AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

URBAN INTEGRATION OF POST-REFUGEE CAMPS:
THE CASE OF DBAYEH PALESTINIAN CAMP

by
NADINE FADI SALHAB

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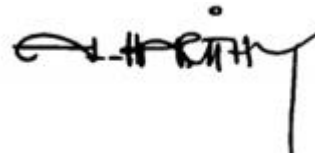at the American University of Beirut

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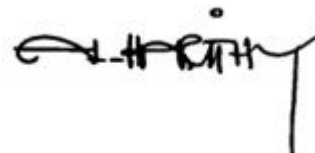# URBAN INTEGRATION OF POST-REFUGEE CAMPS: THE CASE OF DBAYEH PALESTINIAN CAMP
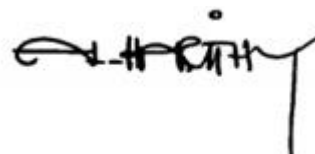
by
NADINE FADI SALHAB

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Howayda Al-Harithy, Professor   Advisor
Department of Architecture and Design, AUB

_____
Dr. Mona Fawaz, Professor   Member of Committee
Department of Architecture and Design, AUB

_____
Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Professor   Member of Committee
Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management, AUB

Date of thesis defense: June 15, 2020

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Nadine Fadi Salhab   for   Master of Urban Design
                                         Major: Urban Design

Title: Urban Integration of Post-refugee Camps: The case of Dbayeh Palestinian Refugee
       Camp

Displacement has become a worldwide issue with over 68 million people displaced including 25.4 million refugees that reside mostly in urban areas (UNHCR, 2020). Camps established in response to an emergency situation, often last longer than the crisis itself and end up as permanent settlements. In the Middle-East, since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, 7 million Palestinian refugees across the world managed to create coping mechanisms and new practices to adapt in hosting urban environments, during seventy years of exile. Today, Lebanon is home to 174,422 Palestinian refugees (Census, 2017) residing in twelve camps that suffer from overcrowding, poverty, poor infrastructure, and lack of social interaction.

This thesis focuses on Dbayeh camp, located north of Beirut, which is an interesting case study since it has been existing for a long time and became a permanent part of the urban landscape. The study will investigate the urban evolution of the camp, a congested built environment that lacks services, infrastructure and healthy public realm. It will also analyze the improvised socio-spatial tactics that refugees use to improve their living conditions, in order to inform a site-specific Placemaking strategy. The thesis aims to explore the role of urban design in addressing the integration of the camp with its surroundings and the enhancement of living conditions in camps particularly through shared open spaces, by building on these tactics. The research relies on qualitative and quantitative methods such as data visualization, field observation, interviews and extensive mapping for data generation, since there is not enough data on this camp.

The strategy will aim to upgrade the physical environment and reintegrate the social structure, while retaining the multilayered identity which includes the 'campness' of the camp. By translating the concept of Placemaking inside refugee camps, the thesis aims to prove that strategic urban design interventions can improve livability and create a sense of belonging. The research aims to create a discourse around the post-camp urban condition, recommending that aid agencies intervene in existing refugee camps that are becoming permanent, using urban design tools.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Displacement has become a world-wide issue. Crises such as political instability, poverty, wars and natural disasters have led to massive waves of population displacements across the globe. In 2015 the World migration report by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) stated that cities are the primary destination for most of the world's displaced populations. Today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 68 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide including 25.4 million refugees.[1] Also, 60% of the total 25.4 million refugees and 80% of the 40 million internally displaced people reside in urban areas. Yet, scholars critique when these populations are too often addressed as "exceptional", outside "normal societies" (Sanyal, 2013). Furthermore, camps established by hosting societies or aid agencies in response to an emergency situation, as a temporary settlement, often last much longer than the crisis itself and end up as permanent settlements.
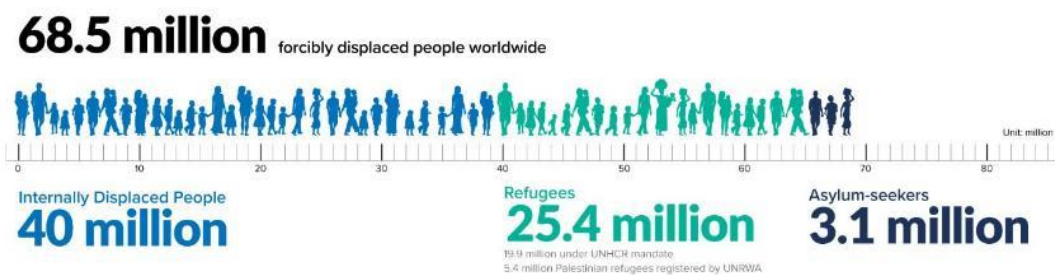
Figure 1: Statistics showing the number of displace people worldwide and their distribution. (Source: UNHCR)

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[1] www.unhcr.org , Figures at a Glance.

In the Middle-East, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 led to the forceful displacement of more than 726,000 Palestinians from their homeland[2]. Today, as a result of multiple waves of displacement that followed, there is a total of 7 million Palestinian refugees between the displaced and their descendants. Lebanon is home to 504,000 Palestinian registered refugees[3] . According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA), many of them have acquired the Lebanese citizenship. However many studies assert that almost half of the registered Palestinians refugees no longer reside in Lebanon.[4] According to the latest 2017 census, 174,422 Palestinians reside today in Palestinian camps and gatherings across Lebanon. They are categorized as "refugees" (UNHCR, 2016) by the Lebanese State, and denied many basic rights. They are banned from exercising more than 50 professions and they have no access to public social services. Palestinians are living in 12 recognized camps that still suffer from overcrowding, poverty, lack of infrastructure, poor housing conditions, and poor social interaction.[5] UNRWA provides services and support but does not administer the camps, as this is the responsibility of the host authorities.

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[2] According to the Final Report of the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East published by the United Nations Conciliation Commission, December 28, 1949.

Around 3,000 to 5000 Palestinians in Lebanon are not registered with UNRWA and have no other form of identity documents. (https://www.unrwa.org)

[4] Population and Housing Census in Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon, 2017.

[5] https://www.unrwa.org
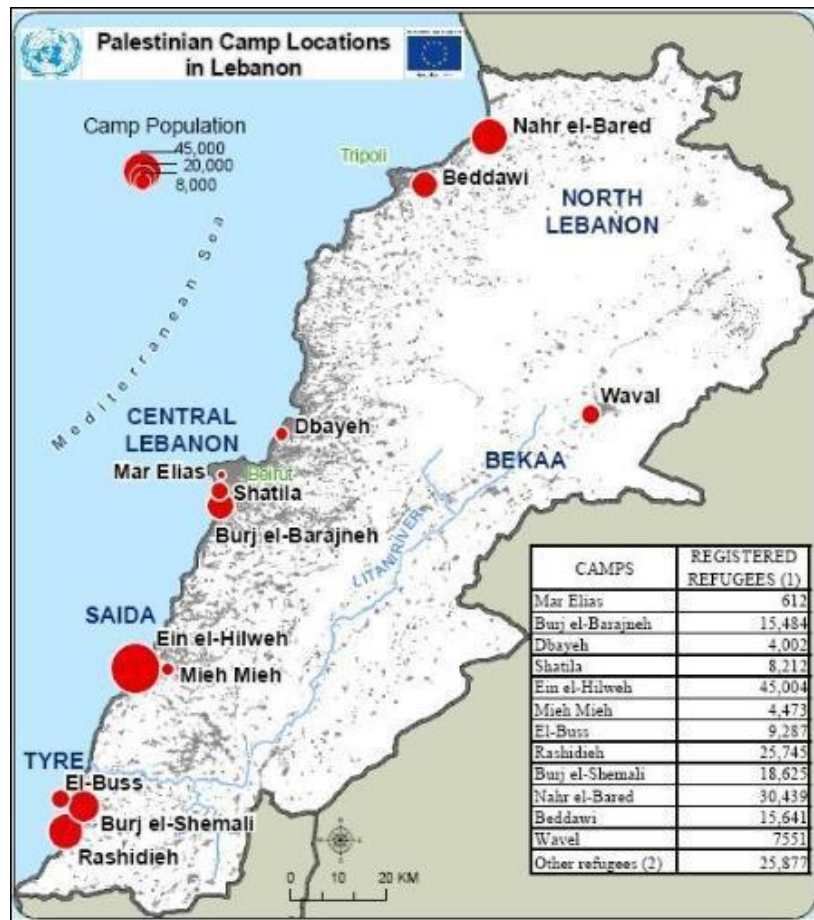
Figure 2: Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon, 2014 (Source: UNRWA)

A. Site of Inquiry

This thesis focuses on the Dbayeh refugee camp located north of the capital city. It will investigate the urban evolution of the camp that became a congested built environment lacking infrastructure and adequate basic services. It will also analyze the improvised spatial tactics by the refugees to manage and improve their living conditions over the course of time.

The thesis aims to explore the role of urban design in contributing to the enhancement of living conditions in refugee camps by identifying opportunities that build on these tactics and by adopting place-making strategies for shared/public spaces. This placemaking intervention will be conceived as a catalyst for a greater neighborhood upgrading. While a full upgrading

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strategy would require a multi-layered intervention tackling a reorganization of the camp's entire social and physical infrastructures, a placemaking strategy focuses on the quality and nature of shared open spaces.

The Dbayeh camp is an interesting and unique case study for place-making since it has been existing for a long time, becoming a permanent part of the urban landscape. Its integration with its surroundings will be a target of the design scheme. Moreover, it is a relatively small camp located on a green hill with diverse cultures and low density compared to other Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Existing small left-over spaces and tight social fabric help create a network of unique public spaces, shared by a mix of nationalities and religions, which makes the site even more interesting for placemaking interventions. Thus, I aim to document and analyze the different socio-spatial practices and how inhabitants use tactics to improve their built environment in order to inform a site-specific placemaking strategy.

Departing from the theoretical framework that collective memory, place-attachment and sense of identity play a key role within placemaking processes (Parkinson, A., Scott, M., and Redmond, D., 2017), the placemaking strategy, while building on the dwellers' spatial tactics in order to be site-specific, will adopt the position that the identity of the camp is threatened by its transformation into a neighborhood. The strategy will aim to upgrade the physical environment while retaining the multiplicity of layers of identity which includes the campness of the camp. The thesis will argue the campness of the site which is integral to its character, memory and spatial definition.

B. Research Problem and Significance

1. Problem Statement

In Lebanon, the Palestinian camp in Dbayeh that evolved through the course of time is still standing after 68 years. The population has changed and the camp transitioned into a local neighborhood becoming a home to vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian families. Poor infrastructure, bad physical conditions, overcrowdings, lack of social interactions and poor quality of shared/public spaces seem to be the main challenges faced by the dwellers.

One of the many problems that are embedded within the camp, is the lack of public shared spaces. Many left-over spaces are being appropriated by the dwellers and integrated within their living space. However, since the transformation and increase in mixity and density, these shared spaces lost their role and social definition. While they used to foster exchange and social interaction back in the sixties, these spaces are now lacking communal activities and social engagement.

Moreover, the space that was established as a Palestinian camp, had well-structured social networks and clear physical and social structures. There is also a strong sense of identity that came through, linking to hometowns in Palestine and using identity markers such as names of streets. Hierarchy was embedded within communal Palestinian practices. Yet the space was subject to both physical and social (population) transformations throughout the years. The camp that started as a clear structure both socially and physically with an intense identity has now disintegrated into a congested, deteriorated urban fabric and social structure that has lost its identity, despite the fact that it is integrated within the larger city of Dbayeh.

