Urban agriculture in camp communities: new perspectives

Recommendations for action
for community-based projects in the scope of urban agriculture
in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan

Julia Mira Brennauer | Svenja Binz | Phil-Torben von Lueder

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Eidesstattliche Versicherung

Hiermit erklären wir, dass wir die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und eigenhändig sowie ohne unerlaubte fremde Hilfe und ausschließlich unter Verwendung der aufgeführten Quellen und Hilfsmittel angefertigt haben.

Berlin, den

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(Julia Brennauer)

_____

(Phil-Torben von Lueder)

_____

(Svenja Binz)

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

CBO – Community Based Organisation

CBRC – Community Based Rehabilitation Center

CBRC – Community Based Rehabilitation Center

CIP – Camp Improvement Plan

DoS – Department of Statistics

DPA – Department for Palestinian Affairs

DPU – Developing Planning Unit

FASPAR – Facilitating Social Participation of Palestinian Refugees

FCYC – Fawwar Camp Youth Council

GIZ – Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)

GTC – Greening the Camps (NGO)

IFPO – Institute Francais Proche Orient

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ISF – Israeli security forces

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

PFLP – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency

WAJ – Water Authority of Jordan

WPC – Women's Programme Centre

Praktiken der urbanen Landwirtschaft gewinnen weltweit an Relevanz und sind auch immer häufiger in den dichten urbanen Agglomeraten palästinensischer Geflüchtetencamps im Nahen Osten zu finden. Insbesondere Dachfarmen werden als Mittel der urbanen Lebensmittelproduktion adaptiert. Die vorliegende Arbeit betrachtet dieses Phänomen anhand verschiedener Fallstudien von gemeinschaftsorientierten Projekten in Jordanien und der West Bank. Neben einer Kontextualisierung der Camps in ihren historischen, politischen und gesellschaftlichen Kontext, werden dabei materielle und immaterielle Stoffströme des Camps untersucht. Darüber hinaus werden anhand der analysierten Fallstudien Herausforderungen und Probleme der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit diskutiert und kritisch eingeordnet. Ziel dieser Forschung ist es, zum akademischen Verständnis von empowerment der palästinensischen Geflüchteten im Kontext der Anpassung an den Klimawandel beizutragen und zu diskutieren wie gemeinschaftsorientierte Projekte nachhaltiger gestaltet und den lokalen Dynamiken angepasst werden können. Die Arbeit richtet sich somit insbesondere auch an externe Experten, die im Zuge von Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in den Camps tätig sind. Ein weiteres Ziel ist es, zu erörtern, inwiefern extern finanzierte Projekte zu einer Resilienz in den prekären räumlichen Bedingungen der Camps beitragen und zu einer autonomeren lokalen Handlungsfähigkeit führen können. Die vorliegende Arbeit transformiert Beobachtungen und Erkenntnisse aus intensiver Feldforschung in eine Diskussionsgrundlage für neue Perspektiven innerhalb von gemeinschaftsorientierten Projekten im Bereich der Anpassung an den Klimawandel. Die in der Analyse gewonnenen Ergebnisse werden dabei zur Entwicklung von Grundvoraussetzungen und Handlungsempfehlungen genutzt. Darüber hinaus soll ein entwickeltes multidimensionales Evaluierungstool dabei helfen, Handlungen strategisch und integriert zu verorten und messbar zu machen. Schlussendlich soll der beispielhafte Entwurf eines räumlichen und programmatischer Projektes die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse visuell vorstellbar machen.

Abstract

Practices of urban agriculture gaining in relevance worldwide and are increasingly to be found in the dense urban agglomerations of Palestinian refugee camps in the Middle East. In particular, rooftop farms are adapted as a means of urban food production. This paper examines this phenomenon on the basis of various case studies of community-oriented projects in Jordan and the West Bank. In addition to contextualizing the camps in their historical, political and social contexts, the material and immaterial flows and dynamics of the camp are examined. Furthermore, challenges and problems of development aid are discussed and critically assessed in the scope of the investigated case studies. The aim of this research is to contribute to the academic understanding of empowerment of Palestinian refugees in the context of climate change adaptation and to discuss how community-based projects can be made more sustainable and adjusted to local dynamics. The work is therefore particularly addressed to external agents working in the camps in the context of development aid. Moreover, the aim is to discuss the extent to which externally funded projects can contribute to resilience in the precarious spatial conditions of the camps and lead to a more autonomous local capacity for action. This paper transforms observations and findings from intensive field research into a discussion basis for new perspectives within community-based projects in the field of climate change adaptation. The results obtained in the analysis will be used to develop basic preconditions and recommendations for action. In addition, a developed multidimensional evaluation tool will help to locate actions strategically and to make them measurable. Finally, the exemplary design of a spatial and programmatic project should make the findings visually imaginable.

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1
Introduction.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research problem and context

Across the globe, countries are increasingly confronted with rapid urbanisation proces-
ses. Over the past decades, the urban population's share of the total world population has
increased from 30% in 1950 to more than a half in 2014 and is projected to rise up to 66%
in 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs/ Population Division 2014, p. 1).
Next to the economic, social, infrastructural and further issues, which are triggered by the
continuing urbanisation and overall growth of the world's population, environmental issues
are increasingly challenging people's everyday lives and particularly affecting the world's
most vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, rising greenhouse gas emissions as a product of
human activities have reached a historical peak and are consequently continuously driving
climate change.

Milestones such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the Paris
Agreement on climate change (2016) represent a joint attempt of addressing climate chan-
ge as a global challenge. While within the Paris Agreement, countries have agreed on the
common goal of a global warming maximum of two degrees, the Sustainable Development
Goals (SDGs) provide 17 Goals, which include new fields of action such as *climate action*
as well as *sustainable consumption and production*, which were not included in the previous
Millennium Goals. All countries are called upon to adopt the guidelines and targets set by
the SDGs according to their priorities and to the global environmental challenges at large
(UN Development Programme, n.d. A). Although critics complain, that the set goals were
formulated too vaguely and indicators were chosen arbitrarily, they are putting a certain
pressure on local and international politics (Endres, 2015). Even though the discourse has
currently taken on a new dimension with the US's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement,
the international agreements are quite relevant for development aid policies. Since the
SDGs determine a thematic framework, into which money from the respective countries'
development budgets flows, development projects are increasingly embedded into the cont-
ext of climate change adaptation.

According to the UN Development Programme (n.d. B), climate change adaptation means "advancing more resilient, sustainable development outcomes that take into consideration ongoing and future climate-related impacts". Furthermore, they outline the importance to follow a community-driven approach, "supporting integrated climate change strategies, advancing climate-resilient agriculture, promoting ecosystem-based adaptation initiatives, fostering resilience for food security, supporting integrated water resource and coastal management, creating improved climate information and early warning systems, and building climate resilient energy and infrastructure platforms designed for the 21st century". This gives an insight into the wide and diverse scope of action in the field of climate change adaptation. Within this scope, the research at hand deals with urban agriculture and its related flows such as water, waste and food.

Worldwide, the growth of cities is placing tremendous demands on urban food supply systems. Thus, practices of urban agriculture as a strategy for local and sustainable food-production are gaining relevance and are increasingly spreading in urban areas. Urban agriculture provides a complementary strategy which enhances food security by providing locally produced fresh and healthy food, generates employment, recycles urban wastes and thus contributes to the cities' resilience to climate change (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d.).

Geographically, this research focuses on the context of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Jordan as a country has experienced a rapid urbanisation due to the enormous growth of its population, not least because of the admission of hundreds of thousands of refugees from different countries over the last decades. Furthermore, Jordan is classified as one of the driest countries in the world and is therefore strongly affected by climate change. Even though the government already tries to adapt to and manage climate change impacts in practice, Jordan's natural resources are further being overstrained and water resources per capita continue to fall dramatically due to mismanagement and population increase. (International Union for Conservation of Nature, n.d., p.4)

The above described climatic challenges lead to shortcomings in living conditions in Jordan, especially in Palestinian refugee camps. Compared to the rest of the Jordanian population, their housing situation is particularly precarious. Additionally, a protracted state of temporality of the camps has led to their unchanged poor physical constitution and a constantly increasing spatial density due to the camps' static boundaries. 2018 marks the 70th

anniversary of Israel's declaration of independence, or as Palestinian would refer to as *Al Nakba* (*the catastrophe*), the eviction of roughly 700,000 Palestinians from their homeland. The relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem and the subsequent riots happened, while this research was conducted. Such political events do not really affect the life situation of the more than one million Palestinians who continue to live in camps within the five host countries, among them Jordan. However, the events demonstrate in an impressive way the political actuality of the Palestinian's most important demand, the *right of return.*

Within this balancing act between physical manifestation and maintained temporality, Palestinian refugee camps have developed into dense urban neighbourhoods over time. Regarding the thematical focus of this research, the question arises: Which spaces are available for urban agriculture practices in these highly densified urban areas? In most cases, the roof remains as a valuable spatial resource. Public space is very limited in the camps, usually the streets are narrow and most of the plots are completely overbuilt. Therefore, using the roof as a productive space and implementing ideas such as rooftop farming is not new to this context. During the extensive field research in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and the West Bank, the concept of urban agriculture was almost exclusively observed on rooftops. Apart from a few exceptions of self-initiated rooftop farming practices, the field research further revealed that rooftop farming in this specific context is mostly embedded into externally funded development projects.

This is due to the fact, that since their establishment, Palestinian refugee camps are highly dependent on donations from the international community. One of their most important stakeholders is the UN Agency UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), which takes on quasi-governmental tasks in the camps. How disastrous this dependency can be, became obvious when the US government had frozen 65 million dollars of its promised funds at the beginning of this year (Hammer, 2018). Due to such recent incidents and UNRWA's temporary mandate, the question is raised if or how long UNRWA can be kept alive as a representative of the Palestinian case and a central humanitarian agent. Through this decade-long form of development aid and its political agendas, the population of the camps was often excluded from the political decision-making processes about their own habitat. For community-based projects in this context, it is therefore important to actively promote participative and empowering processes in order to shift away from the common donor-recipient constellations, which are based on top-down policies.

In recent years, the perception and treatment of camps by actors such as UNRWA has un-

dergone a paradigm shift that aims to increasingly involve camp residents in decision-making processes. The launch of this new phase means the strategic concession to question the previously applied top-down policies and to perceive the people of the camps as serious actors (Rempel, 2009). A significant step in this regard marks the implementation of Camp Improvement Plans (CIP). These follow principles of integrated urban development in order to fundamentally analyse and define fields of action and priorities, taking into account participatory methods (Misselwitz and Hanafi, 2009). Nevertheless, topics such as climate change adaptation have been underrepresented in this process so far (Interview Mura, 2018). Furthermore, the community-based urban agriculture projects examined within this thesis had rather few points of contact with the strategic planning tool CIP. This raises the question to what extent conclusions can be drawn from actual projects in this field for strategic planning at camp level.

In addition to the climatic and political aspects, identity plays an important role in this research. 70 years after the initial expulsion, the camps are undergoing a generational shift in which the last people who have experienced Palestine before the expulsion are passing away. Even though older generations of the camp community continue to hold on to the narrative and memory of Palestine prior 1948, and thus to the temporality of camps, it can be assumed that the younger generations could develop a new perspective of their habitat and life. However, the decisive factor for this change of perspective is whether younger persons are actively involved in the participation and design processes in the camps. Much too often, this is not the case.

1.2 Research questions

The aim of this research is to contribute to the academical understanding of empowerment of the Palestinian refugee camp community in the scope of climate change adaptation. To do this, local constraints as well as local possibilities need to be identified.
All of the community-based urban agriculture projects, which were subject of the case study research within this thesis underlie a donor-recipient constellation. This dependency constellation should not be negated in the thesis at hand, since external funding will continue to play a significant role within the context of Palestinian refugee camps. Instead, it aims to develop recommendations and make them usable for planning and implementation practices in the camp in order to enhance the resilience of local communities. In a second

step, the identified recommendations are to be presented in an exemplary programmatic and spatial design that visualises a possible community-based urban agriculture project.

Therefore, this research tries to answer the following questions:

1. Which recommendations for action can be detected for community-based projects in the scope of urban agriculture in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan?

2. How can the identified recommendations derived from the investigated case studies and the analysis of the specific Jordanian context be made usable for planning and implementation practices in the camp?

3. What could an exemplary project design look like, which integrates the developed recommendations spatially and programmatically?

1.3 Research outline

The first step in the thesis is the examination of its underlying *theoretical framework*. Here the terms *power* and *empowerment*, as well as the concept of the *room for manoeuvre* by Michael Safier are examined and defined for the further course of the research. In the following chapter *methodology*, the methods applied for research are described, which vary from the access to the field and sampling to methods of data collection and data analysis. These two chapters form the basis of this thesis and are essential for its understanding.

In order to approach the first research question, it is important to be aware of certain basic information on the context. Therefore, the chapter *Background* (p. 46) deals with the historical background and rights of Palestinian refugees, as well as their legal and political situation in Jordan. Moreover, the chapter describes the development of Palestinian refugee camps to towns over time and their protracted temporary status. In a next step, the description of specific notions of the Palestinian collective memory and common narrative provides a better understanding of the demanded *right of return* and the resulting importance of the camp as a symbol for this demand. In the last part of the chapter, the different typologies of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan are introduced. The following chapter (p. 92) detects various *Dynamics and flows* to which the camp is subjected within its Jordanian context

and discusses the relevance of the respective flow or dynamic for urban agriculture projects. The chapter *Development aid and power structures* (p. 126) focusses on the significance and challenges within current dynamics of development aid in camps. Furthermore, it introduces relevant operating actors in the respective field. The chapter includes an excursus, which gives an insight into current community-based planning practices and tools. Moreover, it analyses three types of power structures within the camp context, which influence community-based planning processes. These three chapters lay an important basis for the understanding of the context, and already reveal important insights into our empirical field research in Jordan. Before presenting the outcomes of our field research, it seems crucial to critically reflect on our experiences in the field and on our role as urban designers or architects in the chapter *Our role* (p. 150). The following chapter *Case studies* presents findings of urban agriculture practices in the Middles East and especially in the context of Palestinian refugee camps. Four community-based urban agriculture projects are analysed in detail. The *four-dimensional model of action space* by Safier is applied for evaluation and gives insights into the projects' *action space* and *limits and boundaries.* The in-depth discussion of the *Background, Dynamics and flows, Development aid and power structures* and *Our role* within the first chapters in combination with the evaluation of the *Case studies* enable us to set important preconditions for the work within community-based agriculture projects in Palestinian refugee camps and to give concrete recommendations for action (see first research question).

For the purpose of answering the second research question, the *four-dimensional model of action space* is extended with the parameters, which result from the given recommendations. The thus developed *multidimensional evaluation tool* can be applied within potential community-based urban agriculture projects. In order to give an impression, what a project could look like, which uses the introduced tool and integrates the developed recommendations spatially and programmatically (see third research question), this thesis ends with an *exemplary project design.*

1.4 Reflections on our background as urban designers and architects

Our research has always been influenced by the question if or how planners, urban designers or architects coming from the global north – like us – could and should be active in the

very complex and contested context of Palestinian refugee camps. The concern of reproducing (colonial) power structures accompanied us and had its effect on our actions. Due to the intensive interaction with the camp and its actors, the indications accumulated that many development aid projects – sometimes contrary to their own description – do not seem to have achieved their goals. However, we perceive the concept of development aid as a constant phenomenon which will continue to influence the chosen context. Therefore we want to advocate a critical approach to development aid which takes into considerations local knowledge and power structures and relies on site specific analysis before stepping into action. Because it is certain that development cooperation in camps will continue, money will flow, and expats will be consulting.

That is why it is important to enrich the discourse about this process not only with criticism but also with recommendations for action on an academic level. The outcomes of this thesis should therefore explicitly serve as a basis for discussion, establishing the basic prerequisites for action in the chosen context and encourage external agents to reflect on their position, privileges and the frame in which they are able to act.

2
Theoretical
framework.
(p. 22)

2 Theoretical framework

In the following, the theoretical approaches, which are important for the understanding of this research, will be discussed and categorised. Firstly, the concept of *power* and *empowerment* and their relevance for community-based projects is approached, as it is elementary for understanding one's action within the context of Palestinian refugee camps. Secondly, with the *room for manoeuvre* a model is introduced, which should help to define and analyse the *action space* and *limits and boundaries* of the investigated case studies.

2.1 Power and Empowerment

Within the scope of this research, various projects were examined with one thing in common, namely the dependence on external funding and the associated external agencies. These projects primarily focus on activating resources, enabling participation and thus try to foster a form of *empowerment.* As a basic precondition for understanding and approaching the notion *empowerment*, it is crucial to consider what *power* itself can mean within the special and contested context of a Palestinian refugee camp and what implication can be drawn from this regarding one's own role. In doing so, it seems helpful to focus on findings that are related and thus tested in the field of advocacy and developmental or action planning (Moser, 1989; Rowlands, 1997; Sadan, 1997; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002; Gaventa, 2006; Luttrell and Quiroz, 2009; Al Nammari, 2013).

In particular, the central concepts of power discussed in *The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation* by VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) prove to be a well-suited approach to discuss the term *power* in this context both as an analysis tool and as a tool for capacity building. Following Veneklasen and Miller, *power* is framed as relational, multidimensional and adaptive to its immediate context. It serves as a definition of the control and distribution of all kind of resources within a society. It should explicitly differ from a purely monolithic and unchanging notion of *power,* which according to VeneKlasen and Miller is often

associated by people living under a regime that excludes them from active participation. During a process of *empowerment* this concept of *power* has to be reframed. In addition to the terms *control*, *domination* and *resistance*, process-oriented notions like "collaboration" and "transformation" must be added as possible positive dynamics of *power*. Reframing can lead those who are experiencing not to be in *power* to a feeling of actionability (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002, p. 39). A reflective, process-oriented view on the different forms of *power* is therefore especially necessary for experts and practitioners in the chosen field of this master thesis.

To approach and illustrate dimensions especially in the area of (political) participation and decision-making within the notion of *power*, VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) follow Gaventa's (2006) *Power Cube* and distinguish between *Visible Power*, *Hidden Power* and *Invisible Power*. Based on this approach and its inspiring application of Al Nammari (2013) in Palestinian refugee camps, this thesis will also examine, which forms of *power* an *external agent* can be confronted with in the context of the camp (see chapter 6.2 *Power structures*).

Summarizing the above, it is important to define positive applications of *power* in the context of developmental aid which reach beyond the classical one-dimensional and hierarchically clearly defined *power over* category. Possible additions after Rowlands (1997) are *power with*, *power to* and *power within* (see Fig. X). This classification of specific relations of power thereby shows the possibilities of using power positively and productively instead of an antagonist conception of giving and receiving power. Applying the different categories on each case study would exceed the frame of this research, but to mention the framework of power dimensions seems crucial to approach the term *empowerment*.

Type of power relation

Power Over	Power To	Power With	Power from Within
Ability to influence and coerce	Organise and change existing hierarchies	Increased power from collective action	Increased individual consciousness

Implications for an understanding of empowerment

Changes in underlying resources and power to challenge constraints	Increased individual capacity and opportunities for access	Increased solidarity to challenge underlying assumptions	Increased awareness and desire for change

fig. 02: Implications of different dimensions of power (own illustration, data base: Luttrell and Quiroz, 2009, p.2)

The concept of *empowerment* itself goes back to feminist theory and is used in contemporary discourse within dimensions of economic empowerment, human and social empowerment, political empowerment and cultural empowerment (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009, p. 1). Luttrell and Quiroz (2009, p. 16) define *empowerment* as "a progression that helps people to gain control over their own lives and increases the capacity of people to act on issues that they themselves define as important". Furthermore, they note that the lack of contextualisation and missing embedding of the term *empowerment* in the various dimensions of power often lead to an inadequate analysis of processes. Moser (1989) furthermore identifies *empowerment* "as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and nonmaterial resources". As described by Moser (1989), also in this thesis the term *resource* is not to be understood as purely material but is rather oriented towards concepts, such as types of capital (economic, cultural and social) developed by Bourdieu (2015). *Empowerment* therefore requires access to these *resources* and the ability to use them. Finally, it is important to understand that *empowerment* is not a static transmission of an ability, but rather a process that ranges from problem detection to action.

Contemporarily, the notion of *empowerment* is often used in the framework of community-based projects, which this research lays a focus on. In this context, *community-based* means achieving a high degree of participation of the target groups and distributing responsibilities more horizontally. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2008, p. 14f) defines the community-based approach as "a way of working in partnership with persons of concern during all stages [...] It recognizes the resilience, capacities, skills and resources of persons of concern, builds on these to deliver protection and solutions, and supports the community's own goals [...] It demands that we understand and consider the political context, the receiving population, gender roles, community dynamics and protection risks, concerns and priorities. It also requires that we recognize our role as facilitators, our limitations [...], the temporary nature of our presence, and the long-term impact of our interventions". In practice, however, this approach can conflict with the already mentioned camp-internal power structures and the agendas of external agents, which makes proper participation more challenging.

On the basis of these definitions, conclusions on power relations in camps will be drawn. The foundation for these conclusions is provided by own empirical research in the context of the camp, as well as by valuable findings of Al Nammari (2013) on community-based development projects in Palestinian refugee camps (see *CIP as a bottom-up approach in urban planning* in chapter 6.1 *Development aid*).

2.2 Room for manoeuvre

The theoretical introduction to the topic of power relations above provides findings on the general understanding of decision-making and participation in the context of the camp. Now, Safier's (2002) theoretical approach towards a *room for manoeuvre* is introduced, which is intended to direct a more precise focus on the strategic embedding of development cooperation projects. The aim of this approach is to evaluate and reflect on specific parameters of action and to identify potential areas of adaption within the projects. This multidimensional approach is used to evaluate the case studies later in this thesis.

To embed Safier's approach, it is firstly important to discuss the theoretical origin of his construct and to explain why it can also be helpful for the research subject of this thesis. Safier is part of the Developing Planning Unit (DPU), which is particularly concerned with planning responses to urbanisation processes and social justice in the Global South. Thereby the term *strategic action planning*, shaped by the DPU, plays an essential role. Levy (2007, p. 1) describes it according to Koenigsberger (1982), Mumtaz (1983) and Safier (1982, 1983) as "[a] positive response to rapidly urbanizing human settlements, action planning seeks to address social justice in the physical, economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of urban development within short time frames and in a flexible and responsive manner".

The *four-dimensional model of action space*

Safier (2002) designs the *room for manoeuvre* along four dimensions, defining the *action space* of an *agent*. The thus developed *four-dimensional model of action space* provides information about the *potential action space* with regard to possible interventions (Safier, 2002, p. 127). In the *four-dimensional model of action space*, the area in which the *agent* actually acts is considered as *action space*, which is limited by certain *limits and boundaries*. Beyond this first line of hindering factors lies the *potential action space*, which results from the previous analysis. The potential field of action is again limited, by constraining factors that are supposed to demarcate the *room for manoeuvre* more precisely and distinguish realistic from utopian approaches. (see fig. 03)

Furthermore, Safier (2002, pp. 127-128) designs the *four-dimensional model of action space* along the following dimensions:
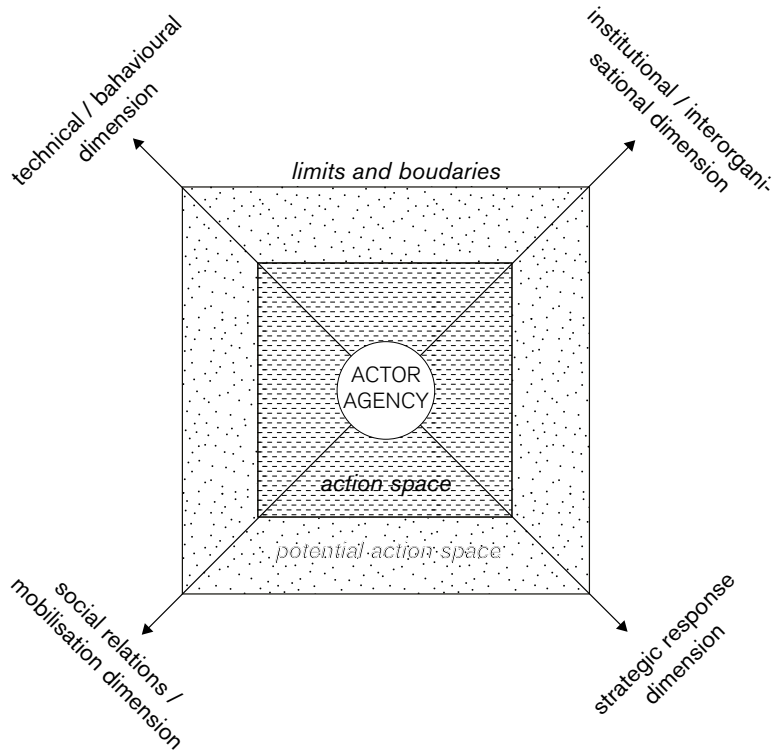
fig. 03: Four dimensional action space of room for maoeuvre in planning (own illustration, data base: Safier, 2003, p. 2)

a. improving technical-professional – in the broadest sense – innovations and individual or group ethics and behaviours (technical)

b. extending institutional and inter-organisational reforms of goals, roles, priorities, procedures and resource allocations (organisational)

c. expanding social interaction and mobilisation – involvement in modes of inclusive, participative and collaborative bargaining and negotiation (social)

d. enlarging the scope of strategic analysis and tactical response to the dynamics of urban development in time and place (strategic)

Safier (2002, p. 128) points out that "the four dimensions have different but intersecting boundaries which define the likely limits (imposed by various sources of opposition) to action by planners in support of progressive interventions intended to help bringing about greater equality, inclusiveness, democratic process and social justice". Within the frame of this research, this multidimensional model is applied for the evaluation of the case studies and developed further for an exemplary project design at the end of the thesis (see chapter 8 *Case studies* and following).

