the arrival of people from Syria had enhanced some dynamic growth for the camp's local economy, subsequent external interventions like exclusivist food voucher schemes forcedly reconfigured relations inside it by creating ground for tensions (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020).

The case exemplifies that acknowledging and exploring the nature and implications of refugees' relationality inside and outside of the camp means recognising the consequences of overlapping displacement altogether are potentially asymmetric for individual and collective experiences. External humanitarian aid providers participate in highly visible ways with the power shuffling processes that generate them (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019). Interestingly in the case of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, they do so by separating refugee groups on the ground of national identity; in fact, as discussed previously, the very figure of refugee stems from the negation of membership to the national state they find themselves physically in. Additionally, awareness of ongoing cycles of displacement problematises further the assumption of refugees' national belonging – since refugees may construct multiple national identities at different stages of the migration in different localities, thus revealing the inadequacy of a nationality-based focus (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). However, also the mobilisation of hospitality and hostility by refugees for other refugees also highlights that relations inside camps are rarely linear and often politically interested. Meaningfully engaging with the agency of refugees and with the diverse shapes through which encounters of hospitality/hostility materialise is essential to decodify refugee-refugee relations as they unfold within overlapping processes of displacement, marginalisation, and precariousness. The discussion now turns to the theoretical

reconsideration of the processes at play just examined: the migration of meanings of host and guest revealed in light of overlapping displacements and the stratification of simultaneous perpetually dynamic identities of refugee camp residents.

2.1.4 Assemblages, nomadic territory, refugee identities and spaces

Directed by some of the literature cited so far, I thus turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to formulate a coherent lens of de-codification and a set of referential concepts that comprehensively underpin this thesis and guide the analysis of refugee relations and their extension in space. An engagement with the extensive work of the two celebrated authors is well beyond the scope of this thesis, where the ambition to bring in their ontological theory is not dismissed on the ground of its validity. Rather the theoretical methodological challenges that a full commitment to their thinking pose to the very process of "normal" writing – disregarded by them as inherently an act of representation of a dichotomic world, would make the act of writing very difficult, as verified by Hanley (2019). However, some concepts can be borrowed from the two authors' philosophy and applied at the epistemological level in social sciences and especially in dialogue with geography. Haesbaert and Bruce (2009) for instance offer a pivotal example of such an operation: in order to understand processes of deterritorialisation of human communities, the two authors engage with a discussion of the conceptual debt post-structuralist geography owes to Deleuze and Guattari in terms of theoretical enrichment to the discipline. It is therefore important to remember that Deleuze and Guattari's work overarches multiple domains of knowledge – from philosophy to semiotics, literature, psychoanalysis, and capitalism theory.

In order to elucidate the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, it is first necessary to formulate a coherent set of notions and dynamics that explain territory and the elements constituting the cognisable reality, which in dynamic dialectic generates territories. The assumption is a critique of the reduction of reality to dichotomies – conscious/unconscious, nature/history, body/soul. Hence, the two authors elaborate a theory of *multiplicities*, reality being a multiplicity in itself and composed of multiplicities where processes of totalisation and unification – processes that tend towards the one - are incorporated as inherent and in turn themselves productive of multiplicities. Elaborating on this axiomatic statement, the proposal is to understand thinking as the process of mapping

multiplicities, where the visualisation of this cartography pertains as much to transcendental objects as to material experience. Hence, there is no conscient central subject producing the map or hierarchy of order of the mapped concepts and elements. Thereby stands the idea of *rhizome*, briefly introduced above, which is in itself this cartography. Rhizome brings together multiplicity and heterogeneity with a botanical image that stands also for connectivity (of the elements) and capacity to reconfigure itself when a segment constituting it is ruptured or escapes (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The rhizome is activated by the encounter and interlacement of *assemblages*, by which they intend sets of components (a multiplicity) related with biological, social, imaginary, and gnoseological dimensions where their qualitative heterogeneity does not constitute an inconsistency but rather a continuity. Assemblages of beings and meanings organise according to territorial units that they demarcate, and which are the premises allowing to relate with other assemblages – therefore, assemblages are always territorial. By *territory*, Deleuze and Guattari understand the physically inhabited or experienced space as well as the system of symbolic cosmic flows perceived by a subject as their environment. Thus, territories are: synonyms of a complex of projections and representations produced by the assemblage; they pragmatically legitimate behaviours and investment of meanings; and they are executed through the appropriation of the symbolic meanings and the domination of the functionality of a space – whether it be social, cultural, aesthetic, or gnoseological (Haesbaert and Bruce, 2009:6).

The process of deterritorialisation simply is the abandonment of a territory and always occurs with the concomitant process of reterritorialisation, the latter being the construction of a new territory constituted by a newly configurated assemblage. The two processes are vectors of the metamorphosis of the physical and metaphysical space that subjects appropriate and relate to. For instance, in *Anti-Oedipus, capitalism and schizophrenia* (1972) Deleuze and Guattari retrace the genealogy of human organisation from pre-capitalist societies to the capitalist modern form of state and posit that the latter has coerced the largest deterritorialisation operation. By disrupting the deeply territorial relation of precapitalist societies with land, and re-codifying it in terms that organise space according to jurisdictional and administrative terms, modern states have not fixed humans to territory according to residency. Rather they have codified space as if it was an object – divisible and hierarchically organised in territories, regions, places - and inscribed humans in an imperial order dictated by the unitary state apparatus, intrinsically sedentary, problematically rooted. Deleuze and Guattari contest this construction of history and geography by

advocating for a way of thinking that is appreciative of the ubiquitous processes of de- and reterritorialisation that punctuate the rhizomatic movement of assemblages. Illuminating the nomadic nature of the system of immanent forms and transcendental meanings proper of rhizomorphous complexes is relevant for understanding the construction of refugee camps as inhabited by competing and/or sympathetic assemblages of refugee bodies, identities, and spaces. The codification of bodies' belonging and extraneity to certain national spaces; the construction of individual identities as the result of overlapping displacements and consecutive processes of uprooting and re-emplacement; and the extension in space of agentful refugee sovereignties and claims to resources, services, and infrastructures of the camp. All these dynamics gain augmented significance in the light of the conceptual but also transcendentally empirical proposal of Deleuze and Guattari. Keeping in mind the complexity of the set of notions presented and the thickness of their implications, I now propose to shift the gaze from the ontological description of refugees to a critical spatial understanding of refugee camps and reformulate them through the concept of *campscapes.*

2.2. Camps and campscape

Attention to refugee camps as spatial formations has a long history, testified by a very prolific literature tackling the concept from a variety of angles. By understanding refugee camps as temporary spaces where refugees may receive humanitarian relief and protection until a durable solution is proposed to their situation of exile, much has been said about them as spaces of hospitality, identity formation and negotiation, exception, insecurity and violence, economic relations, and discipline and governmentality (Ramadan, 2013). The notion of the camp often emerges as positioned in tension between two extremes: on the one hand, a site of exception at the margins of society that confines, controls, and filters; on the other hand, a space of active identity formation, empowerment, and resistance. In the following section, I propose to follow a geographical approach sensitive to the construction of space and place which contributes to defoliate the geopolitical discourses that have rendered camps modern spaces of biopolitical power where the sovereign state can reduce refugees to bare life (Agamben, 1998). The aim is to shift the emphasis to the other end of the spectrum, where the activation of camp lives and camp architecture lead us to consider a new spatial model referred to as *campscape*.

2.2.1 Camps as *spatialities*

Considering space as the interplay of physical geographic – at times architectural - structures that can be localised and mapped, and social practices that position individuals in relation to such structures, contextualises space as a dynamic force, constitutive and formative of the social relations that occur within it and in return shape it. Drawing from Lefebvre's urban theory writings complemented with subsequent social theory and critical geographic thinking, Grbac (2013) elaborates through this productive force of space – referred to as *spatiality,* to reflect on refugee camps. He points out how camps have been conceptualised as spatial formations supposedly temporal in nature whose function – the settlement of displaced individuals, is the reflection of geopolitical, historical, and philosophical orderings. Three contemporary thinkers guide the author in unveiling the formation of refugee camps at the intersection of history and geopolitics.

First is Hannah Arendt, who has mapped the history of camps, from their earliest use by imperialist countries, to their deployment as measures of containment for prisoners in wartime, to their institutionalisation as organs of terror in totalitarian regimes of the mid XX century. Arendt (1973) has located the emergence of camps as concurrent with the appearance of the refugee, caught between nativity – the inalienable right of humans, and nationality – the rights of the citizen of a state. As a result of their situation, the refugee loses place in their community, political status, and legal personhood, which renders them vulnerable to incarceration; although, despite being stripped of the qualities that make up citizenship, refugees maintain some aspects of humanity. Giorgio Agamben draws on the theme of the abstract nakedness of the humanity of refugees, stripped of all civic rights, to contextualise the birth of camps spaces as contingent on the moment of crisis of political systems - established on the relationship between territory, a determinate order (State), and governance (laws). As the nation state is no longer able to enforce order on its territory – evidenced by the daily life of refugee camps, it assumes direct care of the national biopolitics. It does so by incorporating the refugee camp within itself, thus becoming a state of exception where individuals are vulnerable to loss of rights and internment (Agamben, 1998). The Agambian genealogy of refugee camp spaces as the materialisation of the state of exception, as much as it has been widely referenced in refugee research, has the effect of trapping refugees in inaction – inert victims incapable of resisting and responding to the situation engendered by the camp itself (Grbac, 2013). The third thinker considered is Bauman (2001), who has asserted that camps represent a terrifying socially invented modern device. They embody the separation of action and ethics – achieved by the structure

of modern society, where non-cruel law-abiding citizens could commit, or permit, the pursuit of a modern state's order that has been shown to be inhuman towards others.

For Grbac, the constitution of camps through the work of the three authors offers insight into their nature as contested sites of being and belonging, recognition and encounter, death and destruction, imbued with meaning and narrative. However, worldwide instances of protracted refugee situations and the expansion and development of refugee spaces as a result of this prolongation call for integrating the philosophical approach just outlined with the need to rethink these spaces in dialogue with the city. In fact, more than half of the refugees worldwide are urban refugees, whose presence and visibility in urban environments makes cities an important framework and interlocutor for interrogating displacement and its unfolding throughout the process of emplacement (Sanyal, 2014).

2.2.2 Camp as hybrid urban spaces

The implication of refugee camps with urban environments - spaces characterised by accumulation of capital, a regulated economic-political life, and the reproduction of everyday social relations - opens the ground for reconsideration. Under such a lens, camps can be understood as city-like complexes of social arrangements and economic activities occurring in non-city-like architectures of makeshift urbanism. Grbac makes reference to Agier's work to engage with the conceptualisation of the camp as city. Agier (2002) draws from ethnographic work from Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya to highlight that camps are places of production and reproduction onto space of spatial symbolics relating to the projection of everyday desires and needs of refugees. This is attested, for instance, by the toponomy of camps: in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon different sections of the camps are named after the village of origin in historic Palestine the first refugee families settling there were from (Peteet, 2005, Sayigh, 2007). Secondly, despite the material and at times legal constraints to economic activity and labour market, camps generate social stratification – refugee NGO workers, small entrepreneurs, and recipients of basic aid showcasing three of the most intuitive levels of this hierarchy. And thirdly, the camp allows for the construction and negotiation of ethnic and non-ethnic identity, strengthening particularisms it enhances anti-ethnic behaviours and inter-ethnic exchange (Agier, 2002).

Assuming Agier's conceptualisation of the camp brings forth the hybridity of refugee camps as responding to the shelter and settlement needs of refugees on the shape of cities. The

crystallization of the camps' peculiar time-space dimension and of the condition of their inhabitants in semi-permanent solutions harnesses problematic weight: it symbolically (temporarily) accepts the unsolved questions as to why refugees find themselves displaced in the first place. Nonetheless, as temporariness transforms into 'transient permanency', refugees come to metabolise this shift by reproducing their own normality, acting upon the built environment, changing its structure, expanding its extension, turning it into city-like structures. However, the alternative space thus formulated falls short of realising expectations of citizenship that a city offers, and simultaneously remains myopic to the potential political engagement that can stem from refugee camps. Ramadan (2013) engages with Agier's shortcoming by awakening us to the socio-spatial practices of Palestinian refugees living in camps in Lebanon that unfurl in the suspended temporality of the extraordinary permanently impermanent Palestinian exile. The author asserts that the liminality of living in temporary features of the geopolitical landscapes has not precluded the development of strong internal political, social, and cultural life of the camp. Rather, remaining perceptive to the continuing rupture of time and space endured by refugee lives, the camp explicitly manifests itself as an architectural construct that bears the signs of trade-offs between temporary settlement and necessary emplacement as displacement is prolonged. For instance, the cramped multiple storey buildings and jungle of hanging electricity wires that blanket the streets are punctuated by a landscape of symbolic affectionate references to historic Palestine: the flag, the *kuffiyah*, photographs of the Dome of the Rock mosque, are ubiquitously on display inside camps.

Multiple ethnographic and historical analyses of the housing development of refugee camps in Lebanon have focused on this tension; especially since it has generated practices of homemaking that have to ambiguously negotiate with the political symbolic meaning of seemingly permanent settlement in exile (Doraï, 2010, Sanyal, 2011, Abourahme, 2015, Aqra, 2015). It is important to remember that for 70 years Palestinians in refugee camps of Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria consistently refused the permanence of displacement and fortressed in a culture of temporary exile that reinforced the disengagement with place. However, *emplacement* for Lems (2016) is a combination of place-making strategies to start feeling at home again that create a relationship – however conflictual and unresolved, with the new place. For Palestinian refugees, part of the process has been to physically construct a home, which reinforces the very process of being in place, thus postulating 'building not just as a means toward dwelling but it is in itself already to dwell' (Lems, 2016:328). In the case of the Palestinian diaspora, the prolongation of the exile strained the contradiction

between longing for the lost homeland and initiated necessary protoforms of emplacement and place-making. Therefore, in peculiar forms related with the extended temporal dimension, Palestinian refugees and camp dwellers 'domesticated' the built environment by self-urbanising it. First, solving the accommodation needs entailed upgrading the UNRWA tents of the '50s to make zinc roof huts. Subsequently, the camp's architecture evolved further through the stealthy erection of concrete houses by encroaching horizontally within the camps' boundaries until the land's surface was saturated – cut through only by very narrow alleys. Finally, the vertical unregulated development of buildings for accommodating increasing camp populations intensified the camps' heavy atmosphere, that now spills out in the surrounding, aesthetically identical, informal settlements inhabited by heterogeneous populations of marginalised communities (low-income or internally displaced Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Bangladeshi, among others) (Martin, 2015, Chamma and Zaiter, 2017).

For Ramadan (2012), comprehending the unfolding of these spatial practices and how their tangible materiality harnesses meanings and appropriates cities reaffirms the spatiality of camps, their creative force, and crucially their political significance. The form that simultaneously keeps all these intensities together is precisely that of assemblage. Seeing through the lens of assemblages enables the disassembling of bordered thinking, and to recognise the tense balance between consistent sets of elements whose limits are fuzzy and with an uncontainable tendency towards de- and reterritorialisation. In this sense, urban assemblages convey a significant foundation to recognise cities as a metamorphic multiplicity assembled at concrete sites of urban practice through processes of becoming of heterogeneous collectives (Legg, 2011:131). The same logic meaningfully and coherently makes sense of refugee camps too: the notion of urban assemblage elastically connects camps' buildings, refugee individuals' homes, humanitarian aid actors, fragmented and competing sovereignties, city-like infrastructures, refugee identities, and their projections in space through action. It also incorporates the micro and macro processes of continuous metamorphosis of each one or simultaneously some of these elements. The refugee camp thus ceases to be a humanitarian artefact, a space of relief provision; it rather presents an open-ended relation with the urban as a reference, as expectation, and often as its physical continuum (Sanyal, 2017, Oesch, 2020).

2.2.3 The *campscape* – a liquid camp

By appropriating characteristics of the city, such as developed infrastructures, electricity, roads, and most importantly concrete buildings, refugee camps in Lebanon have become mimetic spaces where social life, power geometries, and spatial organisations take form in unique configurations. This appreciation of refugee camps illuminates the flexibility between camp spaces and the surrounding area, the movement of people between the two, and the consideration of these elements as constituents of a social and physical unity, produced by a variety of actors. Martin (2015) contends that this unity is constituent of a peculiar urban landscape formation she refers to as *campscape.*

The author retraces the genealogy of the refugee camp of Shatila – and seemingly many others, to problematise the utilisation of legal references in the creation of the state of exception, and the delimitation of what is camp, based on the separation refugee/citizen. The story of the camp taps into the history of urbanisation in the city of Beirut (see chapter 3 for detail), where the Lebanese authorities' disengagement with the peripheries has enhanced the intermingling of the Palestinian camp with the urban sprawl made of more to less formal settlements of other marginalised city dwellers. The author notices that broadly in Palestinian camps in the Middle East the "exception" seems to have 'leaked out', invested the surrounding areas, and thus created a continuity of urban fabric. Yet the legal differentiation remains evident for it formally determines different systems of governance. As camps are considered "legal", camp residents are not exposed to eviction and buildings are not at risk of demolition every day; city dwellers squatting in adjacent areas live instead under these constant threats. Along the same legal track, the formal recognition of the refugee figure excludes all other categories of outcasts of the nation state, who are thus not entitled to humanitarian assistance. However, this formal distinction has not disincentivised the rhizomatic movement of refugees and other marginalised communities. Camps could not keep their shape any longer, since both the legal exceptionality and political independence of Palestinian camps gained after the Cairo Accords (1969) have contributed largely to attract also segments of non-refugee communities looking for legal invisibility and cheap housing (Martin, 2015). The physical and demographic expansion that turned Shatila into a 'liquid' camp that cannot contain refugees and exception any longer has neutralised legal boundaries, and evidenced the lack of solid borders that close off camps from their surroundings. It also indicates once more that the representation of 'camps' as isolated impermeable geographies is a limited conceptual tool to describe reality.

Martin (2015) examines in depth the case of Shatila, where the poorest Lebanese, Palestinian refugees and other groups of migrants living together in the same topography at the edge of the state's concerns have created a heterogeneous landscape of exception and exclusion characterised by deprivation, but also by a flourishing informal economy. For instance, food, housing, and health care being cheaper inside camps, whilst construction materials being only available outside them, the two supposedly separate spatialities in fact are entrenched with one another daily through trade. Moreover, visiting friends and family and commuting to work, residents of outside and inside the camps regularly cross the invisible boundaries, further illuminating the porosity of these boundaries (Doraï, 2010). Hence, a net of transactions, materials, favours, and mutual recognition that defies the planning and imaginary of refugee camps situated in opposition to the space around them emerges. Martin (2015) thus proposes that we speak of a *campscape,* in appreciation of the difficulty in localising the space of exception and refugee camp. She coined the term drawing from the popular theory of global cultural flows formulated by Appadurai (1996:33) where he suggests that:

> *"The suffix -scape allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes [...] These terms with the common suffix -scape also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors".*

The metaphoric reference to the liquidity of thinking through *campscapes* enhances the detachment from bordered thinking where space is an object divided in hermetic sections – exception inside the camp, citizenship outside the camp – and where the static identities of uprooted refugees and urban citizens do not make sense anymore. Rather, camps and their surroundings come to compose an irregular and unpredictable rhizomatic complex whose filaments sprout out of the lived experiences of refugees with layered identities, stemmed from overlapping displacements, and other communities living at the edges of the state. *Campscape* incorporating exception and exclusion and lifting the attention from their gravity to understand refugee camps as laboratories of politics at the margins, it provides the argumentative space to illuminate the 'terrain of habitation, livelihood and politics' of the excluded and to activate their agency in disassembling and reassembling materiality and meanings of the camp*(scape)* assemblage (Martin, 2015:16).

2.2.4 Urban development of camps as *gray spacing*

Finally, I believe it is important to examine briefly the role of state institutions in allowing such irregular formations as the *campscape* to develop. Oesch (2020) draws from his fieldwork in Al Hussein Palestinian camp in Amman, Jordan, to reflect on the process of urbanisation of the refugee camp which has achieved the perfect aesthetical and material camouflage with its surrounding space. According to the author, critical refugee camps literature (Malkki, Agier, Sanyal) has focused on makeshift urbanism and the improvised tactics of camp dwellers whose performance aims at maintaining the ambiguity of the camp as a permanent temporary urbanising space. He argues the urbanism of the camp is not solely the urban assemblage resulting from refugees' and camp residents' practice of informality, embodiment of agency, and disjointed planning policies; but rather, some coherent institutional urban planning takes part in the process too. The assumption stands in respect of the two geopolitical imperatives: camps being the marker of refugees' struggle and of their supposedly transient condition, they are not meant to develop normally or in ways that imply leaving behind their symbolism. However, state and non-state as well as camp residents are willing to improve the camp structure and infrastructure, for a variety of case-specific reasons (Oesch, 2020:350). For instance, camp dwellers care about the improvement of their living conditions as evidently the exile prolongs; the city authorities care to develop the place as it may be located at the heart of the city's buzzing traffic and economy. The contradiction between the two forces is strained by the constant growth of the camp population, the need to accommodate it, and to upgrade the infrastructures serving it, while perpetuating a character of temporariness. The equilibrium between the opposing drives is resolved by a heterogeneous set of state, non-state, and camp actors that has concerted an improvised form of urban planning disguised as "improvements" of infrastructures, and whose shape and effect is that of rendering the process of urbanisation and the agents involved invisible.

The logic of improvement in the case of Al Hussein camp served the Jordanian government and UNRWA to implement transformations for the "rehabilitation" of the camp that did not compromise the symbolism defended by the refugees of the right to return (Oesch, 2020:361). The author stresses on attributing the merit to the actors involved for consciously or unconsciously achieving urban planning by combining performance and resourcefulness, holding in tension structure and agency, constantly reinventing forms of urban planning that can be acceptable to camp residents while attaining urban development goals. Oesch' work contributes to enriching the understanding of camps as the socio-

material assemblage of camp dwellers' practices enacted in tandem with state and non-state actors' policies and strategies. The latter are not just representative of the enforcement of nation state or state of exception orderings, but they are also responsive interlocutors of the camp. The case of Shatila presents the situation where this tandem is flawed by lack of effective dialogue and interaction. As argued by Martin, despite the physical proximity of the camp to the centre of Beirut and its complete incorporation in the peripheral ring, the strategy of state authorities has been that of withdrawal.

Yiftachel (2015) notices that urban regimes characterised by the removal of resources away from social causes have often highlighted a growing fragmentation and internal rivalries between the local groups who struggle for those shrinking resources. In fact, in privatising neoliberal urban economies that confine minority and lower-income groups to inferior citizenship status, the latter resort to informality as a mode of urbanism and citizenship – a theme already dealt with above. Yiftachel speaks of *gray spacing* to refer to the pervasive existence of informality resulting from structural processes, by which urban assemblages of bodies, developments, and transactions constituting the informality position themselves. The conceptual as well as physical *gray space* they occupy rests on the edge of full membership, recognition, permissibility, and safety on the one hand, and exclusion, denial, demolition, and eviction on the other (2015:731). That is to say, within the power geometry of contemporary urbanity and official structures, gray spaces are opened by marginalised groups that propose life styles defeating the radar of planning and immigration regimes by harnessing the instability of their informal assemblages and the retreat of state presence.

The author assumes the perspective of the marginalised groups to point out that, in the process of *gray spacing,* such groups exposed to the price of space deterioration build a shield of urban defensiveness in the attempt to fend off newcomers to their localities and resources. These types of local identity strategies that Yiftachel labels "defensive urban citizenship" deployed for the defence of the group's modest resources, will emerge in variegated forms in the analysis of the current ethnographic work. Also Darling (2017) suggests that the urban space being an arena for the politicisation of refugees, the potential for activism is engendered by the refugees and becomes manifest in the assertion and defense of rights and space through the simple act of presence. Mindful of the sensitivity of the Lebanese context of widespread corruption, elitist political order, highly volatile economy, and neoliberalised care, the relations between different marginalised communities unfolding within the examined *campscape* will draw significantly from

awareness of defensive urban citizenship. Predictably, competition over space and scant resources inflects these relations; however, a critical take on hospitality relations offers the width of vision to rethink these interactions as more complex than idealised.

2.3. Hospitality, migrant infrastructure

Consideration for the political agency of refugees, especially within the material and ideological limits of refugee camps, allows us to shed light on the construction of a social order of the camps and its workings that defeat the barriers posed by understandings of camps as spaces of exceptions and containment of bare life. Rather they come to be understood as places where a swarming social activity takes place and orders life from within. As argued by Bochmann (2018), camps cannot thus be assumed to be governed by a single logic; rather they are figured as sites where institutional bureaucratic structures intersect with human creativity and with the power emanating from residents' practices. For the author, the fact camp residents are part of the processes creating, maintaining, and reinforcing camp micro-structures for the accomplishment of an internal order is not just the expression of their agency and its mobilisation for the advancement of personal or collective interests. It also responds to the essential incompleteness of humanitarian and state orders and instructions for the camp, no matter how well or badly written and designed they are (Bochmann, 2018:18). From this perspective, the internal organisation of refugee camps results from the reconfiguration of camp members' assemblages: the investment of meanings and the reach of their action expand from their everyday life objects, self-constructed spaces, and metaphysical identities, to also the repairing of the shortcomings of humanitarian structures.