Thus, the problematic deals with deteriorated congested fabric, loss of social spaces and loss of identity.

2. Research Question and Hypothesis

Accordingly, this research investigates the principal question of how can the urban design strategy of placemaking that builds on exciting spatial tactics, improve living conditions particularly in shared spaces and restore the multilayered identity that links to the campness of the camp?

The research further addresses the following two sub-questions:

• What symbolic place will the history of displacement play in the camp's reorganization?

• What are the systems, spatial and others, that contribute to connecting the camp with its surroundings?

My hypothesis suggests that urban design can apply a strategic place-specific approach based on placemaking interventions in the neighborhood by addressing the deteriorated congested fabric that lacks public shared spaces, the campness of the camp, segregation and connectivity as well as the sense of identity building on existing social spatial tactics. Bottom-up community-informed interventions would improve livability inside the camp by upgrading the quality of shared spaces, such as streets and left-over spaces, and creating better mobility inside the camp while also strengthening the camp's link to surrounding communities and urban environment.

The questions will also be investigated against the following position: The campness of the camp which is embedded in the space's definition should be retained as an identity for the space, as a signature or reference (one of multiple layers) of its historical narrative as it moves forward.

Scholars argued that improving the physical environment can provide important positive spillover results on the neighborhood such as enhancing social interactions and empowering the community to be actively involved in the camp's sustainability (Parkinson, A., Scott, M.,

and Redmond, D., 2017). Moreover, enhancing the sense of place or place-attachment through placemaking, improves social interaction, public engagement and sense of responsibility. (Ibid, 2017).

As for the continued separation of the space, it is my position that the camp should retain its symbolic commemorative identity as a layer while undergoing transformation. This recognizes that over the past 70 years, the camp -which is not an isolated temporary camp anymore- has become an integrated urban quarter of Dbayeh, with numerous linkages that locate it within the city's infrastructure, making it counterproductive to maintain the extra-territorial organization of the space. The symbolic identity of the camp is part of the historic narrative of the site and its urban transformation. It's also part of the memory of the city alongside collective memory. Hence, the placemaking strategy is not only upgrading and enhancing mobility, but it is a strategy that enhances the identity and commemorates the narrative of the space.

I will look into how the camp evolved through the years and how refugees managed to improve their living conditions through minimal space interventions. All these information will guide me to understand the inhabitants' relationship to different spaces. It is important also to learn about the individual and collective practices in public shared spaces. These are specifically critical because they raise questions about the political identity of the space, whether it would be dealt as a "camp"/extraterritorial to Dbayeh or as a low income neighborhood to be integrated in the city.

3. *Research Objective and Significance*

The main driving objective of this thesis is to create a discourse around the post-camp urban condition and how to tackle it through design strategies.

Other Objectives in relation with the design intervention itself, focus on:

- Upgrading living conditions inside the camp by improving the quality of open/shared spaces.

- Reinforcing spatial practices of different communities while promoting sustainability and self-sufficiency.

- Strengthening the character of the site to inscribe the identity of the camp while integrating it with its' surroundings.

- Setting a precedence for post-camp urban integration useful to other existing refugee camps.

Studies show that placemaking strategies are taking the lead particularly in Europe and United States in order to upgrade living conditions in residential neighborhoods and create a sense of belonging to the communities of the concerned cities. Placemaking emerged as a new body of theory and practice that combines technical, social (people and their relationship with the space) and expressive concerns (creative, artistic, aesthetic) (Parkinson, A. et al., 2017). It seeks to transform urban places by generating site-specific and evidence-based design solutions, through a collaborative multidisciplinary process. However, these frameworks are less applied in low-income neighborhood, and are totally absent in refugee camps. By translating the concept of Placemaking inside refugee camps, I can show that strategic urban design interventions could improve livability and create a sense of place and identity, thus recommending that aid agencies intervene in existing refugee camps that are becoming permanent, using urban design tools.

C. Methodology

1. Data collection

I collected available data based on secondary sources such as the municipality of Dbayeh, UNRWA, different articles and testimonials, as well as available data related to official documents, historical and recent maps of the camp, historical narratives and records about Palestinian refugees' activities and practices in shared spaces. Those documents allowed me to reconstruct the historical narrative of the site, understand the evolution of Palestinians practices in public shared spaces through the years and the regulations applied by the State. I also learnt about Palestinian refugees' rights and limitations and understood the dwellers relationship with local authorities. These information were very useful during the mapping exercise.

Moreover, data was also collected from available literature addressing refugees across the globe and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as well as the concept of Placemaking with related case studies that used it as a framework to improve livability and quality of public shared spaces in low income neighborhoods.

2. *Data generation*

The Dbayeh Palestinian refugee camp is hardly addressed in urban discourses that tackle the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Therefore, there is not enough available data on the space, and part of the challenge is to generate new data and maps through fieldwork and observation.

I used mixed methods approaching my data generation. I relied on qualitative methods that consist of field observation, field work, and interviews. I also used spatial and visual analysis methods such as mapping, photo-montage and a visualization exercise.

Field observation and Interviews

To study and understand spatial practices, I focused on daily activities, social structures, and physical conditions of the housing and shared/public spaces. Based on tools such as interviews, field notes, and observations, I documented everyday uses of space by the dwellers learning more about their relationship with different types of spaces while starting to understand what opportunities are hidden behind these areas.

I first explored how inhabitants use leftovers spaces and learned about challenges they confront in their living spaces. More specifically, interviews were conducted with different types of dwellers (Elderly individuals, residents (adults, above 18) and business owners in the camp) Stakeholders including UNRWA, the mayor of Dbayeh, and a social worker in Caritas also took part in the interviews. I talked to two elderly individuals who have been in the camp since it was created, to reconstruct a reliable history and retrace the camp's evolution. In addition, I interviewed ten business owners in the camp to understand economic activities. The shopkeepers were particularly asked about the management, the type of customers, and the products' transportation. This helped me learn about the types of commercial activities and the limitations in the neighborhood. Moreover, I asked ten residents (from different age groups, gender, nationalities and religions) about education and recreational activities so I could learn more about their needs. The dwellers were all asked about their daily commutes inside and outside the camp, their typical daily activities and experiences, their limitations and needs, as well as their relationship to the state and to immediate surrounding neighborhoods. I also explored the improvised tactics that dwellers created to improve their living conditions and also avail from left-over spaces to adapt to their evolving environment through the years. They were then asked about their sense of belonging in relation to the camp and urban surroundings. Moreover, I inquired about their relationship to UNRWA, Caritas and the municipality of Dbayeh. I aimed to discover from these interviews whether people consider themselves as a

part of Dbayeh or as an extraterritorial settlement that needs to be maintained. Furthermore, I interviewed two UNRWA representatives, two others from Caritas and the mayor of Dbayeh. I asked them about their past achievements and contribution to the camps' development ever since it was established and learned about their future plans or ways to improve livability inside the camp. I also discovered how they perceive the transient community inside the space of refuge.

The interviews were distributed as follow: The interviewees were informed that their participation will be voluntary and confidential by keeping their identity anonymous.

Mapping and visualization exercise

After conducting interviews and gathering field notes, I proceeded by mapping people's movements (pedestrian and vehicular circulation), accessibility, different connection between open shared spaces, individual/collective practices, and communal/cultural activities. I also learnt about renting scenarios through the years in order to understand social relations, living conditions and sense of identity inside the camp. It was also useful to map the land use showing the location and different types of activities and events in relation to open shared spaces. In addition, mapping covered the use and functions of leftover shared spaces at different times of the day, different days of the week and different seasons of the year.

I then identified the locations of my intervention to proceed with the conceptualization. Furthermore, I continued with a visualization exercise based on images, sketches and 3D representations. This method helped me discuss my ideas and improve my intervention based on other people's vision and knowledge about the camp and the inhabitants' needs.

D. Thesis Outline

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the research subject, its scope and significance while providing the detailed methodology used to conduct this study. Main issues tackled in this thesis are then defined: Connectivity, identity, absence of place and sense of belonging.

Chapter two introduces the site of inquiry, Dbayeh refugee camp and traces its urban trajectory and historical evolution marked by transient communities. It also describes the poor living conditions inside the camp highlighting the deteriorated congested urban fabric and neglected shared open spaces. The key role of main stakeholders is then presented, linking to each actor's perception of the place.

Chapter three reviews two types of literature that served as the basis of the design intervention proposed in this thesis: The first one links to my analysis and research about global refugees' urban condition in general and socio-spatial practices in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in particular, including the Dbayeh camp. The other type supports my intervention using placemaking as a strategy and understanding how it relates to both upgrading and identity.

Chapter four presents a deeper understanding and analysis of the case study, defines the edges of the space and its relation with its surrounding neighborhoods and communities. It also explores the link between values, cultures and socio-spatial practices, while discovering the key role these play in defining spatial identity and fostering sense of belonging.

Chapter five discusses the design intervention that aims to achieve two driving objectives: First to 'activate' peripheral spaces and internal unused shared open spaces, and second, to 'reactivate' peripheral and internal open spaces of collective memory. The ultimate objective focuses on creating a network of vibrant multi-scale spaces connecting people inside the camp and interacting through active edges to break virtual barriers with the outside, in order to foster cultural and commercial exchange. The intervention therefore enhances place-attachment and social responsibility, thus communal engagement. Chapter six closes with diverse findings and limitations of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE CASE OF DBAYEH REFUGEE CAMP

A. Location and Population

The camp of Dbayeh was established by UNRWA in 1952 to house Palestinian refugees from Al-Bassa, and Kafr Berem. It is located 12 km east of Beirut on a hill administratively belonging to the Mount Lebanon Governorate, overlooking the Beirut-Tripoli highway. The camp suffered a great deal of violence during the civil war (1975-1990). According to the UNRWA, the camp, occupying an area of 84,300 m2, accommodated more than 4,351 registered refugees (UNRWA.org). Although many Palestinians have left the camp (Census, 2017), 1772 refugees[6] still reside there, 68 years later, settling in small corrugated roofed houses, hoping to return to their homeland.[7]
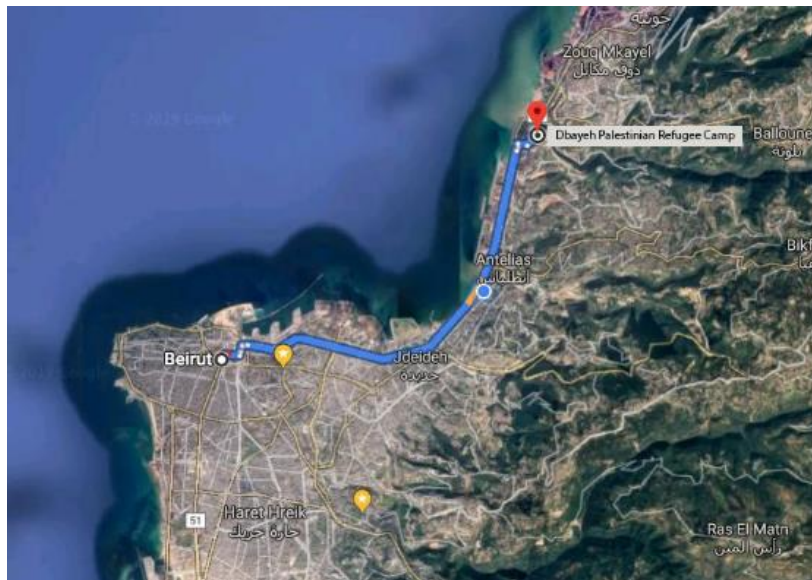
Figure 3: Location Map: Satellite view of the Dbayeh camp in relation to Beirut, 2018 (Source: Wikimapia)