Agent and *agency*

The terms *agency*, *actors* or *driver of change* (Safier, 2002, 2003) are the basis of the *room for manoeuvre*. In general, Safier wants to introduce a way to map and reflect the character and scope of action, to allow the actors "to estimate the degrees of freedom, or *room for manoeuvre* open to practitioners in promoting progressive interventions in urban affairs" (Safier, 2002, p. 127).

At the centre of the construct is the acting subject, which Safier (2003, p. 1) also calls the *driver of change*. This *agent* is motivated to reduce poverty and to improve human development and therefore seeks to "find appropriate ways and means of making such innovations implementable and sustainable". Since Safier remains vague in defining this key character further, it is important for the thesis to narrow down the concept of the *agent* and *agency* more closely. The definition found by Garikipati and Olsen (2008, p. 329) is helpful, stating that "[a]gency is the capacity of any social actor to act; agents behave according to their internal composition and history, and their external relations". Within this definition it also makes sense to distinguish between an institutional and individual agency, whereby these are not to be understood in isolation but are in constant exchange and under the influence of different agendas. The thesis lays a focus on agents – including internal agents and external agents – operating within community-based projects in the camp context. However, since limited financial resources available in camps underline the continuing importance of and dependence on external funding, especially external agents that come into the context from outside are addressed within this research. Rethinking future community-based development projects is necessary in order to shift the relationship of donors and recipients towards a relation on eye-level. Thus, a process of self-determination and empowerment is enhanced. Since we acted as external agents ourselves in the field, a reflection of our own role and the possible scope for action is logical (see chapter 7 *Our role*).

2.3 Critical application

The theoretical framework, which was chosen to approach the research object, is fostering a self-critical reflexion on experienced situations and action in order to determine the space – or missing space – of action more progressively and strategically. Obviously, the theoretical framework can only serve as an approximation and cannot constitute an overall

picture. Rather, since the approaches have been used in similar contexts, they should help to structure the thesis' findings. It is also important to mention that the approaches were used flexibly and extended by potential useful, contextual aspects. The attempt to use them profitably for the discussion of the research question thereby was examined critically and evaluated conclusively in the course of this research.

3
Methodology.

3 Methodology

The following chapter describes the methodical approaches, which were applied in this thesis. Firstly, the used methods for field access and sampling are introduced. Secondly, with regard to the development of an interdisciplinary methodology, the choice and application of data collection- and data analysis methods is explained up to the adaptation and further development of a model of analysis and its application. Since there is little or no specific knowledge about the phenomena of rooftop farming practices in the context of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, the research is based on a case study-oriented and exploratory approach, which requires a particularly high flexibility during data collection, as well as open-mindedness over the scope of the field and its access possibilities (Stebbins, 2001, p. 6). More detailed information and further explanations on challenges and limits within the application of the methods will be discussed in chapter 7 *Our role* and *Excursus: Get-together in Amman* in chapter 8 *Case studies*.

3.1 Access to the field

The access to Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan is - especially for external researchers- strongly regulated, monitored and has to be approved officially by the Department for Palestinian Affairs (DPA). This influences or limits access to the field from the very beginning. In order to obtain a most diverse picture of the field, access had to be gained through more than one method: internet research and informal conversations, existing contact persons in the field and local institutions.

Access to the field through internet research and informal conversations

Through fundamental internet research, a first broad picture could be drawn, to what extent the already recognised phenomenon of rooftop farming can also be found in other contexts

in the Middle East. The problem of the method is that those potentially relevant actors, who are not represented online, are categorically excluded. This applies in particular to informal practices - which are particularly interesting, because they show local self-initiated and non-institutionalised practices. Trying to close this gap, internet research was supplemented by site visits to as many Palestinian refugee camps as possible in the limited time frame of the field research. These enabled informal conversations about self-initiated rooftop farming practices. However, as mentioned in the introduction, despite these efforts, the detected rooftop farming practices in Palestinian camps have in most cases been implemented within the framework of externally funded projects.

Access to the field through existing contact persons in the field

The use of existing contacts, which resulted from a previous workshop in one of the camps within a university project, enabled a first access to the field. Talking to local leaders or individuals from the camp community enabled the access to further networks. This form of field access has the advantage of enabling a relatively deep insight into a local network and access to less exposed data. However, a contact person might highly influence the research process, which bears the risk of making research results unusable and therefore obsolete. For this reason, it is necessary to constantly reflect and classify the findings during this process (see chapter 7 *Our role*). In this context it is particularly necessary to present the research interest to the contact person in a way that influences the research outcome in the least possible way. (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 44)

Access to the field through local institutions

The access to the field via local institutions and their representatives supplements the data set with further perspectives on the field and its dynamics. These perspectives are subsequently linked with each other with the aim of obtaining relevant (partial) research results. However, access to the field via institutions often makes open communication difficult, since the researcher might act strategically after all. Furthermore, with regard on how the research object will perceive the researcher, there remains the risk that once the researcher is seen as part of an institution, he/ she will find it difficult to get rid of this attribution. (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 55)

3.2 Sampling

The research uses a combination of two sampling methods: *Snowball sampling* and *theoretical sampling*. Both were used in a way to complement each other's potentials and weaknesses, or because the context only allowed the application of a certain method. (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 181ff.) Furthermore, the limited accessibility to the field and great similarities of samples within the phenomenon challenge the application of theoretical sampling. Yet, data collection, coding and theory building are carried out in parallel during the entire process. The selection of data sets are not defined from the beginning but is repeatedly redefined by the process aiming at generating theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1998). Although the data sets to be collected are initially indeterminate, the broad field of research and the associated criteria were defined at the outset:

a.   The sample must be a rooftop farm in a Palestinian refugee camp.
b.   The sample should be a community-based project.

Approaches of the phenomenon rooftop farming are investigated through site visits and participant observation. Furthermore, the variety of the field and the collected data impacts the further process of sample selection.

3.3 Methods of data collection

Concerning data collection, the thesis uses the method of *triangulation*, in which various methods are used to answer the research question. The main advantage of *triangulation* is the possibility to collect data from multiple perspectives, dimensions and contexts relating to the research phenomena, in order to gain a more complete picture of the research field. (Given, 2008, p. 2ff.) Furthermore, the selected methods can be assigned to different disciplines (e.g. Sociology, Urban Design). An *interdisciplinary selection of methods* enables a holistic understanding of the research field. Within the frame of this thesis, the following methods of data collection were applied and will be discussed in more detail below: *literature and internet research*, *quantitative survey*, *narrative interviews*, *expert interviews*, *photographs and videos* and *participant observation*.

Literature and internet research

The investigation of the context and the variables that significantly influence research elements is based on *literature and internet research*. The research findings provide information necessary for understanding the context in which the research question is embedded. Relevant contents are the historical background of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, the spatial development and permanent state of temporality of the camp, as well as the legal frame and residency status of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, since they need to be understood to classify the collected data and to avoid misinterpretations during data analysis.

Quantitative surveys

In order to approach the field of rooftop farming in Palestinian refugee camps, *quantitative surveys* were conducted through standardised questionnaires in Palestinian refugee camps, five of them in the West Bank and nine of them in Jordan (see annex *Quantitative surveys*). They were used as a tool to collect comparable information such as how participants use their rooftop farm, which techniques they apply and how much rooftop farming contributes to the families' nutrition. Furthermore, the *quantitative survey* helped to extract challenges, rooftop farmers face within their practices. Therefore, multiple answers obtain a certain relevance to the field, and will be included in the further analysis and proposal. The *quantitative survey* with rooftop farmers took place exclusively in private spaces, mostly next to the participants' rooftop farms, enabling the interviewees to explain their experiences directly on-spot. Even if the rooftop farm was maintained by a couple or by the whole family, the man of the family was in most cases the interview partner. Interviews with women were less common and only carried out in the presence of a male family member. These limitations have made it difficult to understand actual responsibilities among family members concerning the rooftop farm. However, this restriction does not apply to interviews conducted within camp-based organisations, such as the WPC (Women's Programme Centre), which in its inherent nature is mainly reserved for women. During the interviews for the *quantitative survey* making use of an Arabic translator was avoided as far as possible, since the questionnaire had already been translated into Arabic beforehand. However, especially in case of further questions, having a translator on site has proved to be useful. Less severe than in narrative interviews, but still present, is the possibility that data may be lost or misunderstood through translation.

Narrative interviews

Since a certain discrepancy was recognized in how donors and camp inhabitants understand the process and goals of externally funded community-based projects, *narrative interviews* proved to be a suitable method to better understand and uncover perspectives, fears and motivations, as well as behavioural patterns. By using *narrative interviews*, valuable data could also be obtained for the analysis of power structures. Since most narrative interviews were conducted with camp residents, who were mostly Arabic speakers, nearly all *narrative interviews* were conducted with a translator. The possible loss of data, as well as possible misinterpretations of the translator, were considered during the research, but can hardly be evaluated.

Expert interviews

While narrative interviews produced a rather subjective image of the research object, *expert interviews* were conducted to supplement the research with an objective perspective. Two experts were interviewed: Jalal Al Husseini, who is freelance consultant and researcher at the *Institute Français Proche Orient* (IFPO) in Amman and Sami Mura, who is project advisor at the German Development Agency GIZ in the West Bank. Both are involved in the specific context of Palestinian refugee camps. The first expert was selected to provide a mediating or objective scientific view of the field, while the second expert was selected due to his vast knowledge about the context combined with practical experience in community-based planning.

Photographs and videos

Photographs and videos of technical details, spatial configurations, architecture, as well as everyday life situations, which seemed to be characteristic for the camp, were made especially for research purposes. The choice of perspective, the image compositions and the objects to be depicted were determined by the researchers. During research, the basic distinction between the *habitus of the representing* and the *habitus of the represented picture producer* (Bohnsack, 2001) was methodically integrated. In the case of this research, the difference between both lies particularly in the social and cultural context. The photographic recording by the researchers is complemented by photographs of the camps' inhabitants.

For this purpose, ten disposable cameras were distributed in three different camps. Four broad themes (a. places in the fresh air, b. green elements, c. memories of Palestine and d. free topic), which seemed of relevance for this research, were defined in advance. The application of this method is to be understood as an attempt to close the gap between the representing and the represented and to obtain access to motives of research-relevant topics. Experimental research methods, such as collecting data through reversing the representing and represented in photography, are used to gain a first-hand insight into the field of research. Furthermore, a workshop and exhibition together with rooftop farmers from the camps was organised in a cultural centre in Amman, to evaluate and work on common challenges and needs. The paragraph *Excursus: Get-together in Amman* in chapter 8 *Case studies* provides a deeper insight into methods used and conclusions drawn from this workshop.

Participant observation

Two community-based organisations (CBOs) in two different Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan serve as a place of *participant observation*. Both CBOs participate in an externally funded rooftop farming project. Participant observation enabled a direct and unfiltered insight into practices of workshop conduction and implementation of rooftop farms by camp residents. Data relevant to the research question was collected through informal conversations which were, unlike all narrative and expert interviews, not recorded. Instead, thoughts and observations were written down as research memos. The balancing act between closeness and distance, between personal experience and scientific reflection, imposes a major challenge during participant research. Thus, *participant observation* is understood in close relation to the reflection of the researcher's role. (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 46)

3.4 Methods of data analysis

All data analysis is conducted on the basis of the *grounded theory* (Strauss & Corbin, 2010), which follows a parallel process of data collection and data analysis. This process constantly leads to explanations and theory building, which is grounded in the data being analysed and being tested and re-tested in further data collection. The method of *grounded theory* was chosen since there is little scientific knowledge or theory available about community-based rooftop farming projects in Palestinian refugee camps so far. The analysed data can be

classified into four groups: interviews and observations, case studies and analysis of spatial and actor configurations. Due to their different characteristics, they are analysed by using different methods.

Analysis of interviews and observations

Data collected via interviews or observations was transcribed and coded. By using several coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 2010) the analysis of collected data material was carried out step by step and relevant dimensions were filtered out, which then, based on the principle of *grounded theory* (Strauss & Corbin, 2010), influenced constant theory building and further data collection. During this process, the empirical content of the data was evaluated, main codes were initially generated and further extended by more detailed subcodes (see annex *List of codes*).

Analysis of case studies

During the initial case study research, as many rooftop farming approaches as possible were collected and analysed. The identified approaches are further grouped with the objective to derive typologies. Following the first research question, which is asking for recommendations for action based on the analysis of community-based urban agriculture projects in Palestinian refugee camps, the *four-dimensional model of action space* by Michael Safier (2002) (see chapter 2.2 *Room for manoeuvre*) is applied. Thus, the actual *action space* an *limits and boundaries* of the case studies are detected and evaluated. In doing so, the given four dimensions are used unchanged at first. During the evaluation process, potentials and difficulties in the application of this model are assessed. Therefore, it is further adapted, and dimensions are subdivided in more detail according to research findings, in order to develop a *multidimensional evaluation tool* for transformation processes within the context of the research question. With this proposed process evaluation of community-based projects, feedback from the field of practice should be made visible and usable for strategic planning. In this way, the elaboration of the *potential action space* within community-based projects should integrate them into a reflexive and overall strategic perspective. Based on this, this thesis proposes a spatial and programmatic design whereby theory is translated into practice.

Graphical analysis of spatial and actor configurations

The creation of two and three-dimensional drawings is not only part of data collection during research but was also used as a tool for data analysis. Through the graphical representation of space, spatial contexts and relationships of spatial structures become visible. In contrast to two-dimensional methods, such as mapping or plans, drawings of isometries enable a multidimensional recording and interpretation of space and spatial layers. Especially in the study of private roof areas, the type of descriptive geometry allows to understand the relation of rooftop farms to their urban structure. In order to understand the network of actors and their relationships with each other within the case studies, standardised drawings were produced in the form of diagrams. These enable a comparability of the analysed aspects and facilitate further typologisation.

| literature research
internet research | participatory observation
quantitative interviews
research in media | sampling
participatory observation
narrative interviews
photographs
sketches

actor analysis
drawing as spatial analysis
comparable diagrams | actor analysis
drawing as spatial analysis
typologisation

participatory observation
expert interviews
event |

typologisation
●

data collection I	*data collection II*		*case study 01*	*data collecti*
	critical reflection	*minor case studies*	*case study 02*	*data evaluation in the field I*
			case study 03	
			case study 04	

formulation & refinement of research question

questioning our role in the field / as architects and urban designers

| Berlin | Jordan | Jordan / West Bank | Jordan |

research

analysis

design

methods for data collection

methods for data analysis

● *key outcomes*

fig. 04: Applied methodology (own illustration)

literature	literature	design	design
interview transcription open coding	axial coding selective coding		

event

analysis tool finding ← *tool application (Safier)* →

developing and adapting multidimensional evaluation tool

basic preconditions

recommendations for action

on III

data evaluation II   *data evaluation III*   *theorising*

designing → *programmatic and process design* ●

concept

curative proposal

(feedback loops)

Berlin

43

4
Background.
(p. 44)

4 Background

In order to approach the first research question of this thesis, about *which recommendations for action can be detected for community-based projects in the scope of urban agriculture in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan*, it is first of all crucial to understand the specific context. In a first step, the historical background of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan will be described. Secondly, the focus is put on the initially set up refugee camps and their development to actual towns over time, while maintaining their state of temporality. The protracted state of temporality is further explained as part of a collective memory and narrative. At the end of this chapter, the different typologies of the 13 Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan will be presented, which is the starting position for the further analysis.

4.1. Historical background of Palestinian refugees in Jordan

It needs to be taken into consideration that, in its depth and extent, this chapter which deals with the historical background of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, merely offers an insight into the complex history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, it follows the aim to make aspects, such as development aid, local power structures, heritage, and typologies of Palestinian refugee camps in this context more understandable and tangible.

To better comprehend the situation and history of the Palestinian refugees living in Jordan today, two historical key events need to be described: the first Arab-Israeli war from 1948-49 and the Six-Day War in 1967, which both resulted in thousands of Palestinians being forced to flee their homes and dozens of Palestinian refugee camps being set up in a very short period of time in the future host countries, such as Jordan.

One key moment for the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war was the UN Resolution 181

from 1947. Back then, the territories, which are today constituted of Israel and the Palestinian territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip), were still under the British Mandate. The UN Resolution 181, also known as the *Partition Plan*, aimed to end the Mandate as soon as possible and at the same time requested the partition of Palestine und thus, the emergence of a Palestinian-Arab state and a Jewish state. (Timm, 2008)

The Partition Plan demanded a territorial division by 56% for Jews and 43% for Arabs (Krautkrämer, 2004), while counting a population division of 608,000 Jews (32% of the total population) and 1.3 million Arabs (68% of the total population). On May 14th 1948, by Arabs usually referred to as *Al Nakba* (*the catastrophe*), the British Mandate on Palestine ended and a few hours later the State of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv. On the same day armies from Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon invaded Palestine for the purpose of reversing the proclamation. The war lasted for about nine months and ended in January 1949, with Israel as the military winner. The occupation of various territories by Israel, which were not foreseen in the Partition Plan, as well as Egypt taking over the administration of the Gaza Strip and the integration of the West Bank and East-Jerusalem into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which was proclaimed by King Abdallah in 1950, invalidated the intention of the Partition Plan to create an Arab-Palestinian State. (Timm, 2008)

UN Partition Plan

fig. 05: Map of the historical development from 1946 – 2000 (own illustration, data base: democraciapolitica.blogspot, 2016)

By October 1948, the UN relief organisation had already registered 650,000 Palestinian refugees (Timm, 2008). In order to take over from the first aid intents by international groups, governments and local initiatives, UNRWA was established by the UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) at the end of 1949. (UNRWA, n.d. A) By the time UNRWA started its operations for Palestinian refugees in the Near East in 1950, it already had to provide services to 750,000 refugees who had fled to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Starting with basic relief operations, it has evolved to be the key provider of health, educational and social services in Palestinian refugee camps. (UNRWA, n.d. B) (see *UNRWA's genealogy of participation* in chapter 6.1 *Development aid*).

By 1950, UNRWA's mandate in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which included the West Bank until 1988, covered 350,000 Palestinian refugees (70,000 living in Jordan, 280,000 living in the West Bank), which were 41 % of the total number of registered Palestinian refugees. The annexation of the West Bank by Jordan created, compared to the other host countries, a very special situation for refugees, since besides UNRWA services, Palestinian refugees have been granted the Jordanian citizenship without losing their *right of return.* "With full access to rights as Jordanian citizens, Palestinians who lived in Jordan (and the West Bank until 1988) lived the dual status of simultaneously being citizens and refugees, unlike Palestinians in the other Arab countries" (Davis et al., 2017, p. 9). (see *Citizenship of Palestinian refugees in Jordan* in chapter 4.2 *Rights of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan*)

The second key moment, which has to be described in order to understand the background of Palestinian refugees, especially those living in Jordan, is the Six-Day War in 1967 which still has an influence on the current geopolitics of the region. Incidents, such as a campaign by Egypt and Syria against Israel, as well as Egypt demanding a withdrawal of UN troops from their country and the closure of the Strait of Tiran made it almost inevitable for King Hussein from Jordan to also take action, considering that the majority of Transjordan's population were Palestinians at that time. Eventually, the King signed a defence pact with Egypt. A surprise attack by the Israeli Army Air Force on June 5th 1967 finally triggered the outbreak of the Six-Day War. (Schäuble & Flug, 2008)

As a result of the war, Israel occupied the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Golan Heights in Syria. These circumstances forced 300,000 Palestinians to flee to Jordan, where they were not received as openly as after the first Arab-Israeli war. "This event marks the moment when both Egypt and Jordan

fig. 06: Incoming Palestinian refugees to Jordan in 1948, 1967 and actual share of population (own illustration, data base: Davis et al., 2017, p. 9 & 12; UNRWA, n.d. H).

1948

~ 70,000 refugees

1967

~ 300,000 refugees

1967

2018

~ 2,175,000 registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan (23% of the total population)

~ 370,000 (18%) of the Palestinian refugees live in camps in Jordan

acts on the Jordanien side

70,000 Palestinians flee to Jordan

Establishment of four camps run by UNRWA

300,000 Palestinians flee to Jordan

Establishment of six camps run by UNRWA

Black Se
King Hu
of Fida'i

acts on the Palestinian side

Flight of Palestinians to neighbouring states

War declaration of all Arab neighbouring states

Flight of Palestinians to neighbouring states

First military attacks against Israel

Establishment of PLO through Yasser Arafat

acts on the Israeli side

Start of Israeli settlement-buil

Proclamation of the State of Israel

multilateral acts

End of Arab-Israeli-War / establishment of the Green Line / Gaza to Egypt, West Bank to Jordan, Rest to Israel / Jerusalem internationalised as corpus seperatum

Arab-Israeli-War

Six-Day War

UN-Resolution 181 / UN General Assembly votes for Two-State-Solution

UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV): Establishment of UNRWA

UN-Resolution 194 (III): Right of return

UN Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees: Article 1D exludes refugees who are already registred with UNRWA

1940   1950   1960   1970

name of state

||| Brtish Mandate   Israel

fig. 07: Timeline of important events of the Middle East conflict (own illustration)

50

eptember:
ussein mandates elimination
iyyin network in Jordan

Jordan withdraws its
responsibility for the
Westbank

Jordanian - Israeli - Peace
Agreement

Unilateral declaration of
independency by PLO

II. Intifada

Displacement of
Palestinian refugees
from Kuwait

I. Intifada

lding

Eviction of Gaza-Strip

Israelis start
construction of
Seperation Barrier

Oslo II Accord

Start Gaza War III

Oslo I Accord

Start Gaza War II

Gaza War I

Opening of the
US-Embassy in
Jerusalem

Gulf-War I

1980   1990   2000   2010

51

began to enact policies that excluded Palestinian refugees (if non-citizens) from accessing any of the legal protections that previous Palestinian refugees had accessed. Instead, both States moved to an exclusionary model that dealt with them not as refugees, but rather as foreigners" (Davis et al., 2017, p. 12). (see chapter 4.2 *Rights of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan*)

In the case of Jordan, the exclusionary response to the arriving refugees within the country came hand in hand with times of intensified internal conflicts between the Jordanian Government and political Palestinian organisations operating in Jordan. Even though the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) under the leadership of Yasser Arafat in 1964 had been approved by the government, tensions started to arise when the PLO started mobilizing Palestinians socially, politically and militarily against the Jordanian authorities. Increasingly violent conflicts between the two parties escalated in 1970 and led to what is known today as Black September. Besides the fact that thousands of people perished in these clashes, the PLO was expelled from the country and for the following 20 years, Jordan started to suppress separatist Palestinian political agendas, organisations and activities. (Davis et al., 2017, p. 13) These repressive policies also included depoliticising Palestinian refugees by underlining their Jordanian identity (e.g. campaign *Jordan First*) and cutting down the Palestinian identity to the cultural sector. (Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 98) (see *Political tensions between Palestinian refugees and the Jordanian government* in chapter 4.2 *Rights of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan*)

Another marking event of Palestinian migration to Jordan was the Gulf War from 1990-91. Within a short period of time, Jordan had to accommodate 350,000 Jordanians - mostly originated from Palestine - who had returned to Jordan due to the outbreak of war in the Gulf countries. The poor economic situation of Jordan at that time deteriorated even more and at least a tenth of the *returnees*, as they were classified, were accommodated in refugee camps which already suffered from a high building and population density. (Al Abed, 2011, p. 9)

In the following decades, a series of agreements between Palestinians represented by the PLO, and Israel tried to find solutions for the Middle East Conflict. The extensive regional peace process of Oslo, also known as Oslo Accords, started in 1993 and aimed for a return of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and in exchange the recognition of the State of Israel. (Becke, 2018) During the process, the two-State solution became the mainstream idea for the future Palestinian State. To this day especially the second generation of Palestinian refugees, who had experienced the aftermath of the Six-Day War and Black September,

highly criticise the Oslo Accords and consider them as a cessation of their *right of return*: "After Oslo there was an emptiness here. We needed to work on the [political] culture of the refugees. Creating a [political] culture on the *right of return* (thaqafa-t-haqq Al 'awda) means educating the children about their villages of origin, about their rights – to keep something concrete/tangible (malmus) for them" (Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 105). The Post-Oslo period is therefore marked by a strong decrease of political activism by Palestinian refugees and a shift towards working with the basis of refugees' rights, self-representation and legal status. These circumstances lay ground for several NGOs, who started focusing on reshaping social and political organisations as well as political activism. (Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 105)

For researching in this contested context, a fundamental understanding of the various historical events mentioned above is elementary, as it is an important part of the identity of the Palestinians and their camps. While the *historical background* offered a first insight into the situation of Palestinian refugees, the next chapter aims to go more into detail by describing their Human and Civil Rights, and their legal and political situation in the specific context of Jordan.