2.3.1 Refugee hospitality, refugee humanitarianism

Focusing on the local accomplishment of order through the complementing of provision of aid and care from within the camp entails revisiting the complexity of the internal social differences, cited in the paragraph on overlapping displacements. As already illustrated, the experience of multiple cycles of displacements and the consequent overlapping of different communities of displaced people in spaces of asylum enriches the complexity of relations inside *campscapes.* By looking at the Beddawi camp in North Lebanon, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

(2016) identifies the multiple generations of incomers to the camp, and distinguishes between “new refugees” and “established refugees”. She stresses the fact that the interviewed participants confirmed that since the onset of their migratory journeys, the “new refugees” had identified the Palestinian camp as their destination. Despite the extreme poverty, camps are perceived by newcomers as safer and cheaper than any of the national spaces available outside. Two points are raised here: there is something that Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon can offer that as modest and violent as they may be they are preferred by newly displaced refugees; and that the overlapping of different generations of displacement in the camp generates refugee-refugee encounters through the process of receiving, welcoming, and hosting. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016, 2020, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh, 2018), who has engaged extensively with host refugees in her research, warns us against the danger of idealising refugee-refugee hospitality. An analysis of these relations has to be contextual to the power imbalances and process of exclusion and hostility at work in the camp, that at times are reflected in the micro structure and the social hierarchisation of the camp itself.

In the camp in fact, not everyone has the same access to spaces, services, and resources as this is dictated by an internal hierarchy founded on the fact that to offer hospitality entails “having always been there”, therefore having the power to delimit the space available to the Other (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). The ambivalence of this relation is articulated in terms of othering: hospitality is a profoundly human behaviour, where the host opens their space and home to the guest unconditionally, welcoming the unexpected and uninvited visitor. However, in the very moment that they offer hospitality, a power asymmetry is produced. Any offer of hospitality presupposes that the host remains the “master” of the house (in our case the camp), maintaining sovereignty over its limitations and conventions. Hence, offering hospitality inescapably implies some degree of politics of limitation, conditionality, and sometimes hostility and a hierarchisation of host and guest. In the case of refugee camps, the unexpected aspect is that the Self (host) and the Other (guest) are both refugees, displaced people, non-citizens excluded by the order ruling outside the camp (FiddianQasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh, 2018).

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) speaks of ‘refugee humanitarianism’ to frame the role displaced people play as providers of care and support for other members of the camp, challenging the dependence of refugee camp members on INGOs, UN agencies, states, and the solidarity of private citizens. The blurred categories of “established refugees” providing and “new

refugees" receiving hospitality are inscribed in the tracks of diversity as we remain mindful that the effect of overlapping displacements is generating hybrid identities not just through the diversity of each individual lived experience, but also as ethnic, religious, and cultural stratifications are diverse. The encounter of these heterogeneous Selves and Others is not necessarily the potential site for friction or hostility *per se*; rather, as a consequence of gray spacing and long lasting geopolitical processes the hosting communities often already live in contexts of precarity and economic marginalisation which constrains their capacity to receive and activates their defensive urban citizenship. Carpi and Şenoğuz (2018) crucially dismantle the application of the discourse of hospitality as a measure to assess the host's generosity or hostility, where hospitality seems to have become inherently tied to morality rather than relating to the material capacity of the local population to welcome refugees. Interestingly, the two authors point out that between the rural Lebanese community of Akkar and the Syrian displaced people informally settled there – both characterised by a high degree of deprivation - the degree of spontaneous hospitality has been inversely proportional to the neoliberalisation of hospitality in the region. The latter process refers to the fact that international humanitarian organisations and UN agencies handed out renewable financial incentives to support Lebanese families that were receiving cash in order to provisionally accommodate Syrian refugees (2018:5). However, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020:408) stresses that refugee-refugee hospitality does not only entail the provision of basic needs – such as shelter and material resources – but also the organisation of social and material resources for local-level rituals. The author explains this through a concrete case observed: donations are collected across the camp population during Ramadan for preparing food baskets to distribute to the families identified with the most precarious livelihoods – to ensure they have food for the break of the fast, irrespective of their place of origin. The exemplification serves to assert that established camp residents' responses to newcomers does not necessarily pass through a material exchange. Private acts of kindness, offering moral support, and the simple acceptance of sharing the same camp belong to the discrete modes of assistance and practice that powerfully counterpoint the preference of humanitarian aid for hyper-visible logos and displays.

To comment a bit further on the act of hospitality, Carlier (2020) has focussed on the point of view of refugees receiving urban hospitality, and thus raised questions around the characteristics that make a temporary refuge a desirable place to dwell in while waiting - to move forward, to get on with their lives, or to go back. Drawing from her experience working with urban refugees in Brussels, she has noticed asylum seekers and refugees valued the

security of sticking together and use concentration as tactic of safety. The rendition of hospitality also requires that refuge spaces to be capable of sheltering privacy: urban refugees' ecology counted on enclosed places that protect them from institutional hardships, police violence, and the daily hardships deriving from being resourceless. Hence, urban refugees tended to take sanctuary in places like humanitarian hubs, as they provide basic services, the possibility to inhabit some space in an otherwise often hostile city environment, and provide respite from public visibility – perceived as exposure to risks and denial of dignity. As mentioned before, urban refugees by nature of their situation escape the radar of geographical localisation – as they do not make reference to a camp location (see Malkki, 1992, Darling, 2017). By virtue of this dispersion the tendency registered by Carlier seems even more relevant, as places of service provision generate a gravitational force not strictly exclusive to camp dwellers. Rather they extend beyond the porous borders of the camp and catalyse the interconnectedness already widely activated between the inside and outside of camps, reinforcing the need to look at the refugee ecology as a complex and organic *campscape.*

2.3.2 *People as Infrastructure*, migrant infrastructure and transaction economy

Thus, conscious of internal hierarchies dictated by the accumulation of different "generations" of arrivals, wary of romanticising the nature of refugee-refugee hospitality, alert to the fact that refugees are providers of support for their own and others' displacement, and understanding hospitality as an important manifestation of refugee everyday practices, it is important to illuminate the ecology of hospitality relations as constitutive of a social infrastructure that underpins the organisation of space within the *campscape*. To accomplish this operation, I draw from two works on urban marginality and the development of vibrant economies that formulated urban citizenship from the margins through an interplay of subordination, resistance, and alternativity in deprived urban settings (Simone, 2004, Hall et al., 2017). This is perceptible at the very level of the street, revelatory of the ways that marginalized city dwellers access and reconfigure resources, through economic and social relations played out in the street, in contexts of social and civic inequality and a receding state. The authors call these visible forms of transaction, enterprise, and gratuitous care a 'transaction economy', where the dynamic materiality of street businesses and housing conditions reflects the intersection of economic and civic

resources replacing official state provision. The argument strongly resonates with Palestinian refugee camps where decades of discriminatory marginalisation have not seen camp residents as only helpless victims of their exile but also resourceful agents, acting upon their environment for the assertion of dignity and the imbuement of actions and spaces with a range of meanings.

The first work considered explores the notion of infrastructure – commonly understood as a reticulated system of pipes, highways, and cables – as the urban social articulation of economic and cultural potentials activated by people with limited means (Simone, 2004:407). Taking the case of Johannesburg, South Africa, the author illustrates that the livelihoods and transactions of low-income city dwellers stem from their capacity to navigate across a broad range of spatial and economic positions, and in so doing problematise and disrupt fixed territories in the city. For the author the conjunction of heterogeneous objects, spaces, people, and practices making up the infrastructure are essentially producing a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city. However, such conjunctions re-elaborate the urban landscape through a mix of the capacity of improvisation and the bending of the articulation and function of space (residing, buying, selling) in an incessant process of conversion of commodities, resources, places, and bodies to previously unimaginable or limited uses. The underscoring drive is to bring together diversified social compositions with individual capacities and needs, to produce the maximal outcome from minimal resources – a reticulated process that he calls *people as infrastructure* (Simone, 2004:411). As he contends, migrants from countries all across Africa that meet in Johannesburg, all equally at the margins of the urban society, set up economic and social collaborations in more to less illegal trades consolidating along the lines of common national identity. However, inter-ethnic entrepreneurial collaborations form, as the skills and networks that each immigrant group can provide to the ensemble of joint forces constitute a larger margin of social and economic advantage than if every ethnic and national grouping compartmentalised their activities.

Relevantly for communities marginalised by urban policies and national regimes of discrimination, *people as infrastructure* illuminates the necessity of fragmented migrant groups to create interdependencies between each other that substitute modes of solidarity and familiar spaces they left behind or were uprooted from. For Simone (2004), this process produces an economy of transactions and interactions that unfold within a complex geography of the city made of territories and ethnic control, to which each migrant is finely

tuned and navigates attentively. The city becomes a plurality of coding systems – which places belong to and are controlled by whom, which places certain people can go to or can be seen going – where every resident has a systematised understanding of these codes. Thus, they are able to recognise the spaces, activities, flows, and structures, which represent their energy, their interest, their protection, and their useful networks. The disarticulation of the urban space for the recodification of it to new uses and economies, and the dispersion of *people as infrastructure* across the urban texture amplify the complexity of the urban terrain. Also, they occupy and illuminate the *gray space* appropriated and reclaimed within the structural conditions of receding state resources and attention.

The concept of transaction economy and the emergence of people as infrastructure has been expanded in the work of Hall et al. (2017) who have adopted the vision of informal and marginal economies proposed by Simone to explain how marginalised city dwellers come to reconfigure street layouts and appearance. The authors engage with the street dimension to investigate the very tangible and everyday ways resources are accessed and reconfigured by groups cast outside the dominant national and urban registers, by navigating an interplay of constraints and circumventions dictated by those same registers. Two main observations demand attention: that each street showcases a consortium of aesthetics, affinities, and goods connected to wider geographies revelatory of the migration trajectories of their residents; and that the infrastructure upholding the streets are a hybrid repertoire of civic resourcefulness and economic experimentation that range from unpaid labour, to cooperative organisation, to translocal networks of remittances. The first point gives to the under-resourced urban streets with growing migrant populations a historical and geographical horizon that translates into a global sense of local space through the crossover of cultural identities, their projection on the aesthetics of shop signs, and the display of multilingual services. The second point relates directly with the idea of agency and social and civic organisation from below: within the transaction economy emerges a system of infrastructures of care and services set up by migrants' own initiative to respond to migrant needs. These activities may intersect with entrepreneurial activities, but work beyond the scope of economic value as they fill the gap left by the withdrawal of local state resources from welfare and social infrastructures. The 'migrant infrastructures' made by the local residents themselves activate a variety of resources at times secular, at times religious, some gratuitous, some in the form of entrepreneurial activity. The authors identify the polyfunctionality of places of worship as they cater food and other forms of assistance for the religious and non-religious neighbourhood community. Other instances are represented

by shops selling a certain type of commodity while also serving as spaces of assistance for the filling up of immigration documents; or shops specifically targeted for the achievement of accreditation (mainly linguistic and professional) that enhance access to different forms of citizenship (Hall et al, 2017:1317).

Looking at marginalised urban spaces through everyday life and practices that make up migrant infrastructures and that materially shape the spatial layout of these contexts fosters a comprehension of the urban citizenship and participation in solving shared problems. Migrant infrastructures critically assert that life at the fringes of the formal city has developed far beyond strategic survival and invisibility; the reformulation of migrants' relationalities, the recalibration of spaces far from the attention of the city, the organisation of an order that allows and supports livelihoods, they powerfully convert subordination into alternativity and autonomy. If understanding the dynamics of hospitality is fundamental for meaningfully engaging with the establishment of intra-camp relations, migrant infrastructures draw the backbone of the development of these relations on the mould of a matrix of exchange, materiality and space. In the analysis of the *campscape* of Shatila, where the temporal and spatial construction of a thickly layered complex of bodies, practices, buildings, and symbols present a significant intersection of heterogeneous multiplicities, appreciation of both types of relations will guide the unveiling of Shatila's residents' activation of latent resources and creative construction of structures.

3. Research approach, context and methods

The first section of the chapter outlines the regional geopolitical context to the research, where the generation of a large population displaced by the Syrian war has added strain to the already unstable equilibriums of the region (Figure 2). The second section illustrates the Lebanese response to the Syrian displacement, which disproportionately affects poor Syrians by essentially forcing them into the status of illegal migrants through prohibitive migration policies. Subsequently, the "field" of the fieldwork is introduced through a historical overview and the presentation of its social components, and the participants of the ethnography are profiled according to biographic information that remain relevant for the interpretation and discussion of the results. The chapter presents also methodological considerations, where the choice for an ethnographic approach and the importance of counter cartographic practices for the corroboration of the fieldwork are illustrated.

3.1. Historical and geopolitical context

Lebanon is quite uniquely defined by a political system based on confessionalism, where statehood and religious identity have come to be interlaced during its most recent history. Dionigi (2017) encapsulates the formation of the Lebanese State in the twentieth century, to explain how after the end of the French Mandate in 1943 the configuration of the Lebanese political community was compelled to distribute power based on confessionalism. Accordingly, the sectarian distribution of offices concerned the Christian Maronites and Sunni groups in the parliament, government, and state bureaucracy; however, it consolidated the country's divisions rather than synthesising them. In fact, since the power-share agreement is (still) based on a 1932 Census, unrepresentative of the demographics of the country, the fragmentation of society and of the political groups along the lines of confessionalism has corroborated the frictions that led to the Civil War. The preservation of confessional proportions has been at the heart of the political elites' efforts, where Christian Maronite groups have historically maintained a privileged position, despite the diversity of other religious presences (Sunni, Shi'a, Druze, Jews, and other Christian groups). Understanding that Lebanon is a state where confessional politics and an exclusive political community frame the internal and foreign policy of the country, importantly informs the analysis of the reaction to the establishment of Palestinians and the influx of Syrian refugees – both overwhelmingly Sunni groups. The reactionary response is thus re-dimensioned by

the notion of sectarian proportions the Christian elites are set to maintain (Dionigi, 2017). The following paragraphs propose a historical overview that is tailored to cover the events and processes that illuminate the issues further developed in this thesis, hence remains a partial account of approximately the last seven decades.

3.1.1 Recent history of Lebanon

Since the military operations led by the Israeli forces to sweep away the Arab population from 73% of the land of historic Palestine to create space for the Jewish nation in 1948 (Said, 1987:104), displaced Palestinians have fallen under the protection of the specially dedicated United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA). The agency granted them a unique refugee status and was invested with a mandate of welfare and relief: it set up 62 refugee camps for Palestinian refugees in Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, it provided food rations, and as the exile from the lost homeland prolonged it built schools and hospitals inside the camps (Kagan, 2010). About 100,000 Palestinians initially found protection in Lebanon, mostly in the 16 established camps catered for by the UNRWA. Of these, 12 still formally exist that have (registered) Palestinian population reaching 240,000, whilst as many (registered) Palestinian refugees live outside them (Sanyal, 2011). Initially, the camps in Beirut were spontaneously set up on land donated by the Orthodox church (such as in the case of Mar Elias and Dbayyeh) or by a landowning family (in the case of Shatila); they lay outside the urban area, in proximity of antecedent Armenian refugee camps, thus creating a puzzle of spaces of temporary containment, separate from the city to prevent integration. However, in the following years the hope to quickly reach a political solution to the Palestinian exile evidently started fading, forcing the residents of the camps to turn temporariness into a 'transient permanency' – without renouncing their right to return to the homeland: camps evolved, expanded, developed city-like structures, and Palestinian refugees began the process of emplacement by reproducing their own normality (Agier 2002).

In the 50s the urbanisation of the peripheries, due to migration of majority Shi'tes Lebanese to the capital from the rural areas, gave shape to an urban continuum of slum-like informal settlements and refugee camps. The camps filled the space between Beirut and the surrounding villages, providing home for the growing low-income population, thus forming what Martin (2015:13) calls the 'misery belt'. Additionally, the ongoing displacement from the territories occupied by Israel, and the natural demographic growth of the Palestinian

refugee community, was straining the equilibrium of the peculiarly sectarian character of Lebanese society, and consequently its politics. For instance, the Lebanese government, which from the beginning had been uncomfortable with the presence of a majority Muslim refugee community constituting about ten percent of the total population in Lebanon, increasingly saw with hostility the consistent influx of Muslim populations (Peteet, 1996, Haddad, 2000, Sanyal, 2011). In order to discourage the population growth, the Lebanese authorities denied Palestinian refugees the access to public education, limited their right to work by excluding them from the practice of skilled labour (ILO and CEP, 2012:101), and withheld the option to gain Lebanese citizenship (Dionigi, 2017). Furthermore, in the attempt to contain the physical expansion of the camps, the Lebanese issued a ban on construction inside the camps that aimed to jeopardise the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon (Halabi, 2004, Hanafi and Long, 2010, Smith, 2004). The UNRWA could still distribute tents and sell extra tents to growing families; however, structures that might suggest permanence were prohibited.

Things changed dramatically in 1969, when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) evacuated from Jordan and established in Lebanon by concluding an informal negotiation with the government known as Cairo Agreement. According to the agreement, the governance of the camps now lied within the powers of the PLO and the Popular Committees that spontaneously formed, while the UNRWA still featured as an international supposedly neutral actor in the camps' internal politics. The literature presents an abundant collection of Palestinian refugees' stories about the first generations of refugees stealthily transforming the tents from the inside into small houses. They built mud walls inside the tents and closed them with zinc rooftops, recycling the UNRWA food tin cans. Under the protection of the PLO, Palestinians began constructing vertically, using concrete to build extra floors as families expanded (Gambian, 2012, Chamma and Zaiter, 2017). The provision of services such as healthcare, education, protection, and job opportunities, and the relatively low prices of housing provided by the PLO and other militant organisations, attracted multiple deprived groups to the camps: poor Lebanese who had migrated from the rural areas, Syrians, Egyptians, and Kurds (Peteet, 2005). Socially and economically marginalised, these communities lived together in neglected urban spaces where overcrowding, poor sanitation, and scarcity of services such as water and electricity were the rule.

The years between 1969 and 1982 are referred to as the 'golden days' in the popular imaginary of the camps' dwellers; however, the active militancy of the PLO in the refugee camps generated social and political frictions that escalated and contributed to the outburst of the Lebanese Civil War, through dynamics that go beyond the scope of this work. Nonetheless, because of the violence of the war and due to its intricate involvement in the conflict, the PLO was forced to flee the country in 1982, thus leaving the Palestinian refugee camps bereft of any political and financial support, and exposed to vast physical and human destruction (Al Hout, 2004, Hanafi and Long, 2010). The massacre of Sabra and Shatila in September 1982 marked the peak of the violence, and yet in 1985 the Camps War broke out. This involved the Palestinian armed groups from the camps and the Shi'te movement Amal supported by the Syrian regime, which was trying to contain the influence of Palestinian groups to safeguard the interests of Syria in Lebanon (Dionigi, 2017).

The chain of violence and conflict ended in 1990, leaving the country deeply scarred, with hundreds of thousands internally displaced from every faction - especially Shi'tes, Lebanese villagers and farmers, and Palestinian refugees who escaped camps that were erased by the violence. Most poured into the peripheries of the capital, attracted by the opportunities offered by the reconstruction of the country (Ramadan, 2013, Martin, 2015). Additionally, having sponsored the peace agreement that terminated the Civil War, Syria made use of this political leverage to reinvigorate its economy by transferring unemployed Syrian labourers to Lebanon to work in the booming building sector (Halabi, 2004). Thus, the 'misery belt' of slum-like peripheries of the country and Palestinian refugee camps – heavily damaged by the war, bore additional pressure posed by the arrival of Syrian and Asian (mostly Bangladeshi) migrant workers, tapping into the vibrant socio-economy of the camps, and enriching the *campscape* of Lebanon where the urban poor, refugees, and regional migrants cohabit.

Finally, the outburst of the war in Syria in 2011 produced a large vulnerable population escaping the brutality of the conflict and seeking protection and opportunities in Lebanon, a lot of them also happening to have family or kinship ties. Among them, some 50,000 Palestinian refugees displaced from the camps of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and other Syrian cities have added to the existing population (Perdigon, 2015). Due to the ambiguous position of the Lebanese authorities, with regard to the conflict and their no-camps policy approach to the humanitarian crisis, Syrians have resolved to different informal strategies to cope with territorialisation in Lebanon. Whilst some joined family members who had

migrated to the country before the war, many have crammed into the overcrowded Palestinian refugee camps, facing degraded housing conditions; others have settled on agricultural land in rural and semi-rural areas of the country (Fawaz et al., 2014, Sanyal, 2017). Since the beginning of the war, according to the UNHCR, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has touched a peak in 2014 when the registered Syrian refugee population in Lebanon was over 1 million (World Bank, online). Thus Syrians have come to represent the largest refugee group – outnumbering for instance Palestinian refugees by far – in a country that proportionate to its geography and population of 4 million, hosts the highest number of refugees in the world. Yet, Lebanon has yet to ratify the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (Janmyr, 2018). It has been pointed out that the decrease of registered Syrian refugees since 2015 should not be interpreted as a decrease of arrivals to Lebanon; rather it reflects the growing number of unregistered refugees, resulted from changes in the regulatory policies (Fawaz et al., 2018a).

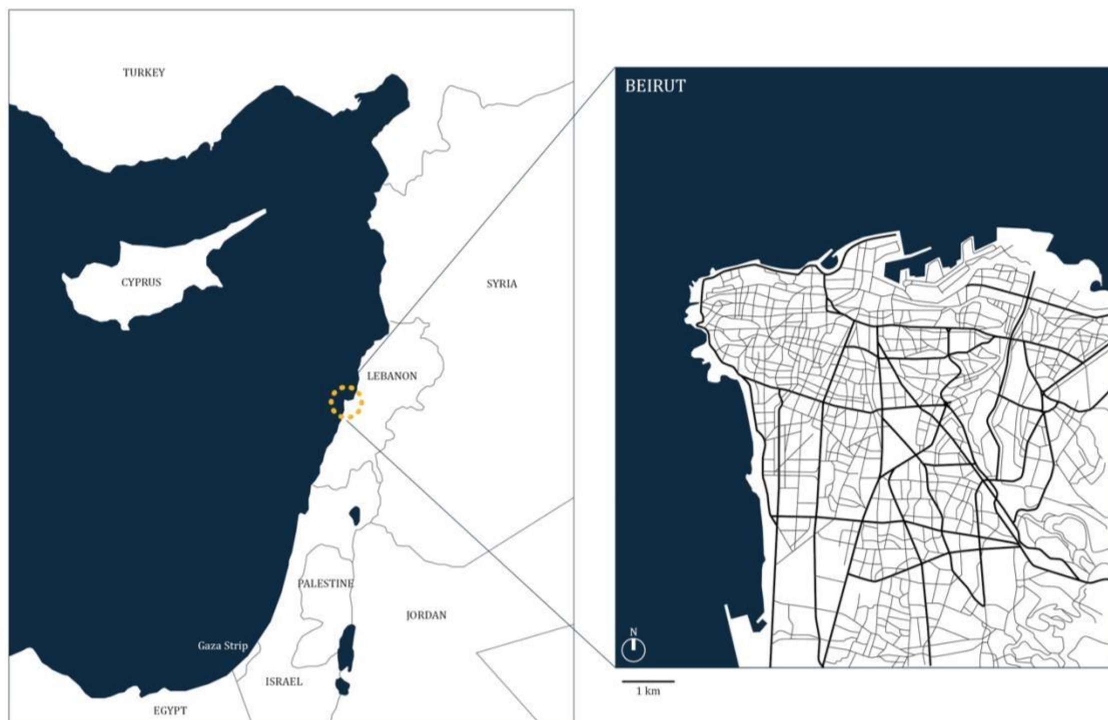


Figure 2 Map of Lebanon, with zoom in on Beirut (source: personal elaboration)

The vast scale of Syrian people's displacement leads necessarily to the discussion of its circumstances. By understanding the Lebanese response to the Syrian refugees' emergency, that is to say the rejection of direct responsibility regarding the provision of relief and

settlement, the relationship between Syrians in Lebanon and Palestinian refugees gains enhanced meaning as Syrians are forced to tap into the existing socio-economic refugee infrastructures.

3.1.2 The Syrian diaspora in Lebanon and the no-camp policy

Historically, the movement of people between Syria and Lebanon has been relatively unrestricted, no visa being required at the border. After the start of the war the Syrian diaspora into Lebanon was welcomed rather hospitably by the local population, despite the additional pressure this caused on overwhelmed infrastructures and on the already deprived situation of the rural areas (Sanyal, 2017). Initially, the Lebanese government was split between two political blocks, one supporting and one opposing the Syrian regime, hence it decided to take a neutral stance regarding the neighbouring country's war. As a consequence, the national authorities transferred the responsibility to provide for the incessantly increasing Syrian refugee population to humanitarian organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). While figures of refugees' registration with the UNHCR hit a record of 43,000 per month in 2013 and 2014, the organisation received also an unprecedented increase in budget from the Lebanese government: from 49 to 362 million USD between 2012 and 2013 (Janmyr, 2018)(Figure 3). The authorities radically changed approach when the number of registered Syrians reached one million, restricting access to Lebanese national territory and encouraging the return to Syria. One of such measures included a 200 USD fee for renewing the residency status, disproportionately affecting the thousands of poor Syrians who had to stop renewing the papers, thus further marginalising them to the status of 'illegal resident' (HRW, 2016).

