

# Creating a Map-space for Palestinian Refugee Camps

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## **Abstract**

Mapping is considered one of the most important agents, not only in representing space but also allowing to ask questions, examples can be seen throughout history of maps that try to challenge the traditional definition of visual representation. The aim of this dissertation is not to create a map of the space but to provide a map-space or a comprehensive framework that, instead of visualizing the complexity of the camps (depending solely on subjective observations), communicates and explores the reasons behind this complexity and offers new angles through which existing representations can be reviewed. In other words: what process can be used to unfold the spatial, economic, and geographical complexity within these camps?

This aim is achieved through providing a decolonized historical overview of the spatial and economic transformation of the Palestinian territories, a literature review of poststructuralist theories of spatial representation, and combining archival and media representations, in a constant zooming in and out allowing the reader to revisit micro details and connect them to macro politics. Creating a framework to visually and theoretically connect these ideas resulted in a dynamic expandable map space which provides a decolonized overview of the camps through shedding light on the wider context.

Keywords: map space, non/representational cartography, Palestinian refugee camps, spaces of exception, West Bank archipelago

## Resümee

Kaardistamist peetakse üheks kõige olulisemaks mõjuriks, mitte ainult ruumi esindamisel, vaid ka küsimuste esitamisel. Näiteid võib kogu ajaloo vältel näha kaartidest, mis püüavad vaidlustada visuaalse esituse traditsioonilist määratlust. Käesoleva väitekirja eesmärk ei ole luua ruumi kaarti, vaid pakkuda kaardiruum või terviklik raamistik, mis leeride keerukuse visualiseerimise asemel (sõltuvalt üksnes subjektiivsetest tähelepanekutest) edastab ja uurib selle põhjuseid keerukus ja pakub uusi nurki, mille kaudu saab olemasolevaid esitusi üle vaadata.

Teisisõnu: millist protsessi saab kasutada nende laagrite ruumilise, majandusliku ja geograafilise keerukuse selgitamiseks?

See eesmärk saavutatakse, pakkudes dekoloniseeritud ajaloolist ülevaadet Palestiina alade ruumilistest ja majanduslikest ümberkujundamistest, ruumilise esindatuse poststruktuuristlike teooriate kirjanduse ülevaadet ning arhiivi- ja meediaesinduste ühendamist, suurendades ja vähendades seda pidevalt, võimaldades lugejal uuesti vaadata. mikrodetailid ja ühendage need makropoliitikaga.

Raamistiku loomine nende ideede visuaalseks ja teoreetiliseks ühendamiseks andis dünaamilise laiendatava kaardiruumi, mis annab laagritest dekoloniseeritud ülevaate, valgustades laiemat konteksti.

Märksõnad: erandruumid, kaardiruum, Läänekalda saarestik, mitte/esinduslik kartograafia, Palestiina põgenikelaagrid.



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## **List of abbreviation**

IAF	Israeli Air Forces
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
JNF	Jewish National Fund
OTRI	Operational Theory Research Institute
PA	Palestinian Authority
SI	Situationists International
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

## Glossary

*Archipelago*: a term originally used to refer to a set of islands in the sea, later introduced by Aureli in his book *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* to describe an urban model where architectonics are seen as islands within the sea of urbanization.<sup>1</sup>

*Corpus separatum*: the term itself refers to a region that was put under a special legal status that is different from its surroundings. This status was given to Jerusalem in 1947 where the city, as a result, was put under an international regime.<sup>2</sup>

*Critical cartography*: a post-structuralist approach towards cartography which links geographic knowledge with power and politics.

*Fractal maneuvers*: a fractal pattern of maneuver used by the Israeli Defense Forces in the Operation Defensive Shield. The maneuver depends on understanding the enemy's operational form and then creating chaos, by attacking simultaneously from every direction, in order to deconstruct the enemy's operational form.<sup>3</sup>

*Humanitarian experimentation*: a term used to refer to humanitarian organizations adopting wholly new technologies in an experimental approach on vulnerable populations.

*The right to return*: The Palestinian right of return (*haq-al awda*) is the notion that all Palestinian refugees (first, second, and third generation) have the right to return to the properties they were

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<sup>1</sup> Rumfhuber, Andreas. 'The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture. Domus, <https://www.domusweb.it/en/reviews/2011/05/13/the-possibility-of-an-absolute-architecture.html>.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 303 (IV), *Palestine: Question of international regime for the Jerusalem area and the protection of the Holy Places*, A/RES/303 (IV) (29 November 1947), available from [https://undocs.org/A/RES/303\(IV\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/303(IV)).

<sup>3</sup> Naveh, S. (2006). Between the Striated and the Smooth: Shimon Naveh. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/22/naveh.php>.

forced to leave behind during the 1948 exodus. This right has been guaranteed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 194. As a principle, the right of return has been at the core of the national Palestinian case and an essential demand since 1948.

*Operation Defensive Shield* (Hebrew: מבצע חומת מגן): a large scale military operation carried out on March 29 2002 by the Israeli Defence Forces. The operation was concentrated in the major Palestinian cities of Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin, and Bethlehem.<sup>4</sup>

*Oslo Accords II*: it was passed by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 1995 (Article 11): ‘The two sides agree that West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations, will come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Council in a phased manner, to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council.’<sup>5</sup>

*Space of exception*: a space where a state of exception applies. A concept in martial law introduced by Giorgio Agamben to describe how the suspension of law in a certain state of emergency may continue to exist (and in some cases become permanent) even after the state of emergency ends.

*The Jewish National Fund*: a non-profit organization that has been established in 1901 with its main aim to establish ‘a homeland in Israel for Jewish people everywhere’.<sup>6</sup>

*UN Resolution 181*: it was passed by the UN General Assembly on 29 November 1947 (Article 3): ‘Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case

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<sup>4</sup> IDF. (n.d.). Operation Defensive Shield. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/wars-and-operations/operation-defensive-shield-2002>.

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly Oslo Agreement II, *Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*, A/51/889 (28 September 1995), available from <https://undocs.org/A/51/889>.

<sup>6</sup> JNF. (n.d.). About JNF. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <https://www.jnf.org/menu-3/about-jnf>.

not later than 1 October 1948. The boundaries of the Arab State, the Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem shall be as described in parts II and III below.’<sup>7</sup>

*UN Resolution 194*: it was passed by the UN General Assembly on 11 December 1948 (Article 11): ‘Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 181 (II), *Future government of Palestine*, A/RES/181 (II) (29 November 1947), available from [https://undocs.org/A/RES/181\(II\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/181(II)).

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly resolution 194 (III), *Palestine, Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator*, A/RES/194 (III) (11 December 1948), available from [https://undocs.org/A/RES/194%20\(III\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/194%20(III)).

## Introduction

Although the fragmentation of the Palestinian territory began in 1948 when nearly 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes<sup>9</sup>, its effects are still evident to this day.<sup>10</sup> According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) latest statistics conducted in 2018-2019, the number of Palestinian refugees rose up to 5,545,540, most currently residing in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.<sup>11</sup>

The increase in the number of refugees was faced with geographical fragmentation and shrinkage in the Palestinian territories due to different spatial and military practices adopted by the Israeli government. The geographical and territorial transformation of historical Palestine resulted in further complexity at spatial, economic, and political levels. This complexity can be seen clearly when looking at the consecutive relationship between different Palestinian cities: firstly, the segregation between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and secondly, the transformation of the West Bank into an archipelago of territories connected through a highly monitored network of infrastructure including but not limited to road segregation, checkpoints, vehicle plates, and an apartheid wall. The different mechanisms used to fragment and monitor result in two forms of separation: the separation of historical Palestine from post Exodus (present) Palestine, as well as the separation of different territories in post Exodus Palestine from each other resulting in the aforementioned archipelago. This disconnected relationship between different Palestinian territories left the refugee camps within as economic and legal vacuum points; where terms such as legal and illegal are irrelevant.

Most discussions around the topic of refugees revolve around humanitarian aid minimizing the situation to a humanitarian crisis and refugees to war victims. Although in most cases adopting

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<sup>9</sup> UN. (1951). General progress report and supplementary report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine covering the period from 11 December 1949 to 23 October 1950. General progress report and supplementary report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine covering the period from 11 December 1949 to 23 October 1950 (1367th ed., Vol. A, pp. 21–35). New York, NY.

<sup>10</sup> further information can be found at <https://www.palestine-studies.org/jps/fulltext/38640>.

<sup>11</sup> UNRWA headquarters. (2019). Unrwa in figures. UNRWA in figures (pp. 1–2). Jerusalem. Retrieved May, 10, 2020 from [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa\\_in\\_figures\\_2019\\_eng\\_sep\\_2019\\_final.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_in_figures_2019_eng_sep_2019_final.pdf).

this narrative helps in fighting the normalization of the refugee status and offers immediate international recognition and response towards the problem<sup>12</sup> – the Palestinian case after 75 years and 8 times increase in the number of refugees challenges this internationally recognized approach.

Palestinian refugee camps have slowly transformed from immediate relief, temporary shelters to permanent structures hosting three generations of refugees. Despite the fact that refugee camps host three generations, the ‘right to return’<sup>13</sup> continues to be the main focus of the Palestinian struggle to this day. The right to return acts as one of the main factors according to which different power dynamics have evolved inside the camp. From locally chosen popular committees, humanitarian aid agencies, the PA (Palestinian Authorities), and the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces), each with their own agendas and views concerning the right to return as an option. The coexistence of these different agendas within the same geographical space and time results in the implementation of different spatial, economic, and political strategies according to which the concept of right to return can be seen and approached. This makes for a multi-layered power dynamic within refugee camps, affecting macro politics as well as day to day life.

Right after the exodus in 1948, UNRWA was given the mission of providing relief to Palestinian refugees only to find itself (after 75 years) providing developmental projects to Palestinian refugee camps due to the suspended state of ‘permanent temporariness’<sup>14</sup>, these camps are facing. The fact that UNRWA became a provider of developmental projects in refugee camps put more pressure on the agency and with time it became (unwillingly) the main internationally recognized representative of refugee camps.

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<sup>12</sup> Nawyn, S. J. (2012). *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, by Agier Michel, translated by Fernbach David. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011. 268pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780745649023. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 41(1), 57–58. doi:10.1177/0094306111430635.

<sup>13</sup> The Palestinian right of return (*haq-al 'awda*) is the notion that all Palestinian refugees have the right to return to the properties they were forced to leave behind during the 1948 exodus. As a principle, the right of return has been at the core of the national Palestinian narrative and an essential demand since 1948. For more information you can refer to <https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/jps-articles/Observations%20on%20the%20Right%20of%20Return.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> The term ‘permanent temporariness’ was borrowed from the book *Permanent Temporariness*, written by Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti.

UNRWA's main agenda throughout the crisis was to stay neutral and stress the idea of looking at refugees as displaced subjects, thus emphasizing these refugees' right to return, which is a vision shared by local refugees and the popular committee. The IDF challenges this conception by looking at the expulsion of Palestinians as an act of emplacement and portrays refugees as terrorists threatening the peace-making process. The vast difference in defining 'the right to return' results in a very complex power dynamic within the camps; one that has a direct responsive relationship with the physical space of the camps.

When it comes to physical intervention, the conflict between the different power dynamics becomes very evident. While UNRWA finds itself obligated to take an unclear route sometimes resulting in what can be referred to as 'humanitarian experimentation', the IDF's approach depends on altering the topography of Palestinian refugee camps through military invasions, demolitions, and assassinations. Due to the lack of involvement from the PA, the popular committees of the camps become the main representative of the locals and gain their respect through acting as a defense system against the constant IDF attacks. The popular committee is referred to as the armed forces of the camp, they defend the camp from within a territory of no legal system, making their own as they go.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the aforementioned economic, political, social, and geographical complexity of Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank. Due to the intertwined and responsive relationship emergent between the space and the complex power dynamic administering the space of the camps, finding a suitable approach to mapping the situation becomes the main focus of the second part of the dissertation. Existing approaches towards mapping are analyzed. From a-political to critical to post-representational. They are explained through giving examples which stress on their strengths and weaknesses individually when it comes to mapping spaces and situations.

Due to the complexity of the situation, there is a need to a mapping approach which allows the map to remain political (a quality found in critical cartography) while, at the same time, being adaptable and ever-changing (a quality found in post-representational cartography). Exploring literature which sees the binaries of representational and non-representational as counterproductive



when talking about mapping such as Hanna and Del Casino, Newman, and Halpern. These newly developed approaches towards mapping stress on the importance of keeping maps as mappings, processual and in a constant state of making. This is achieved through introducing the concept of map space as a response to the dilemma of maps as representation of space (critical cartography) and maps as makers of space (post-representational cartography). A map space presents space as a map and a map as a space in an attempt to highlight the responsive dynamic relationship between both. A map space is political, representative, dynamic, contextual, and processual. As a result, the aim of this dissertation shifted towards providing a map space as an alternative to simply providing a map which acts as a finite artifact.

The map space provided through this dissertation examines refugee camps in the West Bank as spaces of exception. It does so by: Firstly, introducing a historical background which dissects the power dynamic inside the camps and how it affects and is affected by the space, in addition, it positions Palestinian refugee camps within the wider context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Interrogating the wider context is an essential step towards understanding the reasons behind the complexity of the camps. Secondly, developing a map space in the form of an interactive booklet which explains further certain topics regarding the spatial, political, economic, and social complexity in the camps. The information provided throughout the booklet is selective, depending on a wide range of references, scales, and connecting information from different historical times.

Although the map space is inevitable subjective, this approach is chosen in order to be able to reveal the camp from the perspectives of local refugees, the Israeli government, the Palestinian authorities, artists and filmmakers, military theoreticians, and Israeli soldiers. In addition to different perspectives, a constant zooming in and out is used as a technique to connect macro politics to everyday life details, in that sense, providing an exploration of the camp as a home, as well as, a space of conflict.

## 1. The Spatial Formation of the Palestinian Territories

### 1.1 A historical timeline

The Palestinian exodus- 1948 (Arabic: *Al-Nakba*) is surrounded by so many different historical and political narratives that try to form a chronological recollection of events that took place. This recollection is not always objective and usually favors a colonizer's perspective, so it is essential in this case to introduce a narrative which attempts to decolonize Palestinian history.

With the right to return being the central of the Palestinian struggle, the Palestinian refugee crisis became one of the main topics to suffer from a hegemonic discourse. This notion was addressed clearly in Nur Masalha's work, one of the leading Palestinian historians for the past thirty years. Masalha points out a core issue when it comes to the Zionist narrative concerning *Al-Nakba*, a narrative which find its roots in the slogan 'A land without a people to a people without a land'. This slogan portrays the expulsion of tens of thousands of Palestinians from their homes as a practical act of transfer and fails to question the morality of this transfer<sup>15</sup>. This is an indication that the adopted narrative disregards any preexisting life in Palestine before 1948 and limits the discourse of the Palestinian struggle to one that caters for Jewish settlers making the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes a marginal concern.

In his article *60 Years after the Nakba: Historical Truth, Collective Memory, and Ethical Obligations* Masalha refers to al Nakba as a 'dramatic rupture in the continuity of historical space and time in Palestinian history'<sup>16</sup>. Although Al Nakba was the main event that set the benchmark for the Palestinian struggle, it is still important to present the whole historical timeline (starting from the end of the British Mandate to nowadays) in order to understand the consequential rupture of historical space and time mentioned by Masalha.

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<sup>15</sup> for more information on the Zionist political narrative regarding Al Nakba: Masalha, Nur. *Expulsion of the Palestinians the Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948*. Institute for Palestine Studies, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Masalha, Nur (2009) *60 Years after the Nakba: Historical Truth, Collective Memory and Ethical Obligations*. Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies, 3 (1). pp. 37-88. ISSN 1881-8323.