4.2 Rights of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan

This chapter does not aim to examine the individual legal texts in concrete terms but tries to understand how these are used as a basis for argumentation by the refugees themselves and also by the host countries. It further considers the dilemma of Palestinian refugees, who are excluded from the general UN-convention defining the status and rights of refugees. Looking at the national context, the chapter attempts to demonstrate the inner contradiction of the Palestinian refugees being registered with UNRWA on one side and at the same time enjoying full Jordanian citizenship, which as a circumstance questions UNRWA's presence as a quasi-governmental relief organisation. In order to better understand the refugees' political situation in Jordan, the end of this chapter deals with the political tensions between Palestinian refugees and the Jordanian government.

Instruments outlining the Human and Civil Rights of Palestinian refugees

Several instruments and legal bases outline the Palestinian refugees' human and civil rights. The UN Resolution 194, together with the 1951 Refugee Convention, form particular instruments defining the status and the rights of refugees. The *UN-Resolution 194 (III) article 11* of 1948 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." This formulation provides the basis for the Palestinian refugees' *right of return.* (United Nations, 1948) (see *The notion of the right to return* in chapter 4.4 *Collective memory and common narrative*)

In addition, the UN passed the *1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, in which the term *refugee* is defined. This Convention is the key legal document of the UN refugee agency UNHCR, which outlines the right of the displaced and the legal obligations of protection. It is a status and rights-based instrument defining fundamental principles like non-discrimination, non-penalisation and non-refoulment. Beyond this, it underlines minimum standards, such as the right to the provision of documentation, education and work. (1951 Refugee Convention, cited in UNHCR 2010)

Although this basis forms a necessary and elementary foundation for the rights of all refugees, the real issue regarding the Palestinian refugees lies in their exclusion from this convention under article 1D: "This Convention shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the UN other than the UNHCR protection or assistance"(1951 Refugee Convention, cited in UNHCR 2010). Thus, by being registered with the UN-relief and human development agency UNRWA, Palestinian refugees cannot invoke the rights of refugees defined in the 1951 Convention.

The Arab League did not leave these international guidelines unanswered. Within the framework of the *Casablanca Protocol* (1965) the Arab League underlines its self-conception as host states for Palestinian refugees. The *Casablanca Protocol* mirrors the idea of the Arab League expressing solidarity with the Palestinian refugees by outlining their collective duty of providing them with a right to work, freedom of movement and full residency rights. However, host countries are still supporting the *right of return* and are concurrently maintaining pressure on Israel. (Shiblak, 1996, p. 38) Most of the Arab host countries have

not yet managed to integrate the guidelines of the *Casablanca Protocol* in their respective national laws. Regarding the residency status of the Palestinian refugees, most Arab states like Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon limit the refugees' rights by only issuing special *Refugee Documents* (RDs). Jordan is the only Arab host country providing full residency status for the majority of Palestinian refugees. (Shiblak, 1996, p.39)

Citizenship of Palestinian refugees in Jordan

While researching on Palestinian refugees, it is important to understand that despite the fact that the majority of Palestinians living in Jordan holding citizenship, there are different statuses and dynamics that exclude people from this right. Palestinian refugees in Jordan have different legal status into which they are classified. The fundamental difference lies in the claim to Jordanian citizenship. Jordan distinguishes between *refugee*, *displaced person*, *both refugee and displaced* and *refugee from Gaza Strip*, whereby all descendants of these individuals are included. (Arneberg, 1997, p. 10)

Considered as *refugee* are those, who fled to Jordan in 1948 and had the Palestinian nationality at that time. *Displaced persons* are Palestinians originating from the West Bank, who fled to Jordan due to the Six-Day War in 1967. Both groups received permanent residency in Jordan and are holding a passport with National ID Number. Furthermore, they are entitled to full access to governmental services.
Both refugee and displaced are those Palestinians, who fled to the West Bank due to war in 1948 and were later displaced to Jordan as a result of the Six-Day. *Gaza refugees* are considered all Palestinians, who fled from Gaza to Jordan due to the Six-Day War, regardless of whether they had already fled to Gaza in 1948. They received permanent residency in Jordan, but instead of benefiting from full citizenship, they are only receiving a temporary passport, which needs to be renewed every two years, leaving them legally as stateless persons. As a result, their rights are significantly restricted. Gaza refugees need a work permit to enter the national labour market, they have difficulties in obtaining and financing university education and can only acquire property with the approval of a ministerial council. (Al Abed, 2011, p. 10)

With the administrational disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, Palestinian refugees holding Jordanian passports and living in the West Bank were suddenly deprived of their Jordanian citizenship and their Jordanian National ID Number. Instead they were given

origin: former British
mandate territory

citizenship: Jordanian

status: permanent residency,
full service-access

1948s Jordanian-Palestinian

bridge crossing card

origin: West Bank

citizenship: Jordanian

status: permanent residency,
full service-access

1967s Jordanian-Palestinian

bridge crossing card

origin: West Bank

citizenship: none, Jordanian
travel documents

status: limited service-access

1967s Jordanian-Palestinian

bridge crossing card

origin: Gaza

citizenship: none, Jordanian
travel documents

status: limited service-access

Gaza Palestinians

origin: Gaza

citizenship: none, Palestinian
authority passport

status: treated like foreigner

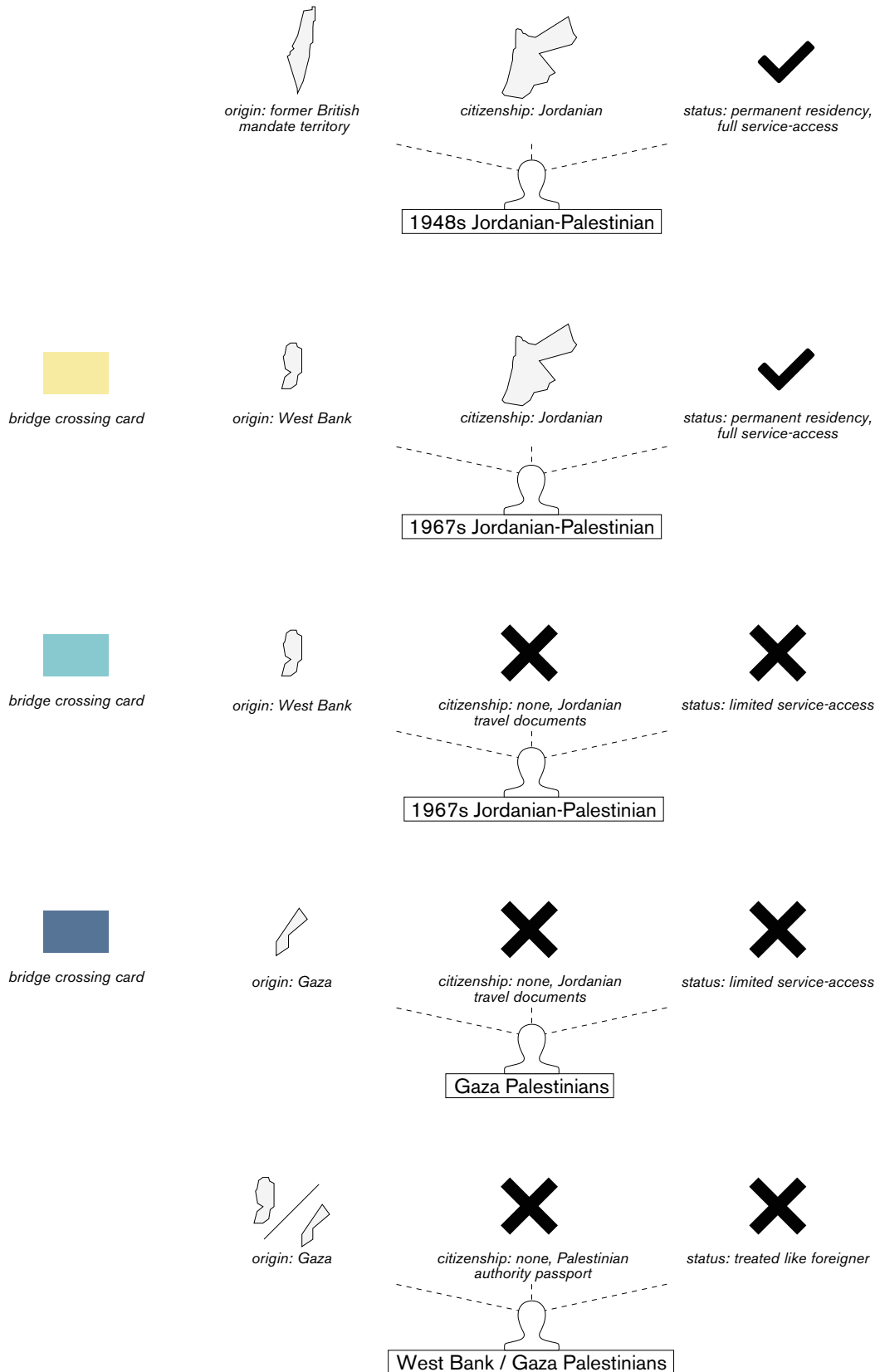West Bank / Gaza Palestinians

fig. 08: Status of Palestinian refugees in Jordan (own illustration, data base: Arneberg, 1997, p. 11ff; Al Abed, 2011, p. 9ff)

temporary passports. (Shiblak, 1996, p. 43) Jordanians of West Bank origin, who were living in Jordan at that time, were not affected by this disengagement. However, the withdrawal of Jordanian citizenship of Jordanian citizens with Palestinian/ West Bank origin continues to this day. The procedure and basis for decision-making appears to be random and arbitrary without any official basis. Between the year 2004 and 2008 around 2,700 withdrawals of that kind have been reported. This practice can be seen as Jordan's reaction to the growing economic and political influence of Jordanian-Palestinian citizens. (Human Rights Watch, 2010) This arbitrary withdrawal of citizenship as a political strategy is increasingly causing insecurity among Jordanian-Palestinians and restricts them in demanding their rights as Jordanian citizens.

In the case of Jordan, 95% of the Palestinian *refugees* and *displaced persons* are holding Jordanian citizenship and are therefore theoretically granted access to all governmental services such as education, health services and social services, as well the right to acquire ownership (Arneberg, 1997, p.16). By giving full citizenship to most of the Palestinian refugees, who are at the same time formally registered with UNRWA, Jordan "created a new type of refugee: the *refugee-citizen*" (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009, p.263). Al Husseini sees this contradiction not only in the residential status of the Palestinian refugee in Jordan, but also in the current role of UNRWA providing "services to the citizens of a state, which is something that is rarely seen in the history of the humanitarian aid. You help usually stateless people (…). When they deal with Jordan authorities […] they are Jordanians. But when they deal UNRWA they are refugees" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). The fact that Palestinian refugees in Jordan are *refugees* and *citizens* at the same time, adds to the complexity of their perception of the *right of return.* This will be discussed further in chapter 4.4 *Collective memory and common narrative.*
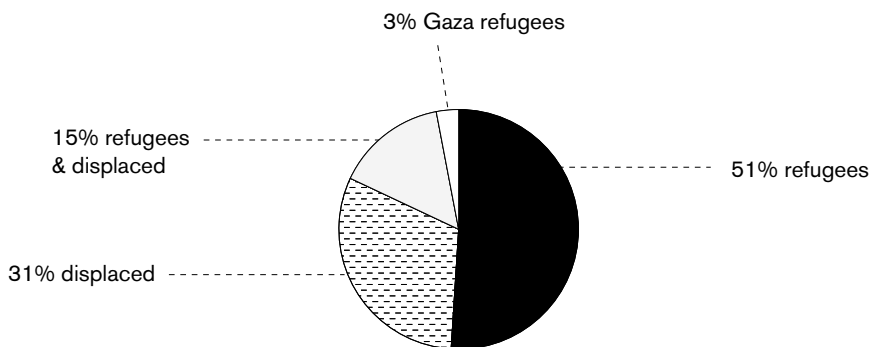

fig. 09: Population composition of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons in Jordan (own illustration, data base: Arneberg, 1997, p. 10)

Political tensions between Palestinian refugees and the Jordanian government

In the following, the conflicts and tensions between the Palestinian community and the Jordanian government are discussed. This is done in order to understand the social role of the refugees in the Jordanian civilian community and the restrictions they face as a result of the efforts of *naturalisation* by the Jordanian government. The main reason for the political tensions between the Jordanian government and Palestinian refugees is the fear of a potential threat by Palestinians leading to an imbalance of the country's sovereignty. On the one hand, this fear is based on the demographic weight of Palestinian refugees. In 1997, 44% of the Jordanian population were Palestinian refugees or displaced persons (Arneberg, 1997, p. 10). On the other hand, the Jordanian government fears the active political involvement by opposition groups (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009, p. 264).

To better understand the conflict, the Jordanian Civil War (1970-1971), also known as *Black September*, should be considered as a key event (see chapter 4.1 *Historical background of Palestinian refugees in Jordan*). Previously, the relationship between the PLO and the Jordanian authorities had deteriorated increasingly. In an interview, Al Husseini describes the political climate as much more dynamic than it is today: „[The] PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – a Marxist-Leninist Organisation) commando went, they kidnapped the muezzin and instead of having the muezzin, you know, shouting the *Quran*, they read Lenin texts. So, this was also Jordan. [...] What happened after *Black September* is that really (…) it was seen as a really threat for the survival of the regime. Any kind [of] civil life was suppressed in the East Bank" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). The fact that Jordan had lost control over the West Bank during the previous Six-Day War in 1967, led to discontent on the part of the Palestinians. Jordan also saw its own sovereignty increasingly undermined by independent actions of the PLO. The following civil-war ended with military victory of the Jordanian authorities and the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan.

Jordan furthermore responds to this difficult political relationship with a policy of *naturalisation*: „For while the refugees' *right of return* and entitlement to receive UNRWA's assistance was officially upheld in national and international forums, any notion of a separate *Palestinian* identity in Jordan's internal politics was banned by royal decree" (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009, p. 263). A similar perception of the atmosphere is identified by the refugees themselves: „They gave us student, they gave us nationality, its political to give us nationality. It's political (…) it's political. It's another type of war [...] I am a Palestinian man. I am

by force (…) they throw me to another country. Why you give me nationality? Why? To be lost my great nationality? (…) This is the greatest of my mind and here to be forget my great nationality?" (Interview Safouri, 2018 A).

The inner contradiction of Jordanian citizenship for Palestinian refugees is reflected in Jordanian nation-wide campaigns. While Jordan and the Arab League continue to invoke the *right of return* of the Palestinian refugees under UN resolution 194, Jordan is trying to strengthen its *Jordanian identity* with campaigns such as *Jordan first*, *the National Agenda* and *We are all Jordan.* (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009, p. 273) Although the strategy of this *naturalisation* policy is questionable, it has facilitated the integration of Palestinian refugees into Jordanian structures through full citizenship, at least in theory. Legally, provided the possession of Jordanian citizenship, there is no discrimination towards Palestinian refugees. However, there is informal discrimination especially in the labour market of the public sector, in the military and in the Jordanian parliament. Only around 10% of governmental employees have a Palestinian background. Holders of a temporary Jordanian passport cannot even work in the public sector. (Shiblak, 1996, p. 43)

It can be concluded, that being aware of events such as *Black September* and the subsequent repression and suppression of civil society involvement are important historical parameters when thinking about community empowerment. Moreover, awareness of the *refugee citizen*-contradiction and the various legal status of Palestinian refugees in Jordan are crucial for understanding the different circumstances within Palestinian refugee camps. Therefore, agents of community-based projects have to keep this background knowledge on the legal and political situation in mind when operating within this context.

4.3 Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality

The historical events, as well as the political and legal situation in Jordan described above already provided insights into the complex situation of Palestinian refugees. This chapter focusses on Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Since they are research object of this thesis, it is important to understand their specific context. In a first step, the role of UNRWA as one of the main agencies within the camp context will be described in order to understand

its responsibilities. Secondly, the physical development of camps over time and their actual housing conditions will be examined. Finally, conditions that contribute to the protracted state of temporality of camps will be listed in order to illustrate the challenges that exist when it comes to thinking in long-term and sustainable cycles in this context.

The Palestinian refugee camps, similar to many other refugee camps in the world, were originally set up as temporary solutions to shelter vulnerable individuals and to meet their basic needs. However, the temporary status became protracted until today and thus during the last decades the camps transformed into spaces that Al Qutub (1989) calls *temporary cities.* Multiple layers of these cities, such as the economic, the social and the institutional layer, are characterised by an extended temporary status. In other words, regulated spaces of tents and one-room shelters which were meant to stay only for a short period of time turned out to be actual cities. To this day these cities officially maintain their status of being *temporary.*

Responsibilities of UNRWA

As already explained in the historical overview, when UNRWA began its operations in 1950, it had to meet the needs of about 750,000 Palestinian refugees. Today, about five million people are eligible for the services of UNRWA, of which more than 1.5 million people live in 58 recognised Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (UNRWA, n.d. B) As defined by UNRWA, a Palestinian refugee camp is "a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs. Areas not designated as such (sic) and are not recognized as camps" (UNRWA, n.d. B).

In Jordan, besides ten official camps, there are three camps which are not recognised by UNRWA but were established by the host government to meet the needs of those Palestinian refugees who were unable to get a unit in the official camps. (Al Abed, 2011, p. 12) At the time, mainly groups of destitute refugees, especially jobless farmers and workers from Palestine – approximately 75% of the overall refugee population in (Trans)Jordan – found accommodations in a refugee camp because they could not afford any alternative. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 3) Today, more than two million registered Palestinian refugees live in Jordan, of which 370,000 (18%) live in the ten official camps. Jordan is the therefore the host country with the highest number of Palestinian refugees of all the UNRWA fields. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 341) (see fig. 06 on p. 49: Incoming Palestinian refugees to Jordan in 1948,

1967 and actual share of population)

Over time, the role of UNRWA in the camps has changed from being the agent for relief operations in the 1950s such as distributing mass rations especially of food, as well as clothes and domestic items, to its today's responsibility of providing services and administering its facilities. Even though UNRWA "does not own, administer or police the camps, as this is the responsibility of the host authorities" (UNRWA, n.d. B), it is the administrator of various institutions in the camp. These range from primary health facilities, elementary, preparatory and vocational schools to relief distribution and social centres. Furthermore, institutions for vulnerable groups such as for women the Women's Programme Centre (WPC) and the Community Based Rehabilitation Centres (CBRC) for physically or mentally disabled people were established by the agency. (UNRWA, n.d. C)

Development of the physical structure of the camp

At the beginning of the 1950s the mandate of UNRWA started. In order to accommodate the Palestinians displaced by force in 1948, it established four Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan which, a few years later, were extended by six other camps in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967 (Al Abed, 2011, p. 12). After these two main waves of forced displacement, refugees were first accommodated in tents, barracks and other light-weight housing types, which were later replaced by more durable single-room units made of concrete. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 340) Following the parameters and standards imposed by the UN, the spatial configuration of the camp was marked by a rigid grid-like layout, consisting of demarcated plots for refugee-families. (Maqusi, 2017, p. 1) "Each family was given a plot of 80-100 m2 on which a "core unit" with one 12 m2 room and sanitary services was built. The walls were made of bricks and cement with asbestos roofing. A family of four to five members received the "core unit" and a family of six to eight members received two rooms" (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 344). In many cases the inhabitants of the camp, mainly farmers and workers originated from Palestinian villages, remained spatially in their former neighbour- or relative constellation and chose plots next to each other. Thus, the reproduction of the Palestinian neighbourhoods and concomitant with this the established clan structures are still traceable in the camps until today. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 340) (see chapter 6.2 *Power structures* and fig. 15 on p. 64)

From the beginning, the host authorities recognised the importance of preserving the symbolism of the *right of return* of the refugees, and therefore supported the preservation of the temporary character of the camp. This, however, happened not least for the reason that the distribution of responsibilities between UNRWA and the host authorities concerning the establishment of an urban management policy in camps remained unclear until the camps had already developed into towns. Thus, and because at the beginning camp inhabitants themselves rejected any improvements of infrastructure that could be misinterpreted as a

fig. 10 - 11: first shelters (own photographs)
fig. 12 - 14: housing conditions and vertical densification
(own photographs)

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permanent residency outside Palestine, camps were for a long time left out from Jordan's urban development policies. Only after various campaigns by UNRWA and the governmental authorities, camp inhabitants were convinced to replace their tents with shelters of more resistant materials, such as concrete, mud, zinc, iron and asbestos. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 10 f.) "These housing units have nevertheless kept their initial label *shelter* (ma'wa, malja') and were not called *homes* (bayt, dar). In the same vein, the camps are still named moukhayyam (i.e. tent camp)" (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 10). Regarding the preservation of temporality, Jalal Al Husseini comments: "In the camp you [...] can just improve the main infrastructure. Every shelter is sacred. (Laughing) Every stone is sacred. So [what] we did is just the easy

fig. 15: Clan structure in Husn Camp (own illustration, data base: UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 28)

Legend:
- Turkman
- Masaroua
- Morouj
- Soqour
- Morouj / Masaroua / Soqour
- Morouj / Masaroua
- Beer Al-Sabeea' / Masaroua
- Beer Al-Sabeea' / Turkman

not boring, let's say, not very interesting architectural and engineering interventions, you know, paving the streets, electricity, sewage, covering the sewage, for instance, etc. But [we] could not, for instance, destroy or demolish houses to build something new - you cannot do that" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018).

In order to maintain the temporary character of the camp, one regulation prohibited to build additional floors to the ground floor. Hence, as a logical reaction, people started to build on the whole plot provided to them, which resulted in horizontal sprawls of houses. The camp inhabitants expanded their building structures beyond their plots, creating narrow

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fig. 16 - 19: Development of street conditions and urban growth in Husn Camp from 1970 - 2011 (UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 34)

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fig. 20: Husn Camp 1976 (UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 27)

fig. 21: Husn Camp 2018 (Google Maps, 2018)

pathways, dead-end alleys and a patchwork of differently shaped houses. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 345) In an Interview, a woman from Talbiyeh Camp explains that "the spaces between the houses in the 80s were really big places, like between the houses, not in the house. So, people were, when they, the family grows and grows, they used to build more, more, more and the people who don't like have a space in the front, they start to go [to] the right. So, they start to take from the streets actually" (Interview Seinab, 2018). Also, Al Husseini describes that the refugees "look about their own shelter and the way they can expand it. So, this [is] how […] the sheltering, the alleys they became narrow[er] and narrow[er]. You have no recreational space, or very little recreational space" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). The horizontal densification and extension of the building plots made spaces once reserved for roads or other public use disappear over the time and is an explanation for today's lack of green spaces in the camps.

Acknowledging the camps' protracted state of temporality, Palestinian refugees started to get more active in the building process, increasingly employing acts that Maqusi (2017) calls *spatial violation*, meaning acts that were officially violating regulations set by UNRWA and the host government, but which were as a matter of fact tolerated. After the horizontal sprawl had reached its limits in the 1980s-90s, refugees made use of another *architectural element* - external stairs to access further vertical expansions. Soon the existing units were extended with extra floors according to the families' needs. (Maqusi, 2017, p. 1ff.) "Today, the camp—enabled by acts of spatial violation—has reached a scale transgressing humanitarian regulations, and creating spatial economies (for example renting and selling space) which contests humanitarian and host country policies, while at the same time attesting to their containment and control" (Maqusi, 2017, p. 2f.).