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[6] Population and Housing Census in Palestinian Camps and Gathering in Lebanon, 2017

[7] www.unrwa.org
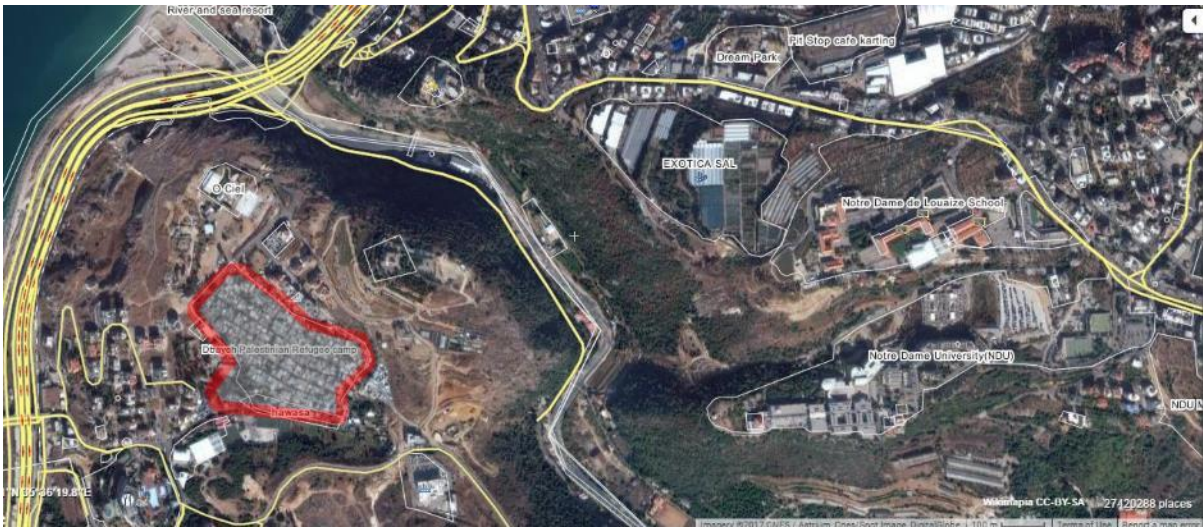
Figure 4: Satellite view of the Dbayeh camp from the South side of Nahr El Kaleb, 2017 (Source: Wikimapia)
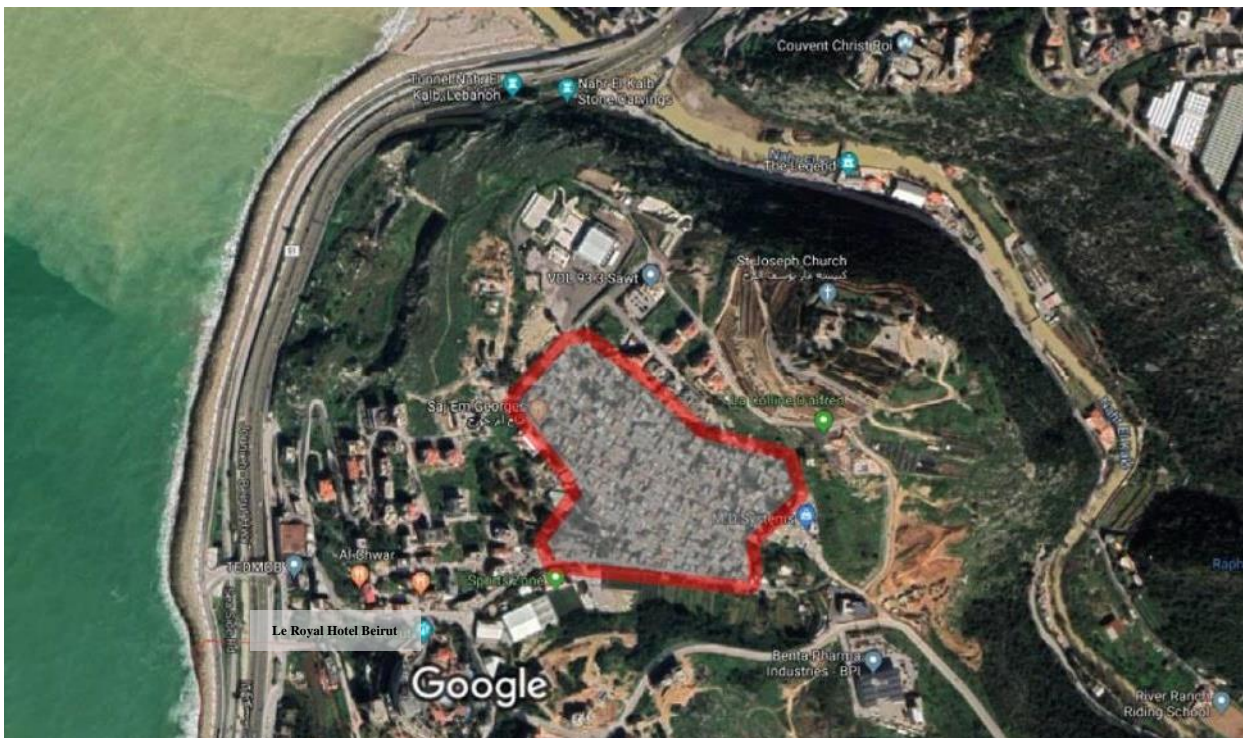
Figure 5: Satellite view of the Dbayeh camp from the Sea side, 2019 (Source: Google maps)

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Age Composition
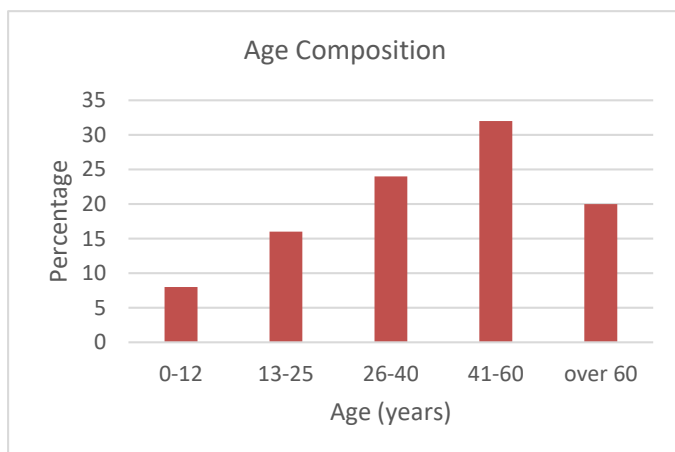
Figure 6: Percentage of different Age groups inside the camp in 2018 (Source: UNRWA.org)

As for the demographics of the camp's population, the age groups (26-40 years) and (41-60 years) present the highest number or percentage. With 24% for the (26-40) age group and 33% for the (41-60), these groups represent almost half of the total population inside the camp (57%). Moreover, according to the graph, the youth (less than 25 years old) represent 23% of total residents. Hence, this graph shows that the population inside the camp is mostly a young working class. After tracing a resident's family history, through an informal conversation, diversity also appears to be an important aspect of the camp's population [8]. The 60 year old Lebanese woman whose deceased husband was Palestinian, used to live in Libya. Her daughter is now married to a Syrian man she met inside the camp. Over the course of time, the area became a melting pot between many nationalities: Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Armenians.

Figure 7: Percentage Distribution of Individuals by nationalities in the camp of Dbayeh. (Source: Census, 2017)

	PRL	PRS	Lebanese	Syrian	Other	Total
Percentage	42.80%	0.50%	38.90%	15.60%	2.30%	100%
Number	758	8	690	276	40	1772

PRL: Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon
PRS: Palestinian Refugees displaced from Syria

Today the camp houses 1,772 people from different nationalities and religions. Palestinians represent the majority of the population with 43.3% closely followed by Lebanese families (38.90%) then Syrians (15.60%). Cultural diversity shapes the camp's character which raises

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[8] Interviewees' names are pseudonyms to assure anonymity.

many questions regarding the survival of the Palestinian culture as well as the camp's identity and the dwellers' sense of belonging.

B. Reading the site: Historical Overview

Dbayeh camp that was renamed after a Palestinian martyr Hanna Eid, was originally established in 1952 for Christian Palestinians. It was also the home of many martyrs who fought for the liberation of Palestine during the 1950s.

At the beginning, refugees lived in temporary shacks with shared outdoor toilets.

"The tents were installed by UNRWA in lower Dbayeh, somewhere under the renowned 'Royal' hotel, close to the sea. Back then, many conflicts happened between the camps' dwellers, but there were never major incidents unlike the case of all other Palestinian camps in Lebanon", Kabalan Achkar, Mayor of Dbayeh.

"I remember lots of funny stories about our shared toilets. With no doors or any kind of privacy, refugees used to stand behind the wall of the toilet seat, and shout loud asking if there is anyone occupying it. Refugees used to go in pairs. One uses the toilet while the other one guards it. They often pranked each other and sneak-peaked at women and children. It was horrible but somehow we managed to cope with it."(Georgette, 68 year old Palestinian)

The actual camp was created in 1952 when Palestinian leader Yasser Aarafat rented an area - prior to Lebanese government restrictions on Palestinian land rights[9]- from the Maronite Monastery of St. Joseph. According to UNRWA, which funds camp operations without handling the administrative tasks, Dbayeh camp was established by Palestinian Christians to provide a home for those facing double discrimination: from the Lebanese as Palestinian outsiders and Palestinian Muslims as Christians. Residents were constantly watched and regularly pressured by Lebanese intelligence services (Nakhal, 2015). According to 'Samir' a 76 year old Palestinian, they would infiltrate the camp, seizing whoever was in their way, preventing any kind of political activity or attempt of construction or even rehabilitation.

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[9] Palestinian refugees are not allowed to build or repair.

In 1960, a school for Dbayeh refugees was constructed by the pope's missionaries, along with St. Georges' Catholic Church. Later on, UNRWA also established a medical clinic inside the camp. In 1976, during the Lebanese civil war, Parties of the Lebanese Right (Phalange Party, National Liberal Party, and Cedar Guards) led an attack on the camp which was strategically weak while housing 3000 defenseless Christian Palestinians refugees (Nakhal, 2015). The whole area was controlled by militias who destroyed the school and attempted to vacate the camp that suffered a great amount of violence and horrific devastation:

"The militias roamed the area and forced all the residents to gather in a large soccer field next to the camp. Despite the cold weather, they ordered families to sit in the mud from morning hours until sunset. Men were beaten, home were ransacked and 70 people were killed. Among them 12 kids were pulled out of class and executed in front of the crowd."(Samir, 76)

During my field visits, many refugees expressed the resentment and anguish they felt during these days:

"We will never forget the cedar Guards slogan: 'It is a must for every Lebanese to kill a Palestinian child'. I can never forget the look on my wife's face when she heard these dreadful words" (Riyadh, 74).

The camp fell after 5 days in the hands of the parties who took over the entire site. After terrorizing and forcing refugees to leave, they occupied many homes and sold others for 5,000 Lebanese Lira (Ibid, 2015). The remaining residents were forced to cooperate and even join the parties of the militias. The camp remained under their control until 1989. On the other hand, many residents felt abandoned and sensed that their identity was being crushed as days went by: *"There are forces working to make the residents of this camp forget where they came from and what Palestine means to them. They want it to become "a lie"* (Nakhal, 2015). Despite the peaceful environment in Dbayeh, Lebanese Political parties grew at the expense of the Palestinian cause. Simply stating out loud "I am Palestinian" had become an act of resistance. (Ibid, 2015). Refugees were denied their basic rights which include exposing their own identity and acting upon their own communal values.