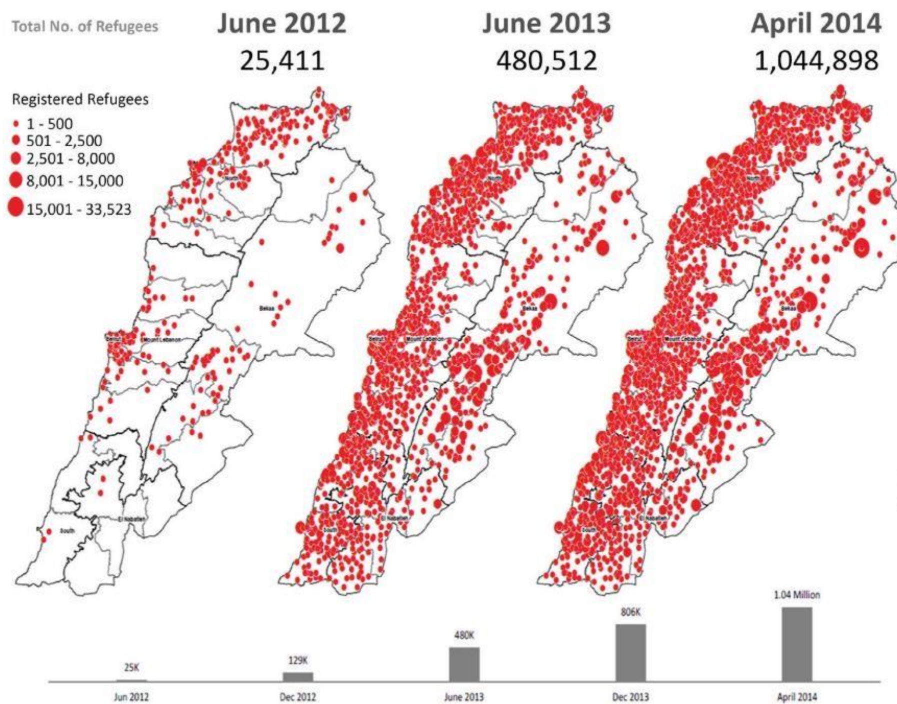


Figure 3 Total number of registered Syrian Refugees registered with UNHCR in Lebanon 20122014 (source: Chamma and Zaiter, 2017)

The preamble for such actions is clearly stated in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan:

> "*Lebanon is neither a country of asylum, nor a final destination for refugees, let alone a country of resettlement. Lebanon considers that it is being subject to a situation of mass influx and reserves the right to take measures aligning with international law and practice in such situations"* (UNHCR and Government of Lebanon, 2014:iii).

Even taking into consideration the Lebanese "panic" over refugees' issues due to the unresolved Palestinian diaspora – supposedly the reason why Lebanon refuses to be signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention, the question of the application of the term 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' to the case of Syrians has had complicated consequences. For instance, even the establishment of the UNHCR on Lebanese soil has been a contended question, sealed by an agreement presenting many structural flaws and questionably signed by Lebanon's General Security Office – thus reinforcing the articulation of refugees as security threats. On the one hand, labelling Syrians as 'citizens who have fled into Lebanon', and subsequently as 'displaced Syrians', circumvents the application of international refugee law regime - thus raising additional uncertainty for 'displaced Syrians' ability to access refugee rights (Janmyr, 2018). On the other hand, it raises questions as to whether

the refugee status determination has been relevant in the process of (temporary) settlement in Lebanon for Syrians.

In 2015, the government produced a new residency policy that bound Syrians' permit to stay in the country to the capacity to provide either a UNHCR registration certificate, or sponsorship from a Lebanese citizen. This considered, if the sealing of the borders turned the Syrian community residing in Lebanon under the previous no-visa-required regime into "illegal" migrants, the subsequent suspension of UNHCR refugee registrations added a darker undertone to the Lebanese recognition of Syrians within the country. It simultaneously elided the presence of Syrians in need of escaping violence, and it reinforced the representation of this community as economic migrants looking for work under the sponsorship system. For Janmyr (2018), the Lebanese government's approach has been extraordinarily worrying, since it cultivates an understanding of the refugee status as essentially insufficient to secure and access protection and refugee rights. Fawaz et al. examined the implications of the amendments to the legal framework as a deliberately "manufactured vulnerability" (2018a:10). That is because the regulatory framework either pushes Syrians in Lebanon to drop their refugee status to secure an economic sponsorship (a process that cannot be undone to reclaim refugee status). Or it criminalises presence and labour by pushing Syrians into the category of undocumented migrants, through opacity and misinformation about the *iter* to acquire legal residency, that eventually leaves the refugee unprotected (Fawaz et al., 2018a).

The formulation of the Syrian diaspora into Lebanon in de-politicised terms has conceptually laid the ground for what Sanyal (2017) calls the "no-camp policy" – meaning the refusal to allow the establishment of formal refugee camps for the people displaced by the Syrian war. As a result of this prohibition, the rural landscape of the country has been marked by the proliferation of informal settlements, especially in the areas of Bekaa, Beirut and North Lebanon. Other Syrians have tapped into the private housing sector, renting private accommodation in rural, semi-rural, and urban areas (Fawaz et al., 2014). This unplanned and unmanaged double geography of displacement positions in a context of scarce resources, rural poverty, and highly saturated housing sector, as highlighted above. The geographical dispersion of Syrians forces humanitarian aid agencies to face peculiar challenges, to attempt providing support and infrastructures, while navigating the complex socio-political landscape of Lebanon (Sanyal, 2017). The emerging uneven geography exacerbates socio-economic disparities of those displaced by the conflict, as different

groups of refugees will be found by different aid actors. For instance, Lebanese law forbids companies and municipalities from selling water, electricity, and land property rights to informal settlements, hence stressing a radical difference with established Palestinian refugee camps. Residents of informal settlements have resorted to alternative self-help tactics to get access to essential facilities and maintain basic services; others opted to turn directly to established refugee camps (Yassin et al. 2016, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016). Many also integrated with the urban *campscape* by finding shelter in the peripheries of Beirut, within or outside the formal borders of the Palestinian refugee camps, where a multitude of "official" refugees and diversely displaced people have been coping with marginalisation for a long time (Chamma and Zaiter, 2017).

Sanyal (2017) argues that the refugee management system of Lebanon has essentially created an anonymous and profoundly disempowering limbo, where refugees are deprived of the right to stay and work and remain under the threat of eviction and sanctions. The discussion of the results will try to rearticulate informality, as rather the result of the strategical achievements of refugees' agency in an otherwise grim socio-political landscape.

3.2. The field

Shatila is located at the southern edge of the municipality of Beirut, in the governorate of Mount Lebanon. It is located 4 km away from Martyrs' Square, the very city centre of Beirut, and covers an area of 75,663 m^2 in what was the countryside around the capital in 1949 – year when it was established. The following map illustrates its position in the urban context of Beirut, where the zoom in shows also the neighbouring areas of Sabra and Tariq el-Jdideh (Figure 4).

3.2.1 Shatila camp

Sayigh (1994) traces back the early history of Shatila as related to the settlement of refugees displaced from the Palestinian village of Majd al-Krum who, in 1949, negotiated access to a small plot of land of 200x400 metres, which was property of the Saad family. Since the family resided abroad, the refugees obtained the permission to settle by Basha Shatila, the representative of the landlord. The Palestinian fighter and representative of the camp Abed

Bisher worked with the International Red Cross first, and with UNRWA subsequently, to create a relationship that allowed him to secure that the encampment was recognised as camp. Hence, it could be supplied with the appropriate UNRWA services: a school, a clinic, latrines, and food rations. As the city of Beirut expanded rapidly and horizontally in the late 60s, the camp was absorbed by the urban expansion and lost its rural character (Peteet, 2005).

Figure 4 Map of Beirut, with zoom in on Shatila. The neighbourhoods of Sabra and Tariq el-Jdideh are also labelled (source: personal elaboration)

The years between 1969 and 1982 are referred to as the 'golden days', or the days of the revolution, in the popular imaginary of the residents of the Palestinian camps. The Lebanese authorities recognised the armed presence of the PLO in the Palestinian refugee camps in what are called the Cairo Accords, and the microgeography of the camps thrived. Camps were recognised as off limits to Lebanese security forces, and sovereignty over internal politics and urbanisation was laid in the hands of the PLO. Since the militancy and revolutionary fervour animating the camp resulted in the camp residents taking control over the camps' borders, the landscape of the camps was remapped: the power exercised from inside subverted completely the relationship with the outside, between the "host" nation and the camp refugees. Local camp committees immediately formed to manage the

housing situation and work for the improvement of living standards in the camps, since construction could now happen with impunity (Sanyal, 2014). A digression is hereby necessary to clarify what the camps' committees are, which much literature seemed to take for granted. Only during fieldwork was it possible for me to understand the quasi-political micro-scale camp order revolving around the remanences of the political organisations of the 'golden days'. There are in fact 14 parties present inside Shatila, and similarly in the other camps, each sponsored by foreign countries: Kuwait, Iran, Qatar, Syria, USA, UAE, Egypt, Algeria, Russia. The financial support they receive serves to pay the salaries for their men in the camp and for the acquisition of weapons to defend – whether the camp or themselves is not clear. The camp committees – the public committee and the secret committee – are composed of one representative member from every political party. While the secret committee intervenes in instances of violence, although without really *fixing* the problems since they are often involved with the problem themselves, the public committee is concerned with the maintenance and administration of pragmatic issues: energy, water, and relations with the UNRWA, to cite the most common.

Returning to the history, the autonomy of the camps was short-lived: they were quickly drawn into the Lebanese Civil war as major players. When the Accords were lifted and the PLO was evacuated from Lebanon in 1982, Palestinian refugee camps remained especially vulnerable to the violence of the conflict. Hit hardly during the Lebanese Civil war, Shatila's infrastructures, homes, and inhabitants were recurrently destroyed. The worst emblematic episode occurred in September 1982 when the camp and its adjacent neighbourhood of Sabra were the scene of a brutal massacre by the hands of Lebanese Phalangist militias, overlooked by the Israeli forces occupying Beirut, claiming thousands of lives among Palestinian and Lebanese residents (Al Hout, 2004). The images presented below condense some of the architectural developments – cycles of creation and destruction – and of economic and social life in the 1980s that unfolded in Shatila with no personal ambition of celebration or victimisation of the past of the camp (Figure 5).

The end of the war left the urban landscape of Beirut deeply scarred; the Lebanese government committed to reconstruction projects of areas of the city centre, thus creating work opportunities for unskilled labourers. The particular relationships of power between Syria and Lebanon at the time enhanced an important transfer of Syrian workers to the Lebanese capital, augmenting the lines of low-income housing seekers who predictably poured into the outskirts of Beirut (Halabi, 2004). The urbanisation of the peripheries,

which had begun already in the 1950s, was uncontrollably rapid and proportionately unplanned. The settlement of low-income communities in informal settlements on the urban fringes of Beirut filled the spatial gap between the Palestinian refugee camps of Mar Elias, Shatila, and Bourj el-Barajneh, and the city – thus creating what Martin (2015) calls the 'misery belt'. It is the urban sprawl surrounding the historic Beirut that was appropriated by the segments of the population the Lebanese government neglected to care for, never provided with affordable housing or services, and ultimately marginalised.

The matrix of dwellers of the 'misery belt' of informal settlements around the Palestinian refugee camps and the camps themselves grew increasingly complex. Because of the Civil War, a vast impoverished population of internally displaced Lebanese – mostly Shi'te villagers and farmers, and Palestinian refugees from camps of other parts of the country had moved to Beirut and started squatting in the damaged buildings of the city centre. As the reconstruction process started, these were evicted and had to move to the informal settlements or the Palestinian refugee camps, where rents were the cheapest (Halabi, 2004). The pressure impending over the refugee camps was overwhelming: the incessantly growing refugee population, the Syrian labour migrants, the marginalised rural Lebanese, and increasingly Asian migrants from Bangladesh, were competing over an administratively circumscribed miniscule surface, overcrowded, precariously and densely urbanised, lacking security and infrastructures (Chamma and Zaiter, 2017). The cohabitation of these different groups in frustrating and degraded conditions, cultivated by a sense of abandonment by both official state authorities and humanitarian agencies, did not contribute to ease the tensions. Finally, with the outburst of the war in Syria and the enlargement of the vulnerable population seeking shelter in the Lebanese capital due to the lack of governmental response to the humanitarian crisis, the Palestinian refugee camps, and Shatila among them, have witnessed the most recent stress (Sanyal, 2017).

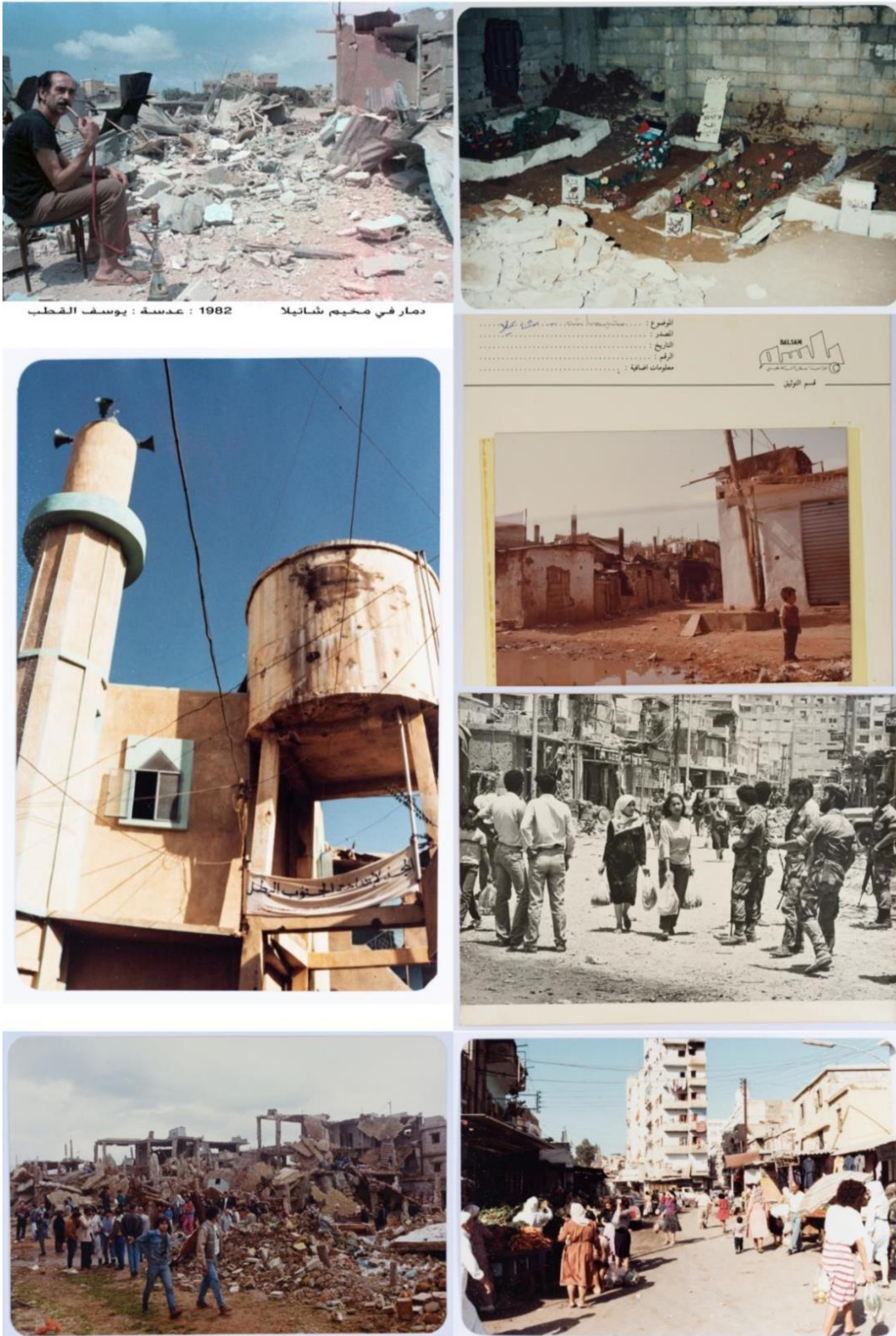


Figure 5 From the top left clockwise: a man smoking argila in front of the rubbles of Shatila; a mass of grave for the martyrs of the Camps war; streets of Shatila with low scanted houses and worn out infrastructures; women holding bags of supply passing armed men surveilling the camp (1986); market street between Sabra and Shatila; a crowd of people checking the state of the ruined buildings of Shatila (August 1987); Shatila mosque (source: The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive, online)

3.2.2 Shatila residents

According to UNRWA figures, Shatila initially comprised of 500 residential units and has grown more than tenfold since then. While the agency registers an official population of 10,849 people as of June 2018 (UNRWAb, online), it is agreed that the numbers are probably around double for a multiplicity of reasons. For instance, keeping track of Palestinian refugees' movement out of the camp is outside the operations of UNRWA. Furthermore, since the arrival of many people from Syria whose registration is a problematic current policy issue, the number of residents in Shatila has certainly increased but its accountability through registers and documents is all but linear. Proportionately to the demographic changes and the political events, the architecture of the camp has adjusted and has currently reached great heights. In fact, an increase in population has generated an increase in accommodation demand that many have harnessed as an economic opportunity: by extending buildings vertically new flats have been produced for rent, thus capturing an emergent segment of the housing market (Martin, 2015).

Although refugees do not own the land on which the camp is established, the development of a housing market attests to an informal economy that responds to the needs of the camp population to make profit and of camp newcomers to attain cheap accommodation. This process, conjugated with the history of migrations explained above, has generated a rich demographic, where the Palestinian camp population feels minoritarian (Peteet, 2005:178). Although the feeling of having become minority is just a perception - according to informal statistics of UNRWA the non-Palestinian population in Shatila is about 30 percent (Martin, 2015), the demographic mix urges questions as to how the socio-economic and intangible effects of such a plural place unfold and reshape the camp. The deficit of official and quantitative information about the population of the camp represents not only a challenge that an ethnographic approach has the potential to grapple with. It also corroborates the capacity of a place that has been historically constructed to be marginal and at the edge of membership – of the "host nation", of the urban surrounds – to elude the radars by becoming inscrutable by virtue of its own informality.

The discussion of the results will present the material collected from 14 semi-structured interviews, the maps drawn with five camp residents, the elaboration of qualitative data collected from participant observation carried out during the month of presential fieldwork, as well as data gathered remotely in the following months through ongoing exchange and communication with some of the participants. The interviews were recorded, transcribed,

and some of them translated. Subsequently I coded them by theme that the interviewees raised, related to, and extensively illustrated to compute them against three colour codes, representing the three dimensions proposed by the three research objectives. The three colours translated into the discussion's sessions.

Mindful of the wish to keep the participants anonymous, I propose a short description of each one of them that provides some biographic information I gathered through direct experience, without disclosing their full identities. The intention is to refuse the practice of profiling through biometric standards, as it simplifies the multiple, non-binary, and at times contradictory facets that describe persons. Rather, a discursive presentation of the participants aligns with the commitment to conduct an ethnographic qualitative work and simultaneously provides some information to position the data presented throughout the discussion of the results.

3.2.3 The participants

In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, I will refer to them through a letter, while a fictional name is assigned to the five participants authors of the maps of Shatila, to reduce the confusion in the results discussion.

Abu N is a Palestinian refugee from Shatila who directs the Children Youth Centre of Shatila, a Palestinian NGO based in the heart of the official camp. He belongs to a generation that has seen the Lebanese Civil war and the Camps war at an age when he could decide to actively participate in the struggle, as a member of the Palestinian Communist party of Shatila. Although hospitable and kind, his anti-occidental feelings emerged episodically – not directed at me specifically, as much as to the involvement of European, North American, Russian, and Saudi foreign influences and forces in issues that concern regional and local affairs.

B is a Palestinian Lebanese restaurant owner whose little business is located right at the edge of the official camp, while it can be considered part of the wider *campscape*. While at first he introduced himself as Lebanese, he disclosed his mixed nationality after discovering my role and positions. His involvement with the Palestinian community has nothing to do with politics, nonetheless his friendly and sociable character makes of him a reference point for many people of different conditions. Over just a month, at his restaurant I have

encountered from PLO leaders to Syrian kids to Sudanese migrants who come to his place because it represents a neutral ground in the midst of an intense spatiality.

D is a foreign participant, project coordinator for a civic INGO involved with the prevention of armed and violent conflicts and peacebuilding programmes in a few countries across the Middle East. He has been living in Beirut with his family for three years, and lives Shatila on his own skin every day.

H is a foreign participant, Arabic native speaker, working for the civic INGO "Humanitarian Corridors" that facilitates the resettlement of people displaced from violent zones to Italy and France. She has been living in Beirut for over two years, from where she displaces to all over Lebanon to conduct interviews with displaced people who potentially can enter or already are in the process of attaining resettlement schemes.

K is a migrant from Sri Lanka, who has been living in Shatila since 1990. She was married to a Palestinian refugee, who died two years ago. Although she has stopped working recently, she has the support of 5 daughters and one sister who live in Lebanon or in Beirut too. Furthermore, the Palestinian NGO Beit Atfal Assumoud, that her daughter **Z** works with, follows her household closely to secure the essentials for her and **Z**.

J is a migrant from Philippines, who lives in Shatila with her Palestinian refugee husband and one son since 2013. She arrived on a visa sponsorship from a Lebanese employment agency, through which she was contracted by families as housemaid. She stopped working when she got married since her union with a Palestinian from Lebanon provided her with a residency permit, however the permit excludes her from the right to work.

M is a Lebanese academic from urban studies and planning at a university of Beirut. Specialised in social and spatial justice, informality, and low-income dwellers, her work and research interests concern with in-depth spatial insights into urban practices of people displaced from Syria in Lebanon.

P is a foreign academic and anthropologist whose research covers migration policies and management of humanitarian aid in relation to the Syrian diaspora in Lebanon. He has lived in Akkar, North of Lebanon, to conduct research in informal settlements of people displaced from Syria and has moved to Beirut to understand the integration of the Syrian community in urban settings. Since the onset of *al thawra,* he has also been covering journalistically the

manifestations in the streets of Beirut and the following escalation of the political situation of the country.

R is a Palestinian refugee from Shatila, although her family has managed to move out of the official camp to the adjacent Tariq el-Jdideh 3 years ago. With an extended group of young residents of the camp of multiple nationalities, she has set up the platform Campji, for the production of visual media from refugee camps of Lebanon. She works as journalist and reporter for the organisation.

Rosalie is a Palestinian refugee. Her family used to live in Tariq el-Jdideh until 2 years ago, when they moved into Shatila. However, her mother still lives somewhere else in the city. She is a university student and plays basketball with the Basket Beats Borders team.

Mohammad is a Palestinian refugee, who has lived in Shatila since the beginning of the Lebanese Civil war, when he was just a child. He has clear memories of the war, since he lost 2 of his 13 siblings fighting in the conflict. He is the Basket Beats Borders and Palestine Youth F.C. sport club founder, coach, and main activist. His energetic and generous character draw people to him, despite the fact others in the camp disagree and oppose his political positions and ethical behaviours – which has caused him no little trouble and hindered his action. Over the time of the fieldwork he facilitated my access to the camp and to other camp residents, acting as mediator.

Abed is a Palestinian refugee from Shatila, working in the construction sector just outside Beirut. He is proficient in English, thus helped as translator during the interview and map making moments with two other participants whose Arabic I could not understand. He plays with the Palestine Youth F.C. and had enough time to walk me around with his friend Ahmad.

Ahmad is a Palestinian refugee from Shatila. He works at the barber shop of one of his brothers in the main street that cuts Shatila North to South. He is very close to one of the political parties of the camp, and dedicated practicing Muslim. Although our conversation was mostly mediated by his friend **Abed**, the clarity of his ideas and personality pierces across language barriers.

Jamila is a Syrian participant, who moved to Shatila 26 years ago when she married with Mohammad, a Palestinian refugee from the camp. Despite having been living in Lebanon for so long, her bond with Syria is still very strong: she maintains her relations with the family

there everyday, and still wishes to move out of Shatila for going back there. She cares for the different members of her family, and from time to time gives cooking workshops.

3.3. Methodology

As a researcher, in order to enter a heavily politicised refugee camp such as Shatila one should consider beforehand one's positionality in relation to "the field", since the place specific circumstances bear analytical and especially methodological implications (Rose, 1997). In fact, the history of Shatila symbolically, almost mythologically, representing the Palestinian people's struggle has attracted flocks of journalists, movie directors, photographers, independent and institutional researchers, activists, and humanitarian workers from all over the world. Sukarieh and Tannock (2013) engage specifically with the problematic issues caused by so many social scientists investigating a relatively small community such as Shatila. Here over-exposure to the inquisitive presence of researchers over time has made the community (or members of it) hostile to the extractive practice of knowledge-driven research. Conducting research amongst impoverished communities often means pursuing objectives that are not relevant to the group that is object of study; thus, the pursuit of quantitative as much as qualitative data can be inconsiderate and invasive of people's lives and spaces (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2013). Furthermore, the undercover securitisation of the invisible borders of Shatila represents an actual barrier aimed at limiting outsiders' access to the camp.

3.3.1 Choice of methodology – for the ethnographic approach

As a young European woman, who can only handle a little conversation in Arabic (mainly around the topic of food), I had to carefully approach the field by: negotiating access to the refugee camp through gatekeepers; and clarifying how and why I was going to work there for the purpose of the research and taking my own ethical considerations into account. The first issue was particularly stressful in the preparatory pre fieldwork phase as I had to establish contacts with potential participants before my departure for Lebanon. However, there was no certainty at the time that any of them could or was willing to act as gatekeeper granting me access to Shatila. Fortunately, once there the activation of the contacts I had produced a snowball effect that enhanced the network of participants I could work with,

while access to Shatila was offered by a few participants and interviewees. One in particular informally introduced me to a Palestinian NGO office with a significant presence in the camp. This introduction allowed me to access Shatila with their approval and from then onwards my presence in the camp was possible.

The second issue concerned the realisation of ethnographic fieldwork that was simultaneously: capable of detecting the subtlety of the human and non-human ecology of a camp in a way that was respectful of the privacy and sensitivity of a population whose marginalised and deprived material conditions have too often been "object of study". In order to achieve that I found a possibility laid in the realisation of something that could remain for the camp and its residents and that enhanced the emergence and discussion of the camp's dynamics and components. Since the objective of the work is to propose a spatial understanding of the mosaic of interlaced worlds of Shatila, the cartographic tool – already essential for a geographical research – was thus applied as a critical mapping practice, explored further in the next section.