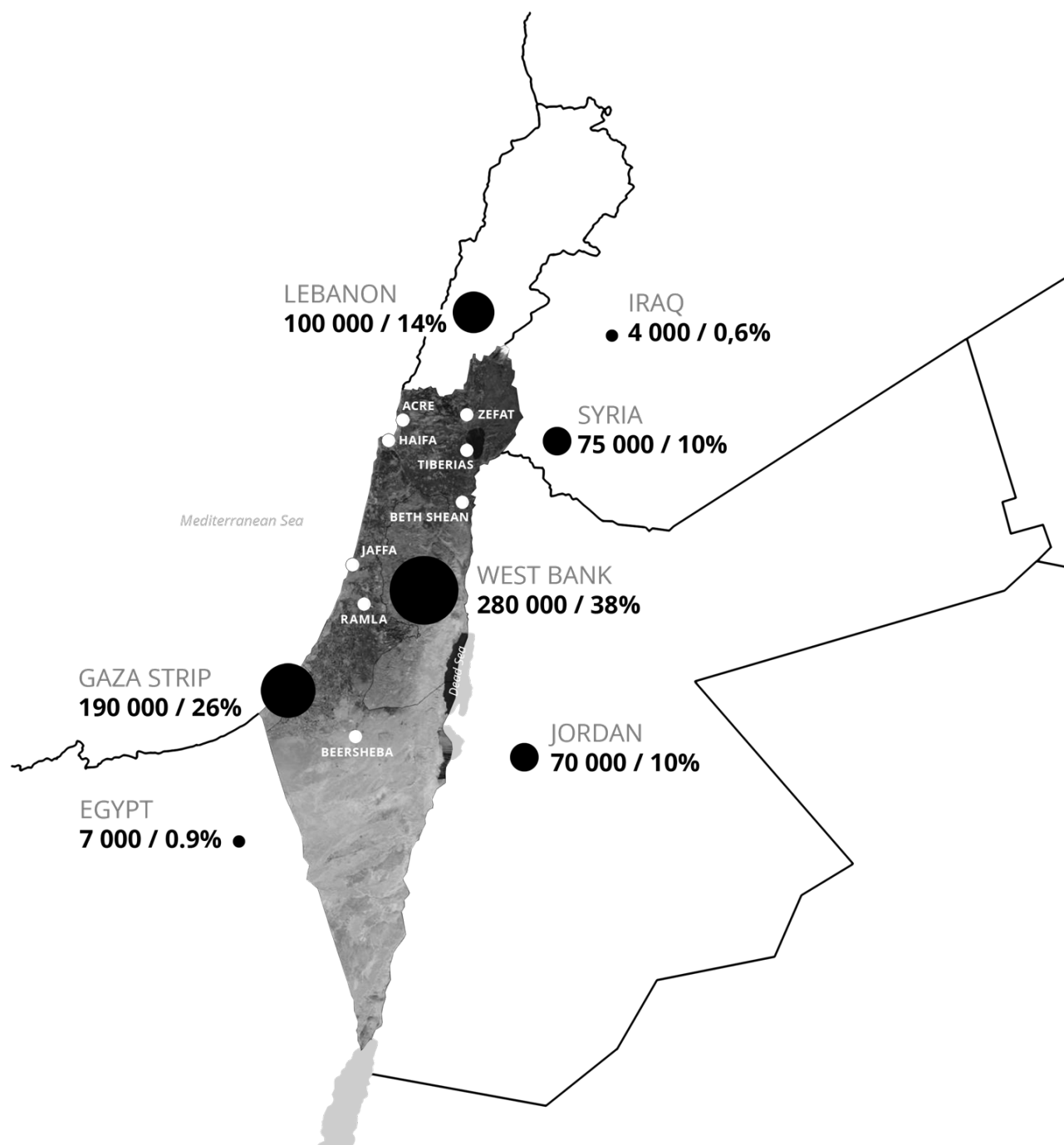


Figure 1. Numbers of Palestinian refugees after 1948 (Author, 2020)

## Palestine

In November 1947, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted in the UN resolution 181 to partition British Mandate Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state with the city of Jerusalem as ‘corpus separatum’<sup>17</sup>. Owing to this resolution, Israel was declared an independent state on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1948. The creation of Israel was a violent process that resulted in the expulsion of nearly 750,000 Palestinians between 1947 and 1949, altering the social as well as geographical nature of Palestine.<sup>18</sup> According to UNRWA statistics, 470,000 Palestinians (almost 63% of the overall percentage of Palestinian refugees) sought refuge inside the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which resulted in a more complicated situation for these locals, becoming refugees in their own homeland. Following the Palestinian *Nakba* was the six-day war in 1967, also known as the June war, or the Arab-Israeli war. As a result of the six-day war, Israel gained more Palestinian land and expelled an extra 280,000-350,000 Palestinians.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 2. The geographical evolution of the Palestine 1947-1948-1967-1995 (Author, 2020)

<sup>17</sup> Corpus separatum is a Latin term referring to a city or region which is given a special legal and political status different from its environment, but which falls short of being sovereign, or an independent city state.

<sup>18</sup> Bechev, D., Rottenberg, C., Gordon, N., Arulthas, M., & Greenstein, T. (n.d.). Breaking News, World News and Video from Al Jazeera. Retrieved May, 20, 2020 from <https://www.aljazeera.com/>.

<sup>19</sup> Bowker, R. (2003). *Palestinian refugees: mythology, identity, and the search for peace*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

In 1987, the First Intifada broke out, and a subsequent peace process (the Oslo Peace Accords) was proposed to end the conflict. The first Oslo accord suggested a timetable for a Middle East peace process and a plan for an interim Palestinian government in parts of Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>20</sup> As a result of the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three de-facto areas: A, B, and C. Area A (17.2% of the West Bank) being under the security and civil control of the Palestinian Authority (PA), area C (59% of the West Bank) containing all Israeli settlements within the West Bank under the full administration of Israel, and area B (23.8% of the West Bank) being under the PA's civil control and a mutual security control.<sup>21</sup> This division of the land transformed the previously discussed territories into what's known as the Palestinian archipelago, with area C composing the 'Mare Magnum'<sup>22</sup> surrounding the islands.<sup>23</sup>

Given that the Palestinian territories are subject to a hegemonic discourse, some historical references do not acknowledge the existence of Palestine before 1948, which is why it's important to stress on the fact that the borders around the West bank and the Gaza Strip (which are currently represented as the Palestinian territories) are only established since 1948. This argument is essential when discussing the issue of the refugees' right to return to their depopulated (in some cases completely demolished) villages in pre 1948 Palestine.

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<sup>20</sup> History.com Editors. (2017, August 11). Palestine. Retrieved May, 21, 2020 from [https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/palestine#section\\_4](https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/palestine#section_4).

<sup>21</sup> The European Council on Foreign Relations. (2002.). Mapping Palestinian Politics. Retrieved January 7, 2020, from [https://www.ecfr.eu/mapping\\_palestinian\\_politics/detail/opt](https://www.ecfr.eu/mapping_palestinian_politics/detail/opt).

<sup>22</sup> 'Mare magnum' Borrowed from Latin meaning the great sea.

<sup>23</sup> Lambert, L. (2013) (Vol. 6). Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books.



Figure 3. A sign installed at Qalandia checkpoint to mark the border between area A and area C (Author as derived from Estrin, 2020)

## 1.2 Transformations within the archipelago: infrastructure, islands, and control

In the book *Architecture on the Borderline*, architect and researcher Alessandro Petti discusses the role of infrastructure in creating what he refers to as 'space of flows'. He defines an archipelago as a set of islands that share a flow of information mainly through; but not limited to; electronic and mechanical infrastructure. Connecting these islands together, infrastructure creates a space of flow that serves as a mediator for transforming a set of islands into a 'control society'<sup>24</sup> and, consequently, becomes a means to dominate through democratizing these same mechanisms of control.<sup>25</sup> The same analogy, with some discrepancies, can be adopted to describe the Palestinian territories after the fragmentation following the Oslo Accords. In this case, Palestinian territories are seen as geographically disconnected islands which were then reconnected through a network of infrastructure.

Within the 1967 Palestinian territories, the mediating infrastructure is physically monitored by the Israeli government through policies of apartheid manifested e.g in road segregation, the separation wall, the different colors of vehicle registration plates, and Israeli military checkpoints set up even between what's legally agreed on to be 'purely' Palestinian cities. In reference to Deleuze, Petti concludes in his text, *Asymmetries*, that 'the space of flows, both tangible and intangible, is the favored space for power to exercise its control'<sup>26</sup>.

The control society is a type of society in which mechanisms of control become increasingly 'democratic' ... The normalizing devices of discipline that act within our shared everyday practices are intensified and generalized in societies of control; unlike disciplinary societies, however, this control extends well beyond the structural places of social institutions by means of a free floating network.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Society of control is a term first discussed in Deleuze's Postscript on the Societies of Control in 1990 and it refers to the interpretation that social power no longer 'disciplines' as in the industrial era, but combines the a priori internalisation of social expectations, with a posteriori control of certain limits. Individuals can move freely within those limits, but not without.

<sup>25</sup> for more information about democratization of sovereignty and institutional mechanisms of control refer to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*.

<sup>26</sup> Hilal, S., & Petti, A. (2018). *Permanent temporariness: al masha/common, madafeh/hospitality, borders, mujawaara/neighborhood, camp, participation, confession, profanation, decolonization, representation, exile, returns, heritage, tawtin/normalization*. Stockholm: Art and Theory Publishing. p. 99.

<sup>27</sup> Deleuze, G. (1990), as cited in Hilal, S., & Petti, A. (2018). *Permanent Temporariness*. p. 98.

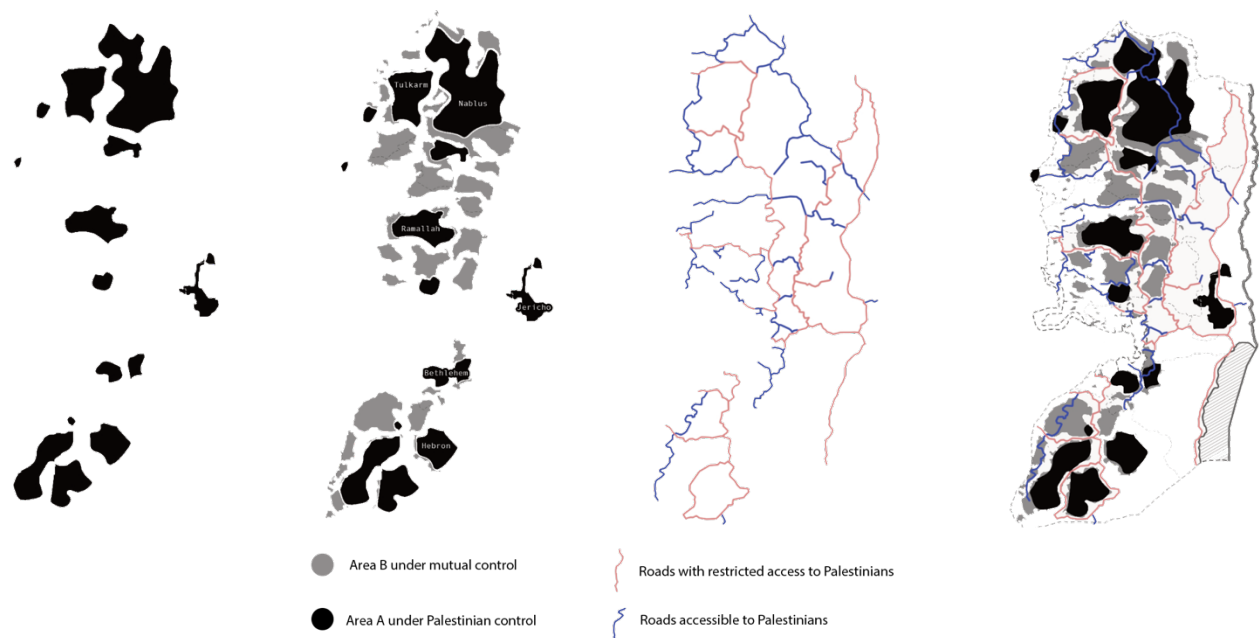


Figure 4. The space of flow created through road segregation in the archipelago of the West Bank (Author, 2020)

Although Deleuze and the Israeli government find common ground in the importance of introducing and utilizing a space of power in order to control, the network created by the Israeli government in the case of the Palestinian archipelago seems less ‘free floating’ and more obvious when compared to Deleuze’s vision. While Deleuze sees the democratization of infrastructure as a means of control, the Israeli government adopts a more obvious approach that grounds itself in the notion of divide and conquer through introducing a space of flow that is, by essence, undemocratic. In the end, the created space of power within the Palestinian archipelago still serves the purpose of penetrating what seemed to be -in 1967- an enclosed piece of land.

While this undemocratic infrastructure was established by the Israeli government in order to create a control society, the absence of a peace resolution generated a counter effect among Palestinians who challenge the status quo and, instead, practice daily civil acts of resistance against this politico-geographical segregation. One example of such acts is the attempts to penetrate the apartheid wall which currently separates the West Bank from East Jerusalem. Crossing to the other side can be granted in two different ways: Firstly, crossing a checkpoint, a possibility for everyone who has a permit issued by the Israeli government to cross (mainly work permits but may also be given for other reasons sometimes). Secondly, for everyone else who doesn’t have a permit and



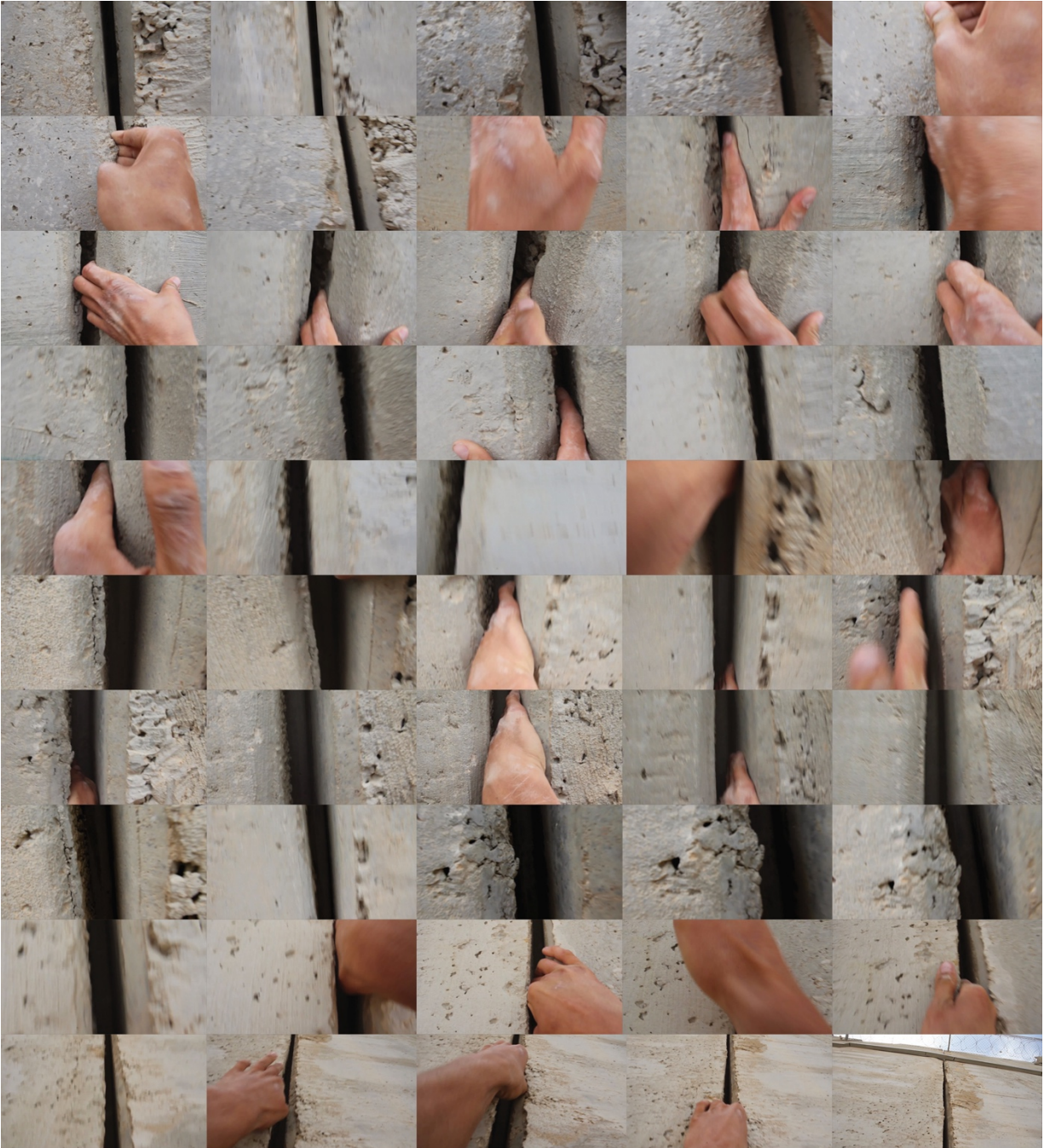
wishes to cross the wall -whether to work illegally or visit relatives- climbing the wall or passing through holes created in it are the only options left.



*Figure 5. A Palestinian boy climbing through an opening in the Separation wall (Ratner, n.d.)*



*Figure 6. A masked Palestinian protestor climbs Israel's separation wall during a weekly demonstration against Israeli occupation in the West Bank village of Nilin (Rimawi, 2019)*



*Figure 7. Edited close-up video of climbing the apartheid wall (Author as derived from Böhm, 2020)*

In addition to the spatial consequences this fragmentation has on the West Bank, the transformation of the Palestinian territory into an archipelago was accompanied by major economic challenges. The Palestinian economy broke down into five enclave economies as described by Nur Arafah, a Palestinian political scientist and economist.<sup>28</sup> Firstly, the Gaza Strip which developed an ‘illegal’ economy that utilizes underground tunnels connecting the Gaza Strip to Egypt ; secondly, East Jerusalem which has been completely separated from Gaza and West Bank economy and became more integrated into Israeli economy and is currently suffering from poverty and unemployment; thirdly, the West Bank economy which was divided into three economies: Ramallah developed a donor-based economy, Hebron and the south of the West Bank became the commercial and industrial center, and the north of the West Bank developed a touristic trade flows with the Triangle.<sup>29</sup> This spatial and economic dismantling of the Palestinian territories includes restrictions of movement into Jerusalem, between Gaza and the West Bank, between Gaza/ West Bank and Israel, and within the West Bank.

One example which can be given to the economic effects on the territorial rupture of the archipelago is the case of Ramallah which developed a donor-based economy. Becoming separated from the other agricultural, and industrial centers of the West Bank, Ramallah suffered from limited resources. As an immediate result to the establishment of Palestinian self rule over the west Bank and the gaza Strip in the mid 1990’s, Ramallah became the hub for administrative and governmental Palestinian institutions and, inevitably, the new unofficial economic capital of Palestine. Due to the lack of resources and the need to survive in this abnormality, land was the only asset available for investment. With the increase of donors’ cash and land being the only resource, a wave of neo-liberal economy rose which tremendously increased the privatization of land and its prices. Encouraging investors to take loans in order to build more apartment buildings, and residents to similarly take loans in order to rent or buy these apartments. The rising numbers of empty apartment buildings in Ramallah stand as physical proof to the effects of the territorial fragmentation of the West Bank.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Arafah, Nur. ‘Decolonising Palestinian Economies.’ *This Week in Palestine*, June 2015.