In 1990, a quarter of the shelters were destroyed or severely damaged. According to UNRWA statistics, over 100 of the original Christian Palestine refugee families were displaced once again. The population of the camp had dropped in numbers (Nakhal, 2015) from 5,000 in 1997, to 4,000 in 2004, to less than 1800 in 2009, reaching 1,772 dwellers in 2017, according to the latest population census. Thus, the multiple attempts to empty Dbayeh camp of refugees have been partially successful.

In the year 2000, reconstruction works began to take place inside the camp and the damaged infrastructure was rehabilitated by UNRWA. Electro-mechanical works, to provide water and electricity to the entire camp, as well as housing renovations and the installation of a new drainage system lasted for more than 9 years, as per my informal conversations with the dwellers. Meanwhile, refugees started adopting an illegal informal renting system [10] to accommodate diverse communities that found refuge in the camp through the years, especially after the Syrian crisis in 2012.

Today, after all the camp has gone through, many refugees managed to refurbish their homes and adapt their living spaces to their private and communal practices. However, the school is still in an extreme state of disrepair. Many children inside the camp, study in public or private schools -if they can afford it. Dwellers also lost connections with neighboring communities. Public shared open spaces that used to foster social engagement and exchange lost their social definition and remain almost vacant.

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[10] The renting system will be developed in chapter IV section B-3.

C. Reading the site: Urban Evolution

1956

1963

After 1990

2010
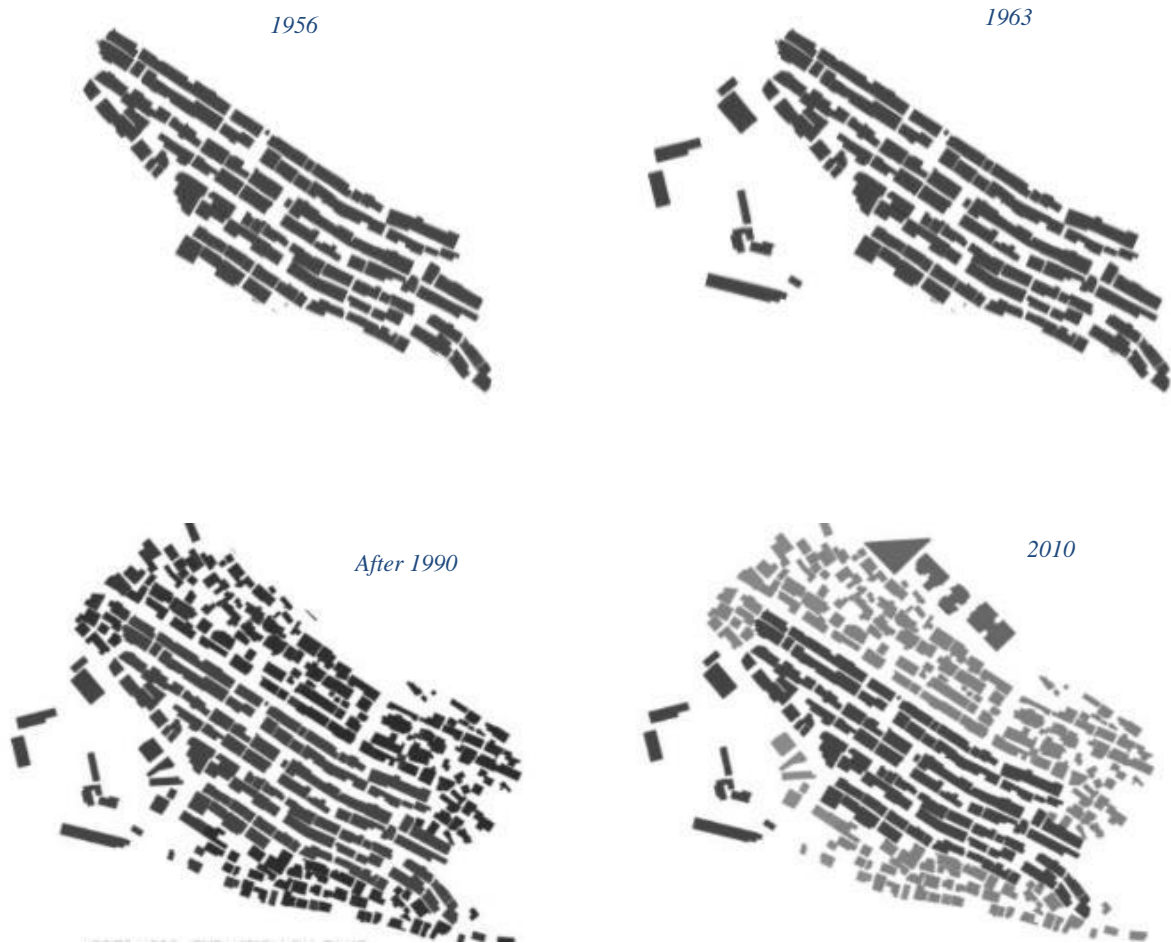
Figure 8: Urban Fabric evolution in the area. (Source: Bechara, 2017)

The camp was originally established in 1952 after Yasser Aarafat rented a land on the coast, near Dbayeh highway. Back then, Palestinian refugees were living in small tents (Nakhal, 2015). In 1956, UNRWA moved the camp up the hill to a 61,450 sqm plot rented from the Monastery. The space was organized around four parallel main narrow streets that were aligned with one or two-story concrete houses. In 1963, UNRWA added 22,850 sqm to the rented land. The school and church with large shared open spaces were built by the pope's missionaries, next to the dense urban fabric. After 1990, an informal expansion of the built fabric was quickly implemented by the dwellers themselves. Around the year 2000, the urban extension was rapidly growing towards the West. In 2010, the development of new residential

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neighborhoods led to the expansion a well-structured urban fabric next to the congested camp fabric. In comparison to other camps across Lebanon, Dbayeh is calm and relatively spacious.
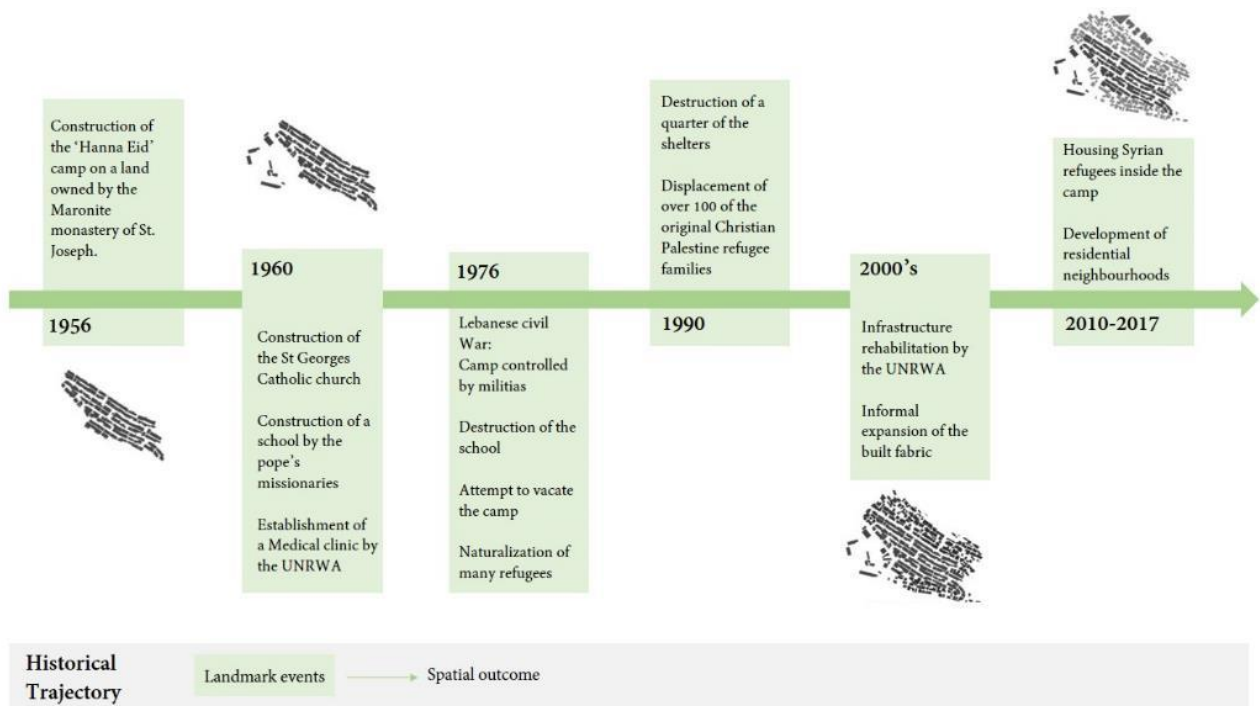
Figure 9: Historical trajectory of the site (Source: Author, 2018)