1980s - 1990s
vertical sprawl
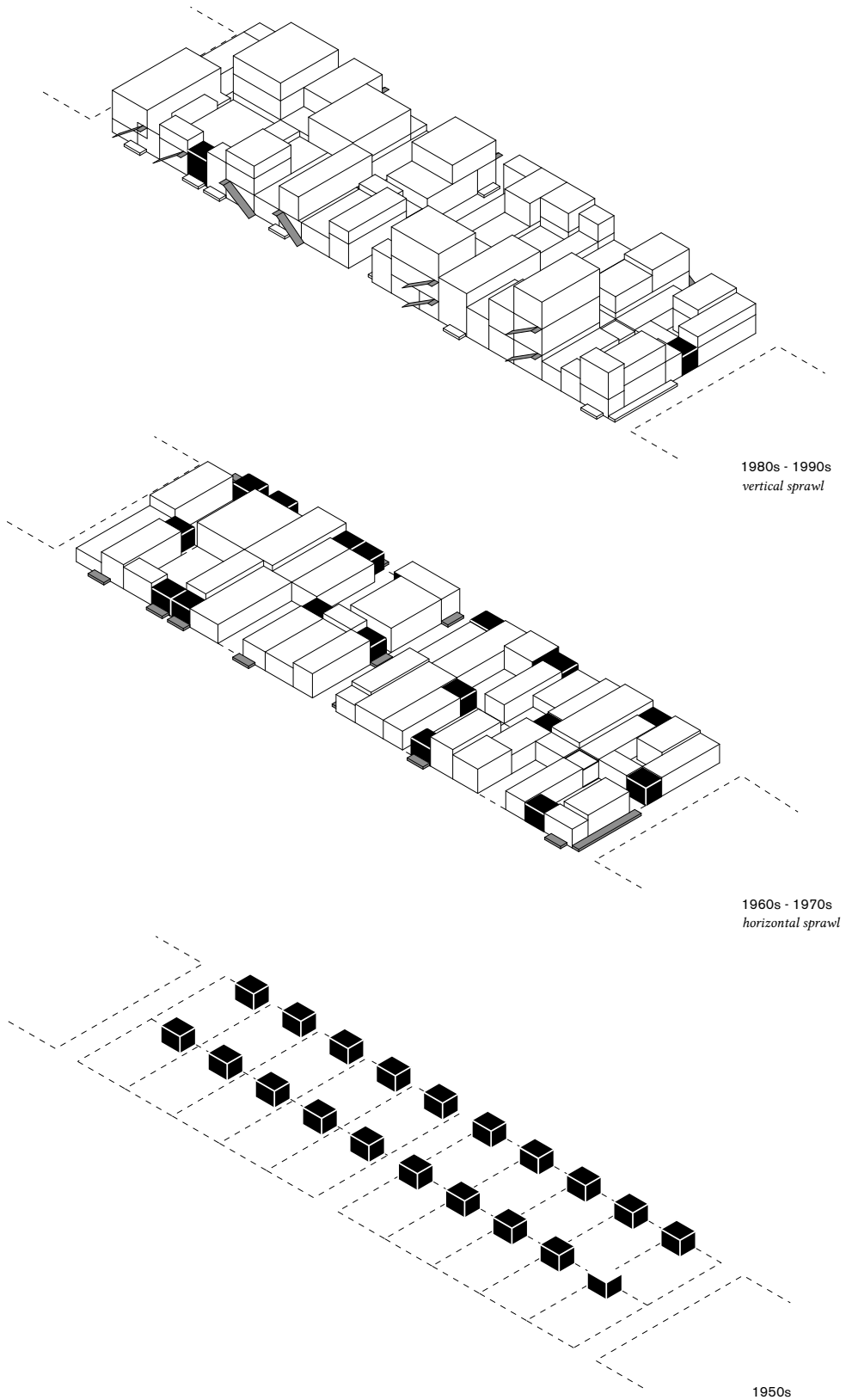
1960s - 1970s
horizontal sprawl

1950s

fig. 22: From camp to town – exemplary densification processes of a block in a Palestinian refugee camp (own illustration)

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fig. 23 - 28: Types of external circulation in camps (own photographs)

fig. 29 - 31: Narrow streets in camps (own photographs)

Housing conditions in Palestinian refugee camps

Strong population growth, especially after the first decades of the arrival of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, has made it difficult to meet the equivalent demand for services and housing needs. Camps, which were established in more rural areas, as well as those, which became neighbourhoods of a city as part of a fast urbanisation process, still stand strongly in contrast to areas outside the camp. This is not least due to the issues of density and housing conditions. Even though, UNRWA has tried to respond to the worsening living conditions in the camps by setting standards and developing guidelines, such as standards concerning height of walls, number of rooms per person, area for courtyards and plot size, camp areas are still generally poorer than the rest of the city. They often suffer from poor housing conditions such as low-quality construction and roofing materials which result in bad heating and cooling conditions, as well as humidity and lack of ventilation. Further common sources of discomfort of housing in camps are noise pollution, the closeness of houses and therefore a lack of privacy. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 1 ff.)

Conditions contributing to the camps' protracted state of temporality

The camp standing as a symbol for the *right of return* has already been touched briefly above and will be discussed further in the next chapter 4.4 *Collective memory and common narrative*. Even though, temporality plays an important role in the symbolic character of the camp, it is also based on real conditions, that camps will be confronted with in the coming decades. Therefore, two important issues have to be mentioned at this point: the necessity to regularly extend the UNRWA mandate and the ending leasehold of the camps' territories after 99 years. It is important to understand these circumstances since they can make long-term thinking and sustainable planning in this context highly challenging.

Since its establishment, UNRWA's temporary mandate has been extended by the UN General Assembly every three, or sometimes five years (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 7). However, due to the absence of a solution for the Palestinian case, the mandate of UNRWA has to be renewed frequently up to this day and has been recently extended by the General Assembly until June 30th 2020 (UNRWA, n.d. A). The temporary mandate of UNRWA adds to the already temporary character of the Palestinian refugee camps. Even though UNRWA's facilities also reach to refugee concentrations outside the camps, merely camps are equipped with the entire spectrum of institutions and underlie additional responsibilities of UNRWA,

such as garbage collection, maintenance and rehabilitation of shelters (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 7). Camps would therefore be the most vulnerable in case of an ending mandate.

Another issue, which Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan will be soon confronted with, is the fact that the plots of land, the official camps are built on, belong to either the government or, as in most cases, to local Jordanian landowners. The camp refugees therefore do not *own* the land their houses are built on, but merely are entitled to *use* the land for a residence (UNRWA, n.d. B). This implicates furthermore, that camp inhabitants are actually not allowed to rent the plots or use their housing for commercial purposes. The leasehold is limited to a period of 99 years and will expire in a foreseeable future, considering that the first Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan were erected almost 70 years ago. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 10) The land values of the territories, the camps were built on have increased dramatically in the meantime, not least because many of the camps - originally built on agricultural land - have now grown into existing cities. Concerning the leasehold, UNRWA was attributed the role of a tenant. Hence, landlords have increasingly raised their voices against the unprofitable leasehold contracts closed many decades ago with the Agency. (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 346) Regarding the leasehold issue, Al Husseini comments: "Soon, we'll see. We don't want to think about it. But yes, it will happen. Most of the camps […] in Jordan, are built on private lands. And the landowners […] are aware of the rights. They have gold there. And of course, they […] are against the CIP […]. They say: 'One day this have to be raid. We don't want to build more. We don't want to build or think for refugees.' They will have to leave or to pay a rent - and a decent rent. So, but this [is] sensitive and nobody wants to talk about it. What the government will do probably is to buy these […]. And then to establish some kind of housing. But they will erase everything most probably. Or they will improve it, but it will be [a] massive change […]. [I]t is a legal issue and it is also a political issue" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018).

Even though the above mentioned are sensitive issues that people prefer not to talk about, they make the temporality of Palestinian refugee camps a lot more tangible and real. It is therefore important to keep them in mind when it comes to planning processes in this specific context. In the next chapter *Collective memory and common narrative*, the described actual conditions contributing to the camps' temporality, will be complemented with the meaning of *right of return*, which adds a symbolic and political layer to the protracted temporality of camps.

fig. 32: Vertical densification process due to an increasing number of family members (own photograph)

4.4 Collective memory and common narrative

fig. 33 - 35: Street art refering to the right of return
(own photographs)

This chapter is dedicated to clarifying terms of the Palestinian collective memory and common narrative that have occurred during the research and whose understanding is important for the chosen context. During fieldwork in Palestinian camps, one frequently encounters certain formulations, symbols and patterns of argumentation that descend from a collective memory. It is important to be aware of and to contextualise these expressions, to understand the origin and importance of certain statements in order to avoid misunderstandings. This subchapter will take a closer look at three phenomena. First, it will discuss which different spatial dimensions result from the omnipresent concept of *right of return*, then the concept of *fellahin* (Arabic for farmer) as self-attribution will be approached. Finally, the meaning of the quotation: "we have no space" in the context of the camp will be discussed.

As mentioned in *Citizenship of Palestinian refugees in Jordan* in chapter 4.2 *Rights of Palestinian refugees and their legal and political situation in Jordan*, Palestinian refugees were – in most cases – given full Jordanian citizenship while maintaining their refugee status by being registered with UNRWA. Within this *refugee citizen* contradiction, the proof of the refugee status is one component to maintain a Palestinian nationality, identity and collective memory in order to counteract naturalisation policies. Due to the lack of access to a common territory the Palestinian collective memory is of particular importance for the national identity (Litvak, 2009, p. 4). Meir Litvak defines as collective memory, "how members of society remember and interpret events, how the meaning of the past is constructed, and how it is modified over time" (Litvak, 2009, p.12).

The notion of the *right of return*

A central part of the collective memory is the *right of return*, which is preserved by UNRWA as an institution and the camp as a spatial context. Especially in Jordan, where many refugees would theoretically be able to live without UNRWA and outside the camps due to their citizenship, the insistence on the *right of return* becomes particularly evident: 76% of the over two million refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan state the proof of refugee status as the main advantage of their registration (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009, p. 276). The camp is a temporary place, which is considered one of the most important symbols in the political struggle for the *right of return*.

Since the protracted temporality of camps enhances the precarious living conditions within them, the camps are also representative for the suffering of the Palestinians. Thus, issues such as the upgrading and improvement of living conditions within such a place are also inevitably addressed as a political issue (Petti, 2013, p. 4). This dynamic has also contributed to the fact that the camps have not been subject of urban planning considerations, were not embedded into the regional context for a long time and have therefore been additionally marginalised (Misselwitz & Hanafi, 2009, p. 363).
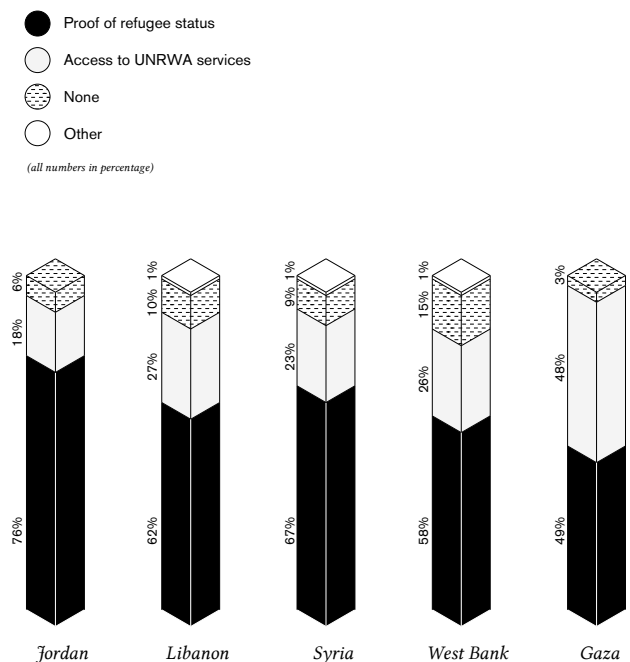

Proof of refugee status
Access to UNRWA services
None
Other

(all numbers in percentage)

	Jordan	Libanon	Syria	West Bank	Gaza
	6%	10% 1%	9% 1%	15% 1%	3%
	18%	27%	23%	26%	48%
	76%	62%	67%	58%	49%

fig. 36: Main advantages of being registered with UNRWA (own illustration, data base: Al Husseini and Bocco, 2009, p. 276)

It is true that the terms *UNRWA refugee* and *camp* are crucial for political agitation, but what does that mean for the space of the camp and especially for the inhabitants living in it today, 70 years after the initial expulsion from Palestine? What does the *right of return* mean at a time when the only generation that has ever experienced Palestine, is dying out? Ruba Salih (2013) shows that the link between the *right of return* and the camp as a necessary territorial argumentation support for the refugees themselves, does not seem as compelling as it may seem at the first glance. More important than the residence in the camp, is therefore the holding of the UNRWA registration card (Salih, 2013, p. 80). Concerning the camp inhabitants' perception of the *right of*

fig. 37: The key as a symbol for the right of return (photograph by A. Safouri's son)

return, the interviews conducted in the field, as well as relevant literature on this subject, reveal a shift, since especially for the younger generation it is rather a question of a *right to choose*, e.g. to have the right to decide about how and where to spend one's life (Richter-Devroe, 2013, p. 113).

The interviews also revealed a certain kind of rationality regarding the analysis of the own situation, which contradicts the often politically motivated narrative of the *right of return*. "[I]f you wanna go to Palestine, you will build another tent. And redo the same story again, because we have nothing there. [...] I think people is already changing, step by step, but they need the time to convince theirselves, that it's time to change. [...] I don't have a land in Palestine, some people say that. I don't have nothing in Palestine, why should I go back? If it's possible to go back, some people say no, I don't wanna go back. You wanna go back? (he is asking his friends, who are sitting with him – they are answering *no*). No, that's the thing" (Interview Mohammed, 2018).

The topic of camp rehabilitation has recently and slowly experienced a *de-tabooisation* and has become part of an integrated strategy. Since the 1980s and 1990s and the rise of neoliberalism, the camps experienced first upgrading-attempts facing infrastructural and housing conditions (Oesch, 2017, p. 117). These were followed up with the implementation of integrated master planning tools such as the CIP by UNRWA, which is intended to contribute to the *right to live in appropriate living conditions* adopted by the Geneva conference in 2004

(Misselwitz & Hanafi, 2009, p. 361, 367). Although the CIP is only a first step and it is not well known if and how successful this instrument performed so far, it shows the general commitment to look at and treat the space of the camp differently. (see *CIP as bottom-up approach in urban planning* in chapter 6.1 *Development aid*)

Finally, it is to mention the opening of the camp to the real estate market. Despite the temporary character of the camp, the residents have developed a sense of ownership and, in addition to upgrading their shelters, have also begun to rent out or sell their dwellings. In some cases, their dwellings have gained considerable value over the years. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 13f) (see *Camp boundaries – from static to blurring* in chapter 4.5 *Typologies of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan*)

In summary, a two-fold picture of the camp emerges. It still is a symbolic place that through a lack of assimilation and exclusion maintains the claim of the *right of return*. Furthermore, it was often excluded through the administrative policies by UNRWA or DPA. But the exclusionary paradigm cannot be kept upright alone, as it is also opposed by the ongoing integration of the camp into socio-economic and increasingly also into planning matters (Al Husseini & Bocco, 2009; Oesch, 2017). Additionally, it can be seen that camp dwellers are willing to improve their living conditions and the intention of an actual return to a future Palestine is critically questioned. The awareness of the actual nature behind the strong term „right of return" is especially important for approaching the context of the camp.

The notion of the *fellahin*

Since much of the field research in Jordan and the West Bank dealt with the topic of rooftop farming, many camp inhabitants referred to their ancestors' occupation in pre-1948 Palestine as *fellahin*. This common narrative initially seemed simple and logical because this part of a refugee's biography could also constitute a motivation to become active in the field of agriculture again – for example cultivating a rooftop farm. However, this conclusion is too simple, as it hides large parts of the meaning of the term fellahin.

By designating themselves as *fellahin*, as Ted Swedenburg (1990) discusses in his work on *The Palestinian Peasant as a National Signifier*, refugees do not identify with agriculture per set but rather affiliate to a national group. This group is often romanticised as fortunate peasants on a paradise-like piece of land. The term *fellahin* was also deliberately used by

fig. 38 The Palestinian keffiyeh as a symbol for the fellahin (photograph by A. Safouri's son)

political actors such as the PLO to create a common ground for a Palestinian nationalism that rebelled against the loss and occupation of its own fertile land (Swedenburg, 1990). The example of the *fellahin* shows how individual aspects of the collective memory of the Palestinians can mislead at first sight and how much complexity is hidden behind supposedly simple terms.

The expression *we have no space*

The same applies to the statement frequently made by camp residents: *We have no space.* This phrase was often delivered as an immediate answer to the question why camp inhabitants have not yet started to farm, despite their existing interest. The ambiguity of this statement is important to take into consideration. On the one hand, the lack of space is perceived due to the actual tremendous density and narrowness of the camp, which simply excludes certain activities. On the other hand, space also plays an important role as the definition of a place where one is permanently residing, feels at home and which one wants to form. In this context it is important to understand that the lack of space for activities is often associated with the lack of a homeland.

Overall, it is important not to ignore these recurring aspects of the Palestinian narrative during fieldwork, but to contextualise them. In addition, caution is required, if one is coming

from an external point of view, since for many people these aspects are an important part of their identity and are thus linked to the corresponding emotions.

4.5 Typologies and boundaries of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan

This chapter serves to investigate the typologies of the camps in more detail. The first step is to identify the typological differences between the camps and to figure out how the camps are embedded in their immediate surroundings. The second part deals with the meaning and impact of the camp boundaries, which are for various reasons static and blurring at the same time. By typologising, the camp as an object of investigation is to be detached from an isolated perspective and embedded in a context on which it is dependent in many respects.

Typologies of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan

As mentioned in chapter 4.3 *Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality,* ten official Palestinian refugee camps were established in Jordan in the aftermath of the first Arab-Israeli War from 1948-49 and the Six-Day War in 1967. The first four camps which were erected after the Arab-Israeli War, are Zarqa Camp (1949) and Irbid Camp (1950), as well as the Amman-based Al Hussein Camp (1952) and Wihdat Camp (also named *Amman New Camp*) (1955). The camps, which resulted from the Six-Day-War are Talbiyeh Camp (1968) in the Amman governorate, Marqa Camp (also named *Hitteen* or *Schneller* Camp) (1968) in the Zarqa governorate, Baqa'a Camp (1968) in the Balqa governorate, Jerash Camp (1968) and Souf Camp (1967) in the Jerash governorate and Husn Camp (also named *Azmi Al Mufti*) (1968) in the Irbid governorate. Besides the ten officially registered camps by UNRWA, three further Palestinian refugee camps exist. These camps are only recognised as camps by local authorities, namely: Madaba (1956), Prince Hassan Quarter (1967) and Sukhneh (1969). (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 3f.)

Considering the typologies of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, one can distinguish between camps located in cities like Amman or Irbid and those situated in rural or periphery areas. The peripheral camps mostly appear like islands, which are often connected to their surroundings by just one main road and are therefore spatially isolated from their

neighbouring municipalities. The density of the built environment contrasts highly with the adjacent open fields and loose rural configuration. Camps situated in an urban context, such as Wihdat and Al Hussein camp in Amman, have instead become neighbourhoods of the city and are spatially a lot more permeable and integrated into their urban context than those in rural areas.

The spatial segregation or integration is also reflected on an economic scale. Especially camps that are located in an urban context have established a flourishing commercial sector, not least due to their spatial integration and the quite liberal and flexible attitude by Jordanian authorities (DPA) concerning the development of the camps. Besides traditional and family businesses that have been established in urban camps such as Wihdat or Al Hussein camp, also companies such as electronic shops, banks, pharmacies and fast food outlets have settled in the camp over the last decades. As a good example serves the *souq* (street market) in Wihdat, which attracts visitors from all over Amman, as prices are significantly lower there than in the rest of the city. In contrast to this, refugee camps located in rural settings or in the outskirts of bigger cities such as Talbiyeh Camp (south of Amman) remain comparably poor communities, are barely integrated economically into their surroundings and lack employment opportunities. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 13)

Camp boundaries – from static to blurring

The static boundaries of camps which are legally non-extendable led to very dense urban structures and high population densities. "You cannot enlarge the camps. […] [I]t is forbidden, because if you expand it, you make it a normal neighbourhood. It must […] remain a specific, that people recognise as a camp. It is not a (…) [will] never be a normal neighbourhood." (Interview Al Husseini, 2018) As described by Al Husseini (2018 & 2010, p.10), regulations concerning the camps' boundaries respond to the fear by host authorities as well as camp inhabitants that extensions could make camp borders blur, that the camp could merge with its neighbourhood and therefore also lose its symbolic value. This is why, especially camps located in rural areas, such as Husn Camp or Jerash Camp, remain spatially isolated entities.

This is also reflected in the infrastructural development of Palestinian refugee camps. Only starting in the early-mid 1960s, as municipalities located close to the camps started to sprawl, camps were connected to public service systems such as running water and sewerage

systems and main streets were paved. Even though the houses in camps are mostly connected to municipal services today, the camps often keep being excluded from municipalities' development plans. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 10) Urban authorities have generally been unable to integrate camps in their municipal master plan. All necessary infrastructure, already available for cities, had thus to be thought out and constructed separately for camps. Having two separate urban infrastructures has often hindered efficient urban planning and management" (Rueff & Viaro, 2009, p. 358).

The borders of camps and the created relation between *inside the camp* and *outside the camp* also mark the image of camps that has evolved over time. A young adult from Talbiyeh Camp comments: "[I]t is really harmful, if I went to somebody in Amman and he ask me: 'Where are you from?' and I say: 'Talbiyeh Camp', then he was like: 'Where is it?', 'Ah, just [...] next to the airport. When you fly on top, you will see it'. It [is] just really harmful just talking about that" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). "[W]e have this really bad image about the camp. Like if I am from the camp, then I am smoking weed too much and drinking too much, selling weed, doing this bad thing" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Further he explains: "They [people from Amman] look at us as a material. That mean[s] more money or you know, more funds. We are poor people and we need more care" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Even though the interview only offers an insight into the complex image that society has on camps, it though shows how boundaries of camps do not merely exist physically but are also manifested in peoples' minds.

Adding to the physical and mental boundaries of camps, a very dynamic and blurring component concerning the demographic structure inside camps can be observed. In search of affordable housing, many migrants, in recent years especially from Syria, have settled in Palestinian refugee camps, where an informal housing market – *informal* due to the fact that the camp inhabitants do not *own* the land they have built on (see *Conditions contributing to the camps' protracted state of temporality* in chapter 4.3 *Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality*) – has already existed for many years. Al Husseini explains, that "this started [a] long time ago in the 70s, all those, who [...] went to work in Gulf - they came back with the money [...] many moved out of the camps, to have more space. They were replaced by poor Jordanians, poor Palestinians, and migrant workers. Especially from the 90s. [...] It is not one population, or a stable population - and it's very different from the original one" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). "And when you go to especially the urban camps, you see, that you have Filipinos, you have Sri Lankans, you have Egyptians and you have second, third generation poor refugees, who

rent or even buy the housing [...]. It's a very vibrant thing" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). This shows, that the character of the Palestinian refugee camp, which is symbolically marked by a strong unity of Palestinians, is not necessarily reflected demographically anymore. As this chapter demonstrates, the Palestinian camps, which often had a very high structural similarity at the time of their establishment, have developed certain typologies and differences over the decades. The distinction between rural and therefore more isolated camps and those camps that now function as neighbourhoods of cities like Amman shows to what extent the spatial surroundings can have an effect on the apparently closed organism of a camp and change it decisively. Another important finding is that despite the camps' rigid legal limitations, a lively economic exchange with the surrounding area is possible. The contemporary demographic dynamics and an emerging real estate market add to the blurring boundaries of camps. A closer examination of the camp and its interconnection with the surrounding area is essential to grasp the many differences between the camps in Jordan and to include them in strategic considerations.

fig. 39 - 42: Impressions of rural and urbans camp borders (own photographs)

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Irbid Camp : 25,250 pers.

Husn Camp : 22,194 pers.

Souf Camp: 20,142 pers.

Jerash Camp: 27,600 pers.

Sukhneh Camp : 4,750 pers.

Baqa'a Camp: 93,916 pers.

Zarqa Camp : 18,509 pers.

Marqua Camp : 45,593 pers.

Al Hussein Camp: 29,464 pers.

Prince Hassan Camp : 74,000 pers.

Wihdat Camp : 51,443 pers.

Madaba : 428,000 pers.

Talbiyeh Camp : 6,970 pers.