The realisation of mapping accounts by the participants themselves from Shatila would not only create visibility for issues that concern "marginal" people. It also opens the space to present the multiplicity of perspectives, experiences, and representations of a community, which is necessarily made by a plurality - of individuals, of actors. Semi-structured interviews and participant observation harmoniously complemented the cartographic material by providing in-depth information and a holistic awareness and receptiveness to the minutiae of everyday life – habits, objects, places, relations. These would ideally be supported by consistent visual material collected during the fieldwork, either by the researcher or by the participants. However, due to the highly sensitive and in some instances dangerously territorialised space of Shatila, taking photographs is not appreciated as a practice a white Westerner should engage with. Hence, I draw from archival material, artistic works, and academic literature to compose a sketch – or a puzzle – of the aesthetic appearance of the materiality of Shatila.

As explained in the literature review, a dualistic vision of reality is refused, while a complex of heterogeneous material – some tangible, some more abstract – is privileged for making sense of the territorialisation of social, economic, and personal processes unfurling in space (Haesbaert and Bruce, 2001). The reticulated and nomadic structure of meanings and beings that this thesis investigates is harnessed thanks to the possibility of mapping. However, the cartography does not relate directly to the migration of people – understood as physical

mobility - but rather to mapping their projections and manifestations in the camp, in turn producing a dynamic stratification of cultural, political, spiritual, and material depths. Thus, the corroboration of individual methods sensitive to diverse ranges of data qualities is essential to form a cohesive methodology, one that engages with the socioecological networks that energize the communities and enhances the density of space – a ground of overlapping territories with histories and political relations (Watkins, 2019).

3.3.2 Counter cartographies

The choice of a cartographic practice with participants from Shatila follows in the steps of counter cartographic traditions that try to deconstruct the normalisation of the relation between maps and territory, where maps are proposed as the *true* representation of a territory. The inference rests on the promise of scientific reliability maps are endowed with by the power structures that formulate them. Maps in this sense were powerful complicit devices in the hands of state and capital in the history of colonialism, its stabilisation, and its legitimisation. As tools and products of knowledge, maps located and spatialised the natural environment by ascribing ownership and rights to it (Halder and Michel, 2018). The tradition of counter cartography has grappled with this theoretical critique and simultaneously built upon an enlarged range of fields – arts, academia, and political activisms - for the deconstruction and proposal of diverse mapping practices.

Reflecting on the role of cartography as a tool for colonial domination and ascription of dominant notions of territoriality, post-colonial practices of "mapping back" incorporate a double intention. One of hybridising the language, tools, and techniques of cartography formerly restricted to "specialists" by socialising and re-inventing them, with indigenous representational cultures, to enhance non-hegemonic views and emancipatory practices with the mapping community (Mesquita, 2018). In this sense, the traditions of counter cartographies become as multiple as the struggles of communities all over the world. The experience of the Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute facilitated by Gwendolyn Warren and William Bunge for the construction of a shared educational space and the dissemination of instruments, knowledge, and abilities for the self-empowerment of a disadvantaged black community, is an early example of such an approach in academic geography (Horvath, 1971).

Secondly, counter cartographies do not only reveal the processes of territorialisation enforced by systems of power, where forms of spatial planning, border setting, and territorial representation are deployed for the appropriation of communal property, the erasure of communities, and the unification of the imaginary about that space (Risler and Ares, 2018a). They also rearticulate the notion of maps producing territory. Maps cannot be territory since they are unable to convey the multiplicity of processes and their constant mutability that the many subjectivities inhabiting a space ascribe to it. Such processes include territorial divisions, symbolic representations, and inherent imaginations (Risler and Ares, 2018a:87). However, they can be part of a wider process. The cartography of a particular dynamic territory whose material and symbolic borders are constantly reshaped by the assemblage of ideas, actions, and perceptions, can transmit the collective representation of territory. In turn, this can be combined with other strategies to enhance the visualisation of hegemonic spaces and power relations, empower resistances, and probe particular issues.

Mansell et al. (2018) have applied counter cartographic intents and counter mapping methodologies to the politically sensitive space of a Palestinian refugee camp – Bourj al-Shamali in the South of Lebanon. They realised that, as in the case of Shatila, the only existing maps of the camp were withheld by humanitarian actors that would not share them in the name of security reasons. The authors also had to consider that the camp population too would mobilise great resistance due to the security implications and possible uses of a camp map if they were to produce one. Hence, they worked under the supervision of the local camp committee to produce an aerial view map that would be incorporated in a wider community project. Rather than utilising drones, military devices everyone living in Lebanon is sensitive to since they punctuate the soundscape of the country at every Israeli aerial incursion, the authors decided to use a camera set up on a helium red balloon. Less threatening and more poetic, it achieved a high resolution overview of the camp and simultaneously involved the community as they were asked permission and could mediate access to their rooftops to let the balloon fly.

The practice of collective mapping utilised with 5 participants during my fieldwork in Shatila owes large ideological and ethical debt to the many experiences brought together by This is Not an Atlas (Kollektiv Orangotango+, 2018). The book also shaped the underlying objective of creating not *a* map of Shatila, but rather an atlas collecting a necessarily partial plural account by the camp population. This enhanced the visualisation of topics, the

identification of actors, the fragility of borders, the diagnosis of problems, and the tension holding them together. Following the *Manual of Collective Mapping* produced by Risler and Ares (2018b), the cartographic sessions organised with the participants were prepared before the beginning of the fieldwork and subsequently adapted to the circumstances I encountered there. The sessions were organised in three different moments: two of them with a participant alone, and one afternoon where the mapping session involved three participants at the same time. Provided with as much paper in A3 format as they wished, a diverse range of colour pens, wax crayons, and pencils, the participants were invited to draw their Shatila free hand. Once the first layout was sketched, I would invite them to reflect on the relationships and places that affect or epitomise their perceptions of the camp as negative or positive. Then I would suggest marking the existence or nonexistence of territories in the camp, and if these were manifest in the environment. The narratives emerged without much need for additional questions. The three participants who worked together especially engaged in discussions among themselves to compare perspectives, allowing me the privilege of witnessing an enhanced constructive dialogue. The other two participants also talked extensively, in a process of thinking through talking of issues they admitted they had not formulated in those terms before.

The construction of a material visual account, an atlas, an archive in a way, for processing memories, lived experiences, and emotional conditions, related directly to my quest for a pervasive rhizomatic yet slippery "object". The exercise of counter cartographies with some participants contributed in fundamental ways to the ethnographic research. Detecting the relations making up migrant infrastructures and the coding systems of feelings and material culture that weave together Shatila's residents and their spaces would have been very difficult without the corroboration of spatial accounts.

3.4. Follow up from the fieldwork

Already at the end of the period of fieldwork in Beirut, end of February 2020, the echoes of Covid-19 were becoming signals of alert: the violence of the disease that had first burst out in China had already reaped numerous victims in Iran, and a flight from Iran had landed at Rafiq Hariri Airport in Beirut with a couple of positive passengers a week before the end of my stay. While the collection of qualitative material remained unaffected, the atmosphere in the camp did change sensibly. Although the number of people actively concerned about

the spread of a potentially devastating disease were still few at the time, many people expressed themselves wary of the catastrophic consequences a sanitary emergency would generate in Shatila. The wave of Covid-19 in Lebanon did affect greatly the population, however the concomitance with other national disasters – the economic crash down, the political corruption scandals, the food and electricity exacerbated shortages, and finally the Beirut blast on 4th August – buffered the urgency of the Covid-19 pandemic as it came to be re-dimensioned in a context of wider structural catastrophes. Through ongoing communication with some participants, I tried to keep up to date to the extraordinary evolution of events and conditions in Beirut and in Shatila particularly, however limited by the distance and the reduced capacity of communication technology. This disclaimer is just to stress that although the analysis of the underpinning dynamics that uphold the *campscape'*s structure remain, the representation of the socio-economic situation presented in this thesis may have much worsened.

4. Data analysis and results discussion

The analysis critically interweaves the qualitative data, the map accounts, and the data from the interviews with the conceptual framework presented in the literature review to engage with a discussion of the results along the three lines of argument posed by the research objectives. Namely these are: first, examining the wider processes emerging from Shatila's residents and experts' discourses that have generated the local overlapping of displacements. Second, exploring the intra-camp competitive but also complicit relations that animate and are performed within the *campscape,* a hybrid urban context of limited material resources and vibrant transaction economy. And third, understanding how the dynamics between co-existing sovereignties within the *campscape* determine the territorialisation of space, conjugating the complexity of temporal *emplacement* in conditions of indeterminate exile with the emergent visibility of refugee camp residents' agency.

4.1. The emergence of local overlapping of multiple displacements

The very strong impression walking through Sabra's market towards Shatila for the first time in pre-Covid19 times is that of an overpowering energy of people, vehicles, fruits and vegetables, lights, live chickens, along one bumpy road whose visual density is all consuming. Turning around the corner that marks the border of Shatila for venturing inside the "camp", the immediate sensation is that of stepping into a quieter village. Despite the fact the atmosphere seems to slow down as one walks down the main streets of Shatila, for the outsider there is no evident frontier trespassed since no physical or human barrier obstructs the way in. While other Palestinian camps in Lebanon present fortified and militarised entry check points (see Peteet, 2005, Mansell, 2016) and an impactful display of Palestinian national objects, the main streets of Shatila present themselves to a shallow observation as just other streets. Although narrower and darker, the components of the physical space resemble faithfully those of the streets just "before entering". **Abu N**, a Palestinian refugee from Shatila, refers to the cosmopolitan aspect of Shatila as related to the demographic mix the camp has been characterised by throughout its recent history. Before and during the Camps war every sort of Palestinian guerrilla, international activists as much as Syrian and Lebanese left-wing fighters were inside the camp since it was

strategically located near the Green Line front. Devastated by the effects of the war and in the process of slow reconstruction, Shatila during the 90s is described as resembling a "ruralised holding centre in the midst of a teeming post-war city" where (Palestinian) men were evidently absent – either dead, abroad, or quiet (Peteet, 2005:171). Simultaneously, the camp was receiving large numbers of deprived Lebanese displaced by the civil war and Syrian seasonal workers in the agriculture and construction sectors, the latter especially booming as the country was re-building itself after 15 years of war. These were menial jobs Palestinians were not interested in since the pay was too low to support a family even in the camp, and too humble for the Lebanese who were simply not willing to do them.

For **Abu N**, the difference between the Syrian migration in the 90s and 00s when no visa was required for them to come to work in Lebanon, and the Syrian diaspora triggered by the war is the type of labour force injected into the Lebanese economy. He said:

> *"In the 50s Syrians were present in Lebanon as they constituted most of the agricultural and hard labour force; a lot of them also were coming as militants to work for the PLO. In the beginning of the 00s there were Lebanese movements and campaigns to end the Syrian occupation in Lebanon and chase all Syrians from here. The Lebanese didn't realise they were kicking away great part of the labour force of their economy, creating a big gap – considering as well that "their noses are as high as the sky" [they would not do menial jobs]. The labour migration then changed of direction, as Lebanese workers seasonally migrated to Syria to work. However, something around 120,000 Lebanese people in Syria are invisible, or pass unnoticed. Whereas with the start of the war in Syria, the migration to Lebanon was much larger and unselective: everyone came here, regardless of the profession or work skills, fitting into the labour market for any sector. This was the novelty, and the reason of shock for the Lebanese: Syrians who came here were not just for the agriculture sector, they are also nurses, doctors, engineers, workers"*

Whilst the first type of migration involved an unskilled pool of labour, from 2011 the Syrian war has been indiscriminately displacing farmers and medics alike, thus unsettling the Lebanese social and economic equilibriums as suddenly labour competition widened. On the other hand, the no visa or work permit requirements regime applied to Syrian migration to Lebanon (until 2015) strains the tension with the Palestinian refugee population, whose access to the labour market in Lebanon has historically been hindered. The experience of **Ahmad**, a Palestinian from Shatila, is telling about the work expectations of Palestinian

refugees in Lebanon. Ahmad's brother has studied and finished medicine in university, his sister studied and completed her studies in law. Neither of them has got a job in their sector in years, because Lebanese employers do not even consider them, and turned them down despite their titles because Lebanese law forbids them from such professional categories. Therefore, he gave up his university studies too, frustrated that Palestinians are denied the possibility of even proving themselves through their skills and abilities rather than through their documents. His friends used to call him "the doctor" because he studied very seriously and intensely, until his siblings' experience made him feel he was wasting his time and no amount of studying was going to compensate for his Palestinian identity. He thus started working in his other brother's barber shop in Shatila. **Mohammad**, another Palestinian refugee from Shatila and coach of the girls' basketball team 'Basket Beats Borders', expresses the same dynamic of exclusion and discrimination of Palestinians at Lebanese workplaces: while his son works in the construction sector where most workers are from all sorts of origins other than Lebanese, his daughter works in a Lebanese beauty salon that he fears will fire her as soon as they find a Lebanese person who can do the same job (interview with **Mohammad**).

Although practices of exclusion and inclusion in economic sectors are based on a legal framework making reference to national and humanitarian (refugee or not refugee) identities, the social consequences of such practices stem from people in Shatila's mutual positioning based among other factors on the knowledge that the other does or does not have right to work and aid. The recognition people apply to others is perhaps invisible to the eyes of the outsider, but it entails a profiling of others through clothing details and accents, which remain imperceptible to a Western researcher. They are rather evident instead for the perceptive senses of people living in Shatila. For instance, the regional Levantine Arabic is inflected differently in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine; therefore, it signals the national profile of someone to receptive listeners just through conversation. Curiously, the Palestinian accent and the sociolinguistic variety of the Palestinian dialect is proudly preserved and perpetuated throughout more than 70 years of exile, partly thanks to the camps' culture of isolation, and despite the immediate discrimination that it evokes among Lebanese contexts.

Two interviewees confirm that people "can just tell where you are from by minuscule differences in the language, food, garments" (interview with **M** and **H**), and react to it proportionately to the historical relation of their community with the community of the

other. The reduced size of Shatila enhances this visibility as every body is exposed to the gaze of others – and it is virtually impossible to avoid it. The social scanning of bodies operated by everyone in the camp resonates with mutual social control dynamics of closed communities: often Shatila's environment is referred to as a comfortable village atmosphere by residents (interview with **Rosalie, Abed, Ahmad,** and **R**). Simultaneously it reveals the fragility of the camp having turned into a *campscape,* where the enhanced circulation of people, ideas, materials, and economies between "in and out" undermines the possibility of knowing everyone and everything in Shatila – thus implying a loss of control over the processes taking place in the camp and instilling uncertainty and mistrust as Peteet (2005:178) already documented in the post-war period.

In order to strip the significance of uncertainty and defensiveness between the different communities inhabiting Shatila, it is therefore relevant to re-trace the trajectories that led to the stratification of multiple displacements (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016) in Shatila and appreciate the intersectionality of each displacement. It is not simply on the ground of national identities and recognitions that overlapping displacements generate sites for refugee humanitarianism or friction. It is rather a matrix of dimensions that connect wider geographies and complex refugee identities, computing with or against each other in a relatively very small place. It is useful to begin by understanding that Shatila, as most other Palestinian camps in Lebanon, has been witnessing a constant flow of migration since the start of the Syrian war due to some characteristics that make it a preferable destination for people fleeing Syria through Lebanon and for members of other less established ethnic communities. Such characteristics may be summarised as Palestinian camps including Shatila offer the cheapest sheltering options, protection from Lebanese Security Forces' incursions, and autonomous organisation from the Lebanese national surroundings. Such qualities are then declined according to individual biographies, aspirations, and needs of displaced people in Lebanon to make sense of their presence in Shatila.

Multiple interviews with Palestinian refugees and experts of the Syrian diaspora have pointed out that the profiles of people displaced from Syria and arriving to Shatila over the last decade is usually quite specific. They are people who were living in rural areas of Syria hit hardly by the conflict and where nothing is left now; people who need to hide because they were somehow politically involved in the conflict and risk backlash or persecution if they were to be found by security forces; or families where someone is at the age for the army draft and are therefore fleeing to avoid their teenagers from being recruited by some

of the fighting forces (interviews with **P**, **Abu N**, and **H**). **H**, who works with an INGO sponsoring resettlement to Italy and France for displaced people in Lebanon, remarks that almost ten years on from the beginning of the Syrian conflict the social and economic profile of the people who shelter in Shatila has assumed an even more selective character. In fact, the people displaced from Syria who had enough savings, earnings, and contacts to attain a visa for anywhere else have already left. People with more modest means dispersed across Lebanon according to their financial and legal situations: in informal settlements throughout the rural areas; cases of less extreme livelihood levels settled in the cities; and in Palestinian camps, where everything is cheaper and eludes Lebanese authorities. The latter case includes some of the Syrian seasonal workers who had already established social networks through previous migrations and this time brought their families along. Although as recorded from the UNHCR the number of residents of Syrian origin in Shatila is large (more than 12,000 according to **D**), great relevance is given to Palestinian refugees from Syria, who constitute a separate "case" in the discourses of multiple interviewees.

Palestinian refugees from Syria preferred to migrate to Palestinian camps in Lebanon such as Shatila following the lines of transnational family relations – or connections with friends of family, or with neighbours of friends of family, etc. As an expert Lebanese interviewee put it, "Lebanon and Syria were one country where some Europeans decided to draw a big line and separate families; hence, it does not come as surprise the fact that a lot of Palestinian refugees dispersed across the Middle East maintain family relations across different exile countries" (interview with **M**). Two of my interviewees and participants in producing a cartography of the camp exemplify such connections. Along with precedent intrapersonal relations, these trajectories are often invested with expectations of solidarity and support based on familiar humanitarian infrastructures (such as the presence of UNRWA). Both are considered important features to sustain and endure what many thought was going to be an exile of a few months, of a couple of years. Testimonies from **H** and **P** stress on the length of the wait – that in migration processes creates temporal uncertainty and undermines the control individuals have over their own displacement experience. Once arrived safely to Shatila, people displaced from Syria – whether they be Syrian nationals, or Iraqi, Palestinian, Kurdish, Afghani refugees – engage with the uncertainty of their lives by making decisions about the course their displacement should take at that point. In synthesis, there are four options: two including further movement (back and forward), two entailing *stasis.*

4.1.1 Returning to Syria

The first possibility is going back to Syria. Since the UNHCR signed an agreement with the Syrian state to send back Syrians from Lebanon who autonomously decide to register for repatriation, there have been around 20 repatriations assisted by UNHCR (interview with **H**). However, according to the interviewees those who register for repatriation are mostly women and old people who have literally nothing left of their savings (if they brought any with them) and cannot even get enough food to eat in Shatila. It is especially the case of families coming from the rural areas of Syria, whose livelihoods were based on selfsustenance agriculture. Deprived of the material means for self-support, they struggle enormously to make a living under the constraint of a quasi-urbanised environment, despite the humanitarian aid they may be able to access. The marginalisation of Syrian refugees due to the expropriation and destruction of their lands reverberates with the recollections of Palestinians' sufferings in the 50s. During the first years of exile, Palestinian peasant families displaced from Galilee and Golan Heights (North of Palestine) were stealthily trespassing the Lebanese-Israeli border to get back to their land and harvest what was left of their possessions (Sayigh, 2007). Their living in the camps of Lebanon had completely disrupted their livelihoods and lifestyles. It is interesting to notice that half a century later, another conflict in the Middle East is undermining rural livelihoods and forcing peasants to move into urban contexts where their condition of "uprootedness" is exacerbated by the deprivation of their means of support.

According to the interviewees (**P** and **H**), those who choose to go back to Syria – through repatriation programs or in other ways - generally think "at least in Syria I am someone". In this sense, the discourse of going back rests upon the existential question of dignity and their social persona that in Syria was granted, whilst in Lebanon it has been stripped away. **P** repeated to me what Syrians have told him quite bluntly:

> *"I'm a Syrian there, what am I here? I'm excess, I'm surplus humanity, more or less kept alive with humanitarian aid, some food, etcetera. But substantially I'm exceedance. If I go back, I am Syrian citizen, I can try to re-earn a position, to get back to a job, without enduring all the humiliation and injustices I suffer here in Lebanon. [...] Going back is always a question mark, you know what you left but you don't know what you will find. A lot still have some family in Syria; these may still live in the same areas, or may have been internally displaced but the communication is not really… easy. Because the Syrian government spies on everything, so you can't really say on the*

phone "look, the Iranian troops took the old neighbourhood". You'd receive the Mukhabarat [Military Intelligence Directorate (Syria)] at your door the day after, even more probably two hours later, they'd take you under arrest and you disappear"

In these cases, the displaced persons may have spoken with some family member who still lives in Syria to get an idea of the situation there – old people can especially manage to go back without being harmed. If an older member of the family – or the neighbour or the friend of a neighbour – went back, they try to communicate with the rest who remained in Shatila to inform them of the situation. Among my interviewees, the experience of **B's** part-time employee Anas, a Syrian boy who still goes to school that I met during the fieldwork in February 2020, illustrates this trend. In August, when I spoke with B after the Beirut blast, he told me Anas had left during the complex months of the Covid-19 pandemic. His father had taken the whole family to go back to Syria since he believed anywhere was better than staying in Lebanon. Long-time residents of Shatila have also started sensing that the number of recent Syrian dwellers in the camp was decreasing, especially due to the impact it creates on the housing market in the camp, as will be explored later in the analysis.

4.1.2 Staying as a result of being "stuck"

The second instance is staying in Lebanon, in Shatila. From the interview with **P** emerges that among those who express preference for remaining in Lebanon, their preference is often proportional to their degree of integration within Lebanese society. In general, people displaced from Syria who have achieved some degree of stabilisation or integration try to stay: it allows openness and flexibility in relation to the evolution of the situation in Syria in case return becomes possible. Meanwhile, they can remain alert to offers of resettlement, or to other sources offering the possibility for a visa to leave. For them, staying in Shatila may just constitute a point on their migratory map, a temporary affordable shelter for 3-5 months that serves to gain a foothold in the city. During that period, they navigate the social ecology of Beirut and find somewhere else to settle that suits their needs better – while remaining aware of the situation in Syria (interview with **Mohammad**). However, not everyone who "stays" is doing that based on the exercise of free will, rather it may be the result of being "stuck". As they cannot go back to Syria where the things they knew are no more, and cannot or do not aspire to go "forward", they find themselves with eroding savings caught in a socio-political impasse that is not favourable to their condition. They are

faced with a double-edged resistance: on the one hand, Lebanese society fortresses itself against the large influx of displaced people from Syria through prohibitive working visa schemes; and on the other hand, Palestinian refugees grow protective of their territory as initial feelings of solidarity and support transition to a low intensity competition over scarce resources.

The delimitation by different actors of physical, material, legal, and labour domains creates a limbo space for people displaced from Syria where they struggle to re-organise their life by placing it within a framework of meaning that dialogues with the specificity of the place. They have to engage with the difficult task of navigating a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon: an assemblage of poor quality buildings, a heterogeneous population with different types of labour market access, and the interests of transnational political parties. Not to mention the jungle of humanitarian actors who categorise vulnerable groups according to their internal logic often unattuned to the complex reality of the camp. **P** depicts the sense of disorientation that Syrian people experience:

> *"Once you get into the perspective that you cannot go back, you don't know how to go forward [...]. Even more, for those whose modus in society has been disrupted. I'm thinking about the men who don't work, hence not able anymore to exercise their role... not able to produce anymore the means that allowed them to exercise their expected familiar role. They don't earn, they don't work, they're often humiliated and vexed, particularly in groups that come from rural areas [of Syria] where the hierarchisation of family roles is more "precise". In these groups the fact the man is not able to retain his role is more striking: he maintains a role of "head of the family", however only from a formal standpoint since he cannot even provide the essentials for his family"*

While adding depth to the stratigraphy of the polymorphic and prismatic profiles of Shatila's residents, the disintegration of the family unit also casts a light on the gendered roles displaced people reproduce in exile. As simplistic and reductionist as the essentialisation proposed by **P** is, the separation of roles in traditional conservative Arab contexts – production of the means to support one's family on the one hand, and management of the family resources on the other - is often subverted in the camp's settings. That is to say, Syrian men have lost their capacity to work and make sense of themselves, while women are actively engaged with social networks in the camp that grant access to forms of support. **Abed** and **Ahmad,** while walking across Shatila, shared with me that some Syrian men in the camp react to the powerlessness and frustration they feel is structurally enforced upon

them by entering the drug scene of the camp – either as users or as dealers. While quantifying the extent of this involvement among men displaced from Syria is out of my scope, it contributes to the emerging picture of Shatila with its uncomfortable minutiae.

4.1.3 Staying by choice

Staying for some is a choice, and a sentimental one too. While Palestinian refugees have little margin of choice, and people displaced from Syria adapt and mould their personal histories and multiple geographies to living in Shatila, for others it is an act of freedom. Interviews with two non-Arab women reveal histories of migration that trace a very different experience of displacement and *emplacement*. **K** is originally from Sri Lanka, and arrived to Lebanon in 1982 when she was 15 years old to follow her sister, both sponsored by a Lebanese agency for domestic workers. The family she was hired by needed a nurse to care for the elders of the family. She worked there for 5 years, where she met her husband who was the driver for the same family. He was a Palestinian from Shatila. The Lebanese family they worked for gave them a place to stay after they got married, but as the husband had some disagreements with the daughters of the family they moved out to a building where people were squatting after the Camp war. Many marginalised people – internally displaced Lebanese and Syrians displaced from the war most prominently, but not exclusively – began occupying empty palaces and buildings of central Beirut after the end of the Civil war. They developed village-like spatial and social organisations inside them as a result of prolonged squatting and makeshift housing practices (see Buchakjian, 2018). As **K** and her husband were forced out of there, they moved into Shatila where the husband had a home.

J's experience unfolds along similar lines: she is originally from the Philippines and arrived to Beirut in 1989. The eldest of nine, born from farmer parents who had to work very hard to support the whole family, she decided to migrate to work hard and give everyone in her family better chances. She spent 6 years in Qatar, then moved to Lebanon through a domestic workers employment agency. She married a Palestinian man who was working as security guard for the same agency – despite the fact he is Palestinian he had Lebanese friends who let him work illegally with them. After the marriage, in 2014, they moved to Shatila because he has family and a house there. She also knows many other Filipino women in Shatila, who also have married Palestinian men. However, despite being married they still have to pay for the *kama* - the visa permit.