D. Reading the site: Land use
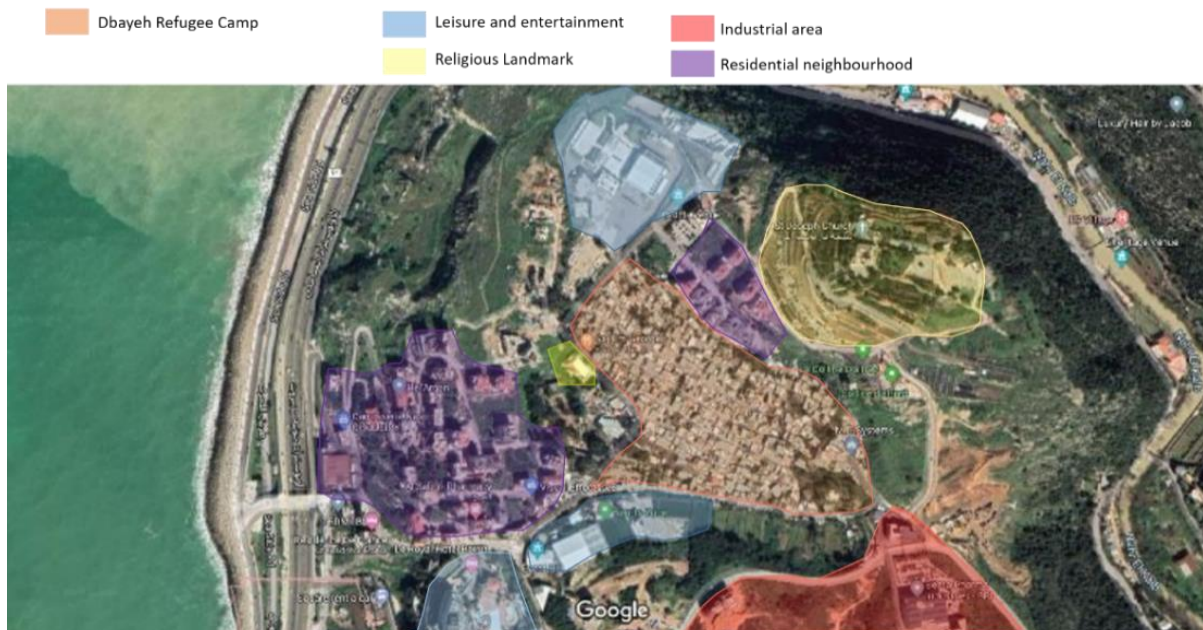
Figure 10: Mix uses around Dbayeh camp (Source: Google maps, 2019)
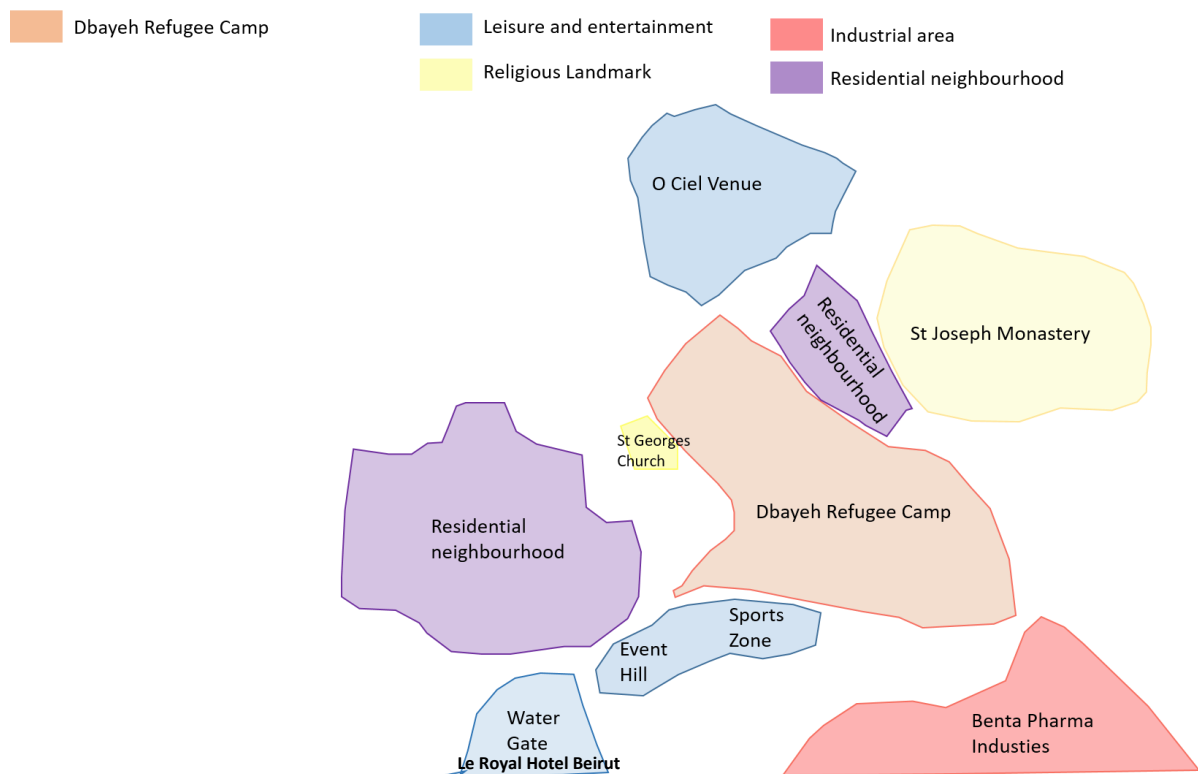
Figure 11: Mix uses around Dbayeh camp (Source: Google maps, 2019)

The refugee camp of Dbayeh is surrounded by a mixture of uses (figures 10 and 11). Two new residential hubs and a private entertainment zone (sports courts) are directly linked to the camp's edges. 'Event Hill', 'Water Gate' and especially 'Le Royal Hotel' are main attractions to surrounding communities and visitors from different regions and countries. Moreover, 'O ciel' wedding venue is one of the most popular and frequented wedding venues in the region. An industrial area, 'Benta Pharma industries' is also bordering the camp. Furthermore, two religious landmarks are located in the vicinity of the space of refuge. Saint George church is visited by most of the camp's dwellers as well as many visitors from neighboring communities. Saint Joseph monastery on the other hand, acts as a strong decision maker inside the camp since the priests own the land itself.

To sum up, the immediate surroundings of the camp offer diverse communal activities that promote exchange and social engagement. The camp that was completely surrounded by greenery during the late 1960's, started to be progressively integrated in an animated urban environment that was developing through the years. A peaceful relationship of exchange grew between the dwellers and neighboring communities in residential areas. However, today this connection is practically absent.

E. Reading the site: Living conditions

1. Road Network

The refugee camp is established around a small network of four tight streets that are poorly connected to Dbayeh. The congested urban fabric is formed by one to two-storey concrete houses with iron roofs. However, the four vehicular internal roads, (named by the dwellers: Road 1, 2 3 and 4) serve just about half of the camp's area since, as I experienced during my site visits, an important part of the space is only accessible by foot (figure 12). In
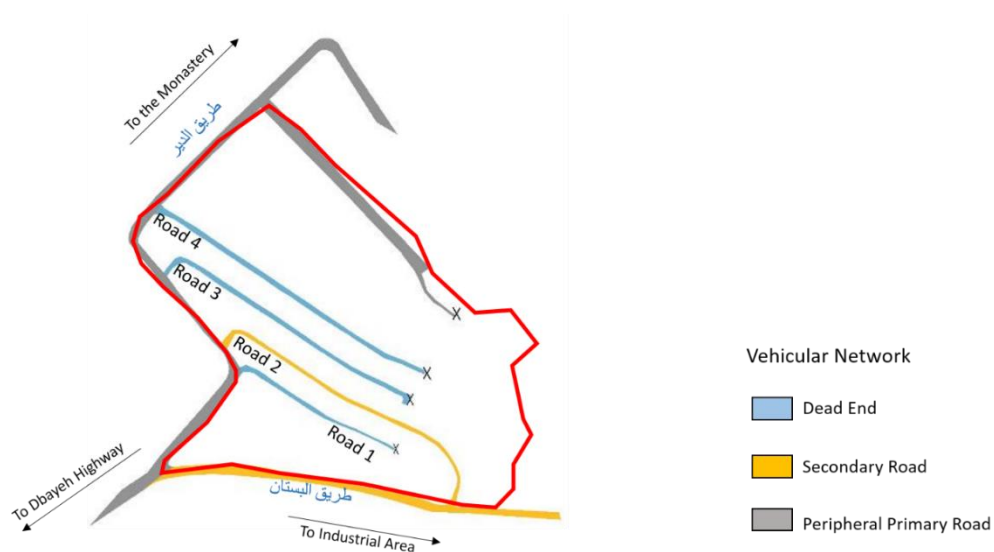
Figure 12: Vehicular network map (Source: Author, 2020)

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fact, Roads 1, 3 and 4 are dead ends, while Road 2 is the only one connected to the neighborhood from both sides.

Moreover, a primary peripheral road connects the camp to the highway and residential and commercial neighborhoods from one side, and to the Monastery from the other. A secondary road leads to an industrial area passing by a large agricultural land bordering the camp.

In terms of accessibility, there is no physical barrier separating the camp from its immediate surroundings. However, although it's not bounded or does not have a wall condition, the refugee camp is not very accessible since most of the internal streets are dead ends, therefore making the space mentally secluded from the mobility map of people in the area. The notion of accessibility is thus, directly linked to the nature of the camp's edges and the locals' mental perception.

Furthermore, an organic network of pedestrian spaces links all different levels on the hill. Few remaining open shared spaces are either unused or turned into parking lots for residents (figure 13).
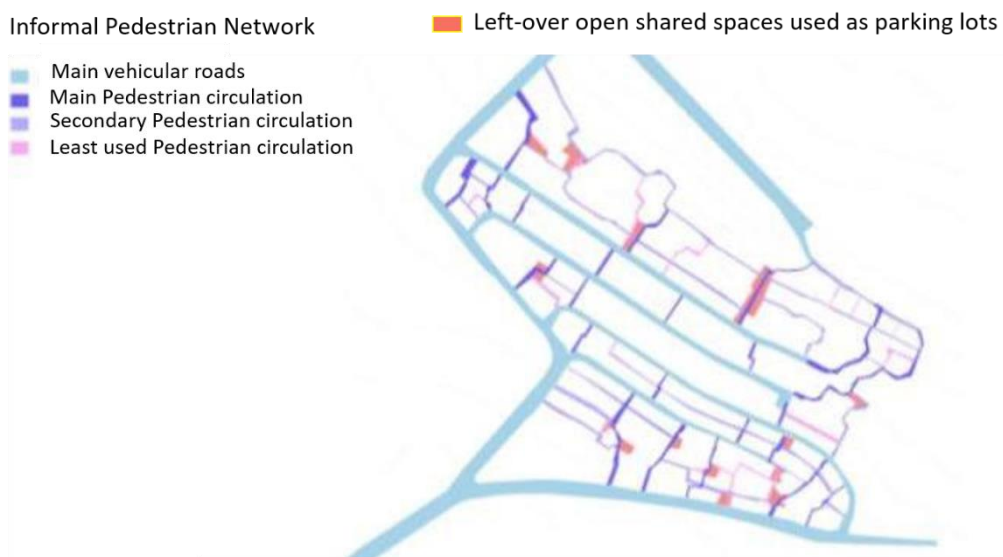
Figure 13: Informal pedestrian network and left-over shared spaces (Source: Bechara, 2017).

2. Infrastructure

The camp grew to take on the typical infrastructural features (that are not related to planning) of an informal settlement. The tires, concrete blocks, and metal poles placed by the dwellers on leaky roofs to maintain the nylon waterproofing covers provide a preliminary idea about poor living conditions inside the camp (figures 14, 15, 16).

Figure 14: The camp's dense fabric in the midst of new residential projects. (Source: Bechara, 2017)

Figure 15: View of the camp from a new residential building, 2017 (Source: Author,2020)

Figure 16: Dbayeh camp, 2017 (Source: Author)

Services and Amenities

Residents struggle to access basic services, education, medication and clean drinking water (Frakes, 2018). Elias Habib, head of the Dbayeh committee of camp members stated that "*there is no actual supply of water in this area*". Refugees have to buy bottled water to drink and tap water for daily use (Ibid, 2018). Small shops on the ground floor provide refugees basic daily products. However, the medical center is not fully equipped to help the dwellers. Most of them go to hospitals in other neighborhoods outside of Dbayeh.[11] In addition, the school is no

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[11] Based on informal conversations with residents of the camp in January 2019.

longer serving the community, and the children of the camp use as their playground, the destroyed abandoned spaces and open streets due to the lack of safe gathering spaces. Nevertheless, as opposed to other Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Dbayeh camp has an organized trash collection system. The dwellers drop their bags in front of their houses and a team of UNRWA representatives handle the collection part. The streets are always clean and the residents are very careful when it comes to hygiene and order.

To sum up, according to UNRWA, the camp's infrastructure is currently undergoing comprehensive rehabilitation whereas the situation on the ground shows the opposite scenario as camp conditions continue to decline.

Figure 17: Basic daily services on the ground floor (Source: Cookin'5m2)

3. *Housing conditions*

The originally planned urban fabric evolved to be more congested and deteriorated over time. To begin with, two types of roofing are used in the camp: concrete slab roofs and corrugated steel roofing. The steel sheets are supported by wood rafters that rest on exterior walls which can't support a slab either because they were never designed to support the load of a concrete slab (and thus control building activities inside the camp) or because they have deteriorated across the years and are no longer able to support any additional load. The roofs

are either abandoned or used as a private terrace or garden. Moreover, broken windows are covered by sheets for rain and wind protection, balconies and front porches are protected with fabric or nylon curtains to provide intimacy, help avoid the vis-à-vis between neighbors and create an extension to the house. Refugees also added steel stairs to interconnect different levels and areas of their refurbished house.