<sup>29</sup> The Triangle is a term used to refer to the Arab Israeli towns and villages in the northern part of historical Palestine.

<sup>30</sup> Kaplan, Y., Hartney, R., & Felsenthal, A. (2015). *Luxury Alongside Poverty in the Palestinian Authority*. JCPA. Retrieved May, 16, 2020 from <https://jcpa.org/article/luxury-alongside-poverty-in-the-palestinian-authority/>.





*Figure 8 photos from the new city of Rawabi built on the borders of Ramallah city (Rawabi, n.d.)*

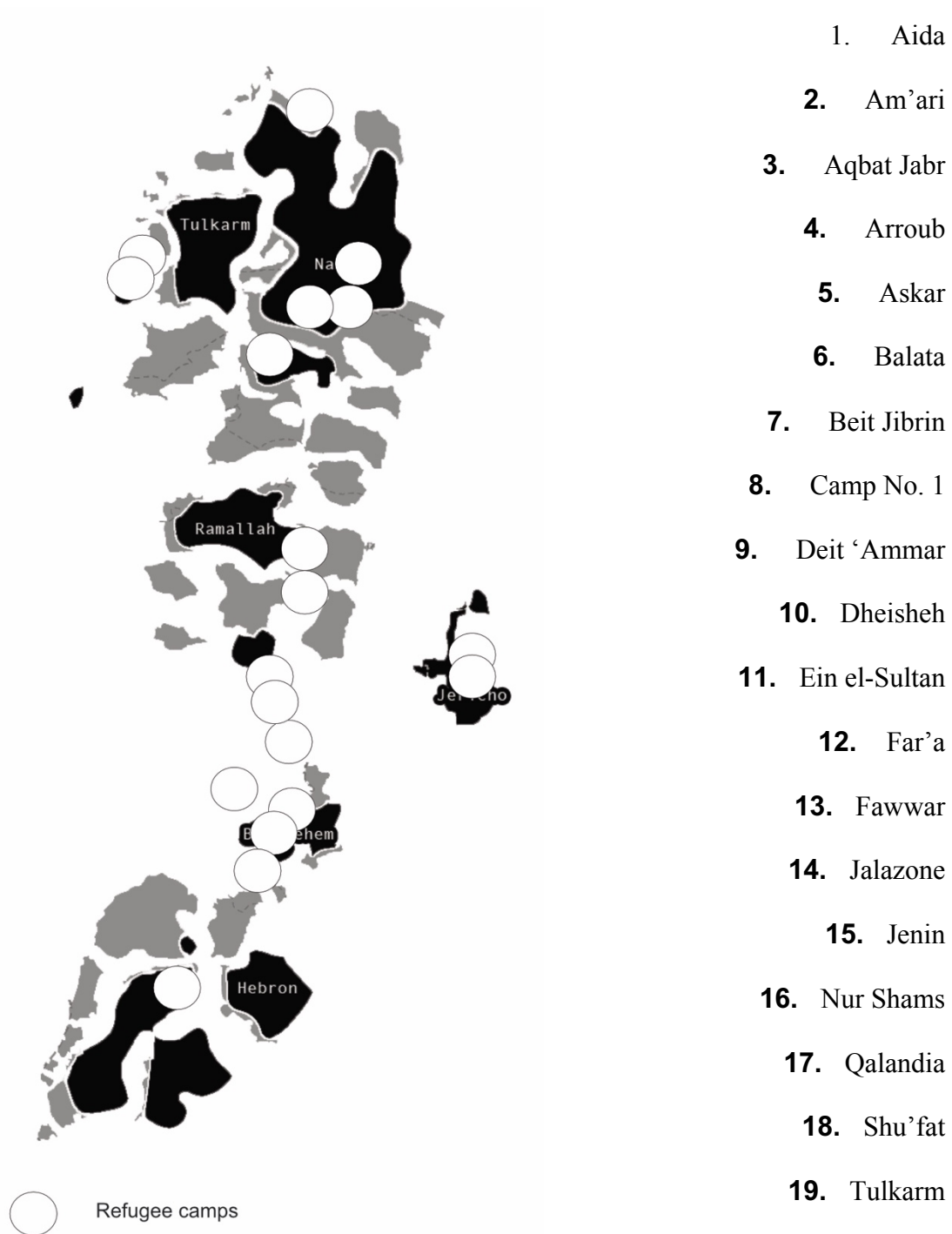


Figure 9. Refugee camps in the archipelago of the West Bank (Author, 2020)

## 2. UNRWA and the Spatial Transformation of Refugee Camps as Enclaves

In the case of the West Bank, the dismantled islands of separated territories contain refugee camps as smaller micro-units that can be considered as ‘spaces of exception’.<sup>31</sup> The fact that refugee camps are geographically part of Palestinian cities (although adhering to different sovereignty) left the refugee camps within the cities completely disconnected from each other and stressed their realization as spaces of exception. The transformation of refugee camps into spaces of exception reinforced UNRWA’s control over them as the PA gradually lost control over the cities, a concept that will be discussed later in the text (chapter 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Given that UNRWA is one of the most important actors in refugee camps, it becomes important to understand the history behind its institutional establishment, how it affected the spatial formation and distribution of refugee camps across newly formed territories after 1967, and how the refugees themselves have contributed in transforming the spatial structure of the camps.

### 2.1 Brief insight into refugee terminology and the establishment of UNRWA

**Asylum** / \ ə-ˈsī-ləm / noun: a place of retreat and security.<sup>32</sup>

**Sanctuary** / \ ˈsan(k)-chə-,wer-ē/ noun: a place of refuge and protection.<sup>33</sup>

**Refuge** / \ ˈre-(,)fyūj also -(,)fyūzh/ noun: a place that provides shelter or protection.<sup>34</sup>

The case of Palestinian refugees is not an exception from the general operation of the concept. Historical narrative is etymologically bound to the term and the ways in which its definition has changed throughout history. Although the right of political asylum, which started as a juridical concept during Greek and Roman times, was attributed in the form of sanctuary to criminals persecuted by their own country, it was later extended to include war victims in its definition.

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Space of exception’ is a term borrowed from Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben to refer to increased extension of power in times of crisis when authority extends beyond where the law has existed in the past.

<sup>32</sup> Asylum. In *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. Retrieved November 28, 2019, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/asylum>.

<sup>33</sup> Sanctuary. In *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. Retrieved November 28, 2019, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanctuary>.

<sup>34</sup> Refuge. In *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. Retrieved November 28, 2019, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/refuge>.

As stated by the United Nations' High Commissioner of refugees, Dr. Ogata, in Weis & Weis' book *The Refugee Convention 1951*, it was not until the 20th century that the refugee problem has been established as a matter of concern to the international community by the humanitarian field.<sup>35</sup> World War I was the main trigger that initiated international cooperation in order to develop internationally recognized instruments such as conventions and resolutions. As a result of World War II, the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was held and according to article 1A(2) of the same refugee convention a refugee is defined as a person who:

Owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>36</sup>

Although the 1951 UN Convention resulted in a universal definition to the word refugee, when talking about the Palestinian case it is important to keep in mind that the UN agency responsible is the UNRWA; the establishment of UNRWA in 1949 came after a series of failed attempts by the UN General Assembly to repatriate or compensate the Palestinian refugees.<sup>37</sup>

Accordingly, it is essential to refer to UNRWA's definition of a Palestine refugee in that sense. According to UNRWA, Palestine refugees are defined as 'persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.' Although this definition acknowledges the refugees as displaced individuals who were expelled from their homes, limiting the period of

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<sup>35</sup> Weis, P., & Weis, J. (1995). *The Refugee Convention 1951: the travaux preparatoires analysed with a commentary by the late Dr Paul Weis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>36</sup> (n.d.). Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees - unhcr. Retrieved November 28, 2019, from <https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/55726/Convention+relating+to+the+Status+of+Refugees+%28signed+28+July+1951%2C+entered+into+force+22+April+1954%29+189+UNTS+150+and+Protocol+relating+to+the+Status+of+Refugees+%28signed+31+January+1967%2C+entered+into+force+4+October+1967%29+606+UNTS+267/0bf3248a-cfa8-4a60-864d-65cdfce1d47>.

<sup>37</sup> McCann, P. (2008, November). The Role of UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees By Paul McCann. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <https://pij.org/articles/1225>.

residence as such portrays a good example of UNRWA's strategy in dealing with Palestinian refugee camps; one that avoids mentioning a longer past and thus limiting the historical Palestinian struggle to a 'conflict' that started in 1948. The lack of a clear mentioning of a historical past or a future solution in UNRWA's definition was a result of the inability to reach a quick solution, as manifested by the failed attempts of the UN General Assembly, adding to the countless challenges UNRWA had to and is still facing.



## 2.2 Challenges facing UNRWA

According to Paul McCann, a former UNRWA spokesperson, the agency started as the name suggests; a relief and works agency with its main role being set by Resolution 302, ‘to prevent starvation and distress and to further the conditions for peace and stability’<sup>38</sup>. The ‘relief and works’ started by establishing the Clapp Mission, whose main goal was to provide employment for refugees mainly through large-scale agricultural projects and school construction.<sup>39</sup> The lack of peace settlements created a major shift in the role of UNRWA; in the mid 50s when the agency realized that implementing Resolution 194<sup>40</sup> is not going to happen anytime soon. This realization transformed ‘relief and works’ to humanitarian development,<sup>41</sup> and the agency started ‘developing the human potential of the refugees by giving them healthcare, shelter and, in particular, the education to allow them to improve their own lives’<sup>42</sup>. As a result of this transformation, the agency faced claims that it was either trying to ‘resettle the refugees against their wishes, and against the terms of Resolution 194, or that it was perpetuating the refugee situation rather than solving it’<sup>43</sup>. This led to a confusion in UNRWAs understanding of its own position, which made its role a lot more complicated. This struggle is reflected in the results of a study consisting of a series of focus group interviews that were conducted with refugees and others who receive aid in the Middle East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Yemen) and were commissioned by the organizers of The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). The study was conducted by Irin news in 2015, and it revealed the opinion of aid receivers using a 10-point scale to measure how satisfied they were with the role of national and international humanitarian aid agencies.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> UN. (1949). *Text of resolution 302 (Iv): Assistance to Palestine Refugees adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 8 December 1949*. Geneva: UNO.

<sup>39</sup> McCann, P. (2008, November). The Role of UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees.

<sup>40</sup> Resolution 194 (III) resolves that ‘refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.’

<sup>41</sup> For further reading about the shift in UNRWA’s role refer to Sari Hanafi’s book *UNRWA and palestinian refugees: From relief and works to human development* (2014).

<sup>42</sup> McCann, P. (2008, November). The Role of UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees.

<sup>43</sup> McCann, P. (2008, November). The Role of UNRWA and the Palestine Refugees.

<sup>44</sup> Redvers, L. (2019, April 16). What refugees really think of aid agencies. Retrieved May, 21, 2020 from <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2015/03/05/what-refugees-really-think-aid-agencies>.

Subject	Mark /10
Being neutral and impartial	4/10
Considering opinions	2.5/10
Meeting priority needs	3/10
Treating people with respect and dignity	3.5/10
Helping people prepare for future crises	2.5/10
Making people feel safe and protected from violence	3.5/10

The complexity of combining relief and development placed the agency in a complicated position; one that it still struggles with. This impossible position was also shared by the agency's representatives. A great example of the difficult position is when Sandi Hilal presented her personal experience in working for UNWRA on the architectural development plan Of Fawwar refugee camp in her article *Temporary Mandate*. Her main interest and question throughout the article was 'What is architecture doing in a refugee camp?'<sup>45</sup> Here, she makes an important reference to the speech of UNRWA's general commissioner, Peter Hansen, during the Geneva conference.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, the 'temporary' is still with us. UNRWA is still here, mandated to continue to provide 'relief' and 'works' assistance and support to a Palestine refugee population which has grown to over 4 million registered refugees. Over the decades, in the face of wars, conflict, and ensuing turbulence, UNRWA has had to deal with waves of first-time, second-time, and third-time refugees. It has had to deal with one ad hoc situation after another. Each time it seemed that the most severe problems had been dealt with, matters grew worse, and UNRWA was asked, via resolutions and other instruments, to take on additional task<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Hilal, S., & Petti, A. (2018). *Permanent temporariness: al masha/common, madafeh/hospitality, borders, mujawaara/neighborhood, camp, participation, confession, profanation, decolonization, representation, exile, returns, heritage, tawtin/normalization*. Stockholm: Art and Theory Publishing. p. 110.

<sup>46</sup> For the whole speech refer to <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-201344/>.

<sup>47</sup> Hansen, P. (2004) as cited in Hilal, S., & Petti, A. (2018). *Permanent Temporariness*. p. 111.

## **2.3 The spatial evolution of Palestinian refugee camps: construction, demolition, and reconstruction**

The dilemma expressed in Hansen's speech is evident in UNRWA's application of their strategies concerning the camps' built fabric, as well as their governance. When it comes to the spatial evolution of Palestinian refugee camps, highlighting the process according to which the existing spatial structure came to be brings to light UNRWA's dilemma explained earlier and how this same double bind affected the strategies adopted by UNRWA concerning the built fabric of the camps.

### **2.3.1 Construction**

The refugee camp is usually established as a temporary space whose main purpose is providing relief and protection for refugees until a durable solution can be found. In the case of Palestine, after almost 75 years with no clear solution in the near future and three generations of refugees, refugee camps transformed gradually. The temporary structures erected by the UNRWA in order to provide basic shelter morphed gradually into permanent concrete structures. This transformation of space can be best described through a timeline showing the physical evolution of refugee camps from 1947 until nowadays.

In 1947 the camps were initially established as tents which were provided by the UNRWA. The first attempt that followed to regulate the camps was done during the 1950's. This is when the UNRWA relied on a grid system to divide the land into plots of 100 sqm, each plot was designated for a refugee family and housed a three-by-four-meter asbestos room with amenities that were spread out as public nodes throughout the camp. The long distance between amenities drove the refugee families to construct their own private amenities inside their designated plots which caused a rapid horizontal spread of the built structures in the 1960's and 1970's forming a continuous horizontal plane covering almost the whole area of the camp. And due to the consequential lack of shared space, and difficulty to differentiate between plots of different families, refugees started adding small horizontal steps at the entrance of each family's unit. The horizontal steps marked the entrances of the units and provided a public meeting space used mainly by the women of the camp. In the 1980's and 1990's, due to population increase and the need for additional residential space,

refugees started adding vertical elements attaching them to the existing structures in order to allow for further vertical expansion.<sup>48</sup>

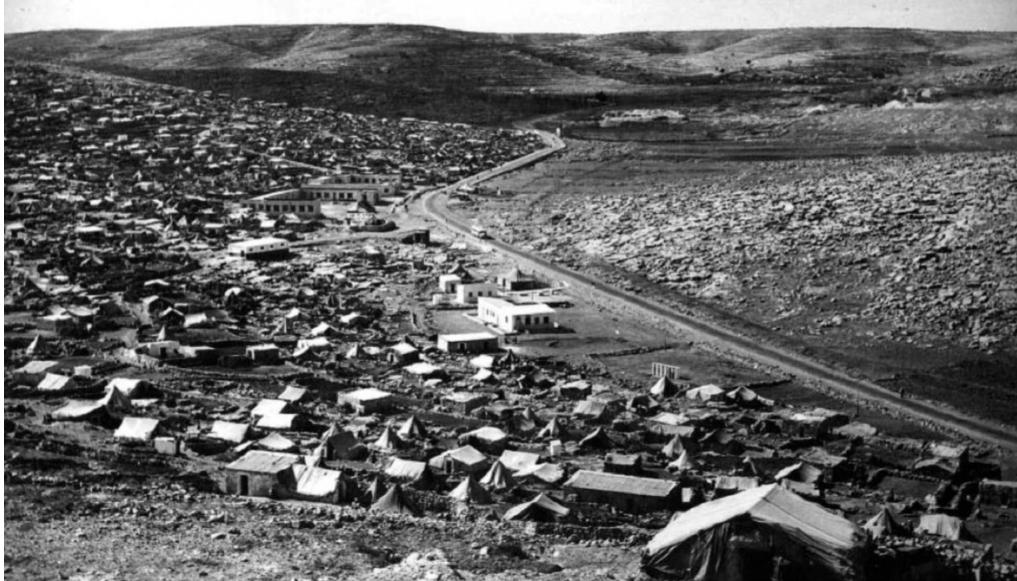


Figure 10. Dheisheh refugee camp (UNRWA archive, 1952)