< 15,000

15,000 - 35,000

35,000 - 65,000

65,000 - 100,000

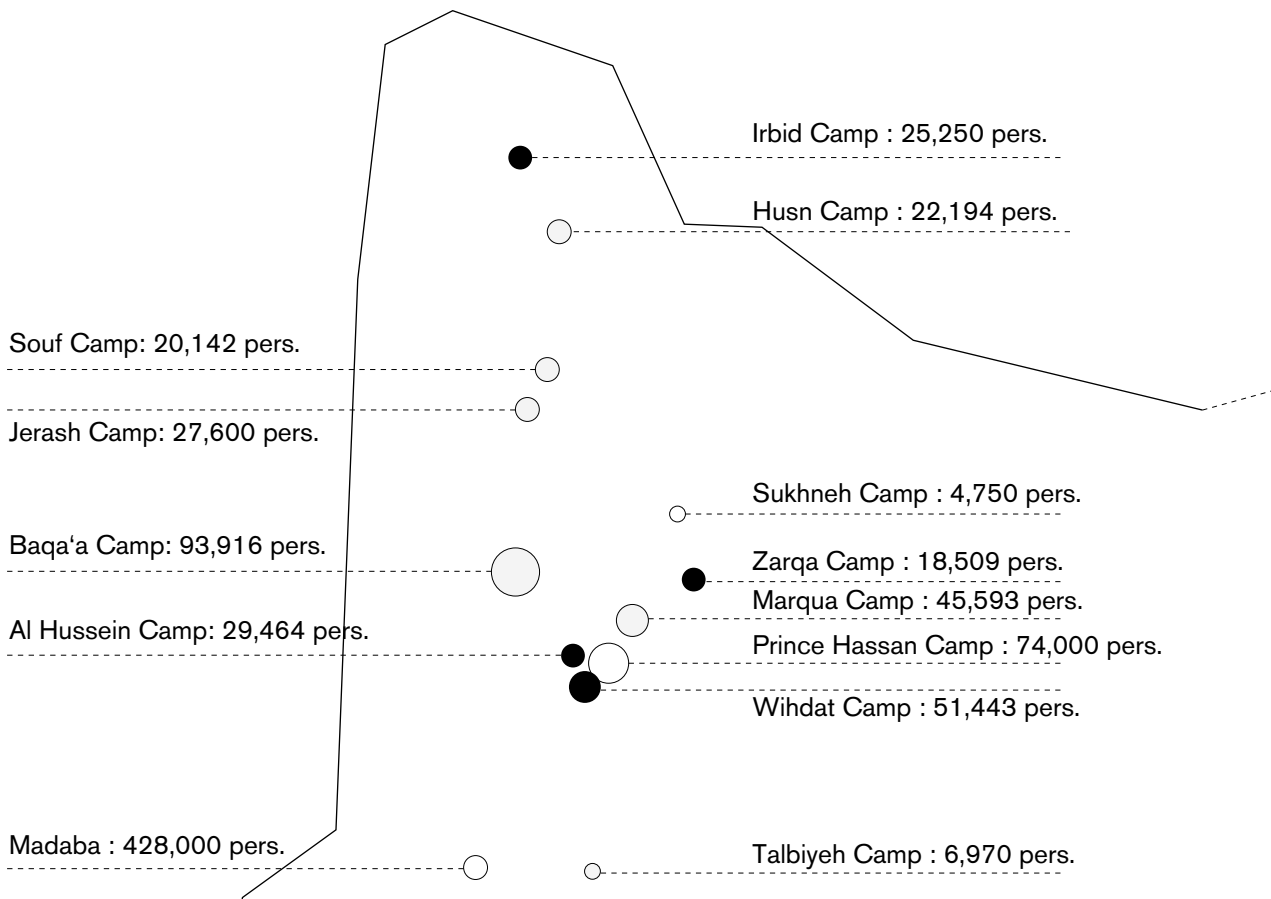> 100,000

*1967

*1948 seq

informal

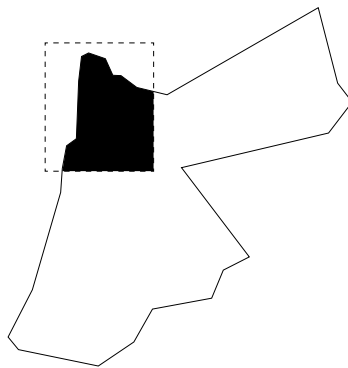fig. 43: Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan (own illustration, data base: UNRWA, n.d. H; ARDD-Legal Aid, 2015)

fig. 44: Souf Camp, established in 1967 [peripherical] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 45: Jerash Camp, established in 1968 [peripherical] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 46: Husn Camp, established in 1968 [peripherical] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 47: Baqaʿa Camp, established in 1968 [peripherical] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 48: Talbiyeh Camp, established in 1968 [peripherical] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 49: Sukhneh Camp 1969, established in [peripherical, inofficial] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 50: Madaba Camp, established in 1956 [urban, inofficial] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 51: Wihdat Camp, established in 1955 [urban] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 52: Irbid Camp, established in 1950 [urban] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 53: Zarqa Camp, established in 1949 [urban] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 54: Al Hussein Camp, established in 1952 [urban] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 55: Marqua Camp, established in 1968 [urban] (Google Maps, 2018)

fig. 56: Prince Hassan Camp, established in 1967 [urban, inoffical] (Google Maps, 2018)

5
Dynamics
and flows.

5 Dynamics and flows

The following part will focus on different flows and current dynamics to which the camp is subjected within its Jordanian context. These insights are intended to provide an overview of the current and critical challenges of the camp as a unit. The various flows identified and examined in this chapter are considered according to a certain logic. The dynamics are derived from observations and experience at camp level and then embedded into their national context. Since this thesis deals in particularly with practices of urban agriculture, the selection of the flows has been adjusted accordingly and each section concludes by discussing indications and the importance of the respective flow or dynamic for urban farming projects. A *quantitative survey* conducted during the field research in Husn Camp, in which eight rooftop farmers were interviewed, was used to gain more detailed insights into the practice and challenges of rooftop farming. The answers were partly used to approach the identified flows and to highlight their relevance to the topic of urban agriculture.

fig. 57: Reinforcement bar as a symbol for vertical densification (own photograph)

5.1 Population growth and density

Camp

The demographic growth in Palestinian refugee camps is significant, considering that the initial camp population has multiplied over the past decades, or in the case of Wihdat Camp even increased tenfold. The high population density in combination with regulations and static boundaries of camps (see *Camp boundaries – from static to blurring* in chapter 4.5 *Typologies and boundaries of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan*) have led to extreme densities varying from 29,435 persons per km^2 in Husn Camp to 115,296 persons per km^2 in Irbid camp. (Alnsour & Meaton, 2014, p.67) In comparison, the world's densest city at the moment is Dhaka, the Capital of Bangladesh, with a density of 44,500 persons per km^2. (UN Habitat, 2018)

As already described in *Development of the physical structure of the camp* in chapter 4.3 *Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality*), after the camps' physical structure extended horizontally to its limits, additional floors were built which led to a vertical densification of the camp. The reinforcing bars that protrude about one meter of many roofs in the camps indicate that the vertical extension of a house has not yet been completed. If the family grows, the house grows with it and the descendants receive an extra floor. Seinab from Talbiyeh Camp explains: "[S]o, you know, it's like floors. They have the house because the kids, their sons, her sons, they are all married and each one has his own floor" (Interview Seinab, 2018).

fig. 58: Vertical densification (own photograph)

Jordan

From 1950 until today, Jordan's population is estimated to have grown from around half a million to almost ten million inhabitants. Already in the aftermath of 1948, incoming waves of Palestinian refugees have almost doubled the population. More recently, mass migrations of 500,000 Iraqis since the Iraq War and of more than 500,000 Syrians to Jordan during the last years, have further increased the population density in Jordan. The rapid population growth is especially visible in the capital Amman which developed from the small town it was in the 1950s into a four million inhabitants metropolis which it is today. (World Popu

lation Review, 2018) Even recently, Amman's population has doubled since 2004 from 1.94 million to over four million in 2015, according to a report released by the Department of Statistics (DoS). (Obeidat, 2016)

fig. 59: Dense city structure of Amman (own photograph)

Urban agriculture

Within the context of population growth and urban densification in Jordan and especially in its capital, practices such as urban agriculture become more and more relevant in order to meet the growing demand for food in urban areas. Furthermore, the immense density in the camps mentioned above, already gives an impression of how limited green open spaces are in camps. The rooftop, remaining in many cases the only spatial resource, plays an important role since it provides families with a private space in fresh air. Furthermore, it has the potential to be used as a productive space of many functions, which has already been the case in many observations on site (see photographs on p. 146 f.). Concerning urban agriculture, rooftop farming practices can be found in various Palestinian refugee camps all over the Middle East, such as in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Egypt and Lebanon (see chapter 8 *Case studies*). However, the vertical densification process can hinder people from being productive at their rooftops, since the rooftop space is in many cases temporary because the building may be extended vertically in a couple of years for the next family generation.

Zarqa (1949)
area in m2: 189,000
pop./ km2: 98,931

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Irbid (1950)
area in m2: 219,000
pop./ km2: 107,846

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Al Hussein (1952)
area in m2: 338,000
pop./ km2: 87,171

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Wihdat (1955)
area in m2: 477,000
pop./ km2: 107,846

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Talbiyeh (1968)
area in m2: 133,000
pop./ km2: 52,406

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Marqua (1968)
area in m2: 894,000
pop./ km2: 50,998

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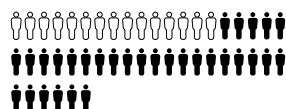
Jerash (1968)
area in m2: 507,000
pop./ km2: 54,437

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Souf (1967)
area in m2: 596,000
pop./ km2: 33,795

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Husn (1968)
area in m2: 754,000
pop./ km2: 29,435

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Baqa'a (1968)
area in m2: 1,307,000
pop./ km2: 72,243

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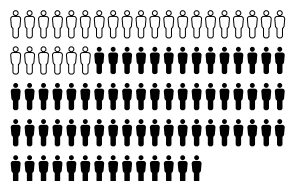
♀ population at the time of establishment
† population (state: 2014)

Madaba (1956)
area in m2: 400,000
pop./ km2: 70,000

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†††††††††

Prince Hassan (1967)
area in m2: 150,000
pop./ km2: 493,333

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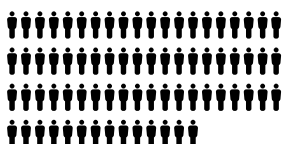
Sukhneh (1969)
area in m2: 70,000
pop./ km2: n.d.

†††††

fig. 60: Population growth and density of the ten officially registered and the three not registered camps by UNRWA in Jordan (own illustration, data base: Alnsour & Meaton, 2014, p. 67; Badil Resource Center for Palestinian residency and refugee rights, 2005; Hejojm, 2007)

fig. 61: Chicken and turtles on a rooftop in Husn Camp (own photograph)

5.2 Poverty and unemployment

I (Svenja): Did you paint the turtle?
S: (laughs) If you haven't any job to do...you have time to do crazy things.
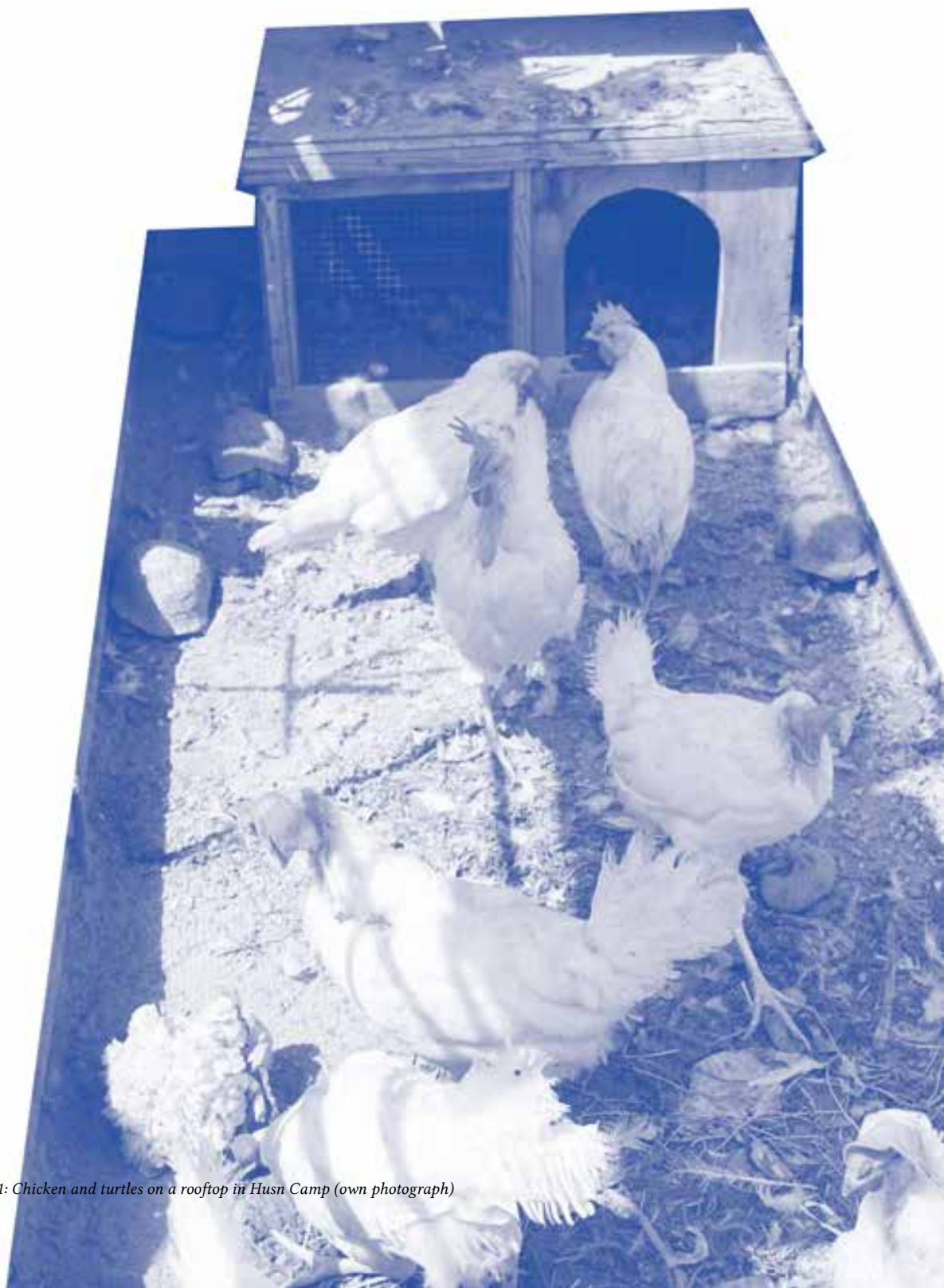*(Interview Safouri, 2018 A)*

Camp

In 2010, the absolute poverty line in Jordan was set at 813.70 JD (equals 983.30 Euro) per capita per year. Applying this national poverty line to their report about socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Tiltnes and Zhang (2013) show the differences regarding the poverty rate between the camps. In all Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan except one, the share of people living under the national poverty line ranged from 19 % in Zarqa Camp to 34 % in Wihdat Camp in Amman. As an exception, Jerash Camp stands out with the highest poverty rate with over half of its refugee residents living below the national poverty line. (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013, p. 245 ff.)

Considering the unemployment rate in camps, the comprehensive survey conducted by Tiltnes and Zhang (2013) shows little variations between Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. It ranges from 11 % in Prince Hassan Camp to 18 % in Husn Camp while female unemployment is generally higher than male unemployment (with an exception of Sukneh, Prince Hassan and Jerash Camp). (Tiltnes & Zhang, 2013, p. 216 ff.) Yet, it is important to keep in mind the discrepancy between male and female employment in camps. Not least due to the present patriarchal structure and its defined roles, only an average of 8 % of Palestinian refugee women in camps are economically active, whereas the labour force participation rate for men in camps reaches an average of 63 %. (Tiltnes & Zhang, 2013, p. 179)

An exceptionally high unemployment rate of 33 %, however, concerns the youth in camps between the age of 15 to 24, which is eight times higher than amongst camp inhabitants aged 35 and above (4 %) (Tiltnes & Zhang, 2013, p. 217). In this regard, Mohammed, a young adult from Talbiyeh Camp says: "Like not just us, other youths. Like we have super genius people here in the camp, but they all left to Amman. But [if] there is chances here, nobody goes to Amman. We see Amman as a big deal because we don't have nothing here. Resources no, anything, we don't have nothing here. Even transportations is … it sucks." (Interview Mohammed, 2018)

Jordan

While in Palestinian refugee camps the rate of people below the national poverty line in Jordan ranges from 19 % to 34 %, Jordan's average in 2012 was estimated to be 14.4 %. The average unemployment rate in Jordan of 14 % however almost equals the one in the camps ranging, which ranks from 11 % to 18 %. (The World Bank, 2013, pp. 4, 18) The national statistic on employment by gender differs slightly from the camps'. Compared to the camps (8 % to 63 % discrepancy between male and female employment) Jordan's average shows a higher degree of female employment with around 13 % to 60 % (European Training Foundation, 2016, p. 13). Independent of residence inside or outside the camp, "for women in particular, perceptions of their capacities remain weak, for society and government policies continue to reinforce their dependency through a patriarchal system" (European Training Foundation, 2016, p. 14). According to a survey conducted in 2012/13, unemployment of youth aged 15-29 reaches around 24 % in Jordan, which is twice the global average, however 9 % less than inside Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan (International Labour Organisation, 2014).

Urban Agriculture

In the context of urban agriculture, it is interesting to note that inside Palestinian refugee camps 2 % of employed men and 6 % of employed women work in the agriculture sector (state: 2011). The population's involvement in agriculture mostly applies in camps embedded in a rural context, especially in the Irbid governorate. Women residing in Palestinian refugee camps in this area are generally more economically active, not least due to working opportunities in the farming sector. In Husn Camp for instance, some female employees are provided transportation and the employers guarantee a segregated work space, and hence correspond to the traditional norms of the camp dwellers. (Tiltnes & Zhang, 2013, pp. 179, 191) The existing local knowledge about farming practices, especially by women, highlights a potential for urban agriculture inside camps.

Even though people might have available time due to unemployment which can be a driver for starting practices such as urban agriculture, poverty remains a crucial issue in camps. The lack of financial resources may stop people from taking self-initiative. To the question if Palestinian refugees in camps are willing to invest a small amount of money to start farming, Seinab from Talbiyeh responds, she "think[s] that they […] have enough commitment to some things to think about you know, saving, because they can't do it. It's really poor people here" (Interview Seinab, 2018). In the same interview the translator Mohammed explains that even small investments such as a barrel to plant vegetables on the roof are recon-

sidered twice: "12 JDs [14,50 Euro] is, for my mom, I think she will think about, it is better to cook something for the money" (Interview Seinab, 2018). Considering these challenges in this context, urban agriculture could unleash potentials regarding subsistent farming and income-generating models.
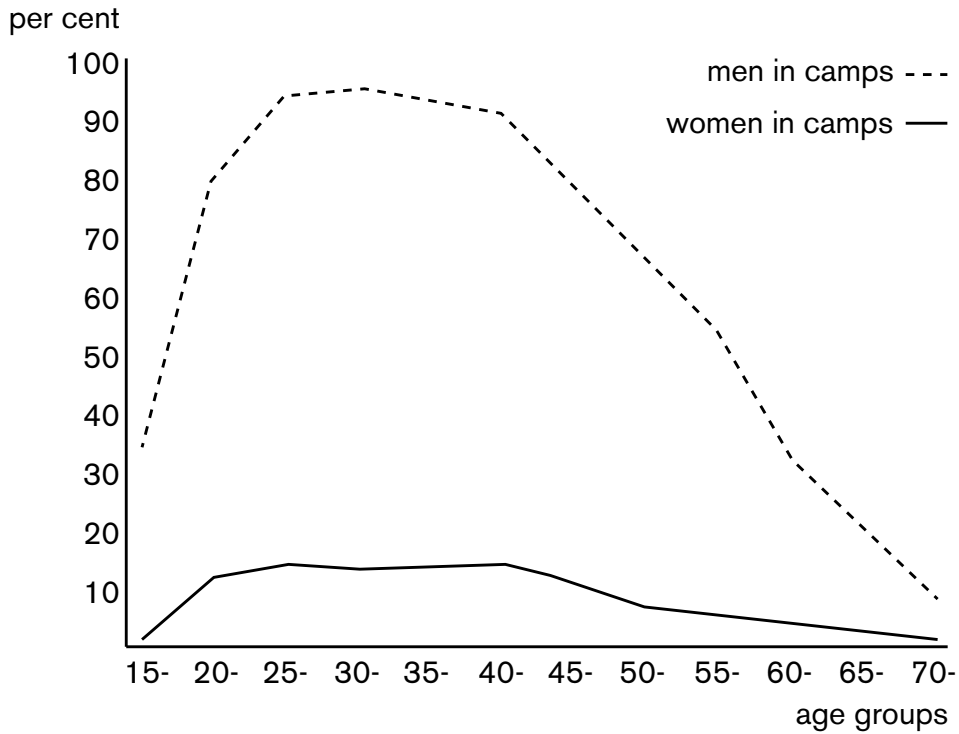

fig. 62: Labour force participation of Palestinian refugees aged 15 and above inside camps 2011 (n=11,533). By gender and age. Percentage. (own illustration, data base: Tiltnes & Zhang, 2013, p. 178)

fig. 63: The mobile phone providing access to important knowledge resource for urban agriculture (own photograph)

5.3 YouTube as knowledge resource

Despite any critical aspects, the google-owned video platform YouTube contributes to the democratisation of knowledge in the camp. The following part does not aim to deeply analyse the social impact of YouTube but tries to understand how it is used as a source of knowledge by camp-inhabitants in the context of urban agriculture.

Camp

In the camp, UNRWA provides basic education and therefore decides on what to teach and to which extent. Through the internet, this physical space as a resource for knowledge is expanded into the digital space. Since most camp residents own a smartphone, a large proportion of the residents have access to this digital resource. During field research five ways of using mobile internet were observed: access to entertainment, access to knowledge and information, sharing of information, maintaining of social contacts and merging and organising groups.

Global

With around 1,396,000,000 clicks per day (socialblade, 2018), YouTube is the world's largest video platform. Researcher Michael Wesch (2008) describes YouTube as "a social space built around video communication that is searchable, taggable and mashable. [...] It is a space where identities, values and ideas are produced, reproduced, challenged and negotiated in new ways". TED curator Christ Anderson applies this to the context of expert knowledge, where YouTube can be understood as a "phenomenon by which geographically distributed individuals in a certain field share their independently developed skills in YouTube videos, thus challenging others to improve their own skills, and spurring invention and evolution in that field" (Anderson, 2010).

Urban agriculture

Andersons's and Wesch's definitions correspond to the observations of urban farmers in in Husn Camp and Jerash Camp during field research. Although some of the basic information was provided by workshops and experts, most of them use YouTube as a source of knowledge. They are especially looking for answers to concrete problems and obstacles, such as plant diseases, but also for new innovative approaches, such as hydroponics, aquaponics, composting and natural pesticides. The practice of using the internet as knowledge resource makes camp residents less dependent on institutional knowledge providers such as UNRWA, international aid agencies or NGOs.

In addition, YouTube offers many urban farmers in the camp the opportunity to exchange ideas across borders with others, who are experts in the same field. Especially in Gaza Strip and the West Bank, rooftop farming practices are relatively wide spread – yet mainly initiated by external development aid agencies. This digital and professional exchange plays a major role in a context, where physical exchange is not possible.

YouTube as important source of knowledge in camps in Jordan on the individual scale is supplemented by the use of social media on a community scale. Different tools are used in order to reach a certain amount or composition of people. While community-led Facebook-pages are primarily used on the camp-level to bring topics into discourse or to advertise projects, instant messenger services, such as WhatsApp are used to organise already existing groups of same interest. The project participants and urban farmers of Husn Camp, for instance, created a WhatsApp group as a forum to organise themselves for trips, share information, exchange about problems and share photos of their farms and crops.

fig. 64 - 65: YouTube search results for *rooftop farms* and *rooftop farms Gaza* in Arabic (YouTube, 2018)

fig. 66: A woman selling the vegetable Chubesi in the streets of Husn Camp (own photograph)

5.4 Food

Camp

In recent years camp inhabitants have been suffering from rising food prices which are part of a national dynamic. The situation is especially threatening in the camps, where, as mentioned above, polarisation of poverty prevails and as a result people are hardest hit by subsidy cuts and rising prices. In addition, diseases such as diabetes are widespread. As an UNRWA health report shows, around 11 % of people over 40 years in the camps suffer from that chronic disease. The emergence of diabetes in the context of camps is often due to an unhealthy diet. 90 % of patients recorded in the survey are overweight (UNRWA, 2012).

Jordan

Jordan is in a financial crisis, partly due to the admission of more than one million refugees from the neighbouring crisis regions of Iraq and Syria and is therefore dependent on external aid packages such as those provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank. In the context of the austerity policy that has arisen in the context of such aid agreements, in 2018 several cuts and tax returns were decided, which then again triggered significant protests from the civil society. The conflict and the, for Jordan, unusually large demonstrations have so far led to the resignation of Prime Minister Hani Al Mulki (Zeit Online, 2018; Mena-Watch, 2018).

In the food sector, the cancellation of the state subsidies on pita bread, which had existed for decades, increased the price by 60-100%. People who are affected by poverty and would therefore suffer most from such cuts will from now on receive state support in their bank accounts (Al Jazeera, 2018; Mustafa, 2018; The Jordan Times 2018 A). Besides the more difficult access through an application process, the newly created procedure therefore provides only for the beneficiaries of selected groups, which means that other groups, such as those not holding the Jordanian citizenship are excluded. The impact of this austerity policy on people affected by poverty, therefore, continues to worsen their situation. In the context of rising food prices, the supply of good and healthy food is becoming increasingly difficult.