Figure 19: Web of Electrical wires inside the camp, 2017 (Source: Nadine Salhab)

Figure 18: Tight alleys between the poorly maintained houses. (Source: cookin'5m2)

Figure 20: Poor living conditions inside the camp. (Source: cookin'5m2)

The congested urban fabric formed by juxtaposed two-story buildings interconnected by a network of narrow stairs and alleyways enhances the feeling of confusion to any visitor who doesn't know the camp. The informal configuration of spaces makes it harder on people coming from the outside to read the space and easily circulate inside.

Figure 21: Greenery added in many left-over spaces (Source: cookin'5m2)

4. Socio-Economic condition

Residents live in severe economic hardship and according to UNRWA, high unemployment is one of the major problems of Dbayeh camp (UNRWA.org). In fact, Palestinians refugees who are seeking work have very limited options. They are allowed to work in the private sector, but their employers would face fees and bureaucratic hoops that make employing Palestinians difficult. Thus, many are forced to work informally and with limited legal protection (Frakes, 2018).

"Having a college Degree was useless to us. No one cared about it! We knew that we would never be able to make a living no matter how hard we studied. Palestinians are forbidden from working in more than 60 jobs. Only some handyman jobs were legal: mechanics, carpenter, works of steel, paint, tiling...Life gets really hard!" (Rashid, 50 years, Palestinian surgeon, owner of a small shop since 1970).

Few men find work as casual laborers in the construction field and some young people work as cleaners or inside small shops (Frakes, 2018). In addition, mechanics are the most present in the camp. Garages, serving the camp and surrounding areas, are concentrated on 'Tarik-El-Boustan', on the primary road close to the school, and all the way up to the church. Carpenters and blacksmiths are also very common inside the camp.

As a result of evolution and accumulation over time, refugees constantly try to adapt their practices to the poor living conditions and deteriorated urban fabric of the camp that was originally conceived as a temporary refuge but came to be their permanent home.

F. Stakeholders and Administration

According to the mayor Kabalan Achkar, the municipality of Dbayeh considers the camp as part of the town:

"It is not considered a burden on Dbayeh anymore. Today, the camp is not really a camp and I don't understand why people are still calling this neighborhood a 'camp'. Refugees are living

among us! There are no physical nor social limits between Dbayeh residents and the camp's dwellers. They are practically living just like us."

Achkar also argued that referring to the space as "Palestinian" is also not accurate anymore. Half of the camp is inhabited by Lebanese citizens who seek to avoid paying municipality taxes and take advantage of the low rent inside the camp. On the other hand, the municipality of Dbayeh has no services to offer nor obligations towards to the camp's community.

"I just helped many years ago, on a personal level, by asphalting the internal roads of the camp to improve accessibility on the hill. I helped improving living conditions by funding small interventions. I wasn't representing the municipality of Dbayeh since the camp does not fall in its scope of administration."

Moreover, local police (Darak) insures the camp's safety just like any other neighborhood in Dbayeh. In addition, whenever a conflict occurs, the camp's dwellers always head to the municipality for complaints.

"There is nothing unusual happening inside the camp. Random conflicts take place just like in any other community. Fights happen between Lebanese and Palestinians, or amongst Lebanese themselves, and sometimes amongst Palestinians, over random daily issues such as parking spots." confirms Achkar.

According to the dwellers, *"Moukhabarat"* agents are also constantly present in the neighborhood and have eyes on the residents who recognize them very well and often get along with them. Some agents work for the Monastery to inform the abbot about any restoration or upgrading activity.

In addition, UNRWA, another significant stakeholder in the area, is represented by the director of the camp who is usually designated from Ain el Helweh, Saida. Electricity and water services inside Dbayeh camp should usually be provided by UNRWA. However, despite millions of dollars spent on waterworks projects, water supply is till today one of the major problems of the camp (Nakhal, 2015). Since the beginning of the Syrian war, the camp has

received increased funding from many international nongovernmental organizations, but the camp committee worries about what would happen to the extra funding when the Syrian crisis is over. According to several residents, during the first 30 years, UNRWA was more present and used to provide more support through rehabilitation initiatives focused on upgrading the infrastructure (the last rehabilitation occurred in 2000), home restoration (many houses that were falling apart were renovated, especially after 1990), street cleaning and basic improvements (street numbering). Medical care through the clinic and educational support through the UNRWA school was also provided until the Lebanese civil war in 1975. UNRWA's role today is limited to trash collection, electricity bill collection, providing free medication and clinic visits twice per week with limited specialized doctors (there is no cardiologist nor pediatrician). The organization also offers some minor home restorations based on the need. Some residents claim that UNRWA lost interest in their case and consider them capable to provide for themselves.

"*UNRWA used to be more involved in our daily lives. Nevertheless, they weren't quite responsive when most of our homes flooded following the infrastructure works they initiated in early 2000's. I waited 9 years for them to come fix my home that drowned below the street level. I had to leave my house and live with my brother and his wife who are also living inside the camp.*"(Georgette, 68).

On the other hand, two Belgian nuns residing in a house on the southern border of the camp, have been working to improve living conditions through the years. They opened another independent clinic with a team of several specialized doctors (generalist, cardiologist, and pediatrician, orthopedist, urologist) allowing free daily visits from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. This clinic regularly receives many donations through the year.

Caritas's presence is not making any significant change in the area today according to most of the interviewed residents. Before 2012, they used to frequently work on upgrading living conditions of Palestinians by providing massage and physiotherapy sessions for elderly.

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They also fixed many broken leaky windows and installed handrails on many stairs inside the camp, as well as handles to assist the elderly in the bathroom showers. Today, they are more focused on the Syrian crisis and their funds are invested on supporting exclusively Syrian communities.

Furthermore, Elias Habib, head of the Dbayeh committee of camp members and director of the Joint Christian Committee in Dbayeh (JCC), is one of the most active actors inside the camp, according to the dwellers. JCC is part of the Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (D.S.P.R) founded in 1950, operating in the West Bank, Gaza, Galilee, Jordan and Lebanon[12]. It is one of the oldest NGOs working with Palestinians in Lebanon. This organization has provided a wide range of services to refugees in Lebanon, starting with relief works to gradually shift the focus on education and vocational training for both women and men. It opened schools and educational centers all over the country but today the only remaining centers are located in Sabra, Sayda and Sour. Moreover, one remaining school is situated in Mussaitbeh, Beirut. JCC offers different kinds of educational opportunities through study centers and tutoring programs, since education is highly revered by the Palestinian community (JCC.org).

Elias Habib a young Palestinian in his 40's, resident of Dbayeh camp, founded in 2006, for the first time in a Christian area in Lebanon, a community center with JCC.

"I don't know why during all these years JCC never thought about opening any center in our area. They were all focused on Beirut and the South. I was very surprised that the Palestinian Christian committee neglected the only Palestinian Christian refugees in Lebanon. And that is when I decided to create the first educational center of JCC in Dbayeh, with the help of a friend inside the organization" (Habib, 2020).

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[12] *Since 1952*

On the other hand, Habib faced many problems with a powerful stakeholder in the area; the abbot of Saint Joseph Monastery who always stood against any upgrading or development opportunity initiated by the camp's dwellers:

"*Although I had a permit to build my community center, the priest tried many times to stop the construction. Any rehabilitation or upgrading project is interrupted by the priests who ends up being silenced by a small amount of money or through nepotism- "wasta".*"

The abbot also tried to stop every attempt to rehabilitate the abandoned school and its large courtyard. Habib worked on revitalizing the space by cooperating with humanitarian organizations such as 'World Vision International' to create a gym for the community, and the NGO 'Right to Play' in order to build a safe outdoor playground for the children of the camp. Ever since they were displaced to Dbayeh, the camp's dwellers and especially Elias Habib and his team; the local community council of the camp, are constantly trying to upgrade their living conditions through bits of interventions and social activities that foster communal engagement and encourage local interaction. But unfortunately, with the rise of development projects in the area, the monastery of Dbayeh aims to invest in the land that was rented and occupied by Palestinians, and sell it for a much higher price. Some of the priests made the dwellers feel like they were a burden on the town and tried to hamper communal activities such as the Dbayeh choir events and JCC summer camp: "*You are not allowed to invade our lands. You have no right to play in front of the school. You should stay inside your houses!*" declared Habib repeating the abbot's words with repulsion. He then stated:

"*He didn't even want us to walk on the streets! I told them that UNRWA rented the land where we built our houses, along with the plots where the school and church were built for our community. They had absolutely no right to treat us this way!*"

Habib also confirms that the dwellers lost interest in many communal activities such as the camp's choir and regional football tournaments due to the monastery's interferences.

In addition, another important stakeholders, the JCC community council was founded by Elias Habib in 2007. He gathered a group of residents and started working on projects and implementing educational and communal practices, aiming to upgrade living conditions and enhance social interaction between different cultures. The council formed by 20 members meets twice per month in JCC's office. Elias Habib has been elected unanimously every year, as the council's director. The members divided several tasks and responsibilities among them, such as secretary, treasury, administration, planning and objectives.

"I wish we could improve the JCC community center since it is making a big difference in the lives of a large number of dwellers" stated Habib.

In 2014, 'Fatah al-Islam' founded another council trying to create an office inside the camp to impose its presence by undermining the JCC council. But according to residents, the new council is supported by a minority of dwellers and hasn't presented any development project to the local community. Its only concern is to stand in the way of JCC.

Although some of them claim to be productive towards the camp, most of various actors and stakeholders today are not truly active and fail to contribute to the camp's sustainable development. However, despite the tension and short comings, the diverse stakeholders can be actors in my proposed framework that aims to upgrade the deteriorated congested fabric while addressing loss of social spaces and loss of identity. The stakeholders' respective roles will help me develop the implementation scenario (in Chapter V, section C) for my design intervention by proposing a collaborative network of management and funding; more specifically a Public/Private partnership between JCC community council led by Elias Habib that represents all the camp's diverse communities, UNRWA the renter of the land, and Dbayeh municipality that has a history of management and upgrading initiatives inside the camp while considering the space within its jurisdiction, as a part of Dbayeh town.
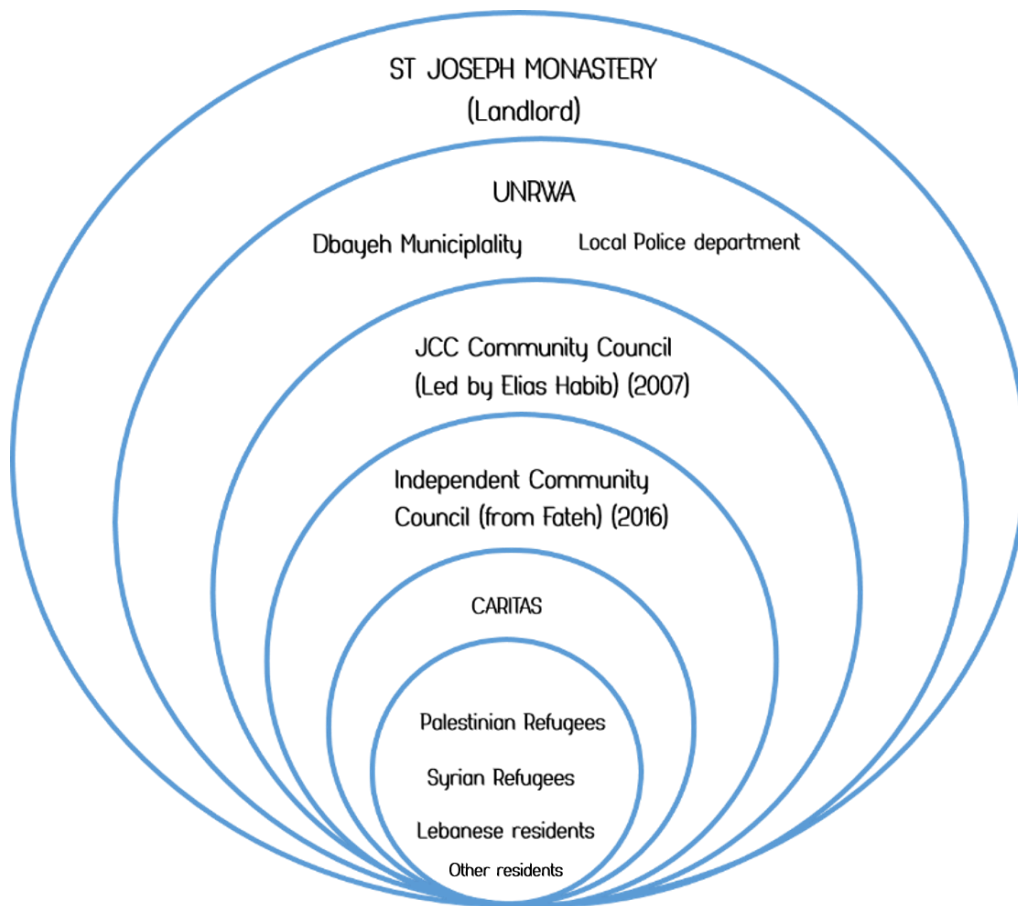
Figure 22: Stakeholder Analysis Diagram (Source: Author, 2020)