This type of migration mediated by Lebanese employment agencies experienced by **J** and **K** was described in different conversations and interviews. It is a migration trend that leads especially women from East Asia and parts of Africa to Lebanon, employed as domestic workers through what is called the *kafala* system. Kafala means sponsorship in Arabic. Migrant domestic workers come to Lebanon under the sponsorship of a '*kafeel'* (sponsor, in Arabic) and live with a sponsoring family, often in a household of a couple and their children. **D** describes the system quite unequivocally:

> *"Lebanese families' maids are mainly women, who entered Lebanon on a sponsorship visa granted by the Lebanese family who is assigned the women by a recruiting agency that withdraws the migrant women's passports until they have worked enough to "pay back" the debt the family has sustained to make them come to Lebanon. Lebanese families have a hierarchical preference for the origin of domestic workers, where anglophones such as Indonesian and Filipinos are preferred and better paid. Then come countries of francophone tradition – so women coming from Congo and Senegal. Lastly come Ethiopian women, who are chosen by Lebanese families who prefer "cheap" domestic workers".*

A woman who works for the Migration Community Centre - that provides a space for support to domestic workers in Lebanon, synthesised the system as essentially stripping the women migrants of their documents, exposing them to the vulnerability of expulsion if the Lebanese Security Forces were to stop them for a papers check. Notoriously they are harassed, psychologically and physically, by the sponsoring families, earning the system the fame of 'civilised slavery' which reaps the tragic rate of 1-2 suicides a week among migrant domestic workers (Ayoub, 2020). Although the testimonies of **J** and **K** do not point to this painful process, awareness of how the *kafala* system works in producing migration to Lebanon and in shaping migrants' experiences remains relevant for comprehending the terms that construct the multiplicity of identities in Shatila.

Resonating with the cosmopolitan atmosphere alluded to before, the histories and geographies of **K** and **J** add global reach to the *campscape*: Shatila's translocality spills well beyond the regional limits of the Middle East. It reaches as far as the opposite side of the Asian continent as well as to the African one. The global sense of local space in Shatila, paying homage to Massey (1994), informs the critical analysis of the material conformation of the camp space proposed in section **4.3**. It simultaneously reminds us to be alert to the intersectionality of camp dwellers' identities, which any archaeology of the stratified

identities of Shatila's residents has to embrace and incorporate if it is to make sense of the mutual recognitions and relationalities performed and established among them.

4.1.4 Moving forward, leaving Lebanon

The fourth situation, less common and perhaps source of the sourest contrasts, pertains to Shatila's dwellers who are eligible for resettlement to third countries. Resettlement is a procedure promoted by the UNHCR available for people fleeing countries of ongoing conflict or with well-founded reasons to fear persecution in the country they are fleeing. Therefore, anyone who has left Syria to Lebanon who registers with the UNHCR can initiate the process of selection for resettlement schemes. Reportedly, the schemes in Lebanon affect also many Yemenites and refugees from Iraq. In 2015 the formulation of the UNHCR's mandate in Lebanon was amended and excludes people displaced from Syria who registered with the UNHCR from then on to be selected for resettlement (see **3.1.2**). Humanitarian Corridors, an Italian-French project that helps asylum seekers leave Lebanon and travel in safe and legal ways – that is to say not risking their lives in the Mediterranean Sea - is the only offer for people displaced from Syria after 2015 to resettle (interview with **H**). On the other hand, Palestinian refugees are only taken into consideration for the resettlement process if married to a Syrian national; however, the case appeals to family reunification. In fact, humanitarian visas are not available to people from Lebanon (including Palestinian refugees from there), since it is considered a "safe" country from which one is not supposed to be seeking asylum.

There are clear divergences that emerged within the "people displaced from Syria" group as a result of the ambiguous positionality of Palestinian refugees in Syria who were displaced by the war along with Syrian nationals and all other minority groups. **H**, who works for Humanitarian Corridors, attests extensively to the contradiction and problematics generated by the legal formality of their Palestinian refugee status. Due to their Palestinian identity, they have to refer to the Lebanese UNRWA offices, which are concerned with the alleviation of the Palestinian condition by providing essential infrastructures and aid to mitigate their prolonged exile. UNRWA is not concerned nor does it have the mandate to deal with resettlement. However, Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon are not only experiencing a second forced displacement in addition to the original 1948 diaspora, although they may already be of a generation that has only heard memories of that

traumatic event. The conflict that is displacing them from Syria is the same war that entitles other people displaced from Syria to move out of Lebanon to third countries. While Palestinians from Syria advocate for their entitlement to such rights, Palestinians from the camps in Lebanon hinder such claims. According to **H,** from Humanitarian Corridors**:**

> *"Both UNRWA and UNHCR are waiting to reach an agreement with the fasahel*[1] *- the Palestinian groups that have to decide and "authorise" Palestinians from Syria to benefit from the right to resettlement. However, they will never agree to that. [...] They oppose letting Palestinians from Syria having right to resettlement by appealing to the other issue, Palestinians' Right to Return [to Palestine]. As far as they're against it, Palestinians from Syria won't be able to ask for resettlement. As a result, Palestinians from Syria will never be able to leave: UNHCR cannot register them since they're under the mandate of UNRWA, and UNRWA registers them and provides a few services, but cannot offer resettlement since it's not under the agency's capacities".*

She pragmatically gets deeper into the ideological contradiction of the contrast:

> *"[...] it's not easy, not easy at all. The issue of Palestinians from Syria in particular... they have marched in protest many times, to express their frustration and marginalisation in this framework: they live in real poverty. But UNHCR and UNRWA don't do anything about it because it is not within their competence, and the spokespersons for Palestinians from Syria have been threatened by the fasahel of the camps because they must not bring forward this message. This "message" being that Palestinians from Syria should get their right to leave Lebanon because it is doubly bound to the right of Palestinians in Lebanon to leave too – since they are living in an open-air jail too. If the right to resettle is given to one group, the day after the other group will rise and say, "I'm refugee in Lebanon too, I want to leave this hell too, give me that right too!". [Palestinians from Syria] lost everything in Syria too, they should receive the same treatment as other Syrians, but if they did then Palestinians from Lebanon would understandably demand it too".*

As a consequence of the unresolved political disagreement, it seems that Palestinian refugees from Syria end up being victimised more than anyone else. In a way, they are

[1] *Fasahel* means movement: it is just another term to say the political parties in the camp.

suffering the consequences of retaining the Palestinian refugee identity that makes reference to past and unseen places, continues **H**:

> *"Palestinians in Syria in a sense were privileged, and here they suffer doubly. For them being in Lebanon is worse than being in Damascus or anywhere in Syria, where at least they have recognised and respected rights. Here they have no rights, they are no one, no one can take care of you, not UNHCR nor UNRWA; UNRWA only for the very basic things. They cannot go to high school; they cannot study in university – whereas in Syria they could. You're no citizen nor refugee, you're a hybrid of the hybrid: you were born in Syria but on your document it's said you're Palestinian. Your Syrian UNRWA document will have your father's town as birth place; in turn, your father's registered birth place won't be Syria but the Palestinian town where your grandfather was from. So your UNRWA card will say "born in Damascus, from Bethlehem".*

It emerges that Palestinians from Syria are stranded in between humanitarian actors whose hands are tied between the formal framework of refugee identity differentiation – which UN agency is caring for whom - and the Palestinian camps' representatives, who stand for their own political claims. However, not every Palestinian in the camp may share the point. **Mohammad** presented a different perspective on the issue, where the erosion of ground for negotiation between the different agents occurs within Shatila's place specific NGOs and *fasahel.* Namely, he does not agree with the way the "Palestinians from Syria matter" has been handled by Basmeh and Zeytooneh[2] and the UNHCR: for him, the problematics rests on the fact these organisations explicitly apply a criterion of exclusivity in providing aid and support for Syrian nationals but not for Palestinian refugees from Syria. According to him, the camp committee – as representatives of Shatila's internal political order - went to speak with these pro-Syrian organisations to negotiate a compromise of shared responsibilities. However, they refused, asserting that Palestinians from Syria already receive support from UNRWA. **Mohammad** emphasises that the argument is in effect an unfair allegation, since UNRWA has evidently reached a saturation point where aid provision was already insufficient before the large displacement triggered by the Syrian war.

The process of profiling of Shatila's residents along the lines of national identity to configure their eligibility to humanitarian responses prominently features in the camp residents' discourses as a determining factor that creates distance between the "different groups". The

[2] A Shatila based NGO serving exclusively Syrian people

contextualisation of the complex of identities of Shatila's residents as plural, divergent, and at times simply incomparable, serves to stress again that an appreciation of the intersectionality of each individual's case is fundamental to make sense of the *campscape*. However, exploring the unfolding of the uneven international humanitarian response contributes also to opening the ground for exploring alternative forms of aid – in the literature review formulated as *refugee humanitarianism* (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020), where the refugee camp residents are fully valued as providers of care and aid. The development of infrastructures of care within the complicated frame of dwelling in a structure, the camp, designed for the containment of inert aid receivers subverts completely the act of "waiting" in exile. Griffiths (2014) lists four types of temporal uncertainties of migrants' containment dispositifs, where two resonate strongly with the experience of living in Shatila, both for those whose aspirations are to leave within the short term and for those who are existentially entrenched with the existence of the camp. The two are: the stickiness of time, where the imposition of waiting is edulcorated by a glimmer of hope for an eventual change of the situation; and the suspended time, where the waiting becomes a seemingly meaningless suspension more than waiting for a goal. For the author, the temporal uncertainty produced by asylum and refuge systems is a technique of power that aims at keeping migrants in a state of desperate continual transience. Simultaneously, it structurally entrenches them with alterity to the "rest" of society by hindering their self-determination as citizens (Rotter, 2016). The case of the people of Shatila provides evidence of the agency of the refugees and other dwellers of *campscapes* who appropriate the act of waiting and turn it into an active and productive interlude in an effort to manage the negative effects of waiting and to re-gain control over their lives.

The following section addresses the described positionalities of Shatila's residents to follow the meandering ways they interweave with each other in the making of the vibrant economy of transactions and infrastructures of care of the camp. Through this perspective, the density of the camp is not understood as a fabric, where the architecture is the warp held in tension by the weft of transversal socio-spatial relations. It is rather a polymorphic spatial element within Shatila's residents' assemblages that joins the experiences of uprooting, displacements, and emplacements. In turn the effect is of catalysing the generative capacity of turning situations of limited material, social, and legal resources into a proliferating reticulated process of migrant infrastructures (Simone, 2004, Hall et al., 2017). The section builds upon the knowledge of highly diverse camp dwellers' identities to understand the

negotiation of migrant infrastructures as inflected by relations of hospitality, cooperation, and competition.

4.2. Migrant infrastructure and the distribution of material and immaterial resources

As signalled before, Shatila is currently and has been already for a couple of decades a space of multiplicities where ethnic, cultural, and humanitarian status differences depict a heterogeneous place. The migratory trajectories that led to the accumulation of lives here were drawn by different motives that relate to histories and geographies at times very distant from Beirut. Regardless of the reasons though, the very act of moving into Shatila mobilises the notion of hospitality, where someone who was already in the place receives, more or less consensually, others (Carpi and Şenoğuz, 2018). Although people have come and gone to and from Shatila at different times, the process' visibility has acquired spectacular prominence since the onset of the war in Syria, when the influx of people displaced from Syria has sensibly increased.

4.2.1 Critically positioned humanitarianism and hospitality

Participants and interviewees did not bring up this transformation spontaneously. However, when questioned about it almost unequivocally the observation was the same. At the beginning people displaced from Syria were received and hosted in Lebanon with solidarity and sympathy for their sufferings and condition – both in the Lebanese towns and villages at the borders with Syria, and in the Palestinian refugee camps. Following the traces left behind by someone they know had made the same movement before, they activate the human connective tissue made of family, friends, neighbours, friends of neighbours, and the power of word of mouth. **H** synthesises the experience of most people displaced from Syria:

> *"I knew the neighbour of my neighbour who had come here, I asked for her number, I called her, told her I'd come, I stayed at her place a couple of nights, I looked for a house, I found a room, I rented it, I made my family come, I looked for a job, I started a job"*

Especially Palestinians from Syria for whom the refugee camps represented the best chance, opted for sheltering in camps not only based on pre-existing social networks and economic convenience, but also on expectations of solidarity. However not the hosts nor the guests of this simplified dualistic hospitality system expected the exile to last so long – they believed a few months, a couple of years maximum. The consequences of the protraction of Syrians' displacement range across different scales – from individual to camp-wide and beyond, they are highly subjective, and they embittered the dynamics between hosts and guests. As **Abu N,** an established resident, puts it:

> *"Palestinians showed solidarity and offered help to Syrians in the beginning, but then you have to consider they are dead people – because people in Shatila are already dead – who cannot help anyone because they are very poor [...] For example, after the destruction of Nahr el Bared camp in 2007 a lot of Palestinian refugees arrived to Shatila, we welcomed them they were like family for us; but the situation prolonged and the bites of poverty were tough. It is the same with Syrians, they are like brothers for us, everyone helps each other, with those of us who are good. There is no idealisation in this statement: Palestinians are not all angels, and Syrians are not all angels, but it is often that some people, especially from the political parties, exasperate situations and exacerbate frictions and things blow up."*

While the reference to political parties playing a role in the worsening of the relation between established Shatila groups and people displaced from Syria pinpoints the allegations already illustrated in section **4.1.4**, the stress on poverty as the variable determining the possibility of mutual support acquires visibility. As already suggested by Carpi and Şenoğuz (2018), in contexts of deprived population groups where hospitality is the response to a de facto influx of another group, the quantification of humanitarianism shown by the hosting community seems to be relevant in order to represent the hosts as greedy and xenophobic. Relations between Palestinian refugees and all other groups, appropriately understood in their complexity, have been stirred towards feelings of hostility, even open confrontation, by accounts in literature and during my fieldwork. However, disregarding the contextual circumstances of widespread under provision, if not absence, of resources in Shatila risks limiting the scope of such assertions, and simultaneously confusing the ethics with the politics of hosting the other.

M made the point explicitly by citing the case of the "credit cards" dispensed to Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR. Although they probably allow access to not much

credit, it materialises the uneven distribution of aid implemented according to criteria – in this case national identity – improvident of the sensitivity of the context where other groups are as much in need. Rather, an exclusive logic of aid provision serves as a social fragmentation force, where the "established group not receiving extra aid" stiffens the edges of its legitimacy to the territory to produce the "newly arrived group receiving aid" as Other. An extract from a conversation with **Mohammad** exemplifies this dynamic in Shatila: from his perspective, for over 30 years now Palestinians in Lebanon have been granted by UNRWA schools and basic health care, but no material support in terms of food, rent, and energy. On the other hand, humanitarian organisations have been providing Syrians in Shatila with: pocket money, rent vouchers of 150 USD[3], gas, and heating. While in the interviewee's intentions the complaint is not directed at the Syrian humanitarian organisations but rather at the corruption of UNRWA, he attests to the separation and operation of othering drawn along the lines of differentiated humanitarian provision.

Starting by analysing the importance of resources and services provision by humanitarian agents present in Shatila serves as an entry point to navigate the intricate maze of relations unfolding and upholding the *campscape*. The personal maps of Shatila produced by five participants explicitly situate as points of reference: the "main" streets, the UNRWA clinic, the UNRWA school, the mosque, the football fields, home (maps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Although a more detailed engagement with the cartographic material is proposed at a further stage (see section **4.3**), the relevance of these camp features for the lives of Shatila's residents is used here to structure the development of this section. Since the cartographic participants are 4 Palestinian refugees and 1 Syrian long established resident of Shatila, the relevance of the points raised by them is necessarily partial. However, serving as a point of departure, it lays the ground to advance the perspectives of other Shatila residents gathered from the interviews and participant observation. These elements serve to punctuate and provide an orientation within the entangling narratives of Shatila dwellers' heterogeneous representations and experiences.

[3] At the time of the fieldwork, in February 2020, the average rent price for a place in Shatila was 150-200 USD a month

4.2.2 Making a home

The importance of home-making for refugees' experiences is intrinsically problematic since it brings together: the experience of forced uprooting from one's once home; a physical as much as existential movement to somewhere supposedly temporary displaced people do not aspire to develop place-attachment to; and yet as temporary as it is, dwelling necessarily involves an effort in becoming-at-home for the time being (Hage, 2005, Lems, 2016). A quote from Edward Said gently expresses this contradiction in Palestinian refugees' lives in Lebanon:

> *"Whenever I look at what goes on in the interior [of Palestinian homes] I am always surprised at how things seem to be managed normally, as if I had been expecting signs of how different 'they', the people of the interior, are, and then find that they still do familiar thing [...] that there are still chores to be done, children to be raised, houses to be lived in, despite our anomalous circumstances" (Said, 1987:67).*

The same difficulties in the acceptance and practical materialisation of emplacement in Shatila is recorded, where people displaced from Syria who were used to much better living conditions in Syria found themselves having to face the material deprivation and social exclusion of Shatila. Recounts from the Yarmuk camp in Damascus - where a lot of Palestinians from Syria are from - describe a normal neighbourhood whose formality of being a Palestinian camp was the only (invisible) sign of its exceptionality. **H** and **P** attest to the feeling of humiliation registered among many of them who now live in Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Not used to the housing conditions of Shatila – where houses are dark, rarely receive direct sunlight, damp, and precariously cramped one upon the other, they are extremely troubled by the degradation of their own situation. Additionally, they are invested with vexations and accusations of being responsible for the worsening of the camp's condition by other members of the *campscape.* The humiliation they experience unveils the socio-economic and civic disparity between refugee status in Syria and in Lebanon: if in Lebanon being Palestinian essentially deprives you of the right to attain a decent livelihood, according to my interlocutors **H** and **P** in Syria Palestinian refugees were entitled to almost the same rights and duties as Syrians, allowing for the achievement of almost total social integration.

Interestingly, long established Palestinian residents of Shatila also lament the changes of the housing sector in the camp since the arrival of so many people displaced from Syria. **M** who

has dedicated extensive fieldwork to understanding Syrians' urban settlement practices in Lebanon, stresses the noticeable absence of rough sleepers in the streets of Beirut despite the loudly claimed Syrian "refugee crisis". She therefore investigated if and how Syrians were accessing housing and discovered they were renting out from Palestinians who had evicted other Palestinians to rent to Syrians – "since Syrians supposedly could be charged higher prices as they receive food vouchers and pocket money" (interview with **M**). Thus, a camp housing market emerges, where Palestinian refugee owners of their own place in Shatila rent it out as a means of income – whereby owners is intended as refugees who registered owning a house with the camp's popular committee. Since the beginning of the influx of people displaced from Syria, the demand for rooms and flats in the camp spiked and rent prices with it. Hence, while Palestinian flat owners grasped an economic opportunity, Palestinian renters suffered the rent increase and at times evictions.

Rent prices increased not just in Shatila though, as the Lebanese housing sector in its entirety adjusted to accommodate some extra 1 million people from Syria. Also other peripheral neighbourhoods of Beirut were targeted by people displaced from Syria as an appealing cheap rental housing stock. **B** for instance who lives in Tariq el-Jdideh, a neighbourhood adjacent to the Sabra and Shatila market, complains the rent prices increased in his area too, where rooms are now as expensive as 200 USD. The case of **Rosalie**, a Palestinian girl author of map 5 who used to live with her father and grandmother in Tariq el-Jdideh, attests instead to the worsening economic condition of a Palestinian family. The family was forced to move back into Shatila 4 years ago. The feelings moving into the camp arose in her speak to the erosion of dignity.

The emergence of a housing economy even within a refugee camp points at the appropriation of means for self-determination of Shatila's residents. Simultaneously, it reveals the flexibility and responsiveness of the informal housing sector (within a refugee camp) in situations of urban crisis, where shelter is direly needed (Sanyal, 2011). Everyone capitalises on the opportunities at hand, and whilst some gain benefits – securing additional income, securing a home – others suffer the negative effects. Relying on pre-existent social networks and familiarity with the camp constructed through precedent seasonal labour migrations, people displaced from Syria activate an existent social capital to piece together shelter security where humanitarian actors have either failed or are absent (Fawaz, 2016). Palestinian housing providers have chosen to harness the market expansion by physically expanding the housing stock and building floors on existing buildings to accommodate the

increasing demand. However, while the economic relation of supply and demand of housing between Shatila dwellers flourishes, it also presents repercussions on the social sphere. In fact, Palestinian refugees lament that due to the population growth not only have home prices increased but also consumer goods prices at the market of Sabra, where Shatila's residents do most of their everyday shopping (interview with **Abu N, H, P**). While the migrant infrastructure surfaces in the shape of informal housing provision and produces the circulation of an economy of immobile assets in a place where Palestinian "landlords" do not own the properties they are renting[4], it also evidences the cause of friction and competition as already quite deprived camp dwellers have to cope with price increase.

4.2.3 Health care access

The infrastructures of health care in Shatila are rather inadequate for the population of the camp. The UNRWA clinic situated in the heart of Shatila (see map 1, 2, 3, 4) has very limited resources at its disposal: an X-rays machine, equipment to do blood tests, family planning support, and general practitioner services (interview with **Mohammad**). International humanitarian medical aid is also available in the camp, provided by: the Red Crescent, sponsored by Arab countries; the Red Cross, funded by the Christian Lebanese society; and Doctors Without Borders. During the interview and production of counter cartography, **Jamila** crosses over the medical clinics on her map to point out that they are overwhelmed by the number of patients that need treatment, the absence of means to provide medical assistance, and the eternal waiting line for being attended (map 2). For all other medical needs, Shatila's residents can only refer to Lebanese hospitals, where a system of private health insurances turns healthcare unaffordable not only for refugee camp dwellers but also for many Lebanese citizens (interview with **H**). **J**, a woman from the Philippines, mentions in the interview that her Palestinian husband suffers of from heart condition that needs expensive care. However, not able to afford that, they do with what the UNRWA clinic can help with. Similarly, **K** confirms that her and other people from Sri Lanka she knows live in Shatila experience the same inaccessibility to healthcare, as the Lebanese hospitals that have the capacity to cater for their needs are too expensive.

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[4] The plot of land Shatila is built upon was rented to UNRWA for 99 years. Palestinian refugees can informally "buy" the right to one house from the camp committee, which acts as political administrator of the camp since UNRWA is just in charge of the distribution and management of resources (personal communication with **Mohammad**, 07/12/2020).

The problems deriving from poor healthcare infrastructures are clearly enormous for the health conditions of people, which is unacceptable in a context that has been existing for over 70 years. As **Mohammad** bluntly put it, "how this is possible! UNRWA is given a budget to provide for Palestinian refugees, but if they do not even provide basic health infrastructures, then what should they provide?" Walking out of Shatila from its Northern entry point, **Mohammad** also pointed at the "fridge of dead people", specifying that "it was donated by some NGO because to keep the dead in a Lebanese hospital you have to pay". The following two examples raised during interviews give further account of the gravity of the situation.

While visiting two sisters both female players of the Basket Beats Borders team, the parents of the two girls interrogate the coach **Mohammad** about the situation of someone the three of them know and care about. The person in question is a local boy who has developed some drug addiction, as he is involved in the neighbourhood drug dealing scene and started consuming himself. As they agree that the health infrastructures of the camp do not offer any support in that sense, they turn to me to ask if I had any idea of NGOs or any other sort of rehab program that could help their case. I had not a clue of how to help with the issue; however I was struck by another fact. The mobilisation of the daughters' basketball coach in order to cope with a health issue they were concerned with casts a light on the resourcefulness of two parents who rely on a social capital that exceeds the domain of health assistance in a context of deficient health infrastructures.

A second vignette was depicted by **H**. During the interviews with potential candidates from Shatila for resettlement programs, she has been told stories of all types of harassment that her interviewees have borne. For instance, women who have been molested or raped can appeal to Doctors Without Borders for strictly medical help. However, reporting the crime to get some type of "justice" brings in the role of the camp's security committee, which can act as mediator to settle issues like this.

> *"If it's for something like a woman has been molested or raped, they appeal to the camp's security committee which has its own methods for solving these situations. With weapons essentially. Or it tells you simply they cannot or will not do anything about it."*

The account illuminates that due to the under provision of services, Shatila's residents have developed alternative modalities of social and quasi-political infrastructures to substitute modes of civic life left behind during the displacement.

On a different note, walking down the "main" street that cuts across Shatila I noticed a lot of advertisements for dental practices, which testifies to what **R**, a young Palestinian woman journalist working for Campji[5], had told me: that Shatila residents appreciate the increase of dentists in the camp, among the perceived and shared benefits of the arrival of so many people from Syria. To further soften the direness of Shatila's health infrastructures as outlined at the beginning of the section, other realities unaccounted for by the interviewees exist. Beit Atfal Assumoud, a Palestinian NGO of Shatila that runs complementary school projects, women empowerment courses, and support families in extreme difficulty, has opened a doctor's practice to further expand the health care offer for the users of the NGO's resources. Similarly, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic Basket Beats Borders association has set up a medicine distribution point to secure continuous provision of essential drugs to families of the camp that cannot afford or find them. In fact, since the Lebanese economy has crashed, even imports of medical equipment have dropped catastrophically (personal communication with **Mohammad,** 07/12/2020). Again, a sport association converted itself into health care provider to respond to a de facto demand for health assistance in the camp, while, according to information from the same communication, other much better funded actors of Shatila discreetly avoid getting involved.