Due to geographical and climatic conditions, Jordan depends on the import of basic food products such as wheat, rice or corn (OEC Trade Balance, 2016). In addition, insufficient national food production led to increased consumption of cheap but unhealthy food. The number of people suffering from diabetes or obesity continues to increase throughout

Jordan. The country is reportedly among the top 5 countries with the largest proportion of obese people, with an upward trend (Nahhas, 2017).

Urban agriculture

Especially because of the economic crisis and the fact that Jordan remains heavily dependent on exports, urban agriculture projects have recently gained relevance. According to reports, there are already over 400 rooftop farms in the metropolis of Amman that grant people partial self-sufficiency (Whitman, 2013). In addition, the number of technical solutions such as aqua- or hydroponics, or projects following guidelines of permaculture is constantly increasing. However, these projects mainly address an academic middle and upper class from Amman and have little connection to the context of the camp.

Looking at the camp, as a result of the quantitative survey of the rooftop-farming project in Husn Camp, 5 out of 8 surveyed rooftop gardeners stated that they save a small amount of money due to their farming activities. It is obvious that a subsistence farm can lower some of the financial burden on the people in the camps and slowly reduce dependence on the national and global food market. In addition, through the research in the field, it became clear that people who cultivate and harvest their own fruit and vegetables develop a kind of consciousness that also leads to questioning habitual diet habits and to consume healthier food. Thus, especially in the field of *food*, the approach of urban agriculture offers good opportunities to tackle existing problems and negative dynamics.

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*fig. 67 - 72: Food distribution in
different camp communities
(own photographs)*

fig. 73: Garbage collection in Husn Camp (own photograph)

5.5 Waste

Camp and Jordan

UNRWA is responsible for waste disposal in the camp. Due to the ongoing funding crisis of the UN-agency, pick-ups are currently delayed, as UNRWA could not pay the loans for the necessary employees. According to Camp residents, however, this negative development has led to the formation of citizens' initiatives to counteract the rapid littering of the streets. From observation in the different Jordanian camps a picture emerged, which differs not too much from a *Jordanian* town. The roads and especially the gaps between buildings and abandoned areas are used for *private* waste disposal. As in the whole of Jordan, household waste is not separated. In Amman, in addition to the activities of various initiatives committed to reducing waste and to creating awareness, there has recently been an initial effort to insert a separation of waste into the discourse (Albawaba, 2017; My Amman Life, n.d.). It remains questionable whether this pilot project will have an impact beyond the rising middle and upper classes.

Urban agriculture

Whereas the overall waste situation in camps seems to worsen due to the UNRWA funding crisis, inside the rooftop farming projects a general interest to reuse waste was detected. In the surveyed rooftop farms in Husn Camp, half of the respondents were either interested in a collection of compost or had already started it.

The internet was cited as the main inspiration for composting processes. Especially in connection with agricultural production on the roofs, a separate collection of organic waste would generate synergy effects.

Research in the field also showed that the recycling and transformation of containers such as barrels, canisters or similar items has already been implemented on a small scale. Therefore, on the level of the camps, there are some indications for the direct recycling of resources, whereas large-scale projects such as a reasonable separation und recycling of household waste would first have to be initiated at the national level.

fig. 74: Greenhouse on a rooftop in Husn Camp (own photograph)

5.6 Sun and wind

Camp and Jordan

Due to the poor housing conditions and a lack of proper insulation in the camps, the majority of the households claim that their building are either too hot during the summer or too cold during winter (Khawaja, 2002, p. 131). In summer, the narrowness of the camp and the lack of open space create heat islands and a high level of fine-dust pollution. What applies to both the camp and the entire Jordan is that due to the increases in extreme heat and cold, drought and high dust pollution, the entire region is strongly affected by the consequences of climate change. Especially in combination with the chronic water shortage, which will be discussed below, there is a deterioration of living conditions, which naturally has a strong effect on precarious and spatially dense areas such as the camp.

While, mainly due to a lack of financial resources, no advantage can be gained from solar and wind energy at the camp level, efforts are certainly being made in this direction at the national level. According to reports, Jordan occupied third place worldwide in terms of renewable energy growth in 2018 (The Jordan Times, 2018 B).

Urban Agriculture

Observations in the field revealed that storms caused occasional damage to greenhouse structures exposed on the roof. Furthermore, through extreme heat the greenhouse loses its function and has to be replaced by shadings. The exposed position of the plants on the roof also leads to a high risk of drying out. Thus, the development of a suitable greenhouse on the roof faces a variety of climatic challenges that must be taken into account in order to maintain the sustainability of the project.

fig. 75: Self-made ventilation system for a greenhouse (own photograph) *fig. 76: Broken greenhouse due to wind (own photograph)*

fig. 77: Plastic water tank on a rooftop in Husn Camp (own photograph)

5.7 Rain- and fresh water

Camp

Within the Camp, the DPA is in charge of providing an adequate water supply infrastructure, whereas the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) is responsible for the overall water supply, water distribution and sanitation in Jordan. In Husn Camp, for example, 93 % of the dwellings are connected to the Jordanian water system (UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 40), which corresponds to the national average. Water tanks are refilled once a week, which is as well equivalent to the common practice in the whole country. Regarding this issue there are differences between the individual camps. The inhabitants of Jerash Camp complain about irregular water supply by the WAJ. This forces them to buy relatively expensive water from private companies.

Almost every household stores its water in plastic or metal tanks on the roof. However, families, who still have temporary roofing, such as zinc and asbestos, have little opportunity to store water due to the high structural density of their plot. In some cases, this results in water tanks being illegally placed in the streets. Depending on the camp, there is a big difference between how many percent of the inhabitants already have a concrete roof and those who still have a temporary roof. Whereas in Husn Camp the amount of people having a zinc roof lies at 10,9% (UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 39), numbers go up to 79% in Jerash Camp (Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme Jerash (ICIP), n.d.). Although water is a scarce resource, especially in hot months, there seems to be a potential to create further awareness for a more conscious use of water. Since some tanks are not equipped with overflow protection, it can be observed that on the day when the water tanks are filled up, a lot of lost water flows down the roofs and the streets.

All Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan are located in the northern part of the country, which is at the same time the most fertile part with the highest rainfall. A focus on rainwater harvesting as recyclable water resources would be sensible in all cases. In this context, it would be possible to actively use the hillside location of most camps to collect rainwater. However, heavy rainfall can become a threat, especially in the camp. Since most of the area is sealed without a system for rainwater drainage, increased rainfall leads to floods in the camp.

78

*fig. 78 - 87: Practices of water collection and water-saving irrigation systems
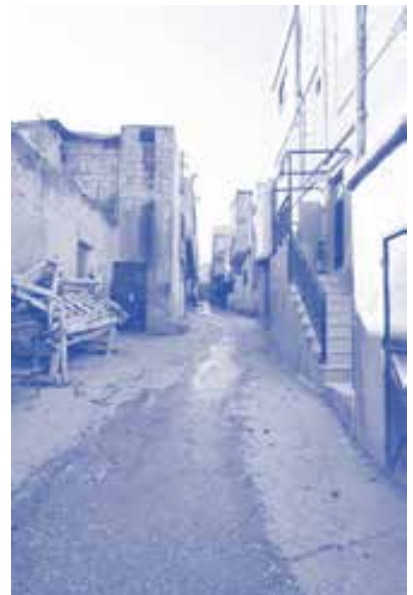(own photographs)*

79

80

81

Jordan

Jordan is one of the countries currently most affected by water scarcity. The situation will deteriorate in the future due to strong population growth, declining groundwater resources and the effects of climate change. (Mekonnen & Hoekstra, 2016).

According to own statements, the governmental WAJ and three companies (Miyahuna, Aqaba Water Company and Yarmouk Water Company) provide 98 % of Jordan's population with water. (WAJ Water Authority of Jordan, n.d.) Due to leaking water infrastructure, the percentage of lost water is more than half (51.3%) of the domestic water supply. (Ministry of Water and Irrigation, 2015, p.14).

Most of the water available is used for the agricultural sector (51 %), followed by the domestic sector (45 %). The industry demands the lowest water consumption (4 %). Since most of the water is used from the agricultural sector, it is interesting to see where these resources come from. Mostly the water used for irrigation is ground water (46 %), surface water (28 %) and treated wastewater (26 %). (Ministry of Water and Irrigation, 2015, p.10)

Urban Agriculture

The *quantitative survey* of this research in Husn Camp revealed, that two out of eight households suffer from water shortages for their greenhouses. Also, two of eight households mention the idea of collecting rainwater from the rain gutter but complain about lacking necessary knowledge. Three out of eight already collect rainwater for their greenhouses, which means that more than 60% do not yet make use of rainwater as a recyclable water resource. Consequently, they depend on already scarce water resources, which might make them perceive the rooftop farm as a burden.

Those camp inhabitants using rainwater developed creative and simple solutions for collection in order to be less dependent on state-regulated and limited water supply. Most of them use inexpensive recycled materials, which are left over from household waste or available at the nearest scrap yard. Empty yoghurt buckets or oil barrels are placed on the roof to collect rainwater directly. Another rare method discovered in the field is collecting the water through rain gutters.

The most commonly used irrigation technique is manual irrigation. In many greenhouses the water flowing through is collected below the plant bed and reused. Water-saving irrigation techniques such as hydroponics or aquaponics were only tried out sporadically but were quickly withdrawn. The lack and the high cost of nutrition or fish has been mentioned several times as a reason for early termination.

2% no access

98% access

fresh water access in Jordan

4% industrial

51% agricultural

45% domestic

water usage

26% treated waste water

28% surface water

46% ground water

type of water used in agriculture

51% un-revenue

49% revenue

un-revenue water

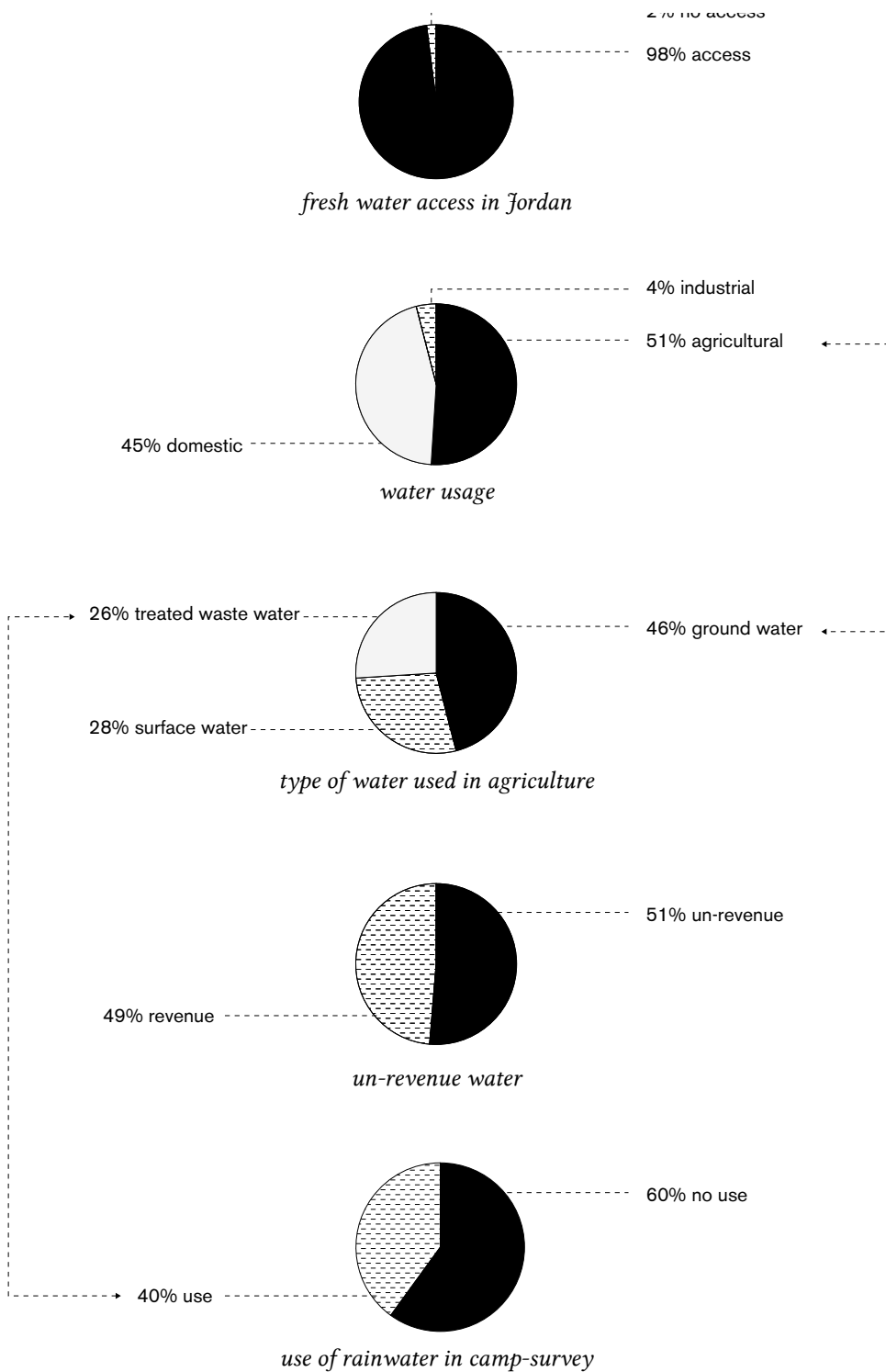60% no use

40% use

use of rainwater in camp-survey

fig. 88: Fresh water access, water usage, type of water used in agriculture, un-revenue in Jordan and use of rainwater in camp-survey (own illustration, data base: WAJ Water Authority of Jordan, n.d; Ministry of Water and Irrigation, 2015, p. 10 & 14)

fig. 89: Self-made waste water collection (own photograph)

5.8 Waste water

Camp

As well as for the water supply infrastructure, the DPA is also responsible for the sewage system. The operation of wastewater treatment plants is mainly the responsibility of the WAJ. Most of the camps visited during field research are almost fully connected to a sewage network. In Husn Camp, for instance, about 97 % of the inhabitants have access to this network (UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.), 2012, p. 40). Although, Husn Camp was upgraded with a closed sewage system in 2003, camp inhabitants still suffer from threats, such as floods and backflows. Missing awareness and knowledge of sewage infrastructure leads to blockages in pipes. Jerash Camp suffers the most from a partly missing sewage network, where grey water is drained away through open channels, which overflow especially during heavy rainfall. Even though most of the dwellings are connected to the sewage network, many households discharge their black water in percolation pits and septic tanks, causing negative effects on the groundwater.

Jordan

The WAJ provides 65 % of the Jordanian population with a wastewater network (Water Authority of Jordan, n.d.) and runs must of the wastewater treatment plants. Within its *National Water Strategy* Jordan emphasises to strengthen wastewater management and desalination (Ministry of Water and Irrigation, 2016). Treated wastewater is mainly reused for irrigation (91 %). However, this makes only around a quarter of the total amount of water used for irrigation in agriculture (26 %). Around half of the water used for irrigation is still groundwater (46 %). Therefore, a large potential lies in the use of treated wastewater in agriculture. (Ministry of Water and Irrigation, 2015)

Urban agriculture

The quantitative survey in Husn Camp showed generally a low interest in or knowledge about reusing wastewater, especially greywater. Only one out of eight interviewees reuses part of his wastewater. One interviewee explained, that five times a day, when he washes himself to go to the mosque for praying, he collects this water in a plastic bucket. He uses the collected water to irrigate plants on his rooftop farm, contributing to a large part of the necessary irrigation. The water used in ritual washing can be easily reused on an individual scale, whereas it could reduce dependencies on external water suppliers. Therefore, mosques offer a so far hardly used potential of water reuse. Five times a day, camp inhabitants

carry out their usual ritual washing, where hands, feet and the face are cleaned. As no soap is used, the water is only barely polluted and therefore still usable for irrigation or similar applications.

By identifying and discussing the different dynamics and flows, which are of particular importance in the field of urban agriculture, issues and potentials could be emphasized. In addition to the deterioration of the climate situation it also became clear that camps are predominantly dependent on the systems superior to them, and consequently the current scope for people to influence these dynamics and flows is small.
Their analysis has thus shown that in this context urban agriculture has a great potential to slowly reduce those dependencies and to at least partially decouple oneself from negative dynamics. On the other hand, it also becomes apparent that the scarcity of resources such as water, the high levels of density, the extreme weather conditions and inadequate financial resources of the inhabitants make urban farming practices significantly more challenging. That is why it is important to positively include the discussed dynamics and flows within projects in order to evaluate possibilities to turn supposed obstacles into synergies.

fig. 90: Self-made waste water collection
(own photograph)

2.2% no access
97.8% access
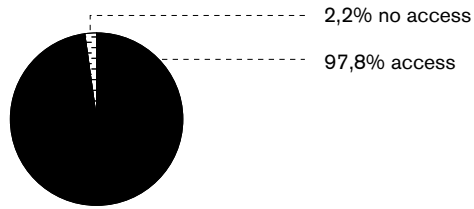
access to sewerage network in Husn Camp
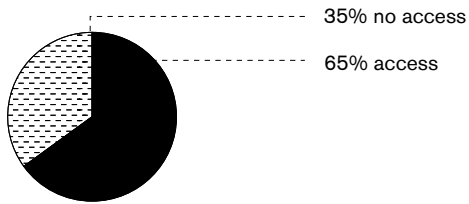
35% no access
65% access

Jordanian population provided with waste water network

7 litres / day
2,555 litres / year

average amount of water used for ablution per capita per day

fig. 91: Access to sewage network in Husn Camp, Jordanian population provided with waste water network and average amount of water used for ablution per capita per day (own illustration, data base: UNRWA (ed.) & Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (ed.),, 2012, p. 40; Water Authority of Jordan, n.d.; Mamun, A.A. & Mujibi, S.A., 2014, p. 561)

6
Development aid and power structures
(p. 124)

6 Development aid and power structures

6.1 Development aid

To approach the camp as a place where dynamics of development aid are of great importance, various actors are to be examined here that are of significance for the development of the camps in general and for the approximation of the question of research in particular. The selection of those actors is generated from fieldwork impressions and literature research regarding the predominant network of actors. It should be mentioned, that the following discussion and analysis of these development cooperation actors does not claim to be complete, since it is based on subjective observations from the field.

The actors operating in the context of Palestinian refugee camps can be roughly embedded in the following classification, whereby each category is précised by an exemplary actor:

- Transnational actors, such as UNRWA
- Governmental actors, such as the DPA
- Foreign governmental development agencies, such as GIZ
- NGOs, such as *Greening the Camps* (Jerash Camp)
- CBOs, such as sport clubs and WPCs

The topic of development aid and the various problems associated with it is a subject that is widely discussed and addressed in research. Issues such as the fact that mostly development aid cannot be conceived and evaluated by those who are the target of the aid, form the basis for dealing with this topic in the context of the camp. However, instead of a justified critique of the overall concept of development aid, this thesis will focus specifically on the context of the camp and the challenges arising from the interaction of the involved actors and the camp community. At this point of the thesis, firstly the role of organisations and institutions involved in the camp will be critically questioned and an overview of identified challenges will be outlined. This step is important because it provides insight into the structure of actors and discusses different agendas. The conflicts and contradictions, which

occurred mainly in the course of field research, are to be discussed in a condensed manner in order to derive conclusions regarding the space for action and possible pitfalls of external agents in the context of the camps. First of all, the authority of the firmly established actors UNRWA and DPA will be discussed. Whereas in the next part the challenges and problems of external agencies (like NGOs) in interactions with the community will be considered. Subsequently, the focus will be on the chronology of UNRWA's participation strategy in order to generate an overall picture of the relationship of this key actor with the community, which is intended to contribute to an understanding of current developments. In order to further approach the research subject of this master thesis, the instrument of the CIP will be addressed to critically examine the challenges and outcomes of such a process and to draw conclusions for community-based approaches.

Finally, the internal power structures within the camp community will be investigated, as an understanding of them is elementary for the work of external agents in the chosen context.

UNRWA and DPA as key actors in Palestinian refugee camps

UNRWA is undeniably the most present and decisive stakeholder in the Palestinian refugee camps. From its beginnings as an agency for the rapid economic reintegration of the Palestinian refugees, however, the decreasing likelihood of a return of the refugees, which became apparent over time, led UNRWA to establish itself primarily as a quasi-governmental actor and thus also as a provider of social services (Al Husseini and Bocco, 2009, p. 267). The agency's tasks include education, health, micro-financing, social services and the upgrading of the infrastructure of the camps.

UNRWA's administrative control over the camp and the Palestinian refugees, a large majority of whom are Jordanian citizens, was complemented by the authority of the governmental DPA, which was established by the Jordanian government in 1988. The DPA deals exclusively with the matters of the camps and adds to UNRWA, especially in infrastructural matters (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 12f). UNRWA and DPA in particular, exercise control over the internal and external activities in the camp. For example, at least theoretically every visit of a foreign actor to the camp, especially if it is part of a possible development aid project, must be registered and authorised by the DPA. After the transnational UNRWA was able to decide almost exclusively on the administrative issues of the camps for many years, the creation of the DPA added a governmental body that brought back responsibility and in

particular control to the national authorities. The Jordanian government's fear of losing control of the camps is certainly also a consequence of the events of the Black September and the subsequent changes in the way the camps are handled. (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 12f) A part of the DPA mandate is to capture concerns of the camp population. For this reason, camp services committees to discuss and pass on community projects and camp residents' concerns were established. However, the fact that this committee is not legitimized by a democratic election shows the government's reluctance to allow a possible political opposition in the camps (Al Husseini, 2010, p. 13). Inside the camp, people argued that: "the people [DPA] who are in charge of the people [the Palestinians] here in Jordan, I don't think that they know what the people need in the camp, especially in the camps" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). The general feeling of being neglected by the state and the authorities is therefore predominant. It is important to understand that almost nothing is possible in the camp without the agreement of these two key actors. The strong authority, coupled with a large bureaucratic apparatus, slows down and exercises control of development processes. As an external agent, there is no other way than to deal with UNRWA and DPA at an early stage in order to carefully embed possible projects into their existing agendas.

Communication problems of external agents

In cooperation with UNRWA, actors such as the German GIZ also play an important role in at least some camps in Jordan. The project FASPAR (Facilitating Social Participation of Palestinian Refugees) aims to ensure social participation of refugees in the development and arrangement of their camp. The main focus is on supporting community led projects and initiatives to improve living conditions in the camps (GIZ, n.d.). In the context of this programme, the case-study of rooftop farms in Husn Camp will be discussed in detail later in this thesis. This rooftop farming project in Husn Camp was externally assessed as a success both by GIZ and by the responsible persons of the camp community, as a large group of interested people had formed and successfully established over twenty rooftop farms. The fact that only roughly half of these farming structures are still being used, as will be explained in detail later in this thesis, impressively shows the gap between the propagated project result and the actual reality. In this context, a fear and a careful consideration of the risks of communicating criticism of the project to the hierarchically superior donors can be seen. As Garikipati and Olsen (2008, p. 334) note, this very phenomenon of the distorted representation of a situation often occurs also in connection with researchers, which is caused by the concern that these external agents could as well exert their influence to the disadvantage of the interviewees.

Disparity of agendas

A frequent topic to be found in the interviews during the field research was differences in the vision and idea of the overall agenda of development aid. The work of NGOs or agencies like GIZ was often associated with workshops or other rather small interventions that would have little impact on the camp environment. "And that's really frustrating, because all these NGOs and all this money coming in and out, all these things I never saw anything in real life. They do workshops. I love workshops, but there is no outcome. When you give like 40 male a communication skills workshop and what next?" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Al Husseini (Interview 2018) also states that: "Construction is better, because people want to see difference." He critically refers to the pilot projects, which are often set up for short periods of time: "And when you talk to refugees and refugee committees and with the governments, they say: 'Enough. We understand that for years it was impossible to do anything in the camp, but now enough of this pilot projects, that stopped, because there is no sustainability. So, do it. Go for it and do it'" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). What Al Husseini also alludes to here is a slow shift in the camp's perspective from an untouchable place of political struggle for a *right of return* to a place where the inhabitants of the camp "[...] want to see real change. Because they stopped to believe in the *right of return* (...) since 2000" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). So even though there is constant influx of investment into the camps, there seem to be quite different visions of what development aid could achieve, which may also be related to the problems of exchange and articulation of these different objectives cited above. The director of the camp-based organisation Karama also drastically recommends: "Don't work in other agenda. Work in your agenda to succeed." and problematises the fact, "[t]hat we run after the donors. Asking what they want, we work in their agenda, no matter of the result" (Interview Al Haj, 2018). In many areas there tends to be disappointment about the progress and outcomes of development cooperation, which is often associated with short terms and mellow methods, which, however, in the eyes of many people involved in the camp, have hardly been able to bring any structural change. Especially as an external agent it is important to evaluate to what extent the contents of projects fit the agenda of the residents .and whether certain formats have worn out in the course of decades of development aid agencies' work and their suitability needs to be questioned.