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews two types of literature that have served as the basis of the urban design intervention developed in this thesis: The first one links to my analysis and research about global refugees urban condition in general and socio-spatial practices in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in particular (A), including the Dbayeh camp. The other type supports my design intervention using placemaking as a strategy (B) and understanding how it relates to both upgrading and identity. My thesis will be guided by arguments and constructs forwarded by scholars that will help me understand the notion of 'camp' as a space and as an urban condition. I will also be discovering the key role of social practices in relation to "the campness of the camp", while exploring the connection between place-attachment, sense of belonging and social engagement. The sections conclude with learnt strategies and tactics to be adapted to the case of Dbayeh refugee camp.

A. From camp to city and Palestinian informal practices

To start with, I will build an understanding of the global issue of refugees, then focus on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon that are becoming permanent in urban settings. However, the literature on Dbayeh camp is limited to the Final Year Project of Architect Myriam Bechara: 'Rehabilitation of Dbayeh Palestinian camp' (Balamand University, 2017), and some of the works of UNRWA, Michel Agier and Kamel Dorai[13]. I will also consult studies

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[13] Dr. Mohamed Kamel Doraï is a researcher at the CNRS (the French National Centre for Scientific Research) currently based at the French Institute for the Near East in Damascus (IFPO). He is currently conducting research on the urbanization process of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

by Mona Fawaz, Julie Peteet[14] and Romola Sanyal[15] discussing urbanization process as well as living conditions, informal practices and challenges faced by refugees throughout the years along with the quality of public shared spaces inside camps.

1. *Global crisis overview*

A new category of population formed by more than 65 million forcibly displaced people worldwide is constituted by two elements according to ethnologist and anthropologist Michel Agier: on the one hand, 'dirty' and 'low-intensity' wars causing ceaseless migrations along with devastating losses, on the other hand, the 'humanitarian response' that follows them (Agier, 2002). The camp becomes then a symbol of the social condition shaped by the combination of these two elements, war and humanitarian reaction, as a life marginalized from the 'normal' social and political world. The site also becomes an experimentation of the large-scale segregations that are occurring on a planetary level (Ibid, 2002). Agier argues that displacement generates the creation of new sorts of spaces that are still hard to be named or defined: camps, zones, squats, invasions, transit zones (Agier, 2008). The host regions, under the concept of emergency, consider the camp as a 'Naked city', a 'Lost area' or 'Waiting area' (Ibid, 2008) created as a protective measure to provide shelter and basic needs to the displaced community. The host country provides camps with minimal supplies and infrastructure, and defines it as an area marked by political and social voids, frozen in the present time, in a 'stand by' situation. However, most camps last far more than the emergency period; some last more than fifteen years as in the camps that housed Somali refugees, or even twenty years as in the camps in Algeria, and more than fifty years for the Palestinian refugees spread all over the

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[14] Professor of Anthropology at University of Louisville.

[15] Lecturer in Global Urbanism at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape in Newcastle University, London, UK.

countries in the Middle East (Agier, 2002). The average duration of major refugee situation is 17 years according to a 2004 UNHCR study (Rafdord, 2015). Kilian Kleinschmidt who worked for 25 years for the UNHCR in various camps across the world confirms in an interview with Dezeen magazine:

"These are the cities of tomorrow… The average stay in a camp is 17 years. That's a generation! …In the Middle East, we were building camps: storage facilities for people. But the refugees were building a city" (Ibid, 2015).

Through the years, social and cultural complexities arise with the evolution of the new socio-spatial form of 'city camps' that witness the creation of new particular practices and identities (Agier, 2002). Romola Sanyal explained that the informal evolution of camps was based on daily practices. Refugees living in tents, with very bad housing conditions, start to build progressively solid houses, and install infrastructures to improve their way of living (Sanyal, 2015). According to Kamel Dorai, the hosting state constrains economic activities and restricts refugees from exercising any building activity that could make their stay permanent (Dorai, 2005). However, despite this marginalization, refugees are deeply tied to their urban environment due to their demographic weight, daily mobility and commercial activities that loosen existing boundaries between the camp and hosting city (Ibid, 2005).

"Transit and waiting areas, camps are organized like "cities" without any clear urban plan or vision, in the sense that everything is created to be permanent and never last. They stabilize and last" (Agier, 2004, p.89).

2. Refugees and Urbanization in the Middle-East

Due to political instability, the Middle East area hosts one of the largest refugee and internally displaced communities worldwide; Palestinians and Iraqis who mainly reside in urban areas such as: Cairo, Damascus, Amman and Beirut (Dorai, 2010). And since 2011, due to civil war, Syria accounts for nearly one third of refugees worldwide, creating the largest refugee population in the world (Todd, 2019).The overwhelming majority (83%) of those who

fled Syria resides in the Middle East (Ibid, 2019). Simultaneously, a rapid increasing urban development is taking place in the whole area. 'The urban population increased from one quarter of the total population in the 1950s to over 60% in 2005' (Dorai, 2010). This rapid growth is directly linked the displaced populations that became the main catalyst of urban evolution (Ibid, 2010). Dorai argues that regardless of diverse reasons that caused these refugee movements, most camps last much longer than the conflict itself and refugees wind up growing and residing inside the host country's temporary settlement. The entire vicinity of the camp is strongly altered and directly affected by its presence. Therefore, this should urge host communities to consider refugees as actors who contribute, through their coping tactics and daily social practices, to the development of hosting cities, and not only as recipients of humanitarian assistance, awaiting their return to their homeland (Ibid, 2010).

Amman is one of the cities that witnessed deep transformations following the influx of 300,000 Palestinians expelled from Kuwait due to the Iraqi invasion in 1990. Moreover, thousands of Iraqis who fled the war and economic challenges since the 1990s, profoundly altered some neighborhoods in Damascus. In 2018, Turkey supported more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees most of whom settled in cities such as Istanbul where they could get job opportunities (Todd, 2019). However, Turkey worked on a plan to decrease the number of refugees in urban centers, starting by moving more than 6,000 Syrians from the capital to temporary housing in the countryside (Ibid, 2019). Furthermore, Beirut's southern suburbs were also affected by multiple waves of refugees: Palestinians, starting 1948, followed by Syrians after the civil war (Ibid, 2019).

Dorai also argues that waves of refugees are arriving into cities which were already experiencing rapid urbanization as a dynamic-not only related to refugees. As an example, he describes the massive urbanization process in Damascus directly linked to new migrant populations coming from Syria and abroad, and residing in the vicinity of the city (Dorai,

2010). Already undergoing rapid urbanization, Damascus also hosted various communities of refugees from Arab areas: mainly Palestinians with more than 350,000 in Damascus and its suburbs, several hundred Somalis, Afghans, Sudanese, Yemenis and the large displaced community from Syrian Golan Heights (around 300,000). Also thousands of Iraqi refugees were hosted since 2003 and two-third of them, registered by the UNHCR, reside in Damascus due to the lack of refugee camps (Ibid, 2010). For a city of just four million inhabitants, Damascus has a very high proportion of refugees and displaced people that are constantly affecting the city's urban and social fabric (Ibid, 2010). The hosting city's urban landscape suffered drastic changes since the Iraqi's displacement. The local townscape was shaped by Iraqi businesses, economic activities and cultural practices such as street vending and clothes manufacturing.

While talking about his experience in Jordan and Pakistan, Kilian Kleinschmidt argues that by banishing refugees and considering that they are all going back to their homeland very soon, and by putting them in short-lived solutions such as tents instead of permanent housing, host communities are losing *"a real opportunity for progress, for change. They are losing an opportunity for additional resources, capacities, know-how."*(Rafdord, 2015).

Urban margins that host migrants and refugees are not disconnected from the dynamics of surrounding cities since refugee camps become part of the urban settings and are strongly linked to their urban environment (Dorai, 2010).

> "*In the case of the Palestinian Arab refugee camps – such as those existing in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria – they are prevailing features of the urban structures of these states. [...] The camp cities, both small and large, can be considered as urban conglomerations in the demographic and ecological sense. [...] These cities represent a unique urban pattern, which has special features, problems, structures, and consequently requires a special classification in the study of urban societies in the Middle East.*" (Al-Qutub, 1989: 91, 107 cited in Dorai, 2008).

In the Middle Eastern unstable political context, Dorai explains that the cases of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees validate the strong link between forced migration and urban development,

since refugees reside in urban areas in order to access resources and develop their own social and economic activities, thus becoming catalysts of urban transformation (Dorai, 2010).

Urbanization process of Palestinian refugee camps

When it comes to the Palestinian case, the dispersed community has spread in the Middle East in refugee camps that became the symbol of this diaspora which territorial dynamics as well as the Palestinian specific perception of space created particular socio-spatial organizations, united around a mythical territory and scattered in different countries. Originally built on urban peripheries or outside urban centers, today most camps are now integrated in main cities or capitals of host countries, due to the Middle East's rapid urbanization (Dorai, 2005). The Palestinian identity is expressed today in exile through camps that are one of its most visible and representative spatial manifestations (Ibid, 2005). During seventy years of exile, Palestinians managed to create coping mechanisms and new practices for local adaptation in urban areas (Ibid, 2005). The camps' dwellers witnessed deep alterations, along with the growing urbanization process, due to emigration, internal displacement and social mobility. Dorai argues that because of the camps' demographic weight, and various activities (e.g. socio-economic activities, political decision making) or social practices developed through the years, as well as the central role they play in the Palestinian society in exile, the segregated spaces can become part of urban areas or even turn into urban centers. According to Dorai, the case of Palestinian camps should be considered in close relation to the temporal dimension of the Palestinian exile, since seventy years have allowed refugees to create specific and special relationships with their host communities backed up by a solid local integration due to the rapid urbanization process in host countries. In contrast to camps becoming cities, 'Refugee spaces are increasingly becoming 'slum like' or mimicking the cities, and growing to become more

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like informal settlements through informal practices, in relation to the politics of refuge'. (Sanyal, 2013, p.2) Aiming to improve the dwellers' quality of life, aid agencies and host cities are therefore rethinking refugee's spaces as 'transitional settlements' that demand specific strategies of interventions.