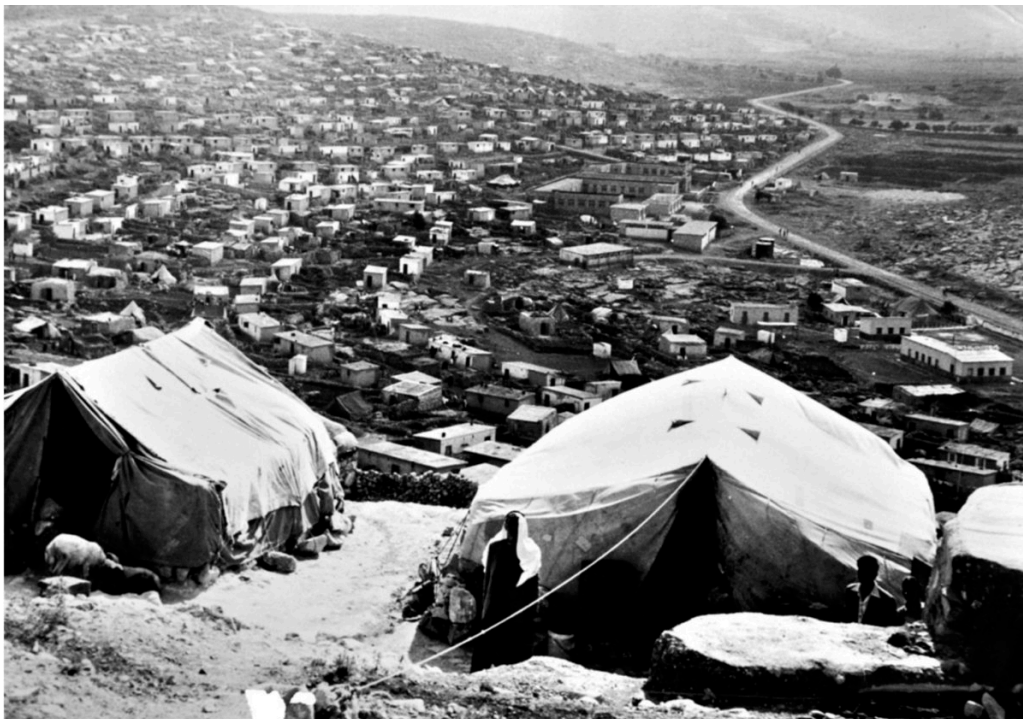
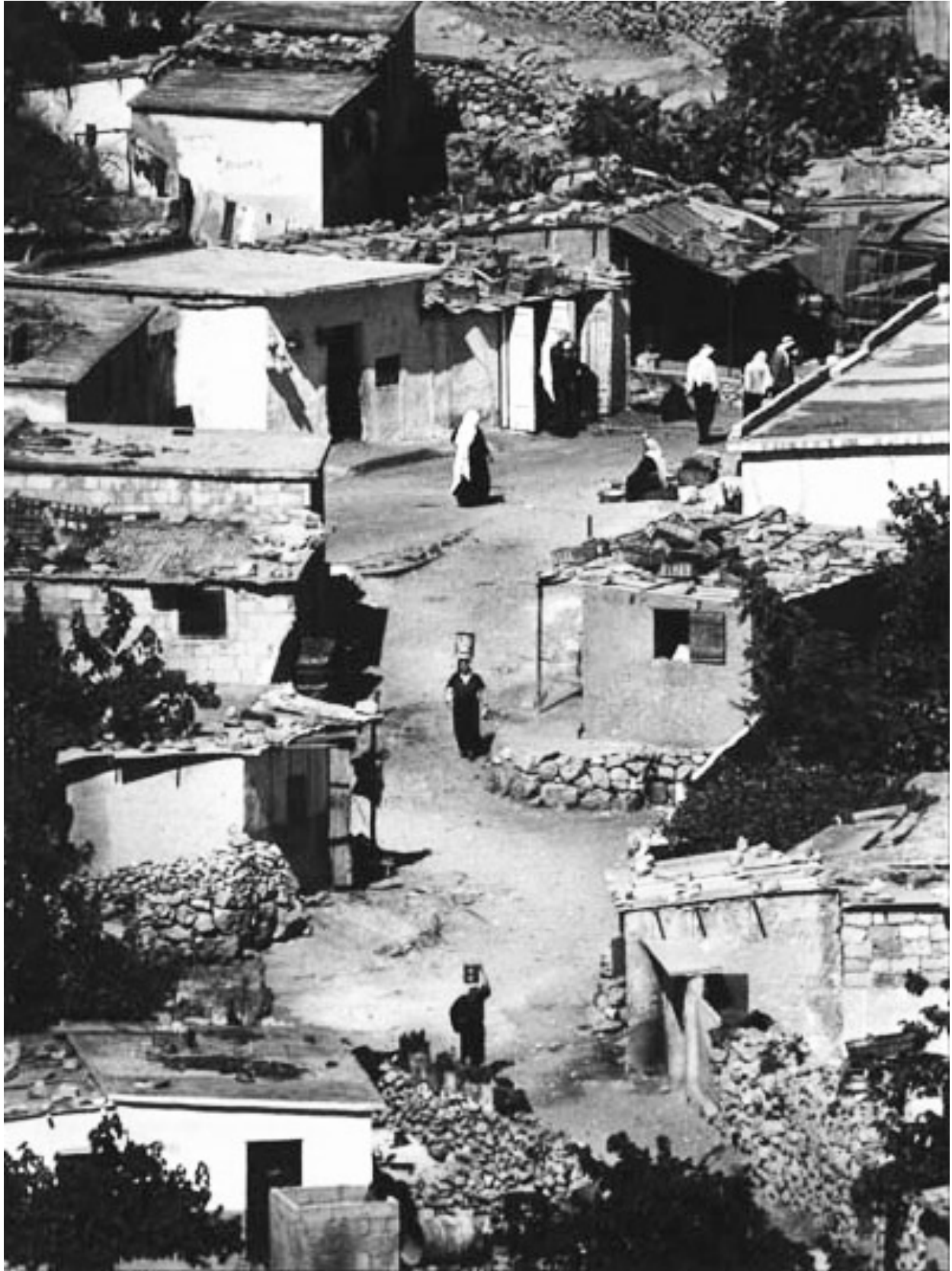


Figure 11. Dheisheh refugee camp (UNRWA archive, 1959)

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<sup>48</sup> Rueff, Henri, and Alain Viaro. 'Palestinian Refugee Camps: from Shelter to Habitat.' *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26 Mar. 2010, pp. 339–359.



*Figure 12. Dheisheh refugee camp (UNRWA archive, 1973)*



Today refugee camps in Palestine have become city-like pastiches, informal and self-organized spatial structures. The unique characteristics of the those clusters are a demonstration of a bottom-up approach that caters to specific local needs. Although the needs of the refugees are considered the main criteria in the official ‘design’ of the camps, it wasn’t the only one.



*Figure 13. Dheisheh refugee camp (Brave New Alps, 2011)*

The bottom-up strategies and user interventions applied in the construction of the built fabric of the camp affected the governance of the camps and required a certain type of hierarchical power dynamic in order to keep the camps under control (especially with UNRWA insisting on remaining a neutral entity and slowly losing control because of the rapid proliferation of informal activities that took place). The situation in refugee camps started deteriorating, and along with the lack of satisfaction among refugees with UNRWA as an international representative of the right to return, popular committees started to emerge in the camp.

The belief among refugees in the popular committees as international representatives put their members under attack by the Israeli Defense forces (IDF) which led to refugee camps (as a space and as a governance) becoming under constant attacks, invasions, demolitions, and assassinations by the IDF. A common consensus among refugees was reached organically: popular committees should act as a defense system against IDF attacks, which meant their transformation from an administrative unit to becoming the armed forces of the camps.

The new power dynamic that emerged in the camps led to an even stronger sense of unity among refugees within the same camp, thus reassuring their state as 'spaces of exception'. This unity was reflected spatially through the lack of distinction between public and private space. Roofs of residential units became public spaces, commercial spaces that were 'illegally' established turned into public gathering spaces, and the alleys penetrating the concrete jungle slowly transformed into street galleries filled with graffiti of nationalistic and religious symbols mainly narrating their story and stressing on their right to return to their homes.

### 2.3.2 Demolition and reconstruction (walking through walls)

Due to the emergent maze-like spatial structure of refugee camps, formal mapping the space became almost impossible and it became clear to the public committees that the complex formation of space, which further blurred the boundary between what can be considered as private and public acted as an additional defense mechanism against the attacks of the IDF, especially since the popular committees couldn't compete with the IDF's use of advanced military technology and weapons. This realization guaranteed the spatial configuration to remain in its negotiable and transformable shape, which converted the space of the camp (whether so called private or public) into an 'interior' space as such, leaving it unfamiliar to anyone who doesn't live in it.

When the gradual and informal transformation of the spatial configuration followed a more complex layout, it became almost impossible for the IDF to attack refugee camps which demanded the implementation of new tactics by the Israeli military units. A great example is the invasion of Jenin refugee camp in 2002 or what is referred to as 'operation defensive shield'<sup>49</sup>.

During the invasion, Israeli military units discovered that it was impossible for their tanks to navigate the alleys of the camp. As a result, it was necessary to implement a new plan.

Brigadier General Aviv Kochavi<sup>50</sup> describes the maneuver conducted then as 'inverse geometry'.<sup>51</sup>

Soldiers avoided using the streets, roads, alleys, and courtyards that define the logic of the movement through the city, as well as the external doors, internal stairwells and windows that constitute the order of building; rather, they were punching holes through party walls, ceilings, and floors, and moving across them through 100 meter

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<sup>49</sup> Operation defensive shield is used to refer to a large-scale military operation conducted by the Israel Defense Forces in 2002 during the course of the Second Intifada. It was the largest military operation in the West Bank since the 1967 Six-Day War.

<sup>50</sup> For further information on Israeli military innovation and the theory of fractal manoeuvres you can refer to <https://www.publicspace.org/multimedia/-/post/between-the-striated-and-the-smooth-urban-enclaves-and-fractal-maneuvers>. A conference lectured at the Symposium 'Archipelago of Exceptions. Sovereignities of Extraterritoriality' CCCB 10-11 November 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Weizman, E. (2017). *Hollow land Israel's architecture of occupation*. London: Verso.



long pathways of domestic interior hollowed out of the dense and contiguous city fabric.<sup>52</sup>

Through turning the camp inside-out and reversing the space typology, Israeli military units were able to progress from house to house through walls, forcing Palestinian fighters to move through tunnels on the lower stories of the camp but Palestinian snipers learnt to shoot through several layers of holes penetrating the walls. The physical configuration of the camp remained an advantage for Palestinian fighters and it wasn't long until the Israeli military realized that yes a new strategy needs to be adopted.



Figure 14. Walking through walls at Qalandia camp (Author, 2019)

On April 9th IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) ordered D9 Caterpillar bulldozers that started destroying the camp burying whatever they find on their way and piling earth on top of buildings and between

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<sup>52</sup> Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. Verso, 2017, pp. 185.

them, changing the topography of the battle space completely.<sup>53</sup> Widening the existing alleys inside the camp and creating an open space in the center of the camp allowed the IDF to destroy the existing methodology of resistance adopted by the Palestinian fighters in addition to creating an easy way to reenter the camp.

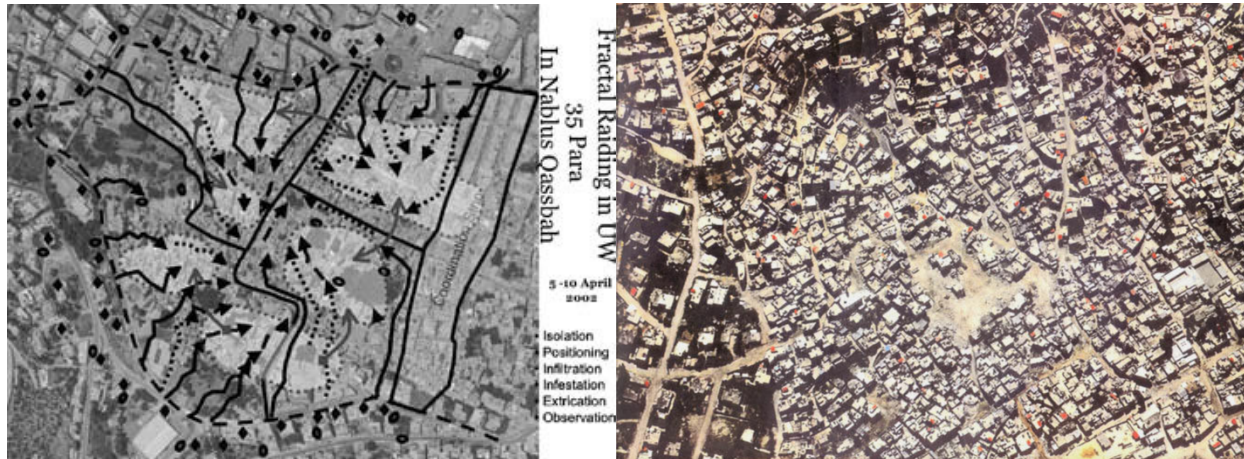


Figure 15. The destruction of Jenin refugee camp after Jenin battle ( IAF, 2002)

Figure 16. Fractal Raiding (OTRI, 2004)

Soon after the battle ended UNRWA received donations for the reconstruction of Jenin camp. Ahmad A'bizari (UNRWA's engineer in charge of the reconstruction) wanted to take advantage of the deconstruction that took place during the battle and widen the roads in order to solve the infrastructural problems of the camp, create better routes for transportation, and elevate the living standards for the refugees living in the camp. Despite concerns from the camp's popular committee about widening the roads, and their fear that widening the roads will allow easier access to the camp in the future by Israeli military tanks UNRWA proceeded the implementation of the project. In November 2002, Israeli tanks reentered the camp. This time followed by an apology from UNRWA's second project director at the time Berthold Willenbacher.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> A good example that depicts the mindset of one of the bulldozer operators is the interview with Moshe Nissim (Kurdi Bear). The interview conducted for Yediot Aharonot explains in detail the process of 'making a stadium in the middle of the camp'. [https://ifamericansknew.org/cur\\_sit/stadium.html](https://ifamericansknew.org/cur_sit/stadium.html).

<sup>54</sup> Weizman, E. (2017). *Hollow land: Israel's architecture of occupation*. London: Verso. p. 201-205.



We designed a way for Israelis to get through with tanks and we shouldn't have done that because the armed guys have less chance of getting away than if it's narrow alleys. We didn't take their views into consideration.<sup>55</sup>



Figure 17. After the reconstruction of Jenin camp (Verso, 2007)

Looking at the transformation that Palestinian refugee camps went through from construction to demolition and reconstruction, brings forward the importance of looking at space and the built environment as an active agent when it comes to spaces of exception. In his article *Walking Through Walls*, British Israeli architect Eyal Weizman states that:

The urban environment must be understood not simply as the backdrop to conflict, nor as its mere consequence, but as trapped

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<sup>55</sup> Willenbacher, B. (2002) as cited by Weizman, E. (2017). *Hollow land* p. 205.

in a complex and dynamic feedback based relation with the forces operating within it – be they a diverse local population, soldiers, guerrilla, media or humanitarian agents.<sup>56</sup>

This statement relates to the case of Palestinian refugee camps. As demonstrated earlier, it is impossible to look at the evolution of refugee camps as a linear process. The constant construction, demolition, and reconstruction of space is both a consequence of and a cause for the complex power dynamic in the camps.

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<sup>56</sup> Weizman, E. (2006). Lethal Theory. *Log*, (7), 53-77. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/41765087](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41765087).

### **3. Dissecting the Spatial Complexity of a Refugee Camp: The Case of Qalandia**

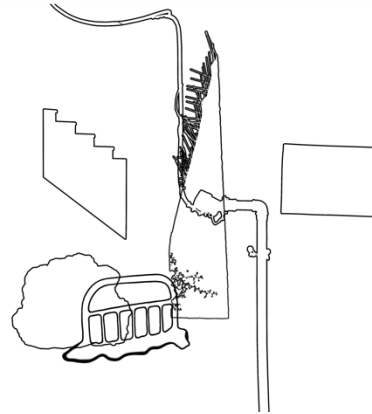
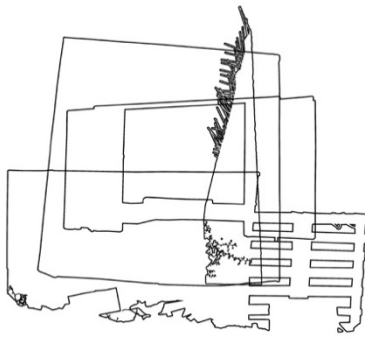
In the case of warfare, space is not only a dynamic subject, but also a field for reflection on macro politics and the ways within which these macro politics are expressed physically, either through construction, demolition, or reconstruction. Since the aim of this dissertation is to unfold the spatial complexity of refugee camps, it becomes essential to experiment with spatial representation in its context.

Looking closely at the cases of spatial formation of refugee camps in Palestine, e.g. how camps occasionally react as a defense mechanism both physically and ideologically, and the ways in which their space has been formed by an immaterial concept such as the right to return brings up the significance of raising questions about the ways within which space can be perceived. It's important to keep in mind that even though the space of a refugee camp is political in nature (physically through acting as a defense mechanism and ideologically through being a manifestation of the right to return) the same space continues to be a home for three generations of refugees.

As an attempt to understand the physical nature of camps, I conducted one concrete field study in Qalandia refugee camp. The choice of the camp came due to its exceptional nature of being located in Area C under full Israeli control. Being one of two refugee camps in the West Bank located in area C leads the camp to a more complicated power dynamic and spatial structure since the IDF is able to freely enter the camp any time. The camp itself is situated at the border between East Jerusalem and the West Bank and serves as the main crossing point between Israel and the Palestinian territories. This attempt at representing the physicality of the camp's space tries to stress on the fact that it's a 'border camp' through deconstructing the term border and introducing multiple layers of less clear borders and allowing them to interact freely on a neutral 'objective' canvas. This dissection of space can also be seen as an attempt to reveal the physical and non-physical complexity of the camp through visual representation in order to cross-cut the indeterminable spheres of personal and political, professional and intimate, private and public, permanent and temporary, battlefield and home.