Expertise of the community in dealing with development aid

In Palestinian camps, there is also the particular situation that the camp inhabitants have been familiar with the mechanisms of development aid for decades and are well aware of their role vis-à-vis the donors. This not only leads to the already mentioned fear of communicating problems directly, but also to the knowledge of how to benefit the most from projects individually. Al Husseini (Interview, 2018) narrows down the situation and questions the often-used concept of empowerment: "You post-colonialist, [...] why not empower this poor people. This poor people are empowered, but in a specific way. They know all the tricks, they are super smart. They have been dealing with (...) UNRWA from the start - for years. They know how it works. But they know the constraints they have - their own constraints. [...] They have their own man. They have their own institutions and they have their own agenda, which is not GIZ agenda at all" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018). In addition, the many years of aid provided to refugees by external donors has slowed down self-initiative, as the services and projects received are often perceived as a gift for which no own contribution is required. A camp resident from Talbiyeh thinks that "[i]t is a good thing that you give money for the camp because you need to, you know, make it a sustainable place and you know to generate a new smart generation, like independent people. But it's in reverse. People start to feel lazy, not working, just waiting for funds and you know, act sweet to the people who give funds" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). While the staff of the operating humanitarian agencies changed constantly, the people who are the declared target of these interventions remain the same. On the one side there is the constant loss of knowledge and the possible lack of self-reflection, on the other side there is certain knowledge elaborated over generations. The nevertheless constant hierarchical relation between *provider* and *recipient* makes cooperation considerably more difficult, as the consolidation of these positions, oppose a cooperation on an equal level.

Admittedly, the discussion of the above points can only cover a small part of the debate on the role of development aid, since it draws largely on the experience gained in field research and attempts to summarise this knowledge in an application-oriented manner as a basis for discussion. The remarks and summary of conflicts made above clearly show that a reasonable work in the context of a Palestinian refugee camp requires a lot of time to understand structures and above all to build the necessary trust that seems to have been lost in the course of the decades-long relationship. While it is equally important to approach local agendas and learn from mistakes made in past projects, the necessary reconciliation of project content and objectives with the UNRWA and DPA agenda is an additional factor.

Especially in view of the problems and conflicts listed here, it may at first seem a logical consequence to refrain from any activity in order to avert further damage. The fact that this work nevertheless deals with the possible *room for manoeuvre* by external agents is mainly due to the fact of the continuity of development cooperation projects. For this very reason it is important to take time for a reflection and a profound discussion on the forms of interventions so as to make sustainable use of the resources that are in any case flowing in.

UNRWA's genealogy of participation

As the last chapter already outlined how a hierarchical relation between *provider* and *recipient* tend to make cooperation considerably more difficult, the following paragraphs focus on dynamics in shifting these thinking patterns towards stakeholder participation.

At this point, the key actor UNRWA and its various strategies for the participation of camp residents will be reviewed. Thanks to Rempel's procedural study (2009), insights can be gained into how UNRWA, as an important actor in development aid, is gradually developing its strategy for cooperation with the camp community and what implications this has for participatory planning approaches in the present. It is important to comprehend UNRWA's shift in thinking the term refugee participation, since UNRWA itself is one key player when it comes to developing and realising development aid projects. Finally, an example of the latest UNRWA paradigm, the integration of new participatory planning method, namely CIP will be discussed.

The overall development of refugee participation by UNRWA can be roughly divided into four individual phases: participation in economic reintegration (1940s+50s), participation in service delivery (1960s +70s), participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (1980s+90s) and stakeholder participation (until now).

The initial strategy of participation in the frame of economic reintegration in the host countries aimed for a quick reintegration of Palestinians in the

1940s 1950s

participation in economic reintegration

▽

1960s 1970s

participation in service delivery

▽

1980s 1990s

participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

▽

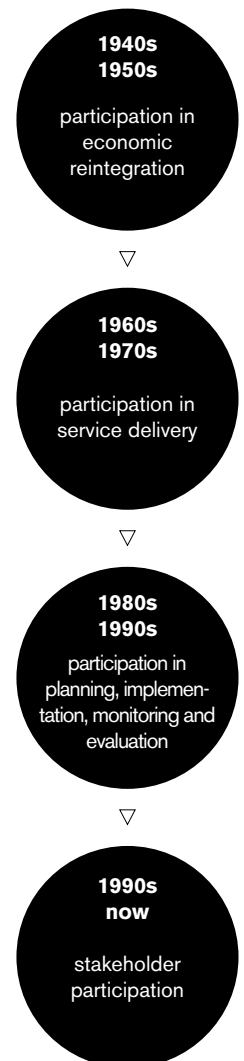**1990s now**

stakeholder participation

fig. 92: UNRWA's genealogy of participation (own illustration, data base: Rempel, 2009)

labour market. Many refugees feared this form of reintegration was rather an interim goal on the way to their permanent resettlement, which denied their *right of return.* As a result, UNRWA's first years of operation were accompanied by protest actions, petitions and attacks of the refugees towards the agency. (Rempel, 2009, p. 418ff.)

The first rather integrative attempt towards participation was to be found in the shift to participation in the agency's service delivery. For the first time, refugees were given the opportunity to participate in the administration and implementation of UNRWA's main programmes. In fact, it was more about taking part in programmes than actually participating in decision-making processes, as hierarchical structures continued to exist and particularly senior positions with essential decision-making and administrative powers were still held by foreigners. By integrating refugees into its main areas of responsibility, UNRWA became one of the camp's largest employers (Rempel, 2009, p. 420ff.).

The second move approaching a horizontal relation between UNRWA and the refugee community is summed up as participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. One resulting phenomenon is the emergence of CBOs. Especially through the constitution and the provision of a physical and programmatic space within the WPCs participation and self-determination of women was fostered. (Rempel, 2009, p. 425ff.)

Despite UNRWAs seemingly ambitious above-mentioned process towards more participation, it was still a small group of international staff, which was entitled in decision-making. In its last step towards a horizontalisation of its relationship with the camp community, UNRWA defines the term stakeholder participation as „an active, free and meaningful participatory partnership between UNRWA and its stakeholders, and in particular, [the Agency's] primary stakeholders, the Palestine refugees" (Rempel, 2009, p. 432). The approach of stakeholder participation should recognise the right of the refugee community to be part of the decisions affecting their reality. This should include not only the possibility to articulate and prioritise their needs, but also the possibility to recognise and determine their own scope of action. Regarding the relationship between UNRWA and the camp community, this could mean that cooperation happens mutually, decisions are made collectively and responsibility is taken in a shared manner. (Rempel, 2009, p. 432ff.)

UNRWAs ongoing shift in decision-making processes is supplemented by the application of integrative planning tools, such as the CIP. In the following part, the potential and limits of such an approach in the context of the camp will be discussed in more detail.

CIP as bottom-up approach in the urban development of camps

The chapter aims to introduce the CIP as a tool for integrated planning in the context of the Palestinian refugee camps. Beyond, it should give an insight into the inner logic of the CIP and the methods proposed in the Camp-Improvement Manual, which constitutes the conceptual background of the CIP. Moreover, the argumentation follows the helpful research of Al Nammari (2013), as she evaluated the CIP process in Talbiyeh Camp to understand and define the major challenges and limits of grassroot participation within community-based projects.

What are the main objectives of the CIP?

The CIP is an integrated, strategic and comprehensive planning tool, which is trying to introduce a bottom-up process in refugee camps, in which the refugee community is included in the planning. It was first tested in 2007 and has constantly been developed. With the goal to work out a common five-year vision, the CIP should tackle the camps' urgent problems like substandard living conditions, infrastructural issues and poverty. Nevertheless, it is deliberately emphasised that camp improvement does not mean to change the political status of Palestinian refugees or their *right of return*. In order to include all stakeholders into the planning process the CIP "functions as a spatial coordination and steering tool, which helps to better synergise the actions of all stakeholders, avoid fragmentation and improve the medium and long-term impact of measures with the overall goal of building a sustainable urban environment, in which refugees can live with dignity." (Laue, 2012, p. 14).

As there hasn't yet been any formalised body on the side of the camp community, which has participated in planning processes on behalf of the camp community the CIP proposes a new mechanism, called *Working Group*, which brings together representatives of the refugee community and UNRWA staff." As the central joint decision-making platform, it seeks to transform what was once a hierarchical relationship between the provider of humanitarian assistance and relief (UNRWA) and the beneficiaries (camp residents) into an eye-level partnership" (Laue, 2012, p. 2).

Challenges of the CIP process

The following paragraph summarises the findings of the urban consultant and researcher Fatima Al Nammari and is partly complemented with own experiences during field research. A theoretical model of power typologies will be applied later in the chapter 6.2 *Power structures*, as this chapter aims not to differentiate and analyse typologies of power and how they intertwine but will provide a basic understanding of what main challenges community-based planning faces.

**Excursus: What is the *Camp-Improvement Manual*
and which methods does it propose?**

This excursus is intended to provide an opportunity to gain a closer insight into the structure and concept of the camp improvement strategy. The *Camp-Improvement Manual* proposes working methods and intends to support the implementation of integrative planning processes in the camp. Thus, the manual establishes a basis in which strategic documents such as the CIP can be embedded.

1 Initial Contact and Formation of the Working Group in "the Hub"

2 Integrated Needs Assessment

3 Integrated diagnosis and camp priority list

4 Comprehensive Planning: The Camp Improvement Plan

5 Action Plan (Implementation Plan, Funding Plan, Project Design)

6 Implementation Management

7 Ensuring Sustainability

The *Camp-Improvement Manual* was developed within the context of a cooperation between UNRWA, the *Institute of Urban Planning / University of Stuttgart* and a local Research Team. It was funded by the *European Commission*. The manual addresses institutional actors like UNRWA, host government representatives and donor representatives as well as NGOs and any individual who is interested. (Misselwitz et. al., n.d.)

Phase 1 and the initial contact will quickly lead to the formation of a **Working Group**, which will be the hub for discussion and decision-making. The composition of the Working Group should represent all major **community groups**, be gender balanced and include a mix of all ages and generations.

Phase 2 takes place within **focus groups**, beyond the framework of Working Group sessions. Within the process of integrated needs assessment, existing resources and capacities are mapped, needs are participatively identified and local camp initiatives and institutions are surveyed.

Phase 3 focuses on analysing and synthesising the previously collected data during the integrated needs assessment. The expected outcome consists of an Integrated Diagnosis, which gives an overview of existing potentials and challenges, as well as a **Camp Priority List.** A Camp Priority List contains all key needs, which shall then be addressed during the follow-up process.

Phase 4 describes a process of discussion and negotiation, addressing the issues carved out and evaluated in the previous steps. The expected outcome the **CIP (Camp Improvement Plan)**, which consists of an *Urban Improvement Plan* and a *Community Development Programme.*

Phase 5 aims to produce an **Action Plan**, which should bridge the gap between previous insights and a concrete agenda for implementation. Concrete tasks and challenges are the development of a project concept, budgeting, finding donors and developing implementation plans.

Phase 6 aims implementation processes. Any internal or external actor can be responsible for the **project implementation**, as long as they work in accordance with the previously developed objectives. The Working Group mainly focuses on the monitoring of the implementation.

Phase 7 describes the process of **monitoring** and **evaluating implemented projects** in order to gain insights for further camp improvement processes and to prepare the establishment of a responsible camp management structure.

(Misselwitz et. al., n.d.)

Al Nammari gives a hands-on insight into challenges that could likely occur during community-based planning, especially in a context where processes of decision-making follow rather non-democratic patterns. Al Nammari claims that time and authority are the most important variables for the success of possible interventions. (Al Nammari, 2013)

a. Authority

Although the camp improvement process and its organs use a wide span of different methods to foster a participative approach to planning, Al Nammari sees the Working Group, a *participative forum*, as the centrepiece of this process. Thus, also many local conflicts are represented, as the Working Group "is composed of local leaders, heads of organisations, active youth and elders, women, men, and is open to all interested parties. The Working Group is, as such, the locus of conflicts and power struggles that took place in the project" (Al Nammari, 2013, p. 227).

In her evaluation of the CIP process in Talbiyeh Camp, Al Nammari describes examples in which decision-making and lobbying was rather held behind closed doors, only including of select range of actors, who tried to limit grassroot participation in order to push their own interests. By using and reproducing vertical power structures, powerful actors attempt to undermine horizontal power structures, to be built within the camp improvement process. In this context, relations with government representatives are also used to assert the own interests. Al Nammari states that "some pointed out that some local leaders mobilised vertically with government bodies against the Working Group as a potential threat to local stability should they be empowered" (Al Nammari, 2013, p. 229).
Community-based planning is still subject to the power of local elites, who still understand themselves as the only actors authorised to make decisions and who are therefore resistant to any kind of democratic decision-making. Al Nammari resumes, that "existing power structures may allow the planning stage to advance in an inclusive manner, but implementation of such plans may not take place as such powers may resolve to undermine to the point of violence to prevent that" (Al Nammari, 2013, p. 228).

b. Time

Besides the aspects of authority and power structures Al Nammari mentions a second main challenge, which has a significant influence on the community-based projects: The aspect of time.

For Al Nammari it is essential that "in practical terms, a community needs many years and several successive interventions to change existing cultural practices and norms, especially deeply rooted misconceptions related to gender roles and power structures which are part of regular community dynamics. As such, time is an important factor that is often undermined due to the systematic development processes that are based on deadlines and measurable indicators" (Al Nammari, 2013, p. 230). Already in the general set-up of the camp, time limits play an important role in containing long-term changes, considering that UNRWA's mandate has to be renewed regularly, and the camp itself still embodies a temporality (see chapter 4.3 *Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality*).

Al Husseini (Interview, 2018) came to a similar conclusion like Al Nammari, perceiving time as a major variable: "In Talbiyeh, for instance, for the first time ever the GIZ was able to convene meetings, including youth, female and male youth. Something inconceivable. But [...] they went to see the parents - no harm. So the parents said, „Okay. If you (...) if it is about training. If it help them get a job. Why not?" But it was a revolution [...] it is very difficult to turn the whole structure. It is a matter of generations. Generational thing as well [...] The new generation is a bit different - the next one will be different. But, it won't be you, it won't be us. I could be (...) it will be society in 50 years. But you have no other choice." (Interview Al Husseini, 2018).

Both positions show that *time* as an important factor leading to successful projects, contradicts with the temporality of the camp and rather short project set-ups of aid projects. *Community-based planning* is clearly a worthwhile and sustainable approach, yet based on the planning practice of the global North, trying to achieve a lot within a short time and in a context, which is not used to democratic structures and decision making.

UNRWA's shift towards greater involvement of the camp community and the adoption of instruments such as the CIP can first and foremost be seen as a fundamentally progressive step. However, the real effects of the paradigm shift must be viewed critically. The CIP as a planning instrument is obviously derived from the guidelines of integrated urban development including the conception of urban development plans (in this case the CIP), which are frequently used in the global north. Whether and how successful the adaptation of a planning tradition of the global north can be in the context of a Palestinian refugee camp, cannot be answered in the context of this work. However, it was remarkable that numerous discussions with camp residents revealed the impression that the CIP is hardly known or at least currently (2018) doesn't play a major role. Asking one inhabitant from Talbiyeh camp,

who was engaged in several projects of the GIZ and runs his own CBO, if he had heard about a format called CIP, he answered: „I never read it, but I saw the email" (Interview Mohammed, 2018).

Through the own experiences in the field paired with helpful analysis of Al Nammari, it becomes clear which limits and obstacles the CIP faces as an attempt to involve the entire community in the camp development. The question of time and duration of processes has a different, sometimes unpredictable dimension in the camp, as described above. In addition, there is the reproduction of local power structures in the central organ *Working Group*, which impressively shows the influence of local elites in the camp and has the potential to slow down, if not even prevent, many processes. Since the basic understanding of these local power structures is elementary for acting as external agents, these are systematically examined in the following chapter and enriched with own experiences.

6.2 Power structures

„In the camp everybody's fighting" (Interview Mohammed, 2018)

In order to realistically integrate a potential project into an existing and complex network of power structures within a community, it is necessary to gain an understanding of their logic. Therefore, the data we collected during our field research is used as a basis. These findings, mainly gained through participating observation and narrative interviews, are then structured following VeneKlasen and Miller's (2002) classification of the visibility of power. The classification of observation results is conducted from an external point of view and contains only spotlights and individual aspects, which should however give an insight into the different dimensions of power, that exist in the camp. The analysis and clustering of these observations aims to approximate the situation of a potential external agent, involved in community-based implementations.

Thereby the main focus is to approach an understanding of power based on visibility. In this case the adaptation of the *Power Cube's* of VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), which they applied in their *Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, is used. It contains a classification into *Visible Power*, *Hidden Power* and *Invisible Power*, which has proven to be helpful.

As it is summed up:

"Visible powers are powers that can be observed by the public, usually the power of the state and its laws. Such power can be corrupt if biased, non-transparent, monopolized, or non-democratic.

Hidden Power refers to powerful lobbies and organizations that impact decision-making but are not visible. They are the powers that work behind closed doors.

The third is the Invisible Power, which has power over people's minds. Through social processes, structures, and systems the location and role of people and groups is assigned in certain ways and it shapes people's beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of their own superiority or inferiority" (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, pp. 39).

Furthermore, VeneKlasen and Miller outline, that without the existence of alternative models, unequal power relationships and non-democratic structures will constantly be repeated and reproduced by the community itself. (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002)

DPA as an example for *Visible Power*

As already introduced in the previous part of the research, the DPA, as a direct government institution, has been influencing the camps since its establishment in 1988. At this point, the DPA is to be examined as an actor of the category *Visible Power*, in order to classify observations and thus gain a better understanding of the category as such.

Lack of trust and corruption

The DPA is perceived as an external governmental agent in the camp. Thus, as a representative body for the Palestinian community the DPA has an interest in maintaining the camp as a symbol for the *right of return* and the Palestinian case. As a consequence, the DPA renders the maintenance of the status quo in the camp as a common interest to be pursued. The conflict lies in the fact, that this supposed common interest partly stands in contrast to the interest of internal individuals or as well external aid organisations.

For example, this conflict became visible is the project "Colour-Up", which was implemented by the GIZ in Husn Camp. The project idea to paint house facades in bright colours, can

fig. 93: Political street art in Husn camp (own photograph)

fig. 94: Colour-up project in Husn Camp (own photograph)

be briefly summarised under the term beautification. Various actors who were consulted during the research were concerned critically with this project. The process of the approach was described by interviewees as follows: When GIZ proposed this project, DPA initially refused it, arguing that colouring would transform the camp into a nice neighbourhood and therefore question the camp as symbol. Eventually the DPA agreed upon a use of muted colours, such as beige, white and grey. Today, in fact, a few painted house facades in pastel shades are to be found in the camp. (Interview Al Husseini, 2018) According to interviewees, in the above-mentioned exemplary project an agreement was reached especially due to non-transparent and to some respects seemingly corrupt procedures. The suspicion often reinforced with rumours is omnipresent in camp.

Through its governmental entitlement the DPA is a central negotiating agent for aid organisations, whose interests and incentives need to be considered. A camp inhabitant reports from his perspective: "And when we go to the DPA topic, they wanna, you know, make a collaboration between GIZ for example and DPA. They always take them, every two weeks to Mariott Hotel, you know, having a fancy workshop with a free day stay in the hotel and then go back. That's how to make a, you know, cooperated work with DPA. Just spend money on them" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Such statements should explicitly not be used to denounce possible corruption, but rather be used to show that intransparent and exclusive, but still *visible* modes of decision-making processes create naturally a feeling of inequality, mistrust and unfair treatment among camp inhabitants.

Control over space and property

The control of space and real estate in the camp is another visible aspect of the DPA's power in the camp. In the dense urban structure of the camp, according to the residents, DPA properties

are vacant and thus deprive the camp of urgently needed space. Mohammed (Interview, 2018) reports about such a space in an interview: "There is something called [unidentifiable word in Arabic], that's a religious thing, [...]They come to centres and give them money and they will spread it around people. That place never opened. Like three floors of buildings, never opened. Only in Ramadan. [...] So, a lot of empty spaces, big spaces and nobody is using it" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Camp inhabitants perceive the DPA's or DPA individuals' authority over the distribution of space as problematic: "It should be for the camp, not for somebody. And that is my problem too. Like the DPA is controlling everything. And the headquarter of the DPA is owning everything. Not the DPA as DPA. You know? People is not using anything from the DPA, just him. Renting and buying, selling (...) So that's basically what we should try to solve, differently" (Interview Mohammed, 2018).

Additionally, the DPA has the power to evict camp-inhabitants from their houses. Just recently (2018) camp-inhabitants in Talbiyeh Camp reported of a family being evicted from their house: "So do you remember the old man and woman who has this kind of trees in their house? The family who has the biggest tree in the camp?

Anyway, the DPA took their house 'cos they own it." (Mohammed 2018, pers. comm., 12 April 2018). It is important to note that the *Visible Power* of actors like the DPA also affects the constitution and distribution of space and thus represents a clear spatial hierarchy that the camp community tends to oppose to rather powerlessly.

fig. 95: DPA members in Talbiyeh Camp (own photograph)

Control over external access

The DPA has not only the power to decide over space, but also the power to deny or grant access and thus to decide, who is allowed to get in contact with to the camp community. As mentioned in chapter 6.1 *Development aid* every external visitor in the camp must obtain an access permit, arbitrarily issued by the DPA. Paradoxically, we have used these arbitrary power structures to our advantage. At each camp we tried to get the oral support of a local DPA official, by visiting and drinking tea with them. The practice of drinking tea has proven to be a kind of door-opener, which enabled us to move alone and independently in the camp at any time. This tactic has proven to be time-saving and effective. If we had waited for an official permission from the DPA headquarters for every single visit, we would have collected much less data and gained a rather superficial and selected insight of the camp.

CBOs as an example for *Hidden Power*

Nepotism

As outlined in *Development of the physical structure of the camp* in chapter 4.3 *Development from camp to town: a balancing act between physical manifestation and protracted temporality* many of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, especially Husn Camp and Talbiyeh Camp are referred to as tribal camps, where strongly practiced social values and traditions play an important role. Al Nammari outlines how tribal structures are linked to power and states that "locals perceive those elites as powerful due to their networks of contacts, thus strive to create their own networks for empowerment. This perpetuates a culture of nepotism that is widespread in Jordan at large, and was influential in the creation of many of the local organizations" (Al Nammari, 2013, p. 227).

The head of the West Bank based CBO *Karama* explains the difficulty of understanding and classifying the use of nepotism in projects and how this influences trust building. "[T]hat's the only issue in [...] NGO's work, that they hire people from inside the camp. Like if you hire someone from inside the camp, then know that there is, you know "He's my cousin, I will give him", "He's my brother". And if you hire somebody from outside the camp he don't know how to deal with the people inside the camp. So, the only way to work with the people inside the camp is to make a research, how to deal with them before you come to [...] You need to think about it before you go. And that's what they don't do. They just go and just put money and people is just clapping for them" (Interview Al Haj, 2018).

fig. 96: Clan premises in Husn Camp
(own photograph)

A similar difficulty can be found in another case study. In one of the case studies, four CBOs had the opportunity to apply for the realisation of self-initiated projects. A member of the CBO was selected as project manager. Within the first phase 24 rooftop farms were implemented on private roofs. After researching on how the project participants were selected, it turned out that the project manager had mainly chosen friends or family members. This selection process is probably not very surprising, since only one person is managing an entire project. This procedure excludes a large part of the camp community from the project and consequently leads to a sense of exclusion, deprivation and rejection on the side of the camp community, who have no access to the project (anymore). A former project participant expressed his displeasure: "He is the manager. He is the manager by the force. He throw me out, without any (...)" (Interview Anonymous, 2018). In his perspective people got access to the project by relations to the project manager. Instead, the interviewee asks that "you must find persons in carefully, not by relations" (Interview Anonymous, 2018).

People in the camps are deeply rooted in social systems such as the tribes, in which they are classified according to their place of origin in Palestine. In addition, there are large, strong family structures which, like the tribes, are difficult to grasp from the outside. It is difficult to estimate how much influence this kind of social entity has, but the observations and experiences mentioned here make it clear that nepotism is a natural consequence of such a social structure and must always be considered when talking about the participation of the community as a whole.

Inter-institutional conflicts

Internal conflicts do not only occur between individuals, but also between institutions in the camp. A camp-inhabitant reports that there were "a lot of institutions but they hate each other. Even in Husn it's the same. Even in Jerash, everybody, they hate each other. Like, really bad. I don't know why. It's just like they are trying to ruin up their, everything" (Interview Mohammed, 2018).