4.2.4 School dropout and "remedial" classes

The UNRWA school sits at the North Eastern edge of Shatila, lying just outside the concrete jungle of the more claustrophobic inner camp: Palestinian refugee children and teenagers attain their whole education career here, as schooling falls within the responsibilities UNRWA committed to. Syrian children instead are guaranteed the right to education by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which mandates the Lebanese state to take appropriate measures to grant such right. In this respect, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education has developed two multi-years strategy plans for the integration of Syrian children into the education system (Crul et al., 2019). To overcome the

[5] Campji is a Shatila based media production platform.

difficulty that some displaced Syrian families to afford schooling their kids, the UNHCR committed to cover the tuition fees for Syrian children. Furthermore, in parallel it developed Non-Formal Education programmes, tailored on the specificities of refugee students' needs (flexibility, condensed curricula, specific learning methodologies), in an attempt to make schooling as appealing as possible for refugee families, who due to their marginalised conditions are often forced to make their children work.

In the interview conducted with **R,** a Palestinian young woman from Campji, it was clear that schooling represents ground for contrasts between Palestinian and Syrian Shatila residents. She says, from the Palestinians' point of view, Syrian children have abundance of choice. They can either go to Lebanese public schools as "second shifts" in the afternoon – that is to segregate Lebanese kids from Syrians for fear the latter would affect the learning of the former (Crul et al., 2019). Or they can go to UNHCR schools – that is to say the Non-Formal Education programmes. On the other hand, Palestinian children from long-time Shatila resident families can only go to the already saturated UNRWA school, which has been accommodating an additional number of students by also catering for Palestinian refugee children displaced from Syria.

The segregation of the two schooling solutions – Palestinian and Syrian – is reproduced also in the extra-curricular education programmes available with different Shatila based NGOs. For instance, both Beit Atfal Assumoud NGO and the Children and Youth Centre (CYC), that **Abu N** coordinates, run "remedial classes" to "remedy" for the challenges to the continuity and achievement of education posed by the children's personal socio-historical and family situations. An NGO volunteer from Beit Atfal Assumoud that gives the classes I spoke with told me:

> *"Essentially they serve to consolidate knowledge for students who are behind on the school syllabus and prevent this "weakness" from leading to drop out. There are a lot of children who come to the remedial classes who really struggle with the basics, and it's not that they learn too much during the classes. They are too tired from so many hours of school that they cannot concentrate"*

The case is common especially among Syrian students for whom the war and the displacement that followed may have interrupted suddenly their education, made them lose a couple of years of schooling, or never allowed them to enrol, thus affecting their preparation and willingness for keeping up with school once in Lebanon. **Anas**, a Syrian boy

who was 15 years old at the time of the fieldwork, repeatedly told me he hates going to school because "I don't understand anything of what the teachers say". His Palestinian Lebanese employer **B** was rather the one insisting for him to regularly go to school after work and motivating the boy regarding the social and personal importance of an education, exceeding his role of boss and almost embodying a mentor and fatherly role. However, the return of Anas' family to Syria last August has disrupted his studies once again (personal communication with **B,** 19/08/2020), illustrating the most obvious consequences of displacement on the access to and continuity of education of refugee children.

About Syrian children's experience of harassment in school, **H** from Humanitarian Corridors said:

> "*They don't feel safe. They are insulted and they get beaten up when they walk in the streets. A case we followed that managed to leave to Italy was a mother with two daughters; the mother used to let the girls go before her in the streets and in shops to do some shopping, until she saw that both kids and adults were bullying and harassing the girls because they were Syrian. After that moment she never let them out of the home again, not even to go to school*"

Confirming statements made by **H** that people displaced from Syria, and especially Palestinian ones, suffer quotidian experiences of harassment and violence, two social workers from the NGO 26 Letters I could speak with exposed another layer of complexity that reinforces instances of distance between Shatila residents. The NGO works on the assumption that students displaced from Syria also stop attending school because their parents keep them home, as they are scared the children could be beaten on their way to school. The case is also that some parents fear reprisals for their own pasts from other Syrian men in the camp, who pick the kids on their way to school and send them back to Syria to serve in the army. 26 Letters reaches these Syrian (including Palestinian from Syria) families directly in their homes, to deliver education based on the regular school programme in a place the family feels safe. While on the one hand the case signals another example of the social fragmentation in Shatila, on the other hand it illustrates the preparedness of the camp's resources to activate different modalities and cope with the challenges posed by the *campscape*. The migrant infrastructure (Simone, 2004, Hall et al., 2017) is co-produced by the absence of trust with the streets of Shatila, the vulnerable position of some of its residents, the willingness to nonetheless school the children, and the versatility of homes that can temporarily assume the function of a formal educational space.

4.2.5 The mosque and other form of community coming together

The central mosque of Shatila features in the three maps of Shatila made by men – it is sketched as the crescent moon symbol, whilst the two women have not drawn any reference to it. The building is situated at the very heart of the camp, on the wider central street that cuts the camp across North to South, under an arc that obscures its presence if it was not for the undecorated entrance it has on the street. As we passed by walking, **Mohammad** pointed it out referring to it as the mosque and a cemetery – it hosts the graves of 850 martyrs who died during the Camp war, including two of his brothers (Figure 6).

The story of Shatila's mosque, as told by Peteet, is embedded with the history of the camp, since it played a crucial role in securing Shatila's families with shelter, protection from shelling, and providing a burial ground – therefore becoming a sanctuary and symbolic heart of the camp (2005:167). The same author collected memories from her participants about the change brought by the installation of loudspeakers on the mosque's minarets at the end of the 60s. If before announcements of collective interest were made by an individual with a good voice, the mosque's loudspeakers substituted that social function (Peteet, 2005:123). Moreover, beyond the symbolism and ritualistic function of the physical space in itself, the mosque unites the local faith community, whose assumption often of a role in assisting displaced people in the short to the long term is extensively covered in literature (see for instance El Nakib and Ager, 2015, Trotta and Wilkinson, 2020). Nonetheless, my participants did not consider there was anything important about the mosque's role in terms of the social life of the camp, from their point of view, and yet still valued it is an appreciable landmark to be included in the map of Shatila.

Figure 6 Mosque of Shatila after the bombardment during the Camps war (1985-1987) (source: The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive)

Rather, participants brought up a different set of places that work as catalysts for social connectivity. **K** has 5 daughters, all married except **Z**, who since she was a girl had problems with her hearing that slowed her down in finishing school. She followed the remedial classes in the Palestinian NGO Beit Atfal Assumoud in Shatila as a girl and teenager. A few years later, while she was working as a shop assistant in a shop near Shatila, one of the *hajje* (older women) of the NGO walked in and recognised her. Asking how she was, **Z** said she needed help and the NGO worker suggested she joined the NGO as a nursery teacher this time. **Z** pointed out that her mother is Sri Lankan, the *hajja* said "no problem, we do social work, we don't care what is in your paper. And anyway, your father is Palestinian" (interview with **K**). At the time the NGO could help her also with her mother's (**K**) visa, that was too expensive for either the mother or daughter to afford. Bait Atfal Assumoud took them under their wing as a "hardship" case, thus taking responsibility for paying for the visa renewal. The financial sustainability of **K**'s case specifically was eased by the fact that on top of the extreme family condition and the Palestinian husband, **K** had also lived in Malaysia and at the time the NGO was receiving support from Malaysian Muslim donors. Mother and daughter consider the NGO as family. Curiously, during an encounter with other social workers from the same NGO and with Children Youth Centre's **Abu N**, while promoting their action and offer of gratuitous care for "all the people of Shatila", some clues were given away that users of the NGOs with Palestinian identity, or related to a someone Palestinian, were prioritised – thus confirming that national identity serves as an exclusivist criteria also among refugee humanitarian providers.

On the same note **Jamila,** who is from Syria but moved to Shatila more than 25 years ago to marry a Palestinian man, experiences a similar type of discrimination despite her well sedimented familiarity with the camp and everyone inside it. Since she is a great cook, in her spare time she leads cooking workshops to share her culinary culture often with INGO volunteers working in Shatila. As I ask her if she is involved with any Palestinian women's association that may be organising cooking and food workshops, she replies "No... I don't know why". She seems actually greatly puzzled by her own answer, as she cannot explain to herself how she did not think about it before. Her son **Ali**, who is helping with the Arabic English when the conversation gets stuck in translation, suggests that even if she tried, they would not let her join: "she is Syrian, not Palestinian", he comments.

Rosalie, a young Palestinian woman, offers instead a positive vision of the intra-camp solidarity networks. Without a preference for specific sites, to her Shatila evokes the feeling

of being in a large family, or in a village – a very extended family where none would ever be left without help or living on the street. Her narrative resonates with the accounts of the first period of arrival of people displaced from Syria, when dynamics of hospitality bloomed out of spontaneous solidarity, before they came to be entrenched with economic advantages, ideological contrasts, and eroding resources. Interestingly, the participants and interviewees that inform the insights I am weaving together are wholeheartedly Muslim believers or practitioners, and yet their relationship with the local faith-based community was not revealed at any point of the fieldwork. To some extent it may be directly related with my positionality as Western, white, non-Arabic-speaking woman, and the sample of participants I consciously engaged with and those who spontaneously arose throughout the research process. Simultaneously, perhaps it also speaks of some ideological or biographical discrepancy that hinders such relation and that due to my positionality and chance I could not get a glimpse of.

4.2.6 The economic activity of the streets and circulation of drugs

The streets of Shatila are overwhelmingly busy with movement at all times of the day, and to a different extent also at night. Considering its limited area, the amount of clothes shops, second hand stores, pharmacies, falafel and *manaeesh* sellers, coffee shops, and a larger variety of businesses is impressive. According to **Mohammad**, virtually every shop that I see on the streets of Shatila and Sabra have been opened or employ Syrians. Their presence in the local economy has generated a lot of resentment among Palestinian refugees since they have contacts with producers back in Syria, which allows them to get products cheaper than the standard national Lebanese import trades, thus better placing their products on the market. **P** commented on this business model for families displaced from Syria and indefinitely temporarily settling in Shatila:

> *"Essentially [they are] those families that managed to re-invent themselves. In these cases, letting the children continue on their education or even go to university may go to the background. There may be a lot to do in the family business; that's generally the widespread business model in Syria anyway, and in Palestine too, where there are no pension schemes so the consolidation of the economic activity around a family business allows for the coexistence of the older and younger generations. The elders can stop working at some point and rely on the shoulders of the younger ones of the family*

whom start building their own family knowing that their kids are cared for by the grandparents in a mutual exchange of gratuitous support"

However, the streets are not homogeneously predominated by Syrian business. The presence at business level of people from the Indian sub-continent is nonnegligible: on Sundays especially, the North of Sabra and Shatila market fills with Bangladeshi market stalls: it is their market on that day. Campji, the Shatila based media production platform, made reportage where Bangladeshi residents of Shatila are interviewed to investigate how they feel about living there, which collected many positive remarks about the camp (interview with **R**). **J**, a woman from Philippines, confirmed very positive feelings about Shatila and the great range of economic activities operating in the streets of the camp:

"For me it is better than my country, because here, if you have 5000 liras in Shatila, you can go down, you can buy cucumbers? How much? It is only 5 hundreds [liras], 1 kg, also the bandoura [tomatoes] is one dollar, here for me is nicer than…it is cheaper, and I don't need to go far, anything I want to buy is here, my baby, even, in the night, if he is sick, he can alone to buy medicine"

In stark contrast with the woman's description of the streets' fermenting activity, other accounts stressed a very different type of business pursued in the streets of the camp, at its edges as much as at its heart. In maps **3** and **4**, **Abed** and **Ahmad** cross in red the points where the drug dealers conduct their business: they indicate the drug selling and entry points, where Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese gangs gather and negotiate the drug trade of the camp. **D** explained that drug dealers prefer "handling business" in Shatila because of a multitude of mutually complementing factors: the police and LSF (Lebanese Security Forces) do not come in, the camps' political parties provide them with protection in exchange of a percentage of the profits, and the "stuff" is distributed and consumed also in the camp itself by bored unemployed and frustrated young men.

According to a few of my interlocutors, while this sort of trade does not represent the main financial source the political parties rely upon, it does knit together intersecting interests and transaction economies whose currency is territorial control and presence. The *fasahel* (political parties) in fact are supported financially and materially by other countries to afford and maintain an armed presence in the camp. While they are not directly involved with the drug economy, they act as supervisors since they hold the armed power and capacity to support or settle disputes between the drug related gangs (interviews with **D**, **H**,

Mohammad, Abed, Ahmad). Although the secret committee would be in charge of dealing with the violent dynamics that alter the security of Shatila, they do not take position or action about it since its members are themselves involved in the drugs and arms trafficking. In his map, **Mohammad** lists the 14 political parties that are represented inside Shatila, that receive money to pay the salaries for their men by sponsor countries: Quwait, Iran, Qatar, Syria, USA, UAE, Egypt, Algeria, Russia are just the most important. This also confirms Peteet's findings, as these types of sponsorship guarantee continuous flows of money into the camp, securing a position as armed men for one of the *fasahel* for many can mean harnessing not just a salary in a social landscape defined by scarcity of resources and jobs, but also an improvised welfare state benefits deriving by one's affiliation to party organisations (Peteet, 2005). Hence, the circulation of drugs and the activism of armed political forces inside Shatila speaks of social and economic arrangements that emerge within the horizon of official (Lebanese national) authorities' absence, showcasing resourcefulness and political ideology developed to the extreme of criminality and violence.

4.2.7 The football field

Three maps drawn by two male and one female participant include the representation of the football field at the South East corner of Shatila (maps 1, 4, 5). The space stands in contrast with the rest of the cramped architecture of the *campscape*: whilst usually the sunshine does not penetrate the tall and narrow alleys and the coat of electric wires hanging above them, this tiny plot of land was spared the same destiny. It opens up among residential buildings that overlook its fake bright green grass and four goals, allowing the eyes to breathe (Figure 7). For **Rosalie**, the field is important because sports are a cure, an alternative, a possibility, other than drugs for the boys and young men of Shatila – Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian alike. The established dynamics among the groups of young Shatila residents who are drawn into the drug and arms traffics is one of mutual usefulness, according to **Ahmad**:

> *"I have some Syrian refugee friends in Shatila. From what I understand, they want to stay in Shatila and they try to become friends with Palestinians because it makes them feel safer and potentially more powerful: through Palestinians they can access politics and weapons. When their Palestinian friends leave the camp [i.e. because they got better off and could afford to live somewhere outside] they get very upset."*

Although importantly related with an intra-camp micro order of transaction economy and value circulation that conveys drugs and arms' violence across different segments of the *campscape* population, young people of the camp are not just this. The media platform Campji for instance is made up of a collective and mixed group of young journalists from the camp, where Syrians and Palestinians work together to produce video material portraying life from the camp in serious terms, always pinched with irony. According to **R,** a Palestinian refugee, Campji is the proof that young people are not obfuscated by resentment rooted in the past, as opposed to the older generations that have lived the traumas of exile, war, and camps conflict. Rather, the young people build relationships with each other based on shared interests, overcoming the initial diffidence grounded in the process of othering, and coming to appreciate instead the potential and creativity stemming from their coexistence, cohabitation, mutual comprehension, and solidarity in Shatila.

Figure 7 Panoramic view of the football fields (source: own archive)

The playfulness involved with practicing sports stirs away that diffidence and constructs social and friendship bonds that bring together boys and girls from Shatila – of all national identities, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Sudanese – in a metaphorical space of education where personal problems are temporarily suspended by the fun. Basket Beats Borders and Palestine Youth F. C. offer this space to girls and boys of Shatila, where they can make use

of their enthusiasm for sport, irrespective of where their papers say they are from. Also, they are encouraged through sport to take a hard look at socially relevant issues, as sport teaches to resolve differences peacefully, develop the ability to deal with defeat, and form personalities – finally supporting personal growth and the development of grounded ethics (interview with **Mohammad** and **D**). The coach of the girls' basketball team **Mohammad** who has built the project since its conception told me he has been receiving families of Syrians and Palestinians from Syria at the club centre asking for support. He explains it in these words:

> *"They come to me to ask for help because now there is a better relationship. The representative of the Palestinians from Syria in the camp came to speak with me. Palestinians from Syria are more in need for jobs, while Syrians usually come to ask for aid and advice on how to get access to aid services and support. I believe that being active in the civic society as I try to be all the time with the people of Shatila - but being open to help also others – attracts people since they see you are a good person. "*

It is curious once again that a sport centre with modest resources acts as social services provider in a landscape teeming with INGOs with generous budgets. The social infrastructure it embeds and supports entails not only the exchange of advice and a friendly ear, but also a point of medicine distribution and a food bank for the neediest families of the camp as the capacity of the club to supply gratuitously increased – while the demand is in constant increase and is never met. **Mohammad** attributes his commitment to the development of this hub to his personal biography. He has worked within some of the traditional humanitarian agents' structures and social and civic organisations in Shatila before. However, he has regularly come to a point of ideological contrasts with their ways of doing things that urged in him the need to emancipate from them. Not only does his vision of the world, of sustainability, and of "development" of Shatila differ from that of most other people in the camp, he also has deep mistrust for those who hold the reins of power in Shatila (interview with **Mohammad**). Hence, the creation of a polyvalent space for young people to practice sports, develop autonomously from the at times intense environment of the *campscape,* and access care, attests not only to an alternative ecology of migrant infrastructures. It also testifies that even in conditions of very limited resources, and despite national, political, ethnic differences, refugees and camp residents set in place mutual support strategies that: on the one hand mark the transition from "initial" hospitality to a

developed social infrastructure; on the other hand reaffirm, with bright glowing force, the agency of a refugee camp's residents.

Understanding and valuing non-monetary based or traditional forms of humanitarian assistance in Shatila mirrors and presents us with the richness of the *campscape*'s proliferous activity. Activities that interlace inextricably different groups through dynamics not only of othering and wary profiling, but also through the establishment of economic relations, social care, and civic responsibility. Contextually, the concept of hospitality is overcome, as the cohabitation of the different migrant groups extends over time and physical, mental, and humanitarian spaces that once belonged to the host hybridise and are reconfigured to new camp geometries. The next section addresses the spatialities thus composing an ever metamorphizing camp, where the unresolved tension between temporal emplacement (Lems, 2016), semi-permanent architectural features (Ramadan, 2008), and indeterminate exile acquire depth through the signification of material and immaterial components by the dwellers themselves.

4.3. The shape of space – *spatialities* of Shatila

Walking to and through Shatila became almost a reassuring ritual over the month of fieldwork. Repetition and the acquisition of familiarity with the gazes of people, the geography of the buildings that were my reference for orientation, the mental state for the navigation of the narrow and animated streets, and my purpose there – altogether they constructed a very different awareness of the place over the times I visited. Despite all the preparation before the immersion in "the field", I had to take my time to attune to the plural frequency of the space and the way people move (and stay) within it. While at first deciphering the surroundings is like crossing a jungle being blind and deaf, the company of someone from Shatila turns the experience to something close to remembrance – of a hybrid urban place, aesthetically related to many others. The diffidence one feels when entering Shatila for the first time – so famous and yet unknown - evaporates and is eased by the presence of a friendly company leaving space for recognition: of urban forms, of the same faces as just outside of it, and of the velocity of a life on foot (though few cars and motorbikes drive in through the larger streets). Although the gaze of the ethnographer after just a month of fieldwork may be if not trained at least awakened, I draw from the cartographic material produced by 5 participants and the information they disclosed while making the maps to

make sense of Shatila's materiality and its meanings. A comparison with the aerial view representations taken from three mapping services is also proposed (Figures 8 and 9).

Except for one, the mapping accounts are drawn with reference to traditional imaginaries of aerial view cartographies, where the camp is represented with lines and signs to define the borders and streets, complemented by written and symbolic information. Guided by the choice of the participants themselves, the discussion that follows tries to uncover the *campscape's* construction through attribution of meanings to architectural and material forms that accommodate the multiple and interrelated identities identified so far. The thread of the discussion is punctuated by three landmarks of departure: the official borders of the camp, the streets, and the houses.

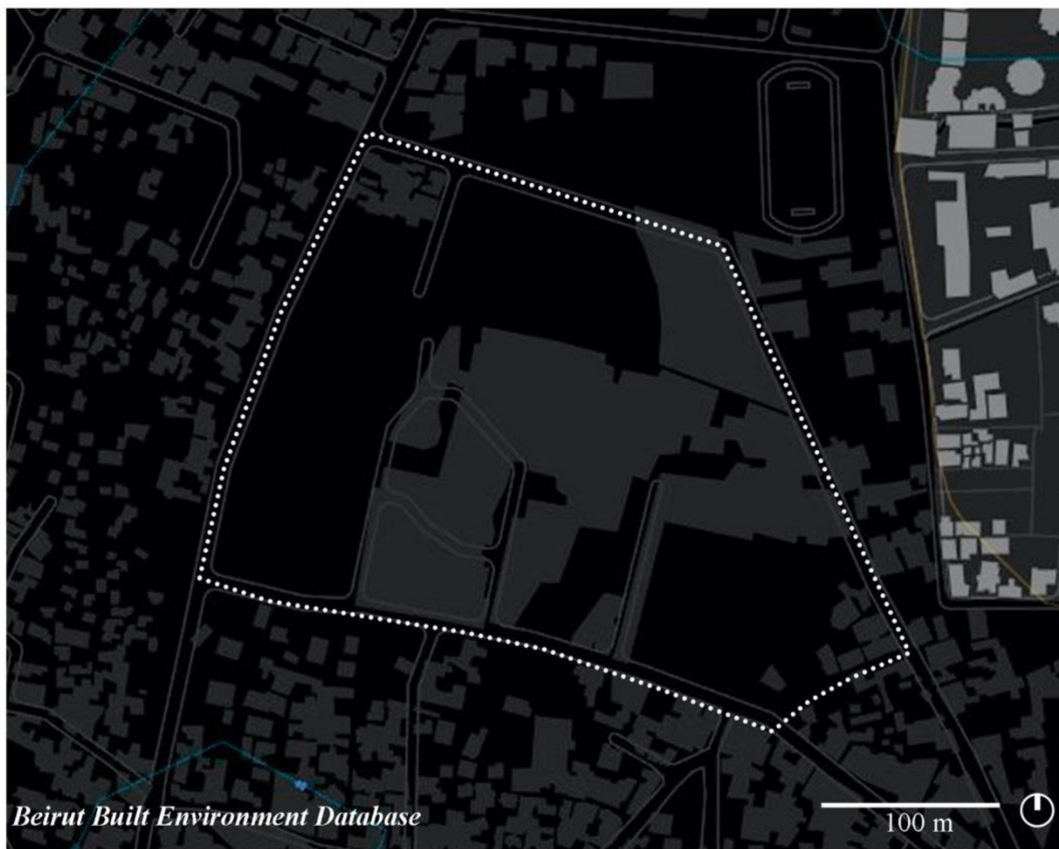


Figure 8 Map of Shatila from Beirut Built Environment Database mapping service (source: elaboration of the author)

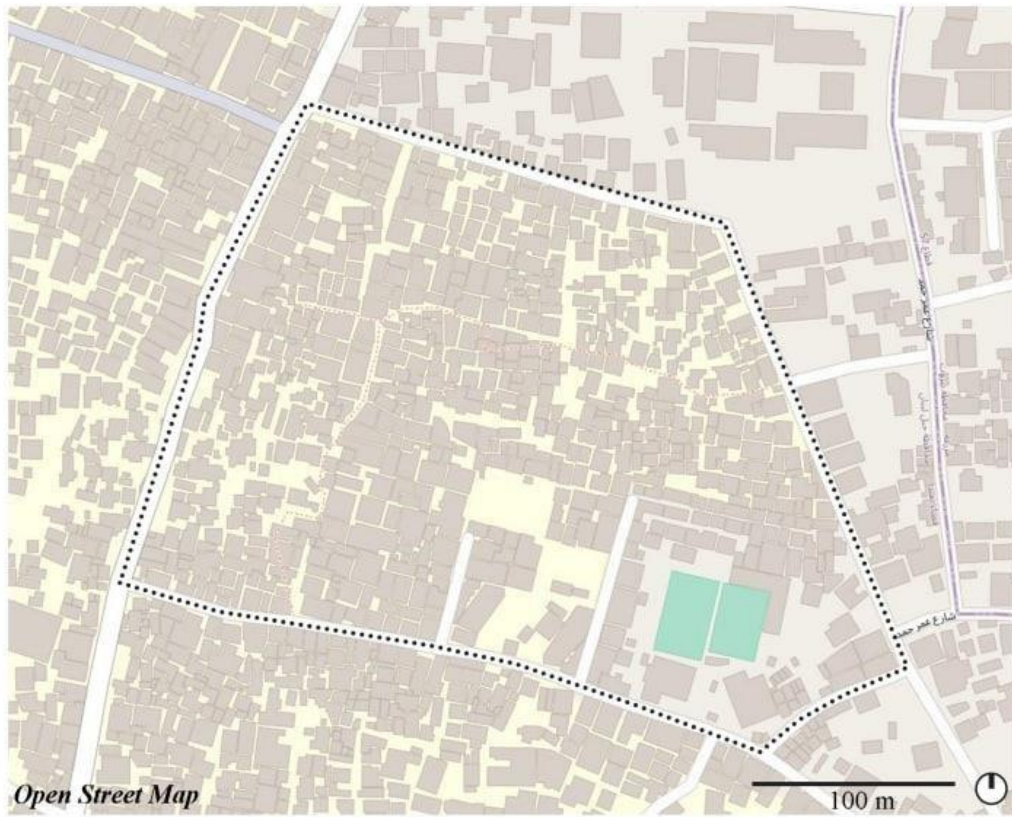


Figure 9 Map of Shatila from Open Street Map (top) and Maps.me (bottom) mapping services (source: elaboration of the author)

Palestinian

Syrian

Lebanese

Bangladesh

Sabra-Shatila main street *souk* (market)