The field study was conducted as a one-day walk in Qalandia camp. Photographs were taken throughout the walk of different spatial elements, the elements chosen represent certain concepts which reflect macro-politics e.g. nationalistic graffiti, exposed infrastructure, spaces in-between private and public... The elements were then stripped down to an abstract version, a Java Script (a programming language) code was then used in order to generate random endless combinations of these naked diagrams creating a multi-layered representation of a new three dimensional space that lacks clear visual characteristics and is up for interpretation.<sup>57</sup> (refer to Appendix A)

Since the map created after the walk was focused more on revealing the process behind its creation in an attempt to show the relationship between micro space and macro politics by revealing certain details in space and hiding others, it raised so many questions concerning this connection between space and politics: When does a map become political? Can a political map be subjective? And where do we draw the line between a map and an artistic expression? Or simply what is the agency of a map? These questions will be elaborated further in the following chapters.



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<sup>57</sup> The adopted approach is derived and inspired by psychographic mapping that will be opened up and discussed in the following chapters.





#### **4. Mapping: from a-political to critical to post-representational**

This chapter provides an understanding of the development of cartography throughout history. It first introduces the emergence of post-war, a-political, scientific cartography, the reasons behind its emergence, as well as, the effects it had on the cartographic discipline as a whole. It then discusses the countermovement of critical cartography and gives an overview of the development of a cartographic discipline which is based on critical theory and the assumption that critique is political by nature.<sup>58</sup> In order to open up the topic of critical cartography, two examples are analyzed: cognitive mapping and psychogeography. The chapter then introduces the concept of post-representational cartography which argues that nowadays cartography is no longer a question of representation and that the discussion around cartography should be ontological not merely epistemological.

##### **4.1 A- political cartography**

Cartography went through a major shift during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>59</sup> Although this era marks the origin of scientific cartography, the major focus on empirical map design, or what is referred to as the ‘Anglo American Cartography’, emerged in the 1950s as a reaction to the increased use of cartographic propaganda during the Second World War.<sup>60</sup>

The focus on scientific map design is usually accredited to Arthur H. Robinson<sup>61</sup>, a writer and influential philosopher on cartography from the United States. As stated earlier, Robinson was not the first to introduce cartography as a science. Robinson’s research was concerned more with how maps are understood by users.<sup>62</sup> After realizing the major effects that Nazi propaganda maps had during the war, Robinson’s mission was to reintroduce cartography as a purely scientific discipline. This meant an attempt at creating an a-political map whose main purpose was to communicate data in the clearest and most efficient way while keeping cartography as far as possible from art

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<sup>58</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). An Introduction to Critical Cartography. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 4(2005), 11-33. Retrieved May, 21, 2020 from <https://www.acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/723>.

<sup>59</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). An Introduction to Critical Cartography, pp. 20.

<sup>60</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). An Introduction to Critical Cartography, pp. 20.

<sup>61</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). An Introduction to Critical Cartography, pp. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). An Introduction to Critical Cartography, pp. 23.



and design since the latter meant, according to Robinson, compromising the scientific base of cartography he was trying to achieve.

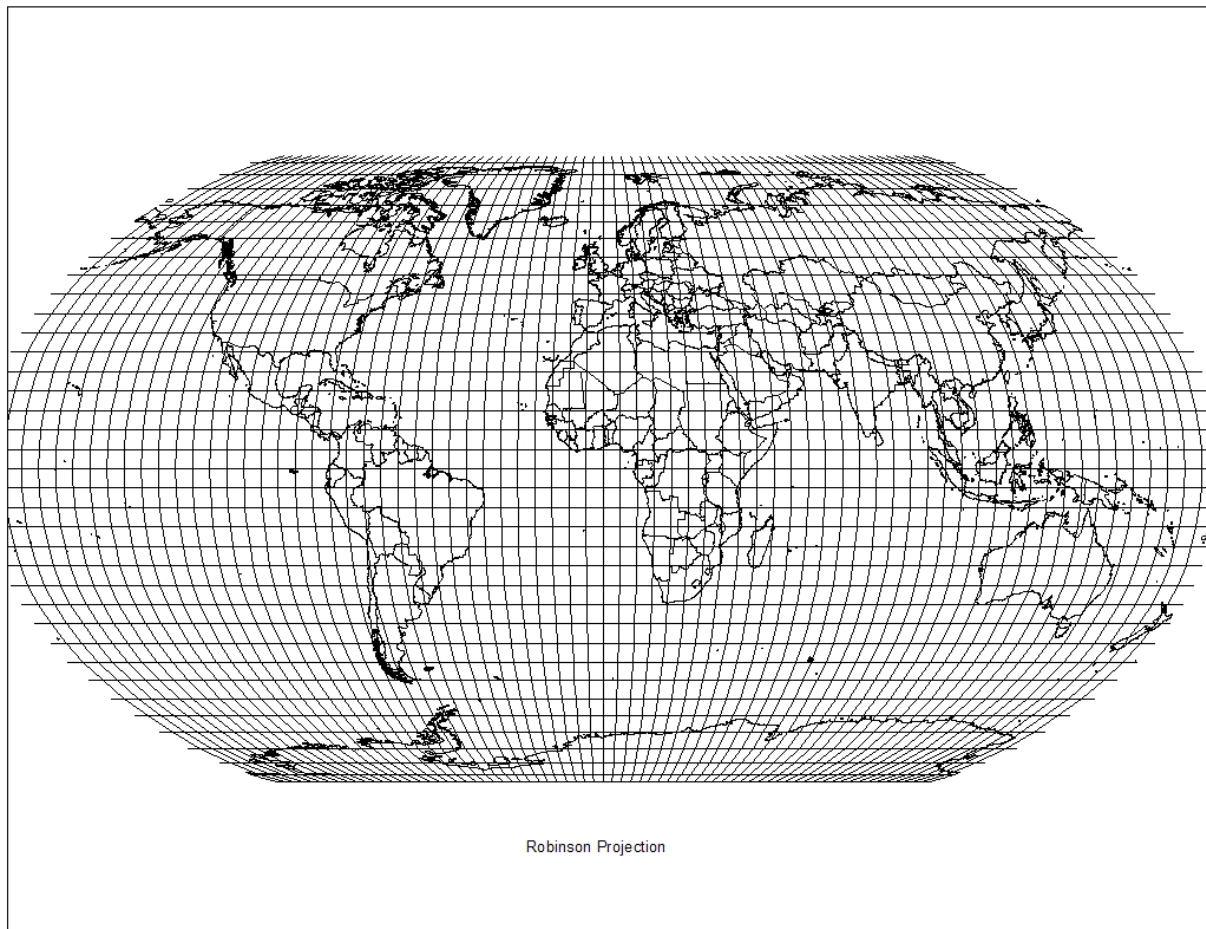


Figure 18. Robinson's projection (Robinson, n.d.)

This a-political, modernist cartographic practice that was introduced during the 1950s was faced by concerns from geographers and cartographers, between the 50s and 70s, who had conceptual concerns regarding the suppression of politics in a-political cartography since according to them 'geography, is, and has been fundamentally an instrument of power'<sup>63</sup>. An example of maps being used as an instrument of power when it comes to the Palestinian case can be seen in the inconsistency between military and tourist maps portraying the borders of the state of Israel between the 50's and 60's. Although the tourist map shows the actual borders of Israel, the IDF map expands the borders to include the West bank, Gaza Strip, and parts of Egypt.

<sup>63</sup> Crampton, J., & Krygier, J. (2005). *An Introduction to Critical Cartography*, pp. 22.



Figure 19 Tourist map of Israel (Shamir brothers, 1955)



Figure 20 IDF map of Israel (Otto Geismar, 1967)

Going beyond Robinson's vision, academic cartographers opened the discipline for exploration, which meant that mapping was, and still is, no longer only in the hands of the experts. One of the earliest and most well-known attempts to criticize the a-political map was initiated by the Situationist International (SI) movement<sup>64</sup>. Although the movement was created by artists and political theorists, it had a huge effect on the cartographic discipline since its introduction of the concept of psychogeography.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> The Situationist International is a movement that was formed in Switzerland in 1957 and is considered one of the most important avant-garde movements of the 20th century. The movement was made up of avant-garde artists, and political theorists who were influenced by anti-authoritarian Marxism and the avant-garde arts movements of the early 20th century such as Dadaism and Surrealism.

<sup>65</sup> Psychogeography as a concept was first introduced by French Marxist theorist Guy Debord, a founding member of the SI. And later defined by the SI is the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals.

## 4.2 Critical cartography: Psychogeography and cognitive mapping

Urban and cultural geographer David Pinder discusses in his article *Subverting Cartography: the Situationists and maps of the city* how the concept of psychogeography helped reposition the cartographic practice, especially after Robinson's attempt to de-politicize the map. Pinder agrees with Lacoste that the notion of a map being political in nature is non-questionable and similarly stresses on the importance of cartography as an active tool not only in the representation, but also the production of social life.<sup>66</sup> Pinder also presents the SI as an example of a movement that aimed at discovering new angles from which an existing practice could be revisited. According to Pinder, the introduction of psychogeography served as a factor to transform cartography from a language of power into a language of protest. Officially speaking, the first psychographic map by the SI is *The Naked City*. The psychographic map of Paris used fragments of a tourist map of Paris that loosely follows the configuration of the 1939 Paris Metro map. The resulting psychographic map serves as a critique of the modernist approach to city planning which is based on absolute paths. Instead, *The Naked City* indicates possible trajectories that are not definite in nature, allowing each person to develop their own psychographic map of Paris.<sup>67</sup>

In the mid-50s, while Europe was going through this avant-garde shift accompanied by the introduction of psychogeography as a cartographic tool, there was a very similar reaction to the spatial and social concerns in the urban environment resulting from post-war urban planning. This reaction manifests itself through the evolution of cognitive mapping. While Guy Debord was establishing the concept of psychogeography, American urban planner and author Kevin Lynch was introducing the concept of cognitive mapping.<sup>68</sup> Although both approaches are similar in the fact that they combined artistic and scientific techniques and depended on subjective mental images in order to understand human experience in the urban environment, one major difference can be seen in the intended use of the produced maps. While Debord's psychogeography was

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<sup>66</sup> Pinder, D. (1996). *Subverting Cartography: The Situationists and Maps of the City*. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 28(3), 405–427. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a280405>.

<sup>67</sup> Newman, W. E. (2017). *Data visualization for design thinking: applied mapping*. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

<sup>68</sup> Wallen, Derek Cori, 'A critical and historical case study of experience design: Lynchian cognitive mapping and Situationist psychogeography' (2006). *Retrospective Theses and Dissertations*. 19068. <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/19068>.

intended as a critique, a tool to protest and create a map of political resistance,<sup>69</sup> Lynch's cognitive mapping was used as a tool to improve the legibility of the city.<sup>70</sup>



Figure 21. Psychographic map of Paris (Debord, 1956)

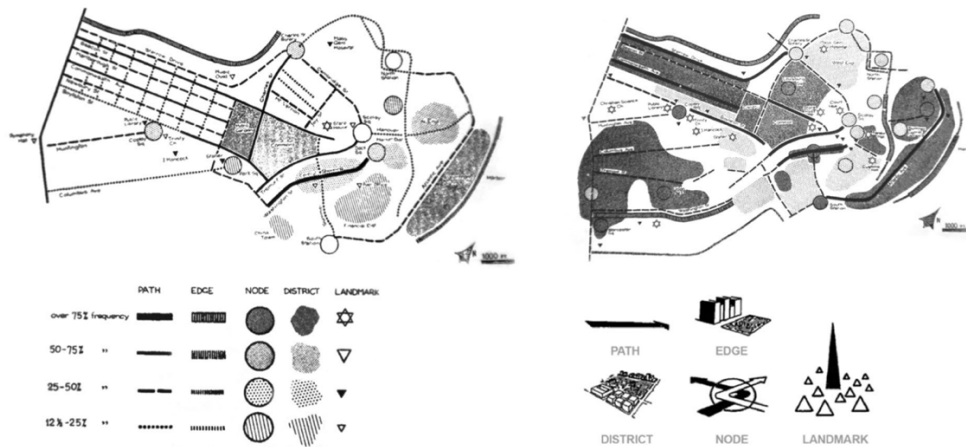


Figure 22. The image of Boston from sketches (Lynch, 1960)

<sup>69</sup> Wallen, Derek Cori, 'A critical and historical case study of experience design: Lynchian cognitive mapping and Situationist psychogeography' (2006), pp. 43.

<sup>70</sup> Wallen, Derek Cori, 'A critical and historical case study of experience design: Lynchian cognitive mapping and Situationist psychogeography' (2006), pp. 20.

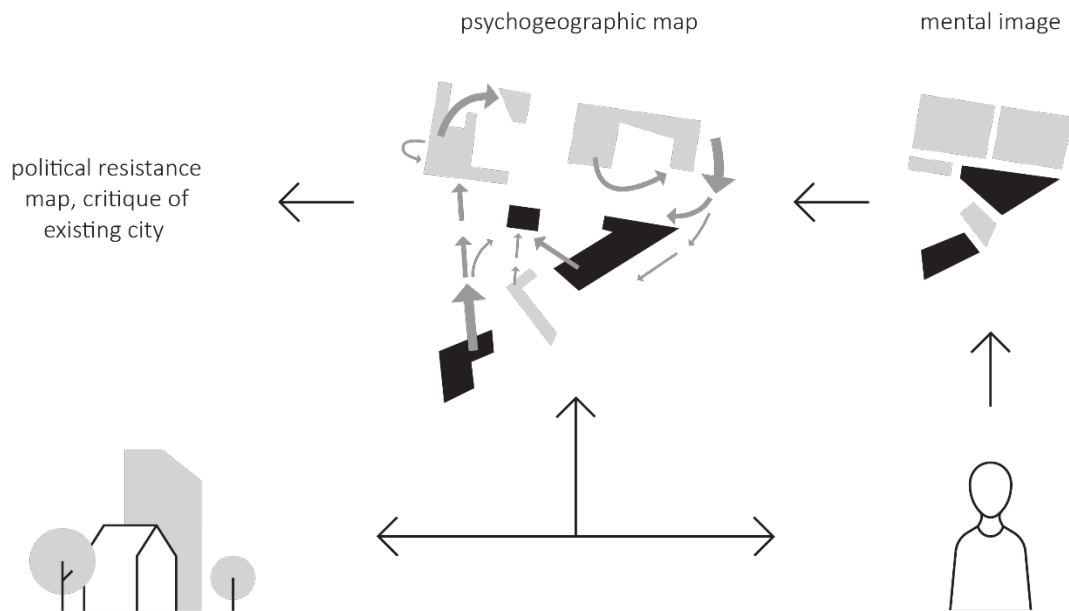


Figure 23. Diagram of Debord's psychogeographic mapping (Author, 2020)

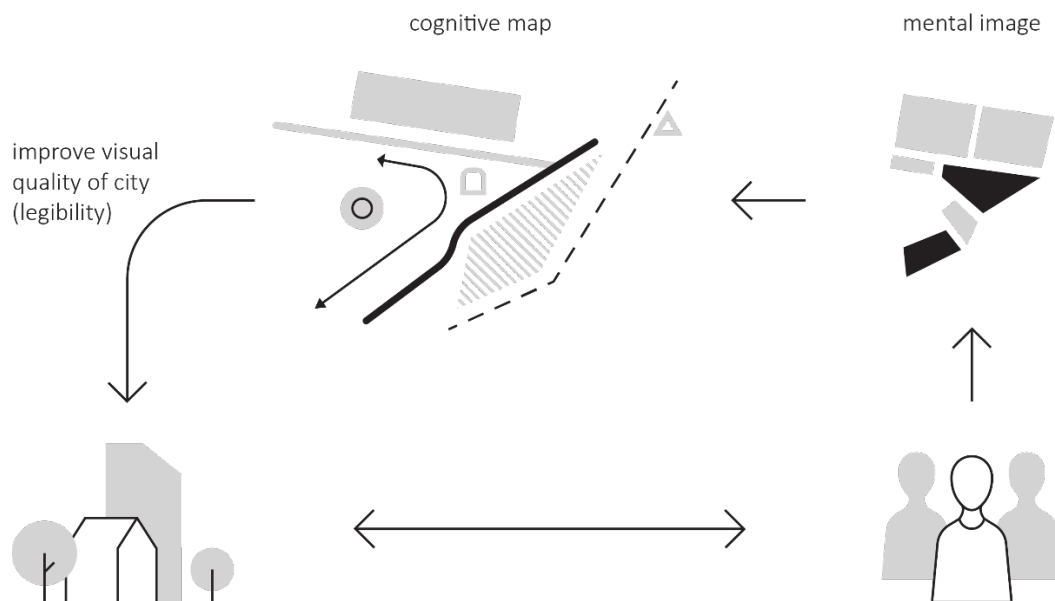


Figure 24. Diagram of Lynch's cognitive mapping (Author, 2020)



Reflecting on the field study conducted in Qalandia camp, it is obvious that the concept of psychogeography has had an unconscious or deliberate effect on the outcome. As the aim of the dissertation is to explore and unfold the complexity of Palestinian refugee camps, there is a need for a tool that stretches cartography beyond its representative qualities and allows it to be critical without dismissing the cartographic practice itself, but rather try to operate within the parameters it allows for.

Although using psychogeography as a tool to represent the space of Qalandia provides a good framework theoretically-speaking, it still lacks the ability to provide context, an extremely important factor here in order to provide a comprehensive framework. Without a comprehensive framework, the map itself remains a subjective visualization that lacks a much broader context which helps to communicate what exists beyond (and mostly contributes to) the spatial, economic, political, and social complexity discussed earlier.