An incident in Talbiyeh Camp can be seen as an example for this kind of conflict. A group of male youth had founded a CBO that offers music lessons for male and female youth in the camp. Initially they got a space inside the local WPC. When a conflict emerged between the two institutions, their music studio was taken from them without negotiation and they had to re-establish it in another building. What were possible reasons for this conflict? Two main reasons could be derived from the on-site research: a.) one party might think, that the other's work is worth less and b.) the conflict may be intensified because of gene-

rational and gender issues. One member of the youth CBO explains: "We get fund like, we buy the stereo for 12,000 and the film making equipment, all these things [...] from (funded by) GIZ. And the woman centre is always looking at us, looking down at us, like: 'why you giving them all this money, we are doing better than them'" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Also, on the other side there is scepticism or disregard for the work of others, expressed by the following quote: "That's why we didn't accept like the rooftop in our building. Because they wanna decorate the rooftop and that's like spending money [...] so we were like, okay, we can use the money to buy instruments for the kids or new recording place or something like that" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Mohammed (2018) described the reasons for the eviction as follows: "They didn't want the youth to control the centre, because they are really old and they have been there since 1995 and they don't want the girls and boys to be together and things like that. So, we were against that and we wanted to be like, you know, having our own personality, not following things and following orders from whoever, like woman centre or GIZ or anybody. So, they kicked us out the centre" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). Later, the youth CBO reported that they were partially denied access to their technical equipment, which was stored in the WPC. The WPC was in this case the more established organisation with control over the building. This enabled the WPC to prevent access to technical resources for the youth CBO and later to even displace them from the WPC building. The WPC saw traditional values, such as boys and girls being trained separately, endangered and tried to maintain these values by exercising its power as an established institution in the camp.

This type of lobby-based exercise of power and the emergence of internal competition between different organisations is particularly encouraged by the scarcity of space and financial resources. Conflicts, like the one discussed above, are resolved behind closed doors and often remain *hidden*, especially for an external point-of-view. Conflicts over decision-making or the distribution of space and money are often based on social values, which the superior lobby sees as the norm. The enforcement of these values often results in the exercise of *Invisible Power*, which is particularly effective on the vulnerable groups in the camp.

The role of women as an example for *Invisible Power*

The effects of this invisible form of power are particularly noticeable in questions of gender and acceptance of new models tackling the prevailing norm. Thereby also the spatial configuration of the camp plays a role. For female refugees who grew up in Palestinian villages

before 1948, for instance, the relation with public space was more familiar than it is now: "Our grandmothers were cooking outside together, singing folklore songs while harvesting the crops and doing other things without hearing any comment from anybody" (Hamouz, Turshan, 2013, p.61). Yet, the spatial configuration of the Palestinian refugee camps does not derive from a traditional Palestinian village layout but follows principles of temporality and emergency-sheltering. Especially for women, the top-down planned structure of the camp provides only limited amount of open space accessibly for women.

The social role of women in the Arab world is produced, reproduced and controlled primarily by male family. These values are taught from the beginning in education, and female as well as male children are introduced to their prescribed roles early on. In the words of one camp-inhabitant "[t]he kids grow up like you have only your sister and you need to take care of her and you need to protect her from other guys and you are not allowed to touch any other girl" (Interview Mohammed, 2018).

Most women in camps are not only limited in the organisation or determination of their own life and daily routine but are also given different rights than men. A CBO manager tries to explain this imbalance by stating that if "you are a man and you are in love and you are [...] a lucky man. But if a girl falls in love with someone, she's bitch. Or a whore or whatever" (Interview Al Haj, 2018). He also argues that the problem lies in the structure of society, which is currently determined by men: "Would she be able to go outside the house without asking my permission? No. No! [...] For two reason. Because I am the male who decide (...) or because she have not self- (...) confidence, to decide to do it. Then, where is the problem? Is it with her? Or with me? It's with me. It's the society the problem" (Interview Al Haj, 2018). The practiced superiority by male over female represents a risk for community-based projects in the camp in so far as that women are more likely to be excluded and denied access to these projects.

The NGO *Greening The Camps* had to experience exactly such a case while working in Jerash Camp, where they had just implemented a rooftop garden on a vocational school. As a target group they explicitly chose women. Each woman should receive a test bed to get to grips with the topic of greening. The fact that women would enter a building potentially used by men caused commotion. The women's husbands or male family members immediately forbade their wives to enter the rooftop garden, thus denying them the opportunity to participate in the project. However, if they were not denied participating in such projects, women seemed to be more motivated, provided that these projects open up new opportunities for them. Having the possibility to engage in an accepted space, they are being given the freedom to participate in projects outside of their private space. Activities such as sitting

in shisha-cafés or drinking tea in (semi)public spaces are largely reserved for men.

Al Husseini acknowledges that structural change requires lengthy processes and sees an opportunity in the current generational changes. He sees the reason for this in the fact, that "(m)any of these [camps], and especially Husn and Talbiyeh are very - they call them tribal camps. Where social values, traditions are still very vivid and important, even among the young. So, who are these people, who come and wants to do meeting with the young, with the women? Come on! No to mean, that it doesn't work some time. Some time it changes things. […] It is a matter of generations" (Al Husseini, 2018). At this point, a parallel to the conflict between the WPC and the youth-CBO can be drawn. Where a new young generation tries to at least partially dissolve hardened values, it encounters actors whose main interest is to continue, secure and exercise exactly these values. A youth-CBO member reports that this conflict was not only between institutions, but also within their own families: "The girls-boys-thing is fine now, but not hundred percent fine. But yeah, they are getting used to it. But in the beginning, it was like shit. Our families were pushing us to quit" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). However, it is also important to note that actors such as the WPC reproduce this clear social separation between genders as well to some extent. As in the example of the expulsion of the CBO from the WPC in Talbiyeh discussed above, the mixing of genders served as a reason for critique and leaded finally even to an eviction.

Gender issues are highly topical and contested in the camp and can quickly endanger entire projects, as in the case of *Greening The Camps*. A sensitive approach to actors and their social structure are therefore basic prerequisites for working as external agents in camps. It is equally important to realise that the social acceptance of women's initiatives is particularly high in protected areas such as the WPC, while the mixing of genders remains problematic. Especially when projects want to include women as a target group, it is important to create a neutral and protected space that at least formally meets the requirements that allow women to move in non-family contexts.

From the classification of experiences into the different dimensions of power in the camp, different, partially overlapping networks can be recognised. Whether it is the externally

regulated visible impact of DPA or UNRWA, the struggle for the funds and space of institutions, the power of tribes and families or the generally underlying norms of society, they all share a struggle for influence on variously defined visible or invisible levels. This influence is embedded in political and personal agendas and mostly reproduces a traditionally patri-

fig. 97: Urban gardening in the WPC of Husn Camp
(own photograph)

fig. 98: Boy group sitting in front of an UNRWA school
(Photograph by A. Safouri's son)

archal social order. Field research showed that the interference with such structures could lead to vandalism as response to possible change. Vandalism was referred to as a main fear by camp inhabitants several times: "The main problem for the principal was, you know, the female school. Ah you know, 'he males, the youth comes and destroy the plants' and things like that. And I was like, 'okay but we will build the fence, really high fence'. She was like, 'yeah but they still do it'" (Interview Mohammed, 2018). A high risk of vandalism seems to occur when vulnerable groups are addressed as a target group. It is also intensified by applying "rules that were not associated to [...] the old, notables, but on youth and on women. They felt excluded. 'How these young shits (sic) and this women dare to do something without us? We'll destroy it.' Can you condem them? No. [...] So they are, in a way [...] victims as well, of the situation. But they said, 'The only thing we have is our power in the camps'" (Interview Al Husseini, 2018).

The structural conditions of the camp listed here may give the impression that an intervention initiated from external agencies is powerless facing the listed obstacles. It is important to note, however, that these restrictions can also be understood as starting points from which one can learn from mistakes and approach actors strategically with more awareness. Especially when it comes to space as a matter of negotiation or potential resource for interventions, it is crucial that external agents approach this context sensitively, including its less visible dimensions. It is clear, however, that the knowledge gained here cannot be all-encompassing, but should rather form a basis for discussion about how external agents can be active in the context of the camp and where potential limits and critical points of failure are located. Therefore, it is necessary to understand community-based approaches within the complex reality of the camp in order to avoid naive notions of participation and a representation of the term empowerment, which denies actual involvement in decision-making processes.

7
Our role.

(p. 148)

7 Our role

Although the mass of different impressions did not always allow us to process all the collected information appropriately, we have tried our best to reflect our role again and again. Especially research methods such as participant observation have made us both: subject and object at the same time.

How do we perceive our role? How do others perceive our role? Which role do we play in different situations and why? What do we convey through our mere presence? How does our origin or professional background influence our perception or how we are perceived? What does this mean for the research results? These are only a few questions we constantly tried to answer during field research and afterwards.

Since we felt that our personal insights gained throughout the research stay should appear in this thesis, in this chapter we try to take a step back and reflect on aspects, that have repeatedly appeared in our thoughts, self-reflections and conversations. These aspects, such as hospitality and gender issues, have accompanied us during our four-month stay in Jordan, surprised us, challenged us and remodelled our thinking patterns again and again. This chapter broaches quite broad topics, yet, it examines which questions we, as external planners or researchers, have asked ourselves in the respective contexts. Within the limited frame of this thesis, however, it will not be possible to answer the raised questions. Nevertheless, in this chapter we intend to initiate new thoughts and encourage critical self-reflection within the work in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan.

7.1 Experiences in the field

Access

Retrospectively we can say, that we had hardly any problems getting access to camps or to contact persons. Although it was formally necessary to apply at the DPA headquarter in

Amman in order to receive a permission to enter the camp, it turned out to be more helpful and efficient to choose alternative ways. Since we were a group of three students, it was easier to enter the camp informally. Furthermore, we were never only visiting as researchers, but rather as friends. One conclusion might be, that a tea with the right person can work wonders. Nevertheless, in the camp's context it was helpful to ask ourselves: Who are powerful players in the camp? Who decides on our freedom of movement in the camp? In the case we regularly visited a camp, having a contact person on site turned out to be very helpful. By letting him - the contact persons were exclusively male – introduce us to local DPA- or UNRWA-members might have had effects on our conflict-free research stay.

Moreover, getting access to the field through a contact person opened up a network of further contact persons in other camps. However, this approach demands a great amount of attention by the researcher, as the realm, given access to, is highly selected and will most likely represent a very special perspective on the camp. Here it is important to ask: Who is selecting what we will see and what we will not see and what are the person's incentives in doing so? And eventually: Whose perspectives are not as easily accessible or even missing?

Hospitality

In general, it can be said that hospitality to an extent, which seems to be usual in this cultural context, challenged us a lot. Not only were we not used to being somehow *served* with food and drinks, but also felt uncomfortable by taking so much time, valuable food and

fig. 99 - 100: Invitations for food or tea as part of the Palestinian hospitality (own photographs)

cordiality from the interviewees. Furthermore, the well-intentioned hospitality has triggered a feeling of outside-determination among us, as it is actually not an option to reject. Rejecting a welcoming tea or coffee would be perceived as impolite and disrespectful. At the same time, having tea and coffee ten times on a working day left us with a feeling of losing valuable research time. However, this ritual was necessary to slowly build trust between us and the interviewee, to ease the situation and avoid a feeling of dispatch.

The practice of hospitality is particularly interesting in urban camps in Amman, since we perceived the degree of hospitality a lot higher than in the rest of the city. We hardly ever paid, when we tried to buy food or drinks in these camps, since we were almost always invited. Especially when entering a camp without any contact person, the kindness of people in the public space helped us to feel a little bit less like an invading stranger and encouraged us to start informal conversations on the street.

Antisemitism

When the camp inhabitants asked us, where we came from, our answer was: "From Germany". We knew, that this answer would assign us to certain expectations, projections and stereotypes. But little did we expect to be frequently associated with the former German dictator Adolf Hitler. Conversations often started with "I love Hitler!", bringing us into a situation of shame. Many Palestinians inside and outside the camp still perceive Hitler as a hero for his crime against Jews and thus as a close ally of the Palestinian people. Although this immediately creates a form of sympathy by Palestinians towards German visitors, it offers a high conflict potential in the first moment of getting to know each other. Since we always tried to explain our critical position towards National Socialism and antisemitism, it was not always easy to find an appropriate way of argumentation, without falling into disfavour and therefore hindering any further research. In general, we often found ourselves in situations in which our counterpart wanted to provoke a positioning. For example, regarding our opinion on Israel or a future Palestinian state. Often, we did not feel able to accept such an invitation for discussion. Due to the lifelong (mostly one-sided) conflict-involvement of the interviewees, they would mostly not understand our balanced and cautious attitude. Knowing that our counterparts were mostly in a precarious situation with little prospects for change, made it also difficult to morally judge them for their statements.

Communication

In any situation it was helpful to know some Arabic to get into an initial contact. Furthermore, it enhanced a feeling of sympathy among camp inhabitants, and a feeling of respect and interest from our side. However, it was unavoidable to communicate through a translator when it came to more specific topics. Working with a translator also made us ask ourselves: What is our relation to the translator? What is the relation between the translator and the interviewee? How might that change the content or intention of a given information within the translation process? What does it mean, to have a man translating for a female interviewee? How can we form or reform our interview questions, in order to avoid misunderstandings?

fig. 101 - 103: Interview settings for quantitative survey (own photographs)

Furthermore, our lack of language skills meant a limited access to the camp community from the beginning. We inevitably came mostly into contact with people who spoke English and thus often belonged to a better educated social group. We could not conduct spontaneous conversations or interviews on the street. To reach parts of the community that only speak Arabic, we have always been dependent on our voluntary and unpaid translators. Because we did not want to expect anyone to do hours of unpaid work for us, the number and selection of interviews remained limited.

Critical whiteness

Simplified, *critical whiteness* describes, among others, the beginning of a process, which people go through, who deal with their *whiteness* and the privileges associated with it. We

experience ourselves daily in a society that ascribes or denies us qualities due to certain external characteristics. In everyday life, as well as during field research in the camps, we were asked if we could issue *invitations* to pave the way for a possible visa into the Schengen zone. Since all of us are holding a German passport, we rarely came across the concept of an *invitation letter* before. Travelling to a Schengen country and especially to Germany seems to be something desirable for many camp inhabitants we met during field research. For this reason, we suddenly found ourselves in the role of being a perceived door opener for the journey to a Schengen country or in other words: deciding over someone's ability to realise his or her dream or not.

Furthermore, the fact that we were regularly invited by locals in the camps stands symbolically for our privileges of being *white* guests. This is the first role attributed to us. The second (and at the same time secondary) role assigned to us is determined by our gender. Entering a situation, the three of us (one male, two females) were given the same role according to which we were treated: *A white young adult from the Schengen country Germany with university education, coming as a guest.* At this point, the three of us still had the same privileges. However, this quickly changed, as soon as our first role was complemented with our gender. Our former privileges are then adapted again to our second role: *A white young male or a white young female adult from the Schengen country Germany with university education coming as a guest.* This is the critical point where our privileges changed antagonistically: While the male part of us experienced to possess even more privileges than in our home country Germany, the female part experienced a decrease of privileges. (explained further in the following section *Gender*)

What and who empowers us to write *invitation letters* to lay the basis for anyone traveling into the Schengen countries? How can we reject this responsibility without disappointing the person opposite or creating the feeling of being left in the lurch? What privileges do we have, or do we not have within this context because of our *whiteness*? These questions need to be asked again and again, as the answer changes in every different context.

Gender

Especially our female group members struggled a lot with attributed gender roles in the context of the Palestinian refugee camps but also Jordan in general. Our male group member experienced enormous freedom and felt he was perceived as a person taken seriously,

while the women were increasingly exposed to physical and verbal harassment, as well as disregard and denial of their competencies by certain groups. Especially by some (male) DPA members, the female part of our group was hardly ever perceived as serious contact person. However, it seems important to note for us, that especially our odd constellation (one male and two females in the same marriageable age) might have led to confusion among Palestinians and Jordanians. Since it is perceived as immoral to address a foreign wife in the presence of her husband first, the male disregard for the women could be interpreted as a precautionary measure, which is owed to our unclear relationship constellation.

However, being a mixed-gender group granted us several advantages, too. We were given access to very different physical spaces and perspectives. Our female group part was able to gain valuable insights into female perspectives, which are normally rather inaccessible for males and take place in the background. The fact of being female has enabled us to sit together with female camp inhabitants, to enter kitchens or their bedrooms, to see them without headscarves and to have conversations with interested, strong, reflective and humorous women. How can we take advantage of our gender within the given limitations caused by our attributed gender roles?

fig. 104 - 106: Participation in a gardening workshop in Talbiyeh Camp (own photographs)

Photograph as *saleable* project outcome

We were offered the chance to participate in a construction workshop in one of the camps. The local WPC received a funding for a rooftop garden by GIZ. The material for the workshop was provided by a CBO-manager from another camp. During the workshop, women, female adolescents and children cleaned and painted planting barrels and filled them with

soil and plants. For us surprisingly, also young male adults from a nearby youth CBO attended the workshop. Even though it felt strange in the beginning to spontaneously join a workshop, we were welcomed quite openly. Especially through topics like marriage, boyfriends and our age, our female group part was able to have *from-woman-to-woman* conversations. While participating in the workshop we tried to sensitively observe vibes, relationships, conflicts and atmospheres, as far as this was visible for us as external visitors.

As the workshop was not supervised or led neither by the community itself nor by GIZ-staff, we were relatively quickly pushed into the role of a *knowledgeable expert.* Most probably due to our external characteristics (see *Critical whiteness* in the same chapter) we were deceived into a role, which conflicted seriously with our intentions of being there. Just in this moment we unintentionally started reproducing our ascribed role. It cost us a lot of energy and persuasiveness, that we did not know better than anyone else in the workshop, that we were happy to be included into a collective decision-making process and would not take any other role in this workshop, than the one of being one of many workshop participants. To actively reframe our ascribed role of a *knowledgeable expert* or workshop leader, it turned out to be helpful to constantly keep asking questions and asking for help or other opinions.

After the workshop had finished and all barrels were painted and planted, a GIZ staff, who had stayed away from the workshop until then, visited the rooftop, bringing a camera for documentation. The GIZ staff wanted to be in the centre of the representative photo of the workshop and advised all participants including us to get into a suitable position and put our hands in the air for the photograph. Still dirty from the workshop, pairs and pairs of hands around the clean hands of the GIZ staff raised up into the air. This moment seemed critical to us. The representative of the donor comes to take a photograph for the workshop documentation only to then leave the camp again. After a valuable day of research, suddenly a feeling of disillusioning and dispatch came over us: Is the outcome of a process measured in a final photograph? What happens when the photograph is taken? Did we become part of a product, that was mainly produced to confirm with donor's requirements and believes? How sustainable is a project, when merely the final photograph represents the project documentation and thus the *saleable* project outcome?

Expectations and projections

Our expectations regarding the incentives of our field research differed significantly from those of the camp residents. It took us time to make clear, that we were doing research for our master thesis in the camp and not looking for implementing potential funds, since we did not have any funding at our disposal. During field research we discussed a lot about the question: How can we go into the field, gain data and knowledge, without making false promises or even raising false expectations? This was especially difficult, since camp inhabitants often face students or researchers entering their habitat without seeing any relevant results. Relating thereto, the method of observation automatically treats the camp inhabitants as objects. This is a rather obvious and logical conclusion, yet the crucial question for us went further: How can we avoid conveying a feeling of observing the camp inhabitants as objects and rather work on eye-level? At this crucial point, we struggled not to get personally involved. This was exactly what we intended to avoid, mainly because we wanted to make sure to be able to evaluate our data as neutrally as possible. Nevertheless, after one interview, two of us were suddenly taken aside – and were told the *real* story. One project participant in the rooftop farm project in Husn Camp was excluded from the project management by the project responsible. In his point of view, he was the one really being interested in rooftop farming and therefore deserved to be integrated back into the project. He asked us, how we could help him, which we couldn't. We had no power over decision-making in this project, as we had no relation to the project funder GIZ. Neither did we want to accept a role in deciding over fair or unfair and right or wrong. Least we could do was to again and again clearly outline our incentives and objectives and how we perceive our *action space*, recognising false expectations on us and trying to dissolve those as quickly as possible. Did we fail in maintaining our role as a neutral researcher? Is it possible to keep up this expectation of total neutrality? Is it enough to know about the grade of personal involvement and include these thoughts in our evaluation processes? How can we consciously deal with the fact, that our physical presence itself, inscribes us potential power and therefore projects certain expectations on us?

Trust

Although we have repeatedly stated that we were not in the camps on behalf of the GIZ or an NGO, we have always been seen in the role of a potential external donor. The camp inhabitants and interviewees have adapted their behaviour to this relationship by providing us

a *perfect* picture of their projects. Obviously, this was not very helpful for our research, as we tried to understand what challenges our case studies face and still struggle with. It took us a while to understand, that we had become an addressee of a long practiced and adapted presentation practice, perfectly tailored to the desired expectations of the donor. The supposed project success or even the project process, which was presented to us in the beginning, was often distorted, and therefore unusable for our research. Analysing the Husn Camp case study, for instance, it took us several visits to get a realistic insight into the project.

During our first field trip to Husn Camp, we were given the information, that only one or two greenhouses were not used anymore. This statement changed to around sixteen unused greenhouses in the last field trip. It has helped, to underline that we were not from GIZ and neither did we intend to measure or judge any project success. Yet, time was probably the most important factor for creating a certain level of trust.

How did the relationship between us and the project responsible of Husn Camp change to the moment, when he stepped back from the distorted project presentation? What did he see in us in the beginning and what in the end? What hindered him to be honest with us right from the beginning? Did we give the reason to fear something? Is it inappropriate to build a friendship, when the objective is doing research on a professional level? How can we deal with this relationship, when it is sometimes the only way to get usable data and results? This should not be misunderstood in a sense that we have strategically built and exploited emotional connections.

Interestingly the whole dynamic works vice versa. Also, the GIZ staff in the headquarter in Amman presented the rooftop farm project in Husn Camp as a success. This can be either due to the fact that they did not evaluate the project's process and outcome sufficiently or they presented the project distortedly in order to hide possible problems and challenges. We expected a realistic (self-)assessment of the project, instead we had the feeling to – again– being dispatched with some kind of sales presentation. How can we play our role as researchers more consciously in order to get a realistic view on the project?

7.2 Role as urban designer and architect

Two conflicting languages

A conflict, which has accompanied us most reliably, was probably the challenge of speaking in two languages. Since our objective as urban designers or architects was to work on an intersection between theory and practice and between research and design, we needed to talk two languages simultaneously. It was a bittersweet realisation that it would be a great challenge to find a link between the analytical language of academic research and the sales language of urban design or architecture. This realisation had brought us to a state of paralysis. What does it mean for us as urban designers and architects, when research is actually questioning any intervention? Do I have the choice not to engage? Yes. But, for us as future urban designers and architects, does it also mean to find a way, making it more than the choice not to engage? How can we best face the challenge of embedding our insights sensibly and translating them into something practical without weakening or contradicting with our previously developed position? Can it be helpful, or might it even be necessary, to acknowledge an open outcome?

Agenda

It might have something ironical, that we started researching about empowerment, transparent and inclusive planning practices, while at the same time we became a play ball of invisible power structures ourselves. This happened at the moment we were invited to contribute with this thesis to an actual externally funded project within Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Due to political decisions, bureaucracy and – for us non-transparent – power structures, the project in the end was postponed and did not start at the time of our research stay.

The paradoxical situation has led us more and more to question our own agenda: Have we suddenly become the object or case study of our own research? How do we deal with being affected by non-transparent power structures and what can we learn from it? Whose agenda are we actually working in? In a scientific agenda? In the agenda of a consultant? In the agenda of a student who, after four months of hands-on field research, can no longer take responsibility for creating picturesque proposals for a colourful future, which seem to more than far removed from reality?

Why us? Thoughts about arbitrarily awarded power

The analysis of power structures and aid dependency in particular has shown that urban planning concepts in the camp, but also in Jordan, underlie top-down structures until now. The CIP has taken first steps to integrate urban planning tools. But these concepts are an import of Western ideas. However, also in the Global North, bottom-up processes are a rather new concept constantly being (re-)tested. This is why one question always accompanied us: why us? Who empowers us to develop strategies, solution proposals or even a design for a context with which we – as external Western Europeans – are hardly familiar? Why do we want to import knowledge that we think is important or right? Are we therefore and in return assuming that this knowledge or capacity is not locally available?

In order to get out of a paralysis-like state of mind, it helped us to acknowledge that we are externals as a matter of fact. Therefore, our *potential action space* lies in the practice of understanding local knowledge as a valuable resource, and integrating and learning from unfamiliar structures to avoid making mistakes due to the ignorance of existing local systems.

This has motivated us to have a closer look at the concept of *room for manoeuvre* and to define parameters which are necessary for a *potential action space*. Our objective is to make the knowledge and experiences, which we have collected during our field research available to others who might come into the position of operating as *agents* within community-based projects, but who did not have the privilege of dealing this intensely with the specific project context due to short project phases. Of course, every context is different. This means we always have to (re-)question our thinking patterns according to the context. Yet, with this thesis we try to provide a kind of guide, which could make the field's complexity a little more manageable.

In our opinion, the objective of architects or urban designer should not be to only impose master plans, but rather to create a discussion basis and activate the existing. The aim should be to make use of local resources and local knowledge, and to offer a space, where this can be practiced and extended collectively.