UNRWA clinic

mosque

UNRWA office

UNRWA school

way out

way out

Political parties

1. Fateh
2. Hamas
3. Jihad
4. Democratic
5. Popular party
6. ?
7. Communist party
8. Freedom party
9. Arab party
10. ?
11. ?
12. Islamic Fateh
13. General leadership
14. ?
15. Revolution party

N

way out

my home

red crescent clinic

car parking

Sabra
friends
friends
friends
the road of Sabra
my home
Red Cross clinic
the street of the UNRWA building
beginning of the camp road
the red road
N

UNRWA school

mosque

coffee

my home

UNRWA

mosque

Sabra

Sabra

Sabra

asphalt

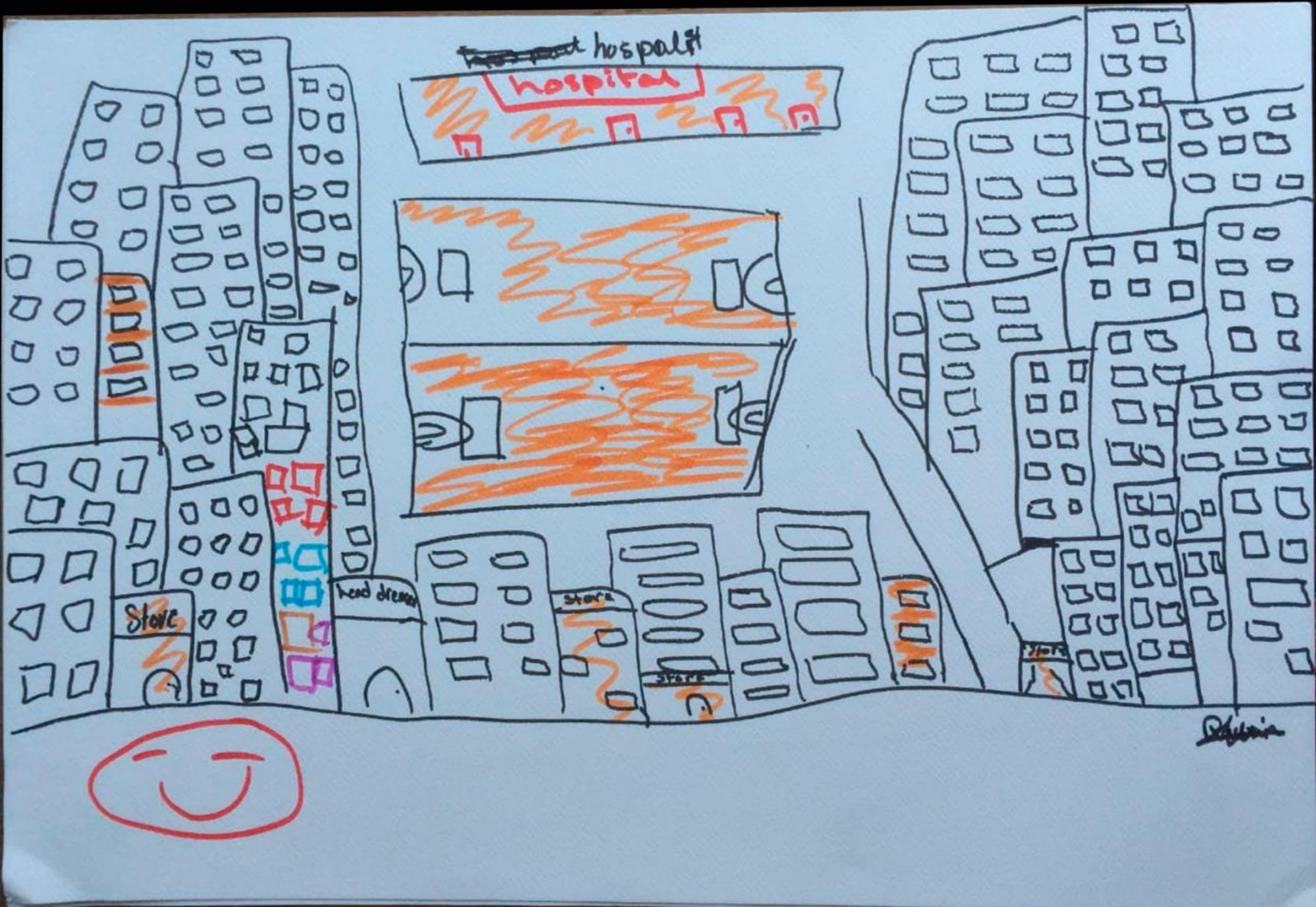
Sabra

mosque

Sabra

Al-shab hall (people's hall)

hospital



store head dresser (hairdresser) store store store

From the previous 5 pages:

Figure 10 Map 1 - Mohammad

Figure 11 Map 2 - Jamila

Figure 12 Map 3 - Abed

Figure 13 Map 4 - Ahmad

Figure 14 Map 5 - Rosalie

Figure 15 Above: official map of Shatila, displayed inside NGOs offices and in some camps residents' homes (source: own archive)

4.3.1 Borders, or the making of boundaries where there are no barriers

Narratives of the participants have recurrently stressed a juxtaposition between a supposed “inside” and “outside” of Shatila, where a clear demarcation of the legal borders of the refugee camp is apparent to the residents. As the map accounts of the article of Fawaz et al. (2018b) evidently showcase, lived and perceived geographies of administrative borders in the city of Beirut delineate individuals’ maps of the city or neighbourhood that draw from each one’s own division of localities based on an imaginary of where that neighbourhood starts and ends. Graphic visualisation of the process of recognition and navigation of spaces, people, and images can result in the blurring of the official boundaries, thus questioning how and why such demarcations were drawn in a specific way (Figure 16).

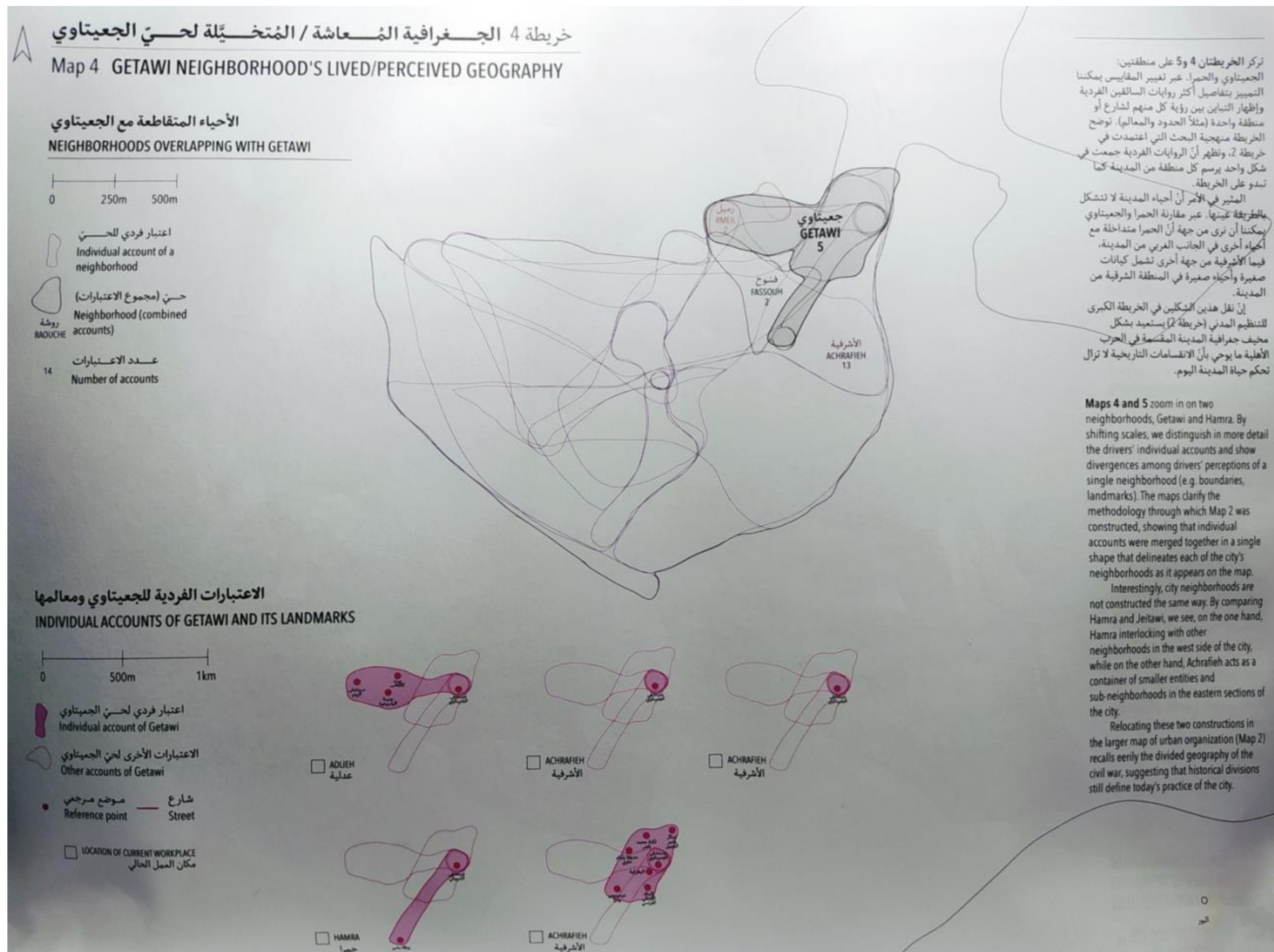


Figure 16 Representation of scooter drivers' perceived geography of neighbourhoods of Beirut (source: Fawaz et al., 2018)

Rather, the Palestinian refugees and Syrian long-term residents of Shatila have very neat conceptions of the extremities of the official camp. Maps 1, 2, 3, and 4 mirror faithfully the land's division plan, borders, and shapes. These were made by the camp's committee at some point in the past (Figure 15): Shatila being an almost rectangular area with the larger streets delimiting it, a few other streets run across it North to South, and East to West. All the narrow alleyways that one could not find in a "traditional" urban space – alleys carved out of the lower floors of buildings, or rather that expanding housing has come to swallowed up and keeps in darkness all day – only feature in light blue in map 1.

The importance of the camp's official borders is evidently relevant for those who rely on a strict distinction between camp and the rest of the city – for whom Shatila like other camps remains an extra national territoriality, separate and separately governed. However, the invisible boundaries have great significance also for the refugee and other "excluded" people who happen to be living in Shatila. For instance, **Mohammad,** Palestinian refugee, commented:

> *"I was born outside Shatila, my family's house was 700m from Shatila's border. They moved inside Shatila in 1985 for the War of the Camps, when everyone moved to the zone controlled by the sect or group they belonged to, to stick to the political and religious identity's territorialisation, because it was the only way to be protected from the violence of the conflict"*

While the violence perpetrated by the parties involved in the conflict was the reason that pushed people to cluster by common religious and national identity in some areas of the city (and of the country), the same parties involved are now the ones that most visibly mark the territory. In several interviews (with **Mohammad**, **D**, and **H**), the militarisation of checkpoints at the borders of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon is brought up. In camps like Bourj El-Barajneh (in Beirut too) and Bourj Al Shamali (in the South of Lebanon, near Tyre) the entry to the camp is still mediated by armed camp forces that scrutinise and monitor the movement of people and goods (Mansell, 2016). Although in Shatila the type of overt surveillance of checkpoints has disappeared at some point after the turn of the century, a network of sentinels is at work: compellingly disguised to the eyes of the foreigner, and effectively asserting territorial control and stirring away the Lebanese authorities.

The role played by the Palestinian *fasahel* (political parties) is not fully developed by any of the interviewees: for instance, despite listing and identifying the different parties (Al Fateh, Front of Liberation, Democratic, etc.) barely any importance is given to the political program each one

represents. However, some insights about collateral dynamics and positionings the *fasahel* reinforce can be gained by piecing together fragments of information. As mentioned before, they are involved with the drug trafficking in the camp by indirectly sponsoring Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian dealers alike to conduct business inside Shatila. Furthermore, participants unequivocally attribute to them the vests of overflowing corruption and responsibility for the malfunctioning and miserable state of things, or as **R** from Campji put it:

> *"The worst problem in Shatila is perhaps the corruption, distilled into so many different forms it has percolated across every interaction, between people, with your neighbours, with institutions, with parties. In Shatila a baker makes 10 breads, however out of these 10 only 1 can be bought by a Palestinian or Syrian or Bangladeshi local. The other 9 are already reserved by and distributed among the corrupt stratifications of the camp society, the Lebanese governmental authorities, the NGOs, and the Palestinian party"*

The metaphor of the baker's breads synthesises in universally comprehensible terms very complex dynamics of favours and corruption. However, **R** also delicately reminds us that in the end Shatila is a relatively small community where the neighbour, the party member, and the relative may coincide in the same person; hence, it becomes complicated to distance oneself from the circle of corruption. For instance, **Mohammad** showed me a big new mall space, built one block Eastward from the Sabra market. It is meant to be the new fruit and vegetables market so that the stalls on the main road of Sabra could be removed and moved into the mall, leaving the Sabra road free for traffic circulation. He prophesises the development project is not going to happen, since the market is territorialised and controlled by local gangs: they will threaten the retailers who know them personally, and the mall will remain a modern skeleton towering over the camp and its surroundings.

The intimidating power of the *fasahel* and their armed factions extends geographically beyond the borders of the camp – it has contributed greatly to the reputation of Palestinian refugee camps and has served them as well-prepared scapegoats for the escalation of the Lebanese civil war. It also reaches out emotionally to other users of Shatila. **D**, who has been working for over a couple of years for an INGO in the camp, admits he does not feel safe staying in Shatila at night, and even during the day he is permanently tense. He has stayed multiple times with his partner and son at **Mohammad**'s home for the evening and night, because in the privacy of the home one feels safe from whatever is happening down in the street, even if just few metres away. According to him, the atmosphere of tension is generated by a multiplicity of factors: the stories

of drug dealing, armed gangs, and disputes between members of different political parties of the camp, but also not understanding the language. It is difficult to read the situation in the street, since the Arabic remains confusing, one cannot eardrop conversations or grasp from the behaviour of people when something is about to happen.

Despite the impending closeness of the armed and potentially violent members of the community, yet still this circle can be very distant and unreachable. A personal experience illustrates this duplicity. For the purpose of this research, I set to interview one member of the popular committee, given that one of the interviewees could put me in contact with him through his personal affiliation with the same party. Hence the meeting was arranged with much difficulty, over the course of multiple phone calls. On the way to meet this person, **Mohammad** who was escorting me recommended to maintain a bland, almost naïf profile, and disguise the assumptions and purpose of my investigation since "we would not want *this* guy to know what you think about and are doing in Shatila", Mohammad said. The person did not show up, getting hold of him was difficult, and it was never possible to reschedule the meeting for another moment: elusion was the tactic to deal with me and the two people facilitating for me. While I have no expectation that someone would be interested in making use of their time by agreeing to be interviewed, the volatility this person – exposed member of the community and representative of some members of it – adopted in dealing with people from his own Shatila group was surprising. Especially, since supposedly the committee he represents is available for consultation to anyone from the camp.

If the territorial control maintained through the deployment of force of the parties relates to the overt and purposely intimidating territorialisation of some key socially and geographically relevant outposts – the drug traffic, the arms supply, the representative institutions, the public space of the streets these activities take place in – it remains not a totalising force in the *campscape.* For instance, **Rosalie**, consulted about her feelings when walking inside Shatila, she replied:

> *"It's not nice all the time because there are drugs and guys with weapons, but when you are from there you are exposed differently. They know I am from there so they wouldn't harm me. I also adopt a different attitude and body movement, to communicate strength when I go inside [Shatila]. I become like a man [she laughs]"*

Since she is familiar with the space, **Rosalie** is not intimidated by the illegal activities happening in the streets. Nonetheless, she feels the need to stiffen her body posture and adjust her body

language in a way that communicates fierceness and determination, to disincentivise everyone from bothering her. Two other young participants confirmed there is no street nor alley they perceive as no-go zone in Shatila (interview with **Ahmad** and **Abed**). They later added shades to the incontestable statement by specifying there is a sprawl of points on the map of Shatila where they would not indulge and stop by for too long – they marked them with red pen on the maps. Primarily, it concerns drug dealing points, lying at the edges or corners of Shatila, privileged positions for the monitoring of the movement of people and goods, while simultaneously being shaded by the same animated movement. For **Ahmad** and **Abed**, either the gaze of the people around belongs to or reports back to the observers that are invisible to my foreign eyes; or the specific point of the street exceeds geolocalisation and advertently refers to signifiers they do not wish to be associated with.

Hence, the existence of some form of democratic administrative and political institution in Shatila and its embeddedness with strategies for the enforcement of functions and meanings to landmarks of the camp – namely its borders – comes to collide against individuals' assemblages and territorial perception. The latter constituting each specific resident's ideological stance, perceptive experience of being in the camp, refugee or displaced biography, and rhizomorphous capacity to take things and transform them to serve customised uses and meanings (Malkki, 1992), it clashes against the multiple *fasahel* assemblages. And every assemblage competes with all others – groups or individuals' subjectivities – producing an overlapping of each person's own territories, whether mental, physical, and a combination of the two. Thus, in a detectable yet at times minimally perceptible scale, every Shatila resident plays a delicate game of adjusting, accommodating, and reformulating the extension of each one's own projection in space: to assert power, control, right to, or simply presence.

4.3.2 The streets and the tangibility of *gray spaces*

The main streets of Shatila (identifiable in maps 1 in black, and maps 2, 3, and 4) are wide enough to allow for the circulation at the same time of a combination of one four wheel vehicle (rarely daring such adventure), one or more scooters, and pedestrians finely tuned to move out of the scooters' way while navigating an unpredictable set of obstacles. The drawing would look like a spider web if it were to show the tiny labyrinthic passages that intersect the rest of the camp; Mohammad's map (1) attempts to show them by sketching out their layout in light blue.

However, an aerial view of the camp would not reveal these alleyways. As mentioned above, they disappear in the damp darkness between buildings that have been extending over the alleys' width, essentially turning them into tunnels where the only lighting is the mobile phone torch of the walker by.

In map 2, **Jamila** drew some winding red lines on the main streets of the camp: for her the roads are just a cherry on top of a badly assembled cake, where the holes, bumps, and puddles that make of driving and walking in Shatila all but a relaxed stroll. **Jamila** notices that the thick net of electricity wires - in so many ethnographic accounts of Palestinian refugee camps reportedly blocking the sunlight from reaching the ground (see Halabi, 2004, Sanyal, 2011, Fawaz, 2016, Chamma and Zaiter, 2017), not only obstructs the sight of the sky, but also kills residents of the camp at every rain since they are not safely isolated. However, she does not attribute the lack of security and possibility to feel well in the camp to material conditions, such as those pointed out already. Rather, she places the responsibility for the inappropriate appropriation of control and maintenance of the camp's resources in the hands of those who present themselves as guarantors of order and security (i.e. the camp committees).

Similarly, the ambiguous role of the camp committee in securing the provision of electricity to all residents in the camp emerged in multiple situations during the fieldwork. As in all the rest of the country, the supply of continuous electricity is nowhere granted 24 hours a day by the Lebanese state, hence households rely on decentralised power sources to cover the electricity demand during the hours of power cuts – which vary every day in time and amount. The consolidation of independent generators creates a unique configuration of house decorations, where an intricate set of cables and switches adorns many buildings' staircases and outdoor spaces (Figure 17). These are just the extension of the same hanging wires that cover the streets of the camp and harm its residents.

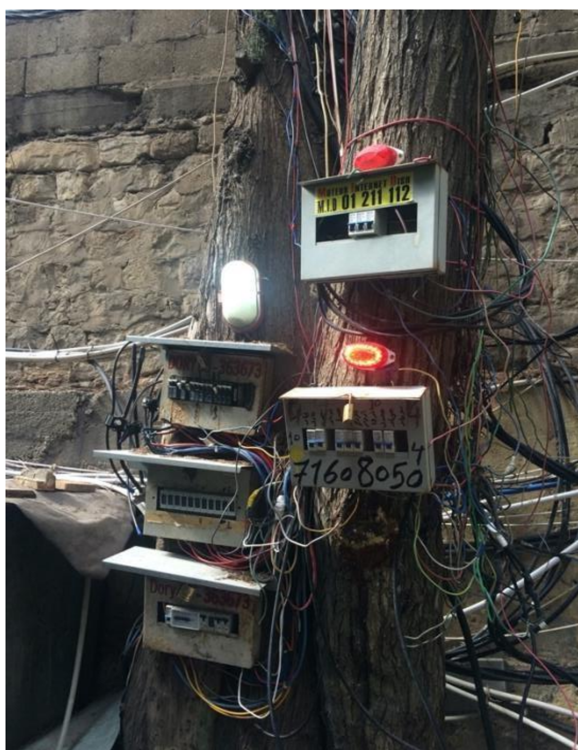


Figure 17 Common electric switches panel, connected to a common generator (source: own archive)

In Shatila there are three generators, set up to supply for the whole population, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, and everyone else indiscriminately. Peculiarly, the power it produces is much more stable than the one the camp receives during the hours of national electricity provision. For instance, in the sport centre of Basket Beats Borders and Palestine Youth F.C. the indoors activities (such as the medical support desk, and boxing, self-defence, Palestinian *dabkeh*, and table tennis classes) are scheduled day by day according to the shifting times of electricity cuts from the Lebanese national company, in order to secure continuous indoor lighting as provided by the camp's generators.

However, the power capacity has not kept up with the expansion of the population, thus jeopardising the provision of power to meet the needs of all Shatila's residents. While surprisingly the large increase of population due mainly to the arrival of people displaced from Syria is not a point of tension or competition over scarce electricity, most complaints point at the bad management of the generators' capacity by the camp committees. Hence, while the energy transmitted through the wires illuminates the camp's struggles over the essentials (i.e. light and internet) for conducting a normal living, the cables themselves contribute to dictating the meaning and function of space. They materially connect buildings through knots and bundles of precious metals that cannot be disentangled. They connect lives through the aethereal internet waves that trespass the camp borders and maintain translocal relationships with relatives and friends far away. According to **Rosalie**, they also heavily impact the aesthetics of the camp space, which not only demoralises its residents who lament the lack of direct sunlight, but also enhances the incidence of respiratory and vitamin deficiency problems.

The streets of Shatila are also much more than this: as previously described, the vibrance of the ecology of people, business, movements, smells, and animals is restless during the day. The architectural setting for this play to take place is an unusually cosmopolitan in terms of camp aesthetics. According to **D**, usually the display of cultural artefacts and symbols reinforcing the Palestinian identity in officially Palestinian camps is great: flags, parties' symbols, posters of Arafat, of the *feddayyin* (fighters), of the martyrs (Figure 18). However, Shatila represents an outlier, where the cosmopolitan composition of its population has mitigated the visual component of space. Palestinian landmarks do not dominate the camp streets since they have been substituted by people with overlapping and different biographical and cultural baggage whose presence, agency, and activities have necessarily altered the materiality and meaning of fragments of the space. Nonetheless, some classic symbolism of Palestinian nationalism subsists:

street art of the map of historic Palestine and of the flag are represented along the central street of Shatila, freshly repainted the day I first entered the camp in February 2020. Another main internal street is covered at one specific corner by prints of people's portraits (Figure 18). **Abed** comments on them by saying:

> *"The posters you see hanging on the walls of the streets of Shatila are not of martyrs and innocent victims of violence. They are dealers killed in shootings to settle drug trades. And also other boys killed accidentally in the fight"*

Not far from the street corner with these posters, enclosed by tall buildings and one low hut where one of the generators is accommodated, the concrete fabric opens to provide some space for the exclusive use of pedestrians, overlooked by the community hall and CYC . It is a space near the heart of Shatila, where funerals and weddings can be held, and where the children have some open space to play without the disturbance of cars and scooters. A few corners and narrow alleys further along, the space opens up again on the main Southern street, where some housing was built to accommodate Palestinian refugees displaced from the Civil war face the water reservoir of the camp (Peteet, 2005:180). The reservoir represents some kind of dark joke of destiny that Palestinian refugees from Shatila use ironically to emphasise their absurd contingent as well as existential condition. **Abed** explained that the project for the construction of a reservoir extracting water from the local aquifer that was supposed to supply Shatila failed as it turned out the local groundwater was salty and unhygienic. To make up for the clamorous mistake, "it was turned into a monument, by adding a sculpture of the key – the Palestinian symbol of the "right to return" – and made the most famous monument of Shatila", commented **Abed** laughing.

These iconic displays and artefacts of Palestinian culture and politics of the camp perhaps convey the assertion of territory more explicitly. It may as well be interpreted as an effort of defensiveness to maintain territorial presence inasmuch as the cultural and social contamination of other complex agentful presences make claim to the space. During our interview, **R** from Campji affirms:

> *"But there are also other communities in the camps, in Shatila for instance there are Iraqi and Sudanese refugees who are followed by Amel NGO. I've spoken with some for work, but I don't have the recordings. And there is a large Bangladeshi community since already long time. On Sunday especially the north of Sabra and Shatila market fills with Bangladeshi market stalls, it's their market on that day*."

Figure 18 Two pictures of posters on the walls of internal streets of Shatila (source: own archive)

The large Bangladeshi community gathering on Sundays, temporarily but also regularly turns an Arabic peripheral urban landscape into an immersion in the Indian subcontinent. The case underscores a highly visible moment of temporary deterritorialisation of the ubiquitous Palestinian assemblage for the reconfiguration of Sabra and Shatila's streets in the form of a Bangladeshi market, which assumes all the complexity of rhizomatic movements of assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). In turn, the subjects - whose stratified identity is not reduced to that of national belonging - and the projections of their desire, aspirations, and meaning are executed through the occupation and appropriation of the environment. Similarly, the entrepreneurial presence of Syrian people in Shatila, extensively debated by the participants, offers a glimpse of (literally) ground level territorialisation, where recently displaced people entering a new place need to re-organise themselves by inhabiting the *campscape* and attuning to its connective tissue. Simultaneously, they showcase great rhizomorphous activity when turning the experience of displacement – for every subject being more to less dramatic – into the reconstruction of themselves as bodies with identities and spatialities in a different geography.