### 4.3 Post-representational cartography

Most of the works regarding the cartographic discipline between the mid 50's up until the 90's demonstrated and discussed the power and ideology inherent in maps and how the knowledge provided in maps is selective and, consequently, is a result of the mapper's choices of including or excluding certain information in the map.

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, theories of critical cartography; which caused a revolution in the cartographic discipline at the time; started being seen as limited.<sup>71</sup> Artist, cartographer, and former design professor Denis Wood along with Geography professor Jeremy Crampton introduced a post-representational approach towards cartography. Crampton argues that critical cartography 'provided an epistemological avenue into the map, but still left open the question of the ontology of the map'<sup>72</sup>. According to Crampton, questioning the assumption made by critical cartography that maps are representational objects of power, and that cartographers are on a path trying to reach more truthful maps, shifts the discussion regarding cartography from a critique of existing maps, to an exploration of the ontological nature of maps (the being of maps). In other words, 'how maps are conceptually framed in order to make sense of the world'<sup>73</sup>.

In a similar manner, economic geographer John Pickles focuses in his project on the ways within which maps shape our understanding of the world, 'how they code that world.'<sup>74</sup> Both Crampton and Pickles, similarly to critical cartographers, based their theories within a post-structuralist framework. They shared, with critical cartographers, the notion that maps are complex political constructs. The main difference is that while critical cartography calls for uncovering the ideological agendas within maps, Crampton and Pickles both reject the notion that 'there is some truth that can be uncovered by exposing ideological intent.'<sup>75</sup> Pickles argues that his adopted post-representational approach towards the cartographic discipline produces de-ontologized maps that

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<sup>71</sup> Kitchin, R., & Dodge, M. (2007). Rethinking maps. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(3), 331–344. doi: 10.1177/0309132507077082.

<sup>72</sup> Kitchin, R. (2010). Post-representational cartography. *lo Squaderno*. 15. 7-12.

<sup>73</sup> Kitchin, R., & Dodge, M. (2007). Rethinking maps, pp. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Kitchin, R., & Dodge, M. (2007). Rethinking maps, pp. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Kitchin, R., & Dodge, M. (2007). Rethinking maps, pp. 3.

operate still within the understanding that maps are contested texts which are not authored or read in simple ways. In other words, de-ontologized post-representational cartography is

on the one hand about accepting counter-mappings as having equal ontological status as scientific cartography (that there are many valid cartographic ontologies) and on the other hand, deconstructing, reading differently, and reconfiguring scientific cartography (to examine alternative and new forms of mapping).<sup>76</sup>

Post-representational cartography came as a response to emergent approaches to cartography. Global Navigation Systems such as GPS (Global Positioning Systems), as well as online mapping services, changed our relationship to cartography and to the way we interact with the world around us. Given the abundance of digital software and data currently being used in mapping and navigation as a part of our daily lives, post-representational cartography introduced mapping as a process; an approach towards cartography which is ever-changing and is based on the here and now.

Examples of post-representational crowd-source mapping become relevant when talking about refugee camps in a contemporary context. A similar project launched by *USA for UNHCR* is an attempt at using satellite imagery, crowdsourcing, and machine learning algorithms in order to improve refugee camp planning and maintenance. The premise of the project is to allow UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to map refugee camps quickly and with high accuracy in order to make humanitarian response more effective and efficient. Given that traditional cartographic practices are unable to provide such big amounts of data in a short period of time tempted humanitarian organizations, such as UNHCR, to adopt new technologies. The adoption of these new technologies is often referred to as humanitarian innovation. The UNHCR's project's goal is to map 106 out of 202 refugee camps using satellite imagery and *OpenStreetMap*;

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<sup>76</sup> Kitchin, R., & Dodge, M. (2007). Rethinking maps, pp. 4.



an open source data platform which allows users to share imagery data that will then be available to other humanitarian organizations.<sup>77</sup>

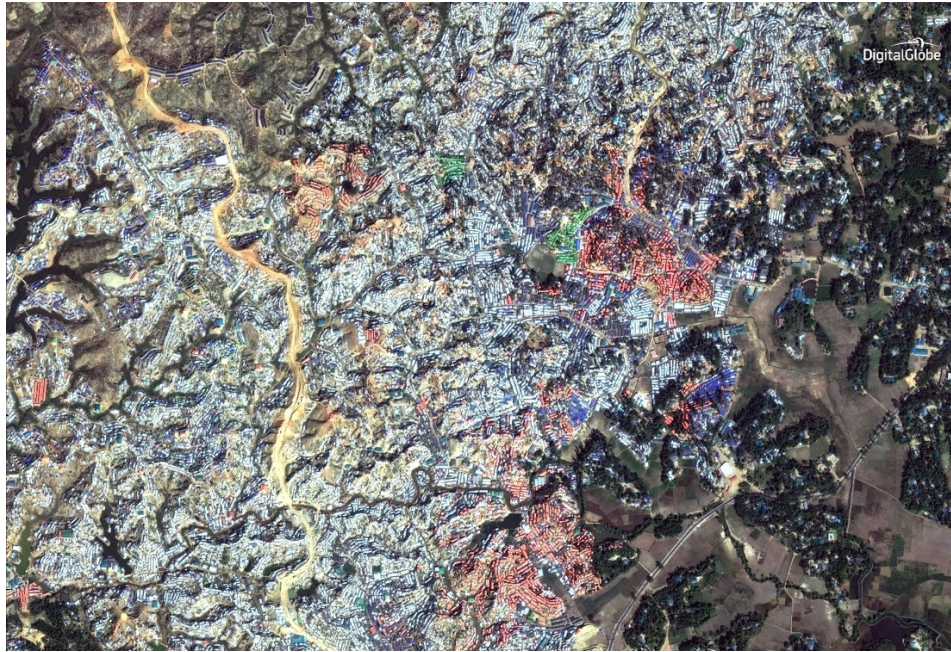


Figure 25 Satellite image showing the Kutapalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh (DigitalGlobe, 2018)



Figure 26 e-cards which has been distributed to Palestine refugees in Jordan (UNRWA, 2016)

<sup>77</sup> USA for UNHCR Launches Satellite Imagery and Crowdsourcing Project to Improve Refugee Camp Planning and Maintenance: USA for UNHCR. (2018, June 15). Retrieved May 16, 2020, from <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/usa-for-unhcr-launches-satellite-imagery-and-crowdsourcing-project-to-improve-refugee-camp-planning-and-maintenance/>.

The use of new digital technology in humanitarian aid is a concept that is not limited to mapping, it stretches to include biometric registration of refugees, modeling of health data and transporting medication using drones.<sup>78</sup> A Palestinian example would be the distributions of e-cards to Palestinian refugees in Jordan which is planned to be a replacement for going in person to the distribution site to get food and cash distributions from UNRWA.<sup>79</sup>

The fact that new technologies of mapping are controversial in what can be considered as certain environments because of issues such as data harvesting etc., raises so many ethical questions regarding their use in uncertain environments such as refugee camps which may introduce additional risk. When considering the case of Palestine, such attempts at improving the ‘life quality’ of refugees are often problematic tools of normalization, they focus on providing an easier experience for refugees disregarding the right to return and thus focusing on the near future without a comprehensive vision which allows for the right to return as a possible solution.

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<sup>78</sup> Sandvik, K. B., Jacobsen, K. L., & McDonald, S. M. (2017). Do no harm: A taxonomy of the challenges of humanitarian experimentation. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 99(904), 319–344. doi: 10.1017/s181638311700042x.

<sup>79</sup> E-cards are giving Palestine refugees in Jordan the freedom to choose their food according to their individual needs. (2016, June 6). Retrieved May 16, 2020, from <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/e-cards-are-giving-palestine-refugees-jordan-freedom-choose-their-food-according>.

#### 4.4 Visualization, visuality, visibilities: a non-binary approach

After exploring different approaches towards cartography in theory and practice, it is important to note that alongside the works of cartographers, scientists, artists, social scientists, etc. who clearly advocate for a certain approach, there are works which focus on bridging, and sometimes questioning, these obsoletes. An example would be Orit Halpern, a strategic hire in interactive design and theory at Concordia University. In her book *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945*, Halpern offers a discussion on the relationship between post-representational cartography in the form of storage, visualization, and interactivity in digital systems, and critical cartography in the form of archiving, representation, and memory.

Halpern discusses the importance of putting forward an etymological argument in order to understand the relationship between perception/cognition and the observer. She explains that the term ‘vision’ multiplies to visualizations, visuality, and visibilities, which complicates the very idea of sense-perception. Visualization was the first term to appear in Oxford dictionary in 1883 defining it as the act of depicting mental images of things that are not visible.<sup>80</sup> In a similar way that psychology makes human thoughts visible, x-rays visualize hidden structures within the body, and cognitive mapping makes experiential and qualitative information visible.<sup>81</sup> According to Newman, the result of mere visualization is called an image. However, because of the abundance of information and software used to produce visualizations nowadays, maps transitioned from visualizations to include a historical layer which explains how the physical act of seeing is historically modulated. This concept is referred to by Halpern as ‘visuality’.

Harun Farocki’s film, *Images of the world and the inscription of war (1988)* can be considered a very good example in that sense. The film’s focus is an aerial photograph capturing Auschwitz concentration camp. Although the photo was taken in 1944 and it depicts the camp along with the prisoners’ footsteps in the snow, American and British analysts failed to see Auschwitz, only to be spotted in those images by two CIA agents in 1978 after watching a TV series about the holocaust. According to Farocki, ‘they were not under order to look for Auschwitz, and so they did not find

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<sup>80</sup> Halpern, O. (2015). *Beautiful data: a history of vision and reason since 1945*, pp. 21.

<sup>81</sup> Newman, W. E. (2017). *Data visualization for design thinking: applied mapping*, pp. 3-4.



it'<sup>82</sup>. This example shows how certain visualizations change over time to reflect new conditions, and in Halpern's words, 'how physiological capacities are conditioned and vary under historical conditions'<sup>83</sup>.



Figure 27. An aerial photo of Auschwitz I (US National Archives, 1944)

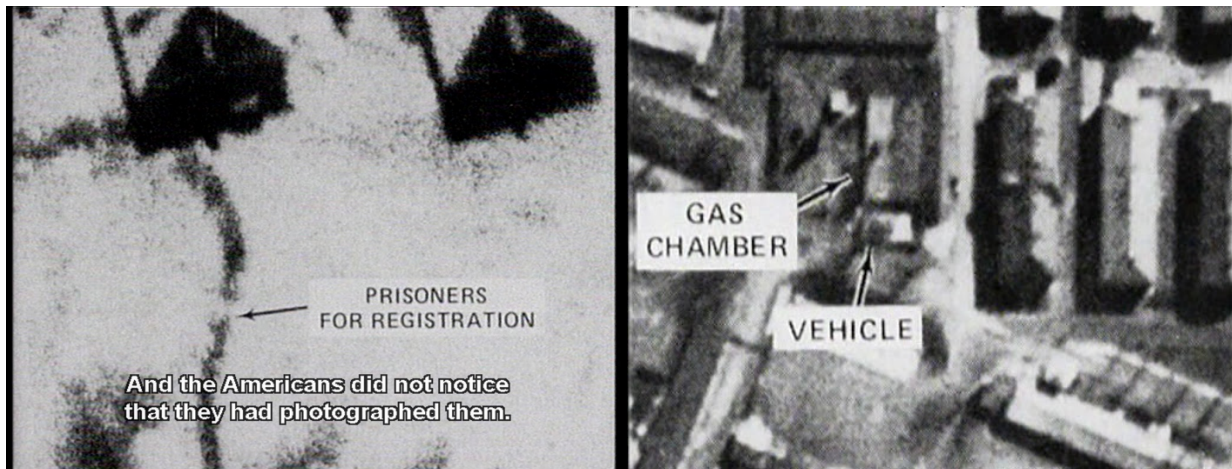


Figure 28. Farocki's film showing the overlooked Auschwitz camp (Farocki, 1989)

<sup>82</sup> Ribes, C. M. (2014, December 12). The Prescribed Gaze. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://dronecenter.bard.edu/the-prescribed-gaze/>.

<sup>83</sup> Halpern, O. (2015). *Beautiful data: a history of vision and reason since 1945*, pp. 23.

This same analogy can be used to analyze certain visualizations in the case of Palestinian refugee camps. The fact that the forestation project of the Jewish National Fund describes itself on its website as clean and green doesn't dismiss the fact that the forests and parks (i.e. the British Park and the Canadian Park) were established on the ruins of Palestinian villages whose residents were expelled mainly during 1948 and 1967. The remains of the villages are now portrayed as historical tourist destinations that were turned into natural green parks.

The most extreme departure from minimal democratic principles has been the complex array of laws and bureaucratic arrangements designed to vest control of over 90 percent of the land in the hands of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), an organization committed to using charitable funds in ways that are 'directly or indirectly beneficial to persons of Jewish religion, race or origin,' so its documents explain; 'a public institution recognized by the Government of Israel and the World Zionist Organization as the exclusive instrument for the development of Israel's lands,' restricted to Jewish use, in perpetuity (with marginal exceptions when useful), and barred to non-Jewish labor (though the principle has often been ignored for imported cheap labor).<sup>84</sup>

When looking at the visualizations portraying the Jewish National Fund's project, the use of pine trees is very common. Although *pinus pinea* (the stone pine) has been native to the region for hundreds of years, the trees planted by the Jewish National Fund are non-native pine trees. The planted pine trees grow faster, destroying more plants because of their acidity, which makes the land unusable for Palestinian shepherds. The trees are also more prone to fire and disease.<sup>85</sup> In 2010, a deadly fire started in the man-made forest of mount Carmel (although this isn't the only fire but it is considered the biggest fire in the history of Israel). Adding a historical layer to the forests established by the Jewish National Fund helps understand how the visual imagery depicted in the Jewish National Fund's posters among its establishment can be read differently, giving an example of how visualizations can change over time through the use of visibility.

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<sup>84</sup> Chomsky, Noam. (2011). *Hopes and prospects*. London: Penguin.

<sup>85</sup> Abu-Sitta, S., Balsam, C., Benjamin, J., Blumenthal, M., Deutsch, J., White Hat, C., ... Zayid, I. (2011). *Jewish National Fund – Colonizing Palestine Since 1901* (Vol. 4). International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network.





Figure 29. Soviet Jewry forest (Tamir, 1973)



Figure 30. A KKL-JNF forest from 1920, with six-year-old pine trees (KKL-JNF archive, 1933)



Figure 31. Imwas showing the development of Canada Park (n.d., 1978)

Figure 32. Imwas after the demolition of the village (n.d., 1968)

Although adding a historical layer to the aforementioned example of visualization helped in understanding a broader context, another concept implied during the analysis was what Halpern refers to as ‘visualities’ (*visibilités*). Basing her definition of the term on Deleuze’s visualness,<sup>86</sup> visibilities are defined by Halpern as ‘apparatuses for producing evidence about bodies, subjects, and now, perhaps, new modalities of population’<sup>87</sup>. In that sense, visibilities are how visualities become part of a discourse on power through an accumulation of different strategies and bodies at specific moments. In a simpler form, it’s answering the following question: ‘what was made visible at a certain moment in time, and why?’.

Newman discusses that adding all these layers of data to the original visualization/image results in a representation/a map (i.e. photographs can be turned into maps through captions which position them in relation to other images and text). In that sense, maps ‘represent artifacts and their *milieu* from within specific reception modes’.<sup>88</sup> In a geographic map, these receptive modes are usually rationally based on Euclidean geometric orders<sup>89</sup>, and a person requires some kind of cartographic knowledge to be able to read the map. In contrast, a chorographic map is a qualitative map that conveys cultural context and doesn’t require any cartographic knowledge. Chorographic maps also include diagrams such as collages/montages. A chorographic map by itself is not representative, and for it to become a representative map, it is essential that it have a map-space. Newman defines map-space as ‘the unbounded, changing space of the map produced by social actors using the map’<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Deleuze uses the term visualness to describe sites of production that constitute certain epistemological relationships, which turns agents into sites of intervention of power through some tactics ranging from spatial organization to statistics. Parallels could also be drawn with Foucault’s ‘gaze’.

<sup>87</sup> Halpern, O. (2015). *Beautiful data: a history of vision and reason since 1945*, pp. 24.

<sup>88</sup> Newman, W. E. (2017). *Data visualization for design thinking: applied mapping*, pp. 9.

<sup>89</sup> Euclidean geometry is the study of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional space.

<sup>90</sup> Newman, W. E. (2017). *Data visualization for design thinking: applied mapping*, pp. 9.



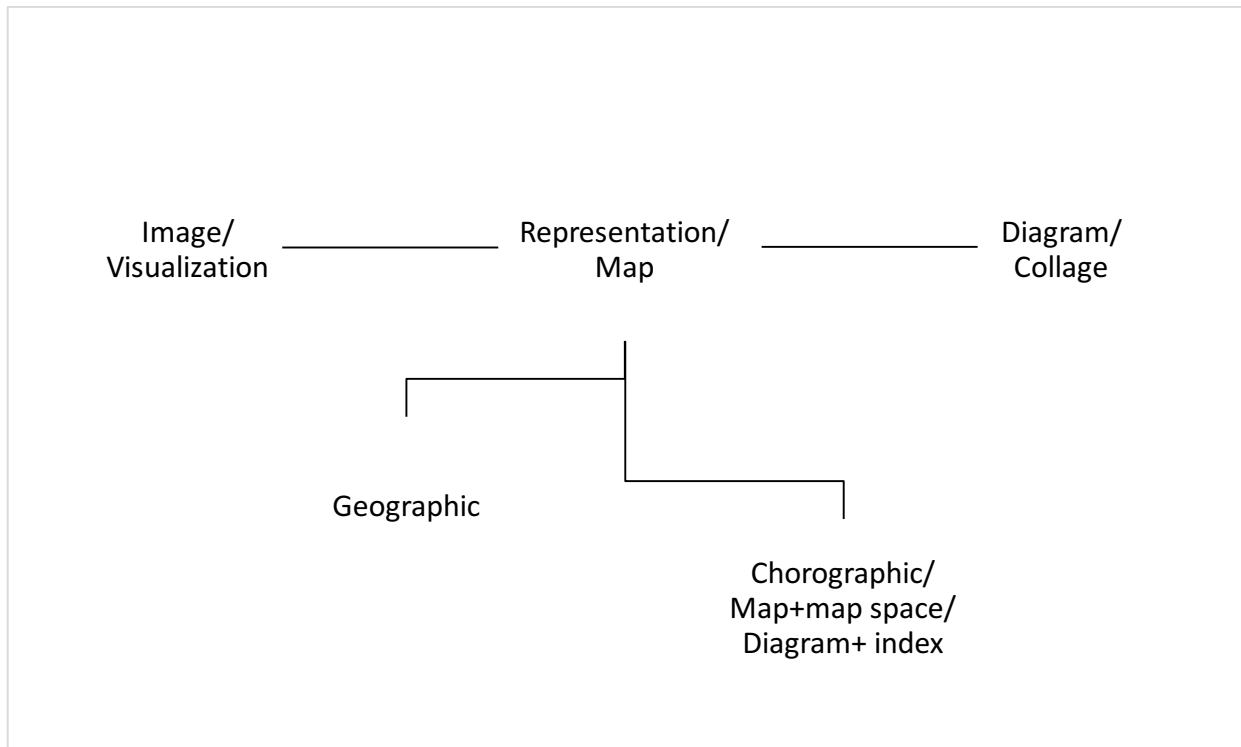


Figure 33. Image, map, diagram (Author, 2020)

Both Halpern and Newman argue for a more comprehensive understanding regarding mapping and cartography. An understanding which is inclusive to all forms of data visualization and does not favor an approach over the other. They both put forward the importance of introducing a contextual frame of reference which allows visualizations to become visibilities and visualites (in Halpern's case) and representational maps (in Newman's case). Consequently, this frame of reference allows the observer to dissect each visualization individually moving away from the binaries of representation and non-representation by introducing a theorization of map spaces.

#### 4.5 Map space: a contextualized framework

The term map space is traced back to geographers Vincent Del Casino and Stephen Hanna. In their paper *Beyond The 'Binaries': A Methodological Intervention for Interrogating Maps as Representational Practices*, they argue for a non binary approach towards cartography, one which moves away from the duality of representational and non-representational. Del Casino and Hanna share with post-representational cartography the notion that maps are *mappings*, in a constant state of production and reproduction which puts less focus on the duality of mapmaking and map use (production and consumption of maps). Considering maps as representations and practices simultaneously responds to the argument of map vs. space. While representational/ critical cartography believes that a map is a representation of a space (in that case some maps are more truthful than others), post-representational cartography disagrees and pushes forwards the idea that maps produce space. For Del Casino and Hanna, they see the map as space, they argue that it is more beneficial to talk about map-spaces instead of maps and spaces. 'Any critical perspective of mapping must investigate the multiple historical and spatial referents that are part and parcel of any map.'<sup>91</sup>

Reflecting on the field study conducted in Qalandia refugee camp, the attempt to dissect the camp's space, although a result of a further historical and contextual analysis, resulted in an abstract chorographic map that if approached solely lacks an index or a map space. The fact that the map created through the combination of different diagrams lacks the instructions on how it could be approached within the context of other images or texts makes the map itself purely subjective and non-representative. In comparison to Debord's psychogeographic map of Paris, they both can be considered chorographic mental maps that rely heavily on subjective experiences and are left open for interpretation, but the difference remains in the main purpose behind both maps. The map of Paris was meant to be read within the historical framework of its production; a tool of protest critiquing the discipline of cartography from within, it therefore becomes very clear that the map sits somewhere between a geographic and a chorographic map since it follows the actual configuration of the 1939 Paris Metro map. On the other hand, the purpose behind the Qalandia

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<sup>91</sup> Del Casino, Vincent & Hanna, Stephen. (2006). Beyond the 'binaries': A methodological intervention for interrogating maps as representational practices. ACME. 4. 34-56.

dissection map, which is a purely chorographic map, was to provide an alternative understanding of the camp's space.

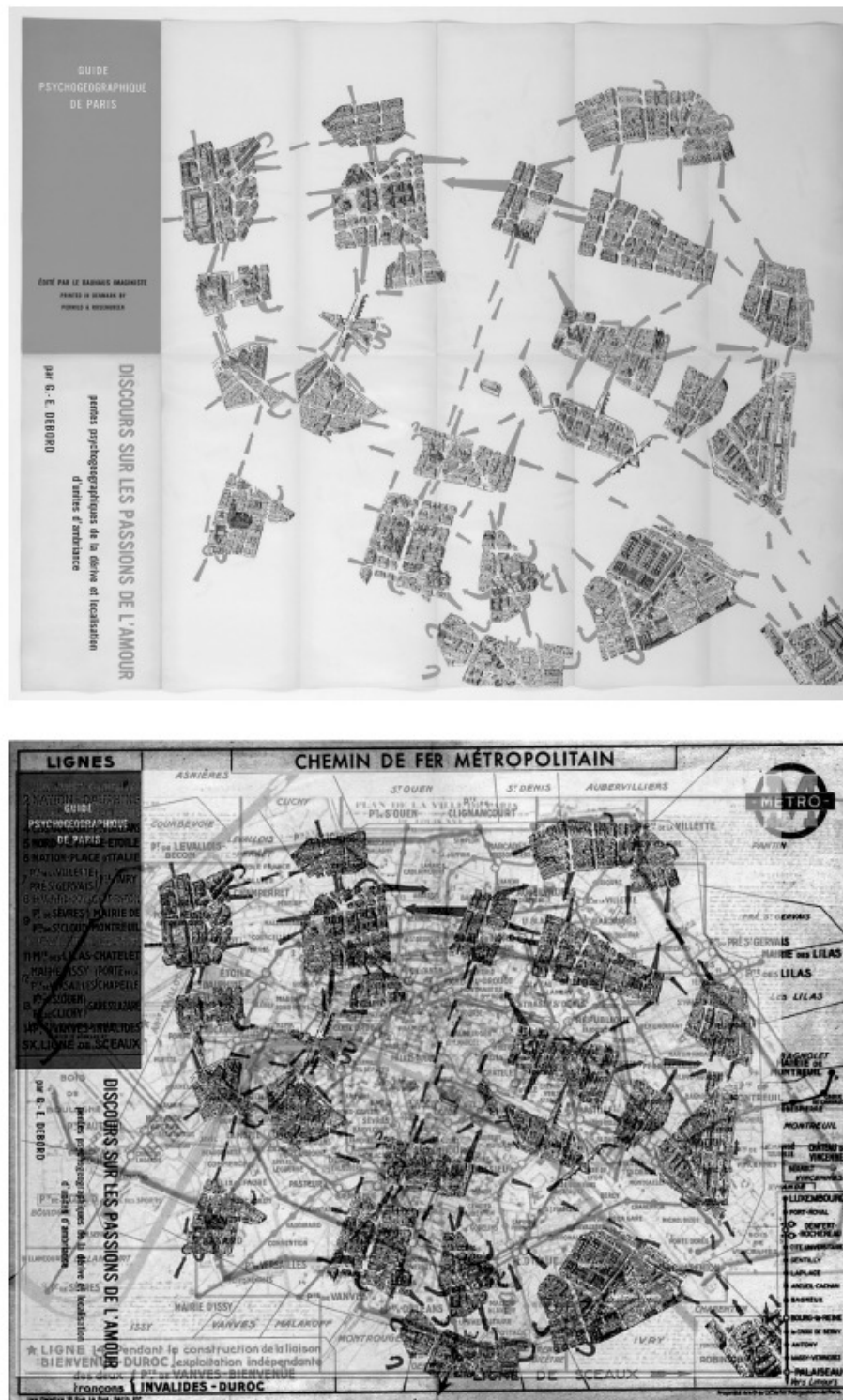


Figure 34. Analysis of the psychogeographic map of Paris (Newman, 2017)

It's true that, eventually, Qalandia's map did help in understanding the space of the camp more comprehensively; however, this understanding can be attributed to the historical context, broader spatial analysis, and the photographs taken throughout the camp which provide more information than the final artifact.

When addressing the case of Palestinian refugee camps, it becomes very clear that analyzing all the different types of visualizations of the camp becomes counterproductive for two reasons. The first reason is the spatial, political, and economic complexity involved, not only in relation to the camps specifically but also the Palestinian territories in general. The second is the abundance of visualizations and maps related to refugee camps. Owing to those challenges, it's much more important to create a map-space that acts as a decolonized frame of reference for dissecting the complexity of Palestinian refugee camps, which became the main aim of this dissertation.

## **5. Creating a map-space for Palestinian refugee camps**

The map space proposed throughout this dissertation consists of two parts: theoretical and visual. The theoretical part consists of the background work and historical analysis provided in this text. The other part is a visual space that tries to organize information on the topic and create links between different types of quantitative and qualitative data in order to create connections.

The map space presented takes the form of an interactive booklet, it tries to recapitulate the nature of maps through questioning the structure of the context itself. This questioning is achieved by producing/reproducing a space which anchors itself in poststructuralist theories and openly allows for a discussion regarding representation while at the same time gives agency to the observer through making all sources of information, used as part of this map space, available. In that sense, it defies the notion of map as an artifact. Del Casino and Hanna remind us of the vitality of keeping a map space ambiguous/ partial/ incomplete, because any attempt to ‘fix oppositional categories, boundaries and other meanings is always partial’.<sup>92</sup> The map space’s ambiguity is what makes it a dynamic source of information putting less focus on the boundaries between center and margin, signifier and signified. This non-binary approach, however, does not prioritize map-making over map-use, which is why the ambiguous map space is in an act of constant recreation. Although the map space is inevitably subjective, the dynamic nature of it gives the reader an opportunity to visit multiple references and form their own opinion. The unfinished nature also leaves space for the reader to reflect on the process of making the space.

The information included in the map space is selective, it highly depends on contextual relationships explained throughout the dissertation. As mentioned earlier, it is important to keep the map space as dynamic and expandable as possible, which is why three main focus points were taken into account when introducing the map space for Palestinian refugee camps: Firstly, the constant zooming in and out which was achieved through using information of different scales i.e. moving from the Jewish National fund’s project of downrooting pine trees along the southern border of the West Bank to uprooting Abu Salim’s olive trees. Secondly, the wide range of references used in putting together the map space which include: local news channels, international

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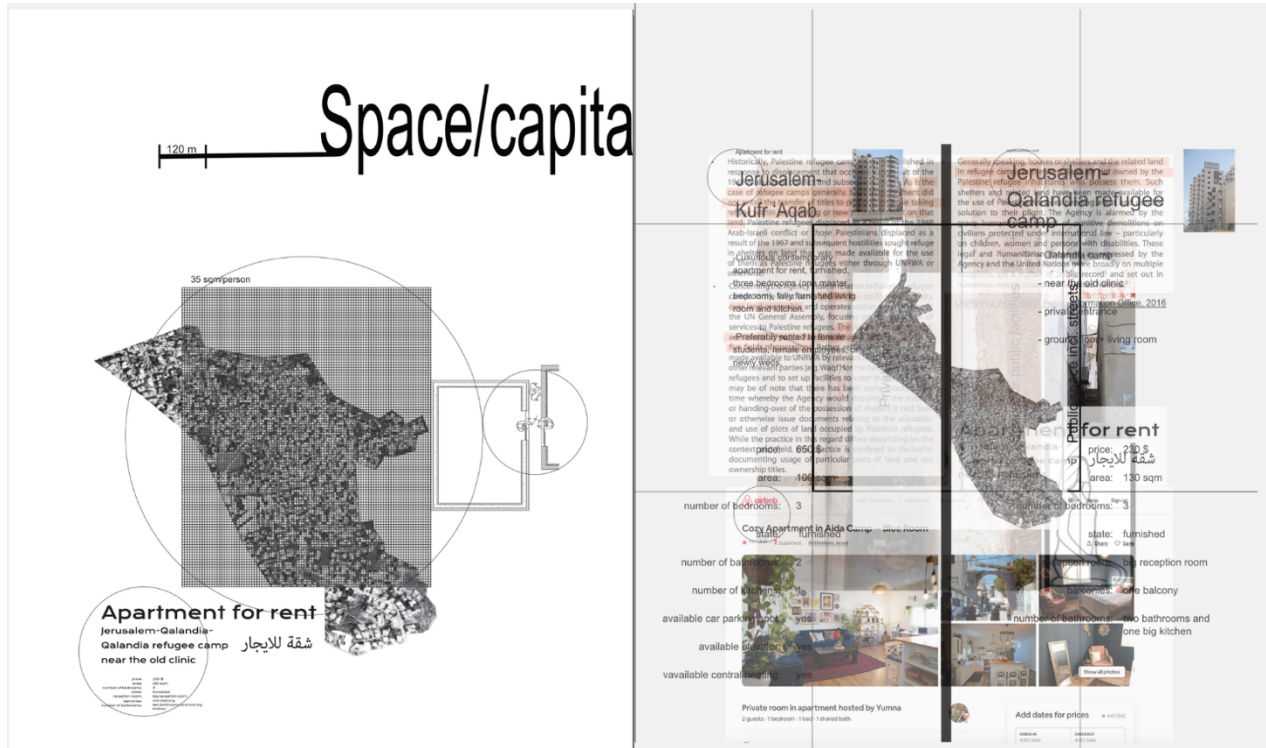
<sup>92</sup> Del Casino, Vincent & Hanna, Stephen. (2006). Beyond the 'binaries': A methodological intervention for interrogating maps as representational practices. *ACME*. 4. 34-56.

news reports, locally used websites, UNRWA archives, Israeli archive, the Palestinian poster project, Palestinian and Israeli artists and filmmakers, International artists, ‘home-made’ YouTube videos, Israeli newspapers, Google maps, Israeli military theorists, etc. (refer to Appendix B). Thirdly, focusing on providing sources of information that cover the whole period discussed throughout the map space through providing a collection of archival materials that help readers discuss topics while being aware of how the topic changed/did not change throughout history. While the information in the map space is connected on many layers, I decided to discuss six different topics through making connections between macro politics and micro details. The topics discussed (not in any specific order) are:

- Space per Capita
- Hole in the wall
- Isaiah 35:2
- Energy
- Up/down root
- Stone

The upcoming part will give a brief overview of each topic within its context and the connections made between the layers of information included in the map space.

(check attached file *map\_space.rtf* for the link to the map space)

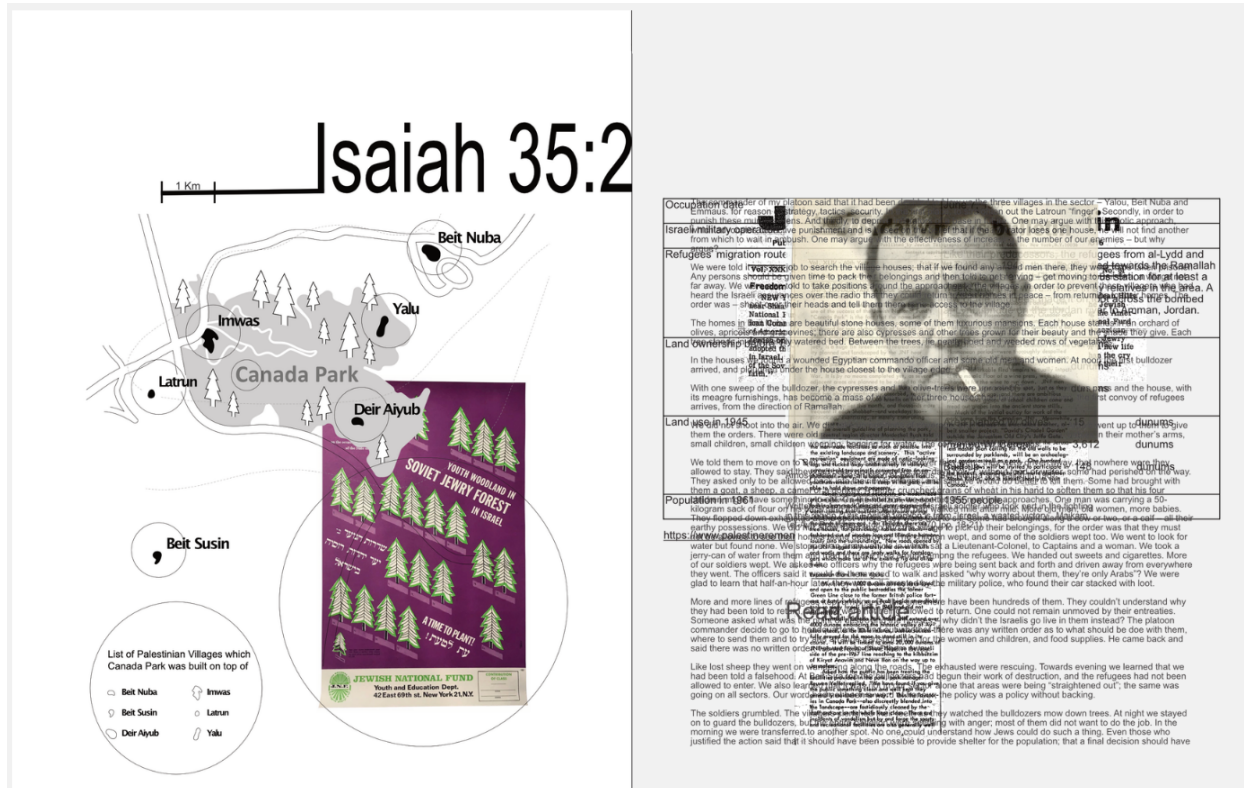


The topic space per capita addresses the issue of personal space in refugee camps, its economy, and the duality of ‘private/public’ space. The case chosen is Qalandia refugee camp, a Palestinian refugee camp situated right at the border between the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Relying on UNRWA’s population statistics and the area of the camp, each refugee can theoretically occupy 36 square meters. Given that almost 50% of the 36 square meters is private/interior space, whereas the other 50% consists of unbuilt areas (streets, alleys, etc.) and public amenities (schools, youth center, clinic, etc.), shows the severe lack of communal/public space in the camp.