The visibility of some of the camp's socially relevant features – such as the hanging electricity wires, the problematic generators, the aesthetics of the streets – enhances the recognition of the presence and claim each individual or group's assemblage of beings, objects, and meanings attributes to the space of Shatila. While the transcendental as well as immanent territorialisation of some landmarks and economic sectors is more immediately identifiable given their tangibility, the process of negotiation of the physical space and its investment with meanings happens at the micro-scale of everyday personal experiences. For instance, the discrimination and harassment endured by some actors walking in the streets – for instance Syrian nationals as discussed before – calls into question a rich complexity of heterogeneous elements that collide. The inter-personal at the micro everyday scale brings together the process of othering, that conjugated with the socioeconomic situation of Shatila, the personal histories of the people involved (for instance, one displaced from the countryside of Syria, one evicted from their flat in Shatila due to rising rents, or one chronically dependent on humanitarian infrastructures with receding resources), and the casualty of encounter in the street, inevitably cause clashes.

The way these collisions are resolved affects directly the space of the *campscape.* In fact, it puts into constant question the attribution of meanings, emotions, and engagement to certain spaces of the camp, in turn pushing people to use and occupy some spaces rather than others. Thus, the camp remains an irremediably constantly evolving spatiality whose ecology is affected by the continuous happening of encounters, territorialisations, and syntheses of the two processes. Simultaneously, it emerges as *gray space* (Yiftachel, 2015), where the informality resulting from structural processes of state withdrawal and refugees' agentful reconfiguration of Shatila, and by which infrastructures of bodies, developments, and transactions constituting the informality position themselves, comes to be contested by competing marginalised groups. Each one defensive of the scant resources they have access to, Shatila's residents and the assemblages of complex projections and materialisation they carry with them deploy a variety of strategies and negotiations. These aim to maintain or improve their status, but also resolve cohabitation and articulate relationships of mutuality, which materialise in the discussed forms of migrant infrastructures and transaction economies.

4.3.3 Housing, houses, homes

On one of the last days of fieldwork, I walked around Shatila with two of the participants, who wished to make me see the camp through their eyes. We started by walking down from Mohammad's home: the building is 7 floors high, and approximately the buildings along the same street are all as tall. **Ahmad** lamented that the buildings are too high: this street being one of the main ones of Shatila it is relatively wide – or wide enough to allow the sunlight to come through for few hours a day when the angle is right. However, most streets of the camp do not have the same luck. The height, he explains, is due to the continuous construction of new floors by Palestinian refugees, who want to rent the extra floors to Syrian refugees: if Syrians had not been coming to Shatila, the houses would still be low. He also complains that they throw away trash inconsiderate of the fragile ecosystem of the camp. He adds that he respects them, they are good people and has comprehension and solidarity for them and their cause. He loves the camp when it is Ramadan, when Shatila becomes like Sabra: the streets full of market stalls with food delicacies everywhere, the atmosphere is festive, and people are happy. **Ahmad** and **Abed** wanted to show me the videogame and coffee shop where they hang out a lot: they say that after work they can be there all night. Walking down the alleys, they greet almost everyone, with different levels of intimacy and warmth, producing a village atmosphere I had not appreciated before, when walking alone and resolutely straight to my objective.

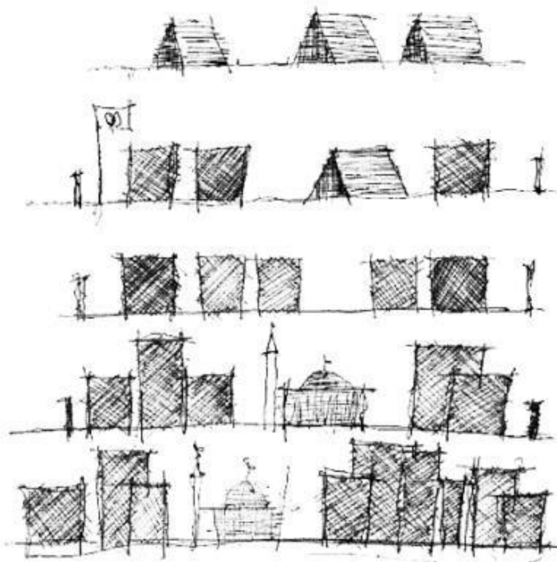


Figure 19 Graphic representation of the architectural development of the architectural development of Palestinian refugee camps over time (source: Aqra, 2015)

The talk during the walk shed light on something that had been brought up recurrently on other occasions by a variety of long established participants, although without being developed: the height of buildings in Shatila increased exponentially over the last couple of decades. The narrative is transmitted with inconsistencies and disruptions by different people; thus, a coherent reconstruction of the history of housing expansion remains out of the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, the frequency of its emergence in

peripheral comments speaks of a wound, or a scar, that concerns at least some in the community. The construction of houses in itself constitutes a vulnerable point in the conscience of the Palestinian community in exile – that including the Palestinian population of Shatila, since physically constructing homes entails committing to *emplacement*. An abundant literature has retraced the peculiar developments of the types of shelter offered to and reproduced by Palestinian refugees, in the balancing of two opposite drives. On the one hand the affirmation of temporariness – of the exile and of the tents of the initial refugee camps in the 50s. On the other hand, the compromise with impelling needs that the tents could not supply for, a growing refugee population, and the difficult climatic conditions exacerbated by the vulnerability of tents just to mention few (Sayigh, 1978, Gambiam, 2012, Sanyal, 2014).

For instance, a recurrent memory among Palestinian refugees in the camp at the early stages is that of clandestine building materials, such as recycling the food tins distributed by UNRWA. These were battered and flattened into sheets that could be used as walls or ceilings in the construction of mud huts inside the tents. This way the Lebanese surveillance forces would not notice until constructions were completed, and they were not authorised to demolish them (Sanyal, 2011:883). Eventually, the tin tiles were substituted with zinc roofs, and the mud huts gradually were upgraded to concrete buildings (Figure 19) in a process of squatting inside their own space – the refugee camp, hence engaging in practices of emplacement that were highly problematic. The Lebanese authorities' aversion on the one hand, the Palestinian refugees' internal struggle as the concreteness of the camp symbolised an acceptance of their indefinite exile on the other hand (Aqra, 2015).

As a result of the recent history of Lebanon and an unresponsive housing sector, the pool of population in need of cheap housing only increased – Lebanese internally displaced, migrant working force from Egypt and Syria, subcontinental Asian migrants, just to mention few. Camps were the only geographies these communities could afford, and that to some extent supported them. Therefore, at an average of one extra floor built on top of existing slanting houses every 5 years, the slum-like camps thrived, and building continued - uncontrolled by the authorities and intertwined with specific politics of the *campscape* (Chamma and Zaiter, 2017). With the outburst of the war in Syria and the increment of the vulnerable population seeking shelter in the Lebanese capital due to the lack of governmental response to the humanitarian crisis, the Palestinian refugee camps have been

targeted as destinations by many of this homeless population. Hence the housing expansion rate spiked, additionally straining the already dramatic housing conditions (Sanyal, 2017).

Mohammad, author of map 1, expresses neutrality about the housing demand spike, although he does notice that the buildings of Shatila have expanded vertically – the only possible direction. Nonetheless, he finds the transformation of the residential distribution that the large influx of people displaced from Syria has generated more interesting. He explains that already for a (unspecified) long time every building in Shatila is inhabited by a mix of people with different nationalities: almost nowhere is a building in the camp occupied just by Palestinian refugee families. In his cartographic account of Shatila, this heterogeneous residential distribution is marked with little colourful dots: green dots mark Palestinian households, red stands for Syrians (regardless of whether they are Syrian nationals or Palestinian refugees), purple is for Kurdish families, pink for Bangladeshi, orange for Lebanese.

Especially in the Southern part of the camp, **Mohammad** cared to represent the housing mix within the same building by drawing multiple dots close to each other: the meaning of an orange, a red, and a green dot together is that the multiple floors of the same building are occupied by families of different origins. For instance, in his building there are 3 Syrian families, in the next building there are only Syrian families, in the following building half of the families are Syrian, half are Palestinian. As he got tired of doing *pointillism,* he marked the rest of the map with evenly distributed coloured dots, explaining though that the distribution is not accidental. Whoever is afraid for themselves and their family's security (for the multiplicity of reasons exposed throughout this work) prefers to live in the most internal locations possible, because the Lebanese police will never enter so deep inside. Thus, along the main streets live mostly Palestinian refugees from Lebanon: even if inside the camp, these are the most exposed locations. Others, who fear for their lack of documents or for reprisals by different sorts of armed or undercover actors, seek shelter in buildings more internally hidden in the maze of the camp.

The uneven urban development of Shatila, and the other Palestinian camps in Lebanon, episodically marked by destruction – the Sabra and Shatila massacre, the Camps war, to mention the most obvious ones - has produced a landscape that people displaced from Syria who have arrived over the last decade were not expecting. **H**, who has conducted many interviews with Palestinians from Syria in Shatila, reports that:

"Yarmuk[6] camp is not what we think, it wasn't anything like what we see here in Shatila and Sabra. It was a proper neighbourhood, despite the formality of being a "camp". Palestinian refugees could build and improve buildings, unlike here. They had the same exact rights – and duties – as every Syrian citizen.

[In Shatila] the houses are... dark, humid, in set apart locations, really run-down. Inside they try to keep them as decent and homey as they can. But they don't get any natural lighting, the streets are too narrow. It's really tough, because they're not used to conditions like this at all! Palestinians from Syria are not used to this quality of housing, they're extremely shocked, and feel profoundly humiliated. That's how they feel, humiliated! Whatever happens in the camp, it's the Palestinians from Syria's fault: they arrived, they occupied all rooms, they occupied all houses, rent rose because of them, all prices increased"

That is to say, the uncomfortable houses' conditions come to intersect with the complex positionality of residents, reinforcing sentiments of exclusion, discrimination, general deprivation. The content of Map 5 drawn by **Rosalie,** a young Palestinian refugee woman, resonates with this testimony: she chose to use the black pen because generally things in Shatila are bad, thus black contours seem appropriate to her. With no hesitation, she started drawing one rectangle and filling it with little squares. Then started drawing the next rectangle, and filling that too with small squares. I quickly realised she is representing the tall buildings of Shatila and their windows. Halfway across the paper, she stopped drawing buildings and drew the football field and playground instead. To conclude, she coloured in orange a few buildings that represent her friends' houses, and one in multi-colour which is the house where she lives with her father and grandmother. She commented that the houses inside the camp do not receive sunlight because alleys are too narrow, buildings are built too close to each other, some flats do not have windows, and as a consequence a lot of residents have vitamin C deficiency problems. She noticed that in Shatila there are only residential buildings, and nothing for girls' entertainment or cultivation of personal interests. Thinking about it a bit longer, she corrected herself laughing: "Actually, they opened a cafe for women a year ago, but none goes there. Why would you go to a cafe to drink coffee and chat with your friends, if you can do it at your place instead?". Whether the

[6] The already mentioned largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria, near Damascus, where most displaced Palestinians from Syria were living before the displacement.

last comment referred to the comfort of being at one's own home, or to the senseless expenditure of money for a drink easily replicable at home, remains unanswered.

Something that emerges from the last two excerpts is that within the jungle of concrete and damp of Shatila, individuals identify one and few more special places where affections nest protected in spite of everything just outside it: home. One's own home and those of the friends are represented in two maps: pictorially in the case of **Rosalie**, and verbally in the case of **Jamila**. The latter in fact drew in purple her home and signposted three points in Shatila in pink – labelled as "friend", to identify the homes of three friends of hers. They are the only places other than her own home where she feels at ease and safe, where positive memories rest protected, and the atmosphere is of affection (map 2). While marking them down, she was keen on explaining what sort of *halal* comfort and fun each of her friend may offer to a guest: playing cards, eating fruits and nuts, sweets, drinking tea and/or coffee, cigarettes, or even *argila* (shisha). As we went to visit one of **Jamila's** friends at her place, I discovered an extraordinarily well furnished flat, with plentiful furniture, a cared for interior decor, and details that made the home welcoming as I had not encountered in other houses in Shatila until that point.

Hence the significance for individual subjectivities of a selective set of places, framed by a cube of concrete walls, and entrenched with emotional boundedness, calls into question the appreciation and engagement that refugees and displaced people have with the *campscape.* So far, the contradictory condition of Shatila's refugee and displaced residents - in permanent temporal exile, statelessness, and yet animated by an unresolved desire to return to their homelands – is manifest through an ambiguous architecture. One that had to resolve the tension between *emplacement* and claims of temporariness through a complex of state and camp actors' discourses and architectural "improvements" that guarantee a quasi-urban living for the time being. A common, almost obvious for the speakers, justification for the construction of urban forms like concrete houses in a refugee camp was "we will leave them [the houses] to the Lebanese when we leave" (Peteet, 2005:133). And yet the ambiguous architecture had to maintain the political symbolism of refugees' struggle and temporariness through informal urbanism (Oesch, 2020). However, the testimonies from the mapping accounts unveil one further layer to the stratifying thickness of Shatila – or one more segment to the rhizomatic cartography of it: an emotional bond to dear domestic spaces punctuates the geography of the *campscape*, where instead everything is often described as dire and miserable.

The relation expressed by some participants with the management of garbage accumulation and collection echoes the construction and investment of sentiments of care for the environment of the camp too. As **Ahmad** pointed out in the short narrative at the beginning of this section, the accumulation of trash in Shatila caused by the careless behaviour of some residents is not only an act of disrespect for civic ethics. It also compromises the fragile equilibrium of the camp's ecosystem where the efficiency of trash collection is fundamental for the maintenance of a decent environment in an already impoverished urban setting. **Mohammad** addresses the same waste management behaviour, when saying:

> *"I noticed coming to meet you that the piles of garbage in the camp's streets were very big and abandoned today. It's the first time I see something like this... It must be because the cleaners paid by UNRWA do not work during the weekend, so the responsibility is of the residents to throw the trash properly. However, now a lot of people living in Shatila are only staying for 3-5 months because it is cheap, while they are looking to find somewhere else to move, so they are careless of the place, and don't mind producing messy garbage"*

The respect for the neatness of the space is very important if the ecology of Shatila is not to collapse, and camp residents are aware of that; it assumes an extra special connotation for Palestinians, for whom Shatila is their home like a second Palestine. While waste and homes relate to two opposing domains dividing and organising space in urban circumstances – one being public, the other being domestic space – this dichotomic perspective cannot subsist in Shatila where the boundary between the two has blurred. The public space is almost inexistent, reduced almost exclusively to the bare streets. The private space of home is subverted: by the impossibility to maintain the complex gendered notions of domestic space in Arab Islamic societies in the small homes of Shatila's residents (Peteet, 2005). And also by the ephemeral deconstruction (Aqra, 2018) residents engender when they allow the homes to serve as school – in the case of the 26Letters NGO doing home schooling, or as sport centre – like the Basket Beats Borders location at **Mohammad**'s brother's home. Hence, the two have blended into a continuum of concrete, symbols, and meanings where the sanctity of the home has reterritorialised the public space, homes deterritorialise to serve as rentable space to produce income, and the privacy of the domestic space at times de- and reterritorialises too – expanding and occupying new space.

In fact, on top of the growing multi-storey buildings and under the Lebanese sky, a discreet ecology of private lives unfolds on the flat rooftops of Shatila (Figure 20). Rooftops serve as

private gardens. Buildings are so close to each other that you could walk the camp across from its top rather than through its dense streets. People communicate across rooftops: they send each other things by throwing them across the street at roof height, placing a weight – like a stone – inside the object to secure its parabolic trajectory. However, they are also far enough, or not frequented enough, to maintain the privacy that is too exposed to external interruptions just downstairs.

Figure 20 View of the rooftops of Shatila in the morning (source: own archive)

5. Concluding notes – for refugees' agency

This investigation started by questioning the existence of a map of Shatila, considering that it is a refugee camp incorporated by the urban expansion of the Lebanese capital. In Agambian terms, it is an uncomfortable hole in the fabric of the sovereign nation state, where the incapacity of the nation state to enforce order over its territory is resolved by the assumption of direct care over national biopolitics. This is attained by stripping individuals of their rights, thus rendering them vulnerable to containment in the space of the camp (Agamben, 1998). The historical attitude of the Lebanese state regarding the issue of Palestinian refugee camps resonates with Agamben's formulation. In different moments of the recent history of the country the territorial rupture - manifest in the fact the governance of refugee camps lies outside the hands of the national government - was confronted by Lebanese politics: either through belligerent action, or with hypersensitive tolerance. Like in the case of the Bourj al-Shamali camp explored by Mansell et al. (2018), it was expected that a cartography of the camp existed, and that it was withheld by Lebanese authorities and international humanitarian actors, guarantors of the security and of the management of the camp.

The fieldwork addressed the lack of availability of official data by engaging with camp residents in the generation of cartographies of Shatila emanating from within. The representations of the camp reveal that a knowledge of the geography of Shatila is well articulated among its residents, who conveyed on the maps not only its geometrical shapes but also an overlapping of symbols and signs that speak directly to the reticulated presence of infrastructures of care and to a socially negotiated territorialisation of spaces. For instance, the superimposition of a large influx of the recent Syrian refugee population with the established community of Shatila has altered the use of space, its accessibility, and its aesthetics. It also enhanced the visibility of the existence of social interdependencies, economic relations, and relations of refugee humanitarianism (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020) that the marginalised communities of Shatila have developed over long time. The special value of migrant infrastructures rests on the fact that their subtlety defeats the radar of humanitarian agencies and external actors' scrutiny, since detecting them requires attuning to the complexity of Shatila.

The retreating provision of services and care by UNRWA - whose finances and resources are increasingly eroding, the absence of state surveillance, and insufficient humanitarian aid have

opened the space for Palestinian refugees and other communities living in Shatila to harness initiative, to develop an informal economy of commodities and care. In the discussion of the ethnographic material, Palestinian refugees, people displaced from Syria, and other groups demonstrate a capacity of turning what, from the outside, seems a degraded refugee camp into a proliferous assemblage of social collaborations, political frictions, and supportive nets. In turn, these revolve around some socially relevant and individually reformulated everyday dimensions. First, there is the informal housing provision where the lack of Lebanese housing schemes for the Syrian refugee population has activated a rental market in Shatila, simultaneously securing shelter for some, and affecting others who suffer evictions and increasing rents. Secondly, the versatility of publicly visible actors in the camp, whose official role is turned to unexpected new social functions when the need arises. For instance, it is the case of a sports club and multiple NGOs that complement the limited health care system and welfare state of the camp. Thirdly, the versatility of spaces as a response to the social fragmentation and insecurity experienced by some Syrian families who resort to schooling their children in the domestic space, since they fear for their safety if they were to walk to school alone. Lastly, the entrepreneurial articulation of legal and illegal businesses present on the streets, where economic marginalisation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the expropriation of Syrian families of the means of support they left behind during displacement is contested through a relatively vibrant economy and streetscape.

The rich ecology of migrant infrastructures attests to the agentful presence of the residents of Shatila, through the appropriation of the undesired and yet presently unresolved condition of exile by engaging with practices of emplacement, which returns control over their lives. It also complicates perspectives on camp dynamics through the overlapping of multi-dimensional identities – each defined by different sets of aspirations, necessities, and space occupation – that bend the physical space to unrecognisable shapes. For instance, the invisible but perceptible securitisation of Shatila's official borders is the result of the historical development of a political structure of power – the camp committees. This makes reference to the years of militancy and revolutionary momentum galvanised by the PLO's presence in Lebanon, but whose internal workings have deteriorated and are now widely regarded as corrupt by camp residents that the committees supposedly represent. The presence of armed forces affects camp dwellers in the sense that it violently marks territory through demarcation of borders and physical presence in the internal streets. However, its invisibility at the edges of Shatila reinforces the ambiguous isolation of camps.

Furthermore, the street space offers the most visible stage for different camp actors to claim presence, occupy space, assert rights. While Palestinian refugeeness was once hegemonically dictating the symbolism attached to landmarks of the camp, the diversification of the population as a result of the multiplicity of dwelling communities has hybridised the aesthetics of space. The latter is the fluid result of the dynamic transformations generated by the adjustments of different territorialising processes of camp actors, expressing themselves spatially. And finally, the separation of private and public space is questioned by the ambivalent use of homes: they are spaces for the recreation of domesticity and familiarity; and yet their construction relates to the metaphysics of political symbolism. The fact that Shatila's buildings are made of concrete by and for people who supposedly are only temporarily dwelling in them calls into question the tension between emplacement and transience where houses are a symbolic device for the public advancement of the refugees' right to return. However, the privacy granted by the closedness of homes in Shatila also preserves the intimacy and emotional attachment camp dwellers may develop for an irregular place like Shatila, that despite its deprivation and complexities is a home.

A few questions emerged during the fieldwork that remain unanswered and would be worth exploring further. For instance, the gendering of space in Shatila remains limitedly studied by Peteet (2014). In particular, gendered notions of space are exceedingly complex in Arab Islamic societies, where public and private space use intersects with faith practice. While some clues of difference between women and men participants were detected, an investigation that addresses this specifically would surely enhance greater understanding of the camp. Similarly, the role of the faith-based communities of Shatila in the micro-dynamics of refugee humanitarianism of the camp should be addressed by a research focused on the worshipping community and the spatiality of the mosque.

There is something about Shatila that spills out of its porous borders and that it shares with the surrounding neighbourhoods, as much as with other marginal places. That is despite its reputation of being a deprived area in dire need of humanitarian aid, it is a space of creativity, inventiveness, and self-help, whose gravitational force reaches beyond its margins, beyond the four streets that mark its borders. It attracts people not only displaced from Syria but also from other countries in Asia and Africa, and it merges with the rest of the *gray space* that is the periphery of Beirut. It moves translocally through the non-linear trajectories its residents have covered to arrive there and with which they maintain

connections. It is a liquid camp where bordered thinking and the segmentation of space along lines of legal status – where is the refugee camp beginning and ending – is irrelevant. Rather the elaboration of exclusion and exception through micropolitical acts of mutual care and the appropriation of the forms of space make the camp's assemblage the evident manifestation of refugees' agency, and of their capacity of turning subordination and marginalisation into alternativity and autonomy.

Reading the cartographic testimonies of Shatila's residents was fundamental to peel the layers of history, biographies, and personal rhizomorphous conversions of space to unthinkable or invisible uses. But also, to glimpse at the camp's landscape as a plurality of personal coding systems that attribute force and significance to the geometry of space by intersecting, colliding, and mediating their extension. The camp is a *campscape,* an overlapping of personal assemblages that keep together prismatic identities with the heterogeneous mix of material elements and transcendental connections. These derive their political urgency from the precariousness of being socially marginalised, but also inherently contain the force of agency in turning indeterminate temporariness into transient permanence.

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ANNEX

Interview script sample 1 (expert interviewee)

(Me) Can you tell me a bit about the NGO you work with?

(Me) Does the NGO provide them with a house in the destination of resettlement?

(Me) How come the local organisations distributed on the territory contact you?

(Me) Do you negotiate directly with the Palestinian political parties?

(Me) Since resettlements have been frozen for Syrians since 2015, has that affected the migratory trends to Lebanon?

(Me) What was it like before 2015?

(Me) Does there exist some sort of coordinated action that brings forth the Palestinian from Syria voice?

(Me) Why do Palestinians from Syria go directly to Palestinian camps when they arrive from Syria?

(Me) Are there many Palestinians from Syria in Shatila?

(Me) As far as you know, does the political composition of the camp influence SP's choice of a camp rather than another?

(Me) When conducting interviews you must be in a very peculiar position. You hear the integral version of their stories. How families cope when they face some challenges?

(Me) Do they approach NGOs, or it's always NGOs approaching them?

(Me) Those who could afford it, do you think would all try to leave via sea to Turkey and beyond?

(Me) Do Syrians in Shatila feel the same as Palestinians from Syria in Shatila?

(Me) Does anyone go back to Syria?

(Me) Among those who live in Shatila, they feel safe there?

(Me) Do Syrian families help each other?

(Me) Has the situation changed for displaced people from Syria here since the *thawra* began?

(Me) In the debate of the *thawra,* there exists a discussion about the possibility of change on how the Lebanese government and the UNHCR should manage the Syrian immigration?

Interview script sample 2 (expert interviewee)

(Me) How are Syrian displaced people (SDP) reproducing cultural dispositifs for you?

(Me) what type of families have you met when you've lived in Tel Abbas?

(Me) Speaking with a worker of Corridoi Umanitari it came up that a lot of displaced people they work with were from Yarmuk, a Palestinian refugee camp that has been erased during the [Syrian] civil war and that a lot of them arrive to Tel Abbas and from there then disperse across Lebanon to other camps. Do you agree?

(Me) Do you agree that some displaced Syrians have started returning though, especially women and children?

(Me) Among the people you spoke with, how many express the desire to go back? For instance, when you talk to Palestinians it seems that everyone wants to go back to Palestine, even though if suddenly tomorrow that option existed not everyone would *actually* take it. What do you think?

(Me) Those who express they prefer remaining in Lebanon, why do they prefer this option?

(Me) About displaced Syrians who arrived to Shatila, did the fact they have some family here affect their migratory trajectory?

(Me) How are you able to profile Syrians? And Palestinians?

(Me) Speaking with people from Corridoi Umanitari, they said that in the interviews with candidates for resettlement, especially Syrian Palestinians, the underpinning to their

discourse is most of the time the sense of *humiliation*. The humiliation because in Syria they were a fully integrated part of the community. Yarmuk for instance, the largest refugee camp of the country, was an absolutely normal neighbourhood of the city, with the same economic activity, same rights and same duties. Have you encountered the similar responses?