The map space overlays the topic of personal space in the camp with an economic layer. The fact that refugee camps are in a state of permanent temporariness has its effects on the economy of housing units. Although UNRWA clearly states that the refugees don’t own the land the camp is built on, they still manage to create a micro economy inside the camp by renting out apartments (in some cases airbnb). A comparison is then drawn between two rent-ads for two similar apartments. The first apartment is in Qalandia camp and the second is in Kufur Aqab, a neighborhood less than 1 km away from Qalandia. The similarities seen in the typology of both apartment buildings and descriptions of the interior space shows a clear example of the camp as a space of exception.

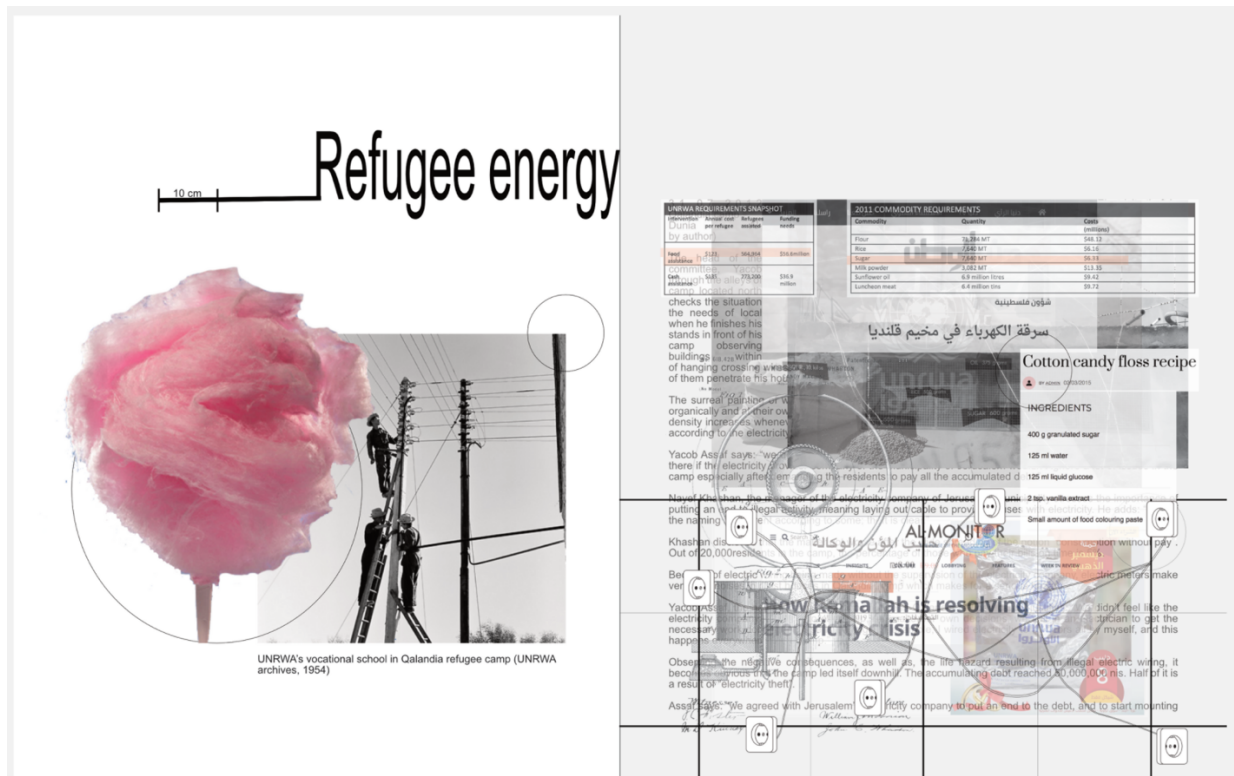






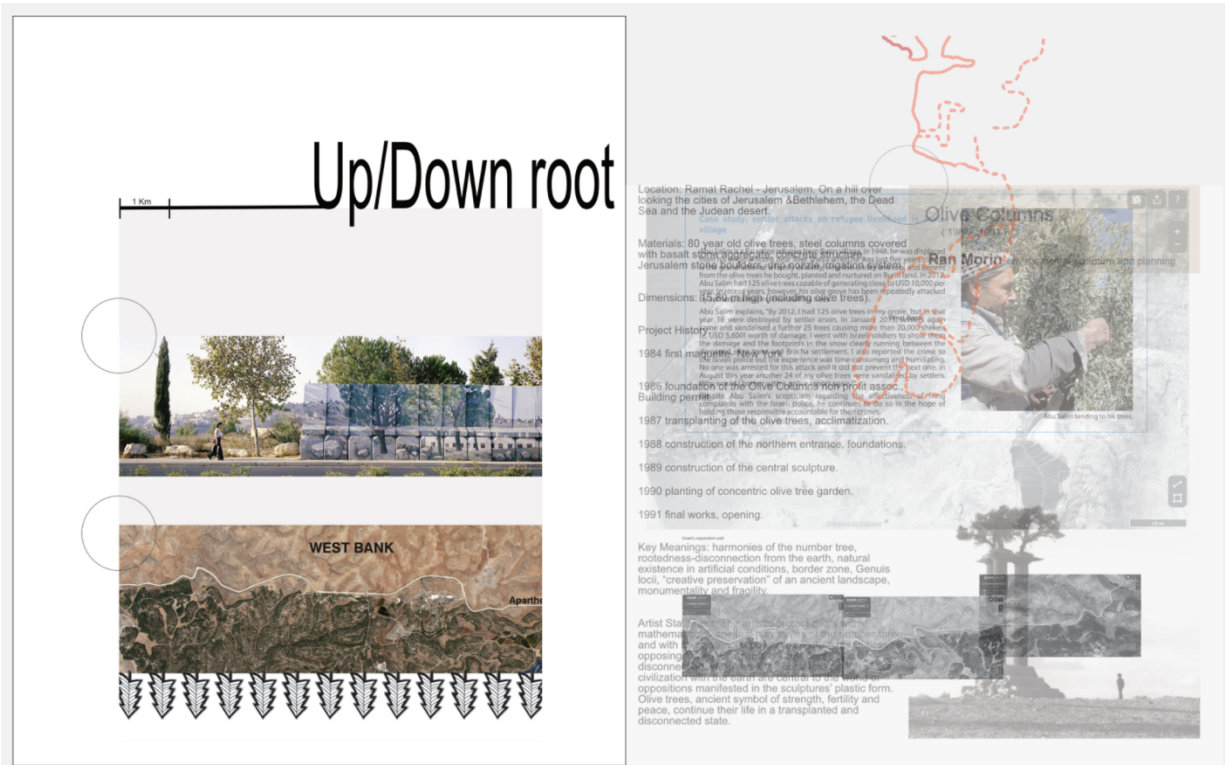
Isaiah 35:2 discusses the Jewish National Fund and the green washing of 1948 depopulated Palestinian villages. Canada park is one example of turning Palestinian villages into an Israeli national park. The park itself is built on top of 6 Palestinian villages. Beit Nuba, Beit Susin, Deir Aiyub, Imwas, Latrun, and Yalu. The land has been declared as ‘public land’ in 1969. Traces of the demolished villages still exist within the borders of the park. The park itself occupies 7,000 dunams and has become a popular tourist destination since its establishment. This topic serves as an example of the re-afforestation projects taken by the Jewish National Fund in depopulated Palestinian villages and thus the agenda the fund holds in regards to the refugees’ right to return.

The map space provides an overlay of two layers. Firstly, the depopulated villages (areas, population, land ownership etc.). Secondly, Canada park shown through archival snippets taken from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s daily news bulletin. The dilemma between both narratives is further demonstrated through an article written by Amos Kenan, an Israeli soldier who took part in the Six-day war in that region in 1967.



Refugee energy brings forward the topic of energy in refugee camps from two different perspectives in order to demonstrate refugee camps as spaces of exception with an ambiguous legal system. Firstly, the issue of electricity theft in refugee camps. This issue is brought up as an example which portrays the complex power dynamic emergent in refugee camps between UNRWA, popular committees, and the PA. Secondly, the issue of sugar recycling. Due to the increased unemployment among refugees, attempts at ‘liquidizing’ the assistance provided by UNRWA are constantly made, whether through directly selling the food parcels online or turning sugar into cotton candy.

The map space explores electricity theft in the camps by providing a locally published news article which contains an interview with the head of Qalandia’s popular committee and the CEO of Jerusalem electricity company, the interview reflects the refugees’ concerns regarding the lack of needed infrastructure in the camps and, at the same time, showcases the camp as an independent legal entity. In order to further stress on the economic and legal complexity in refugee camps, the map space provides an example of UNRWA’s food parcels being sold online, as well as, a calculation depending on UNRWA’s statistics of 2011 to showcase how sugar is turned into cash. An additional layer is provided to the discussion of liquidizing food parcels, which is the e-cards provided to refugees by UNRWA as an attempt to limit the ‘illegal’ selling of food parcels.



The topic uproot/ downroot discusses the duality of downrooting pine trees by the Jewish National Fund and uprooting olive trees by the IDF. The forestation project initiated by the JNF is represented as a project of 'land rehabilitation'. The use of pine forests is not limited to national parks planted on the traces of depopulated Palestinian villages (as showcased in Isaiah 35:2), additionally forests are planted along the southern border of the West Bank working with the separation wall as an additional 'natural border'. The plantation of non-native, fast-growing pine trees; which resulted in multiple fires throughout the years; is accompanied by the uprooting of Palestinian olive trees within the West bank.

The map space provides examples of the use of forests and vegetation as a separation barrier through looking at satellite images of the border and photographs of the Defense Wall at Gilo settlement which uses drawings of trees as a way to normalize and camouflage walls. The issue of uprooting olive trees is demonstrated in the map space through an interview conducted by UNRWA with a Palestinian refugee from Burin village. The map space then discusses the symbolism of olive trees: The Israeli monument, Olive Columns, a physical manifestation of 'preserving ancient landscape', the olive branch as a Palestinian symbol of peace, and acts against the uprooting of olive trees as a symbol of resistance.



Stone is a topic which discusses the illegal Israeli stone quarries established in the West Bank. How these quarries became part of the Palestinian economy, and how the use of stone in building construction has become less practical and more symbolic throughout the years.

The map space showcases the distribution of Israeli quarries within the West Bank and their legal status. The discussion around the use of stone in building construction is opened up through providing wall sections in order to demonstrate the ideological and practical shift from the original use of stone as an essential component in wall construction, to the use of stone as a cladding material (wall covering) in both Palestine and Israel. With the introduction of concrete buildings, the use of stone cladding in Palestine became a symbol of social status. In Israel, on the other hand, the use of concrete structures and stone cladding serves to mimic historical architecture, this notion is demonstrated through an example of the Israeli quarry, *Jerusalem stone Architecture*, which specializes in replicating any historic stone finish. What's seen as a solution to 'harmonize' new and old structures, makes it harder to differentiate between the historical Palestinian structures and landscape built before 1948 and the structure and landscape built as part of the Israeli State after 1948.



## **6. Conclusion**

This dissertation aimed at exploring the underlying complexity of Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank. Given the complicated situation of the camps due to the lack of any peace resolution regarding the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, refugee camps evolved into convoluted entities; both physically and politically. This complexity was caused by a combination of different factors.

Firstly, the state of permanent temporariness which helped realize the camp as a home and a space that should respond to the daily needs of refugees. This realization gave refugee camps a unique legal status and was one of the main reasons the camps formed physically as bottom-up spaces, a result that can be seen when analyzing the evolution of these spaces throughout history which led to their current maze-like structures.

Secondly, the territorial rupture of the West Bank and its transformation into an archipelago which, in turn, contributed to the economic complexity inside the camps which can be seen in the increase in unemployment rates and the establishment of an ‘illegal’ micro economy in the camps, i.e. renting of living spaces as apartments, electricity theft, and the constant attempts at liquidizing UNRWA’s non-monetary aid.

Thirdly, the wide range of the depiction of refugees in media; ranging from victims deserving of humanitarian aid to terrorists. The different portrayals of refugees resulted in an overall mistrust among refugees in finding an institution (media or humanitarian aid agencies) that would provide an image which portrays the refugee beyond a victim or a terrorist. This notion can be seen physically when walking through the alleys of the camps that has been transformed by the refugees themselves into street galleries showing graffiti which discusses the refugees’ daily struggles and their right to return.

Fourthly, the constant IDF attacks of the camps which involve assassinations and demolitions. These attacks contributed in maintaining the maze-like structure of the camps and helped formulate the notion of the camp as a symbol of resistance with the popular committees as an administrative and defensive force.

The dynamic responsive relationship between space and internal politics, as well as the resulting economic, political, and geographical complexity in the camps put forward the need for a method/ a tool that is able to portray the different sides of the camps. The camp as a home, as a space of humanitarian aid, as an enclave in an archipelago, as a legal space of exception, and a space of armed conflict.

Analyzing different mapping methods reveals their limitations especially considering the state of exception Palestinian refugee camps are facing. On the one hand, representational/ critical approach which is rooted in post-structuralist theory (similar to the case of psychogeography and cognitive mapping) succeeds in providing a political map, the limitation of this approach is seen clearly in its approach towards the map as an artifact. A notion which presents the map as a finished product which holds some kind of truth, and further separates the reader of the map from its producer.

On the other hand, a post-representational approach (such as GPS systems and crowd-sourced, collaborative online mapping projects) of digital mapping provides a method which corresponds to the contemporary problem of the abundance of data. It challenges the critical notion of map as an artifact by introducing mapping as a process and performance, an important factor when considering the fast-paced ever-changing conditions in refugee camps. Even though the post-representational approach is dynamic and doesn't favor the creator over the reader, it still presents a dilemma concerning its relationship with the space itself. Given the different political agendas regarding Palestinian refugee camps and that in a post-representational approach the map precedes the space, raises questions regarding who is responsible for developing these maps? What political agenda do they hold? And how are these maps going to affect the organic physical structure of refugee camps, as well as, their bottom-up governance which is proved to be essential to their survival?

Due to the problematics represented in binary approaches towards mapping, especially in the context of refugee camps, this dissertation provides an alternative which bridges the representational and non-representational approaches. A map-space which is political in nature, but still dynamic. The map space explores and asks questions about topics relevant to Palestinian

refugee camps in the West Bank. It offers different perspectives to different scales of the issues discussed. Although it is subjective in nature, it still allows for different point of view to co-exist and interact within its space, this is guaranteed through the use of various references which construct this space. The map space is realized as an interactive online booklet designed using InVision, a digital product design platform used for experimentation, testing of ideas, and presenting prototypes. The choice of the platform came as a result to its flexible and dynamic nature which helps present the topics discussed in the map space as effectively as possible. Additionally, using InVision as a final platform guarantees the map to stay in constant a state of making and moves it further from being an artifact which holds some kind of truth within.

In addition to exploring the complexity of Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank, this map space can be seen as an example of a process that can be utilized for transforming the theoretical concept of map-space, presented by Hanna and Del Casino, into a physical prototype which can be developed further as a tool to connect space to a broader context of history, economy, and politics which are in a responsive dynamic relationship with space where they affect and are affected by spatial formation.



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## **Appendices**

### Appendix A

check attached file *qalandi\_experiment.html*

double click to open and then refresh the page to generate additional combinations.

## Appendix B

### The different sources of information included in the map space

Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Kenan, Amos. Israel: a Wasted Victory. Amikam, 1970.

<https://www.palestineremembered.com/>

<https://www.palestineposterproject.org/>

Photos by author

Google maps

<https://www.airbnb.com/>

UNRWA annual reports

<http://www.findglobal.com/>

Shai Kremer, Israeli artist and photographer.

<https://shobiddak.com/>

Yediot Ahronot, Israel's most widely circulated newspaper

<https://electronicintifada.net/>

Shimon Naveh, Israel's director of Operational Theory Research Institute.

Khaled Jarrar, Palestinian artist and designer.

Yotam Feldman, Israeli artist and film maker.

Eyal Weizman, British Israeli architect.

Ran Morin, Israeli artist.

<https://zoom.earth/>

Morrison & Wharton's candy machine.

<https://zawya.ps/>

OTRI's fractal raiding diagram.

Diagrams by author.

Amos Kenan, an Israeli soldier who took part in six-day war 1967.

Moshe Nissim, a bulldozer operator who took part in Jenin battle.

Abu Salim, a Palestinian refugee from Burin.

ARIJ (The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem).

Jerusalem Stone Architecture, an Israeli stone quarry in Jerusalem specialized in replicating the finish of historic stone.