Dorai also argues that by analyzing the evolution of different Palestinian camps, the specific history and different ties with their host urban setting can be retraced. On the one hand, camps suffer from marginalization and segregation due to the frequent change in regulations as legal status of Palestinian residents. On the other hand, refugees develop a strong link to their host urban environment due to daily mobility, increasing number of other groups of dwellers (refugees and migrants) and commercial activities that erase the boundaries of refugee camps making them blend in the urban and social fabric.

Furthermore, refugee camps themselves are also hosting over the years many different waves of refugees who reside inside the camps and/or in their vicinity (Dorai, 2010). In the case of Damascus, Iraqis refugees live in neighborhoods hosting Palestinian refugees, internally displaced Syrians from the Golan and internal migrants from the countryside. This pattern is observed in many other cities of this area such as Beirut, Amman and Cairo.

3. *Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Dbayeh camp*

Originally created as temporary structures, Palestinians camps gradually became a permanent part of Lebanon's urban environment, until they grew to be an integral part of the main coastal agglomerations. However, those camps are still regarded as extraterritorial spaces and many are yet controlled by the Lebanese army, especially in the south (Dorai, 2005). During the first decade, since the 1950's, Palestinian refugee camps evolved in Beirut's suburbs, from tents to very densely built-up, poor and segregated neighborhoods also hosting

themselves other marginalized communities such as Syrians, Kurds and Armenians (Dorai, 2010). "Building practices in the Palestinian case are noticed all around the world. Refugees find a way to build a durable shelter by engaging in similar forms of survival in a variety of circumstances" (Sanyal, 2013, p.568).

Julie Peteet talks about the Palestinians' powerful sense of agency used in order to shape notions of identity and place against coercive power structures and limitations in Lebanon. While Peteet describes producing space and spatializing identity she points out: "The social activities and relationships enacted in them [refugee camps] and the organizing and naming of units of space produced place, attesting to the remarkable human capacity to create new cultural and social forms of daily life in the face of monumental loss. These landscapes of despair are spaces of bereavement for the loss of the homeland over five decades ago" (Peteet, 2005, p. 95). Palestinian refugees in exile, have developed with the space a particular relationship that is deeply anchored in camps (Dorai, 2005). These spaces, symbolizing the diaspora became places of expression and reformulation of refugee's identity and reflect the constraints exerted by host communities. The singularity of Palestinian spatial practices is expressed in a particular way of settlement within their host spaces.

With more than 7 million Palestinian refugees across the globe (according to UNRWA), more than 90% reside in countries bordering Israel and Palestinian territories (Dorai, 2005). However, this relative spatial concentration should not mask the significant differences that characterize each of the dispersed Palestinian communities. Palestinians residing in Lebanon present a series of peculiarities linked to the singular socio-spatial organization of their small host country that is defined by contrasts: a geography in which mountains and hills dominate a narrow coastal plain; and an urban coastal and commercial society coexisting with a rural communities increasingly marginalized. Lebanon, a country among the most prosperous and dynamic in the region, which displays today the stigma of a long civil war that has destroyed

most of its economic potential, is home to 504,000 (mostly Sunnis) Palestinian registered refugees.[16] 174,422 Palestinians reside today in 12 recognized camps and gatherings across Lebanon, according to the latest 2017 census. The Palestinian community of Lebanon, one of the main communities residing outside the borders of Palestine, after Jordan and Syria, has one of the most problematic futures.

In the 1970s, Palestinian camps and groups experienced significant spatial development in the South, where institutions where very present. The spaces witnessed a densification and qualitative improvement of housing, the establishment of basic infrastructure and diverse economic activities that led to a substantial improvement of living conditions (Dorai, 2005).

After 72 years of exile, these camps became waiting spaces and places of "withdrawal" (Dorai, 2005). Economic activities and production are slowly disappearing, with only small businesses left. In 'Sour' the Southern city that hosts a significant number of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, certain camps tend to integrate progressively into the surrounding urban fabric while simultaneously the legislation and control imposed by the state, increase their isolation. Thus these spaces tend to be marginalized and segregated areas within a rapidly changing urban setting (Ibid, 2005). Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are facing two major constraints: A peace process in crisis on a regional scale which shadowed the case of 1948 refugees, and increasingly deep socio-political marginalization in the host country. Moreover, the Taëf agreement (1989), which ended the civil war, leaves no room for the Palestinians. Categorized as "refugees" (UNHCR, 2016) by the Lebanese State, since the mid-eighties, a series of laws banned them from exercising more than 50 professions. They are denied access to public social services and basic rights such as education and freedom of travel abroad. These policies are translated by a strict control of refugee camps, where issuing a work permit is nearly impossible and through

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[16] *Around 3,000 to 5000 Palestinians in Lebanon are not registered with UNRWA and have no other form of identity documents. (*https://www.unrwa.org)

applying very restrictive requirements on international mobility (Ibid, 2005). Instability and mobility are two main aspects that characterize the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Several Palestinian camps that were partially destroyed during the Lebanese civil war, were not included in the state reconstruction plans. Originally 15, refugee camps today are down to 12. As Palestinians cannot renovate their accommodation due to lack of means and rights, housing is in danger of becoming precarious, while 90% of refugees had been forced to leave their home at least once (Dorai, 2008).

Most refugees experienced life in and outside camps (Ibid, 2008).The different forms of daily mobility constantly cross the camp's borders, since most refugees leave the camp every day to study or go to work. Other forms of spatial practices linked to access businesses and services, or visiting family and friends, lead to commuting in different parts of the hosting city (Ibid, 2008).

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are deprived from any vision to their future, and find themselves isolated more than in any other host country in the diaspora with nearly two third of refugees currently live below poverty line (Dorai, 2005). An increasing number of refugees are seeking another host country, suitable for a long-term settlement (Ibid, 2005), while UNRWA frequently highlights the urge to find a permanent solution to these communities (Dorai, 2008).

Urban Integration process

Palestinian refugees camps are welcoming today an increasing number of migrants who are partly asylum seekers such as the case of Iraqis in Shatila camp in Beirut, or mostly undocumented migrant workers, such as Sudanese or Sri Lankans in Mar Elias camp in Beirut (Dorai, 2008). In the case of Dbayeh, Palestinians have been hosting Lebanese (38.9%),

Syrians (15.6 %) and Armenians (2%) (Census, 2017). Those refugee camps present many advantages to migrants, such as relatively low cost accommodation, safe spaces that allow them to avoid being exposed (in case of illegal stay) to local authorities -who don't enter camps-, and a central location which allows them to limit their long commutes to access services and resources.

"*Like all urban migrants, asylum seekers are attracted to urban centers because economic resources and opportunities, including education for their children, are concentrated there, and in cities migrants can access the social networks and ethnic enclaves that supports newcomers, and which initiate the process of integration*" (Jacobsen, 2006: 276 cited in Dorai, 2008).

The presence of this non-Palestinian populations in refugee camps that are not created to host them, pushes to rethink these spaces and perceive them more as urban spaces of segregation and isolation instead of temporary 'camps'(Ibid, 2008). The influx of different migrant communities and different cultures in one territory, leads to the need to redefine this space. Today there are two types of housing in Palestinian refugee camps that are rented to migrants and new comers, allowing Palestinians to obtain additional income (Ibid, 2008):

- The house is vacated by a Palestinian family who has immigrated most often to Europe. The empty accommodation is often entrusted to a family member who will handle the renting process. The low cost rent (which varies between 75$ to 150$ per month depending on the size and the region) attracts outsiders who share rent costs with several other tenants. On the one

- Some Palestinians build an additional floor (most often illegally) and turn it into an accommodation for new comers.

Detailed renting scenarios occurring Dbayeh refugee camp will be developed in Chapter IV.

Another sign of the camp's urban integration into the hosting city is the development of commercial activities since the end of the Lebanese civil war (Dorai, 2008). Small local businesses that are found in most Palestinian camps, benefit from the contribution of new

comers who seek to get their daily supplies from the closest location and at lowest costs according to informal testimonies that I collected from small traders and dwellers in Dbayeh camp. In the case of Mar Elias, most of the business owners, today reside outside the camp, after being displaced during the conflicts. As an example, one Palestinian business owner who left Mar Elias, lives in a village in Saida where he managed to find accommodation at much lower prices than in Beirut. He kept working in Beirut because his clientele is located in the city (Dorai, 2008). The owners decided to develop their business inside the camp since rent prices are much lower, and because as Palestinians, they are prohibited from working outside the camp boundaries. According to Dorai, the clients mainly come from surrounding neighborhoods since the camp's dwellers can only afford basic provisions and services. (Only grocery stores and fruit and vegetables shops benefit from the Palestinian clientele.

As for Al-Buss camp in Beirut, numerous businesses established along the main roads, at the camp's boundaries, are owned by both Palestinians and Lebanese and integrate the camp into the urban landscape of the hosting city. (Ibid, 2008).The income provided by the dynamic commercial activities allowed Palestinians to improve their homes, which increasingly tend to look like those in Lebanese low-income neighborhoods. These informal settlements evolved while integrating the economic activity and urban landscape of Tyr (Ibid, 2008).

In Dbayeh camp, many commercial activities developed mostly on the edges of the camp in direct relation with the local community of Dbayeh (Bechara, 2017). Many other particular social-spatial tactics and cultural/communal practices (developed in Chapter IV) are also noticed: adding curtains as space extensions, painting facades, planting the majority of left-over spaces and passages, arts and crafts workshops, music lessons, regional sports competitions, local shows and concerts…Following my interview with the mayor of Dbayeh, and informal conversations with local inhabitants, it became clear that Dbayeh camp is perceived today as part of the hosting town.

However, the control of entrances by the Lebanese army in most Palestinian camps plays a significant role in the deterioration of housing inside the camps. Strict measures allow the army to search cars at each entrance and prohibit all construction materials that contribute to the improvement of refugees' accommodations and living conditions (Dorai, 2008). These include concrete masonry units, sheet metal for roofs, glass, paint, and electrical equipment…These restrictions prevent any maintenance or renovation works in homes (Dorai, 2008). Dbayeh Camp as opposed to the majority of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, is exempt from any control due to the absence of physical boundaries. The camp's relation to its immediate surroundings will be further developed in Chapter IV, Section A-3.

Moreover, the different forms of commuting and daily mobility previously mentioned, are also one major aspect underlining the camp's urban integration. Refugees are not trapped inside the camps' boundaries (Dorai, 2008). When asked about freedom of mobility, many dwellers confirmed to me that they live just like any other Lebanese citizen:

"*We commute every day to work and school. We often visit our family and friends outside the camp…During the weekends, we often go on road trips and we never encountered any problem. We have traveled across Lebanon from North to South just like any Lebanese citizen.*' Samar, 43, Palestinian refugee in Dbayeh.

Palestinian refugee camps are witnessing forms of complementarities between local communities and different groups of migrants, coexisting in a space in which develops a housing market, and small businesses from which benefit local dwellers and new comers. "*Through their heterogeneity, camps can generate unforeseen cities, new contexts of socialization, relationships and identification*" (Agier, 2002, cited in Dorai, 2008).

The development of businesses on the borders of the camp, along with Palestinians' practices which, due to the dwellers daily mobility, cross frequently the borders of the camp, lead to a rethinking of the role of the camp in the city. Camps are also increasingly acting like low-

income neighborhoods of Beirut, by hosting non-Palestinian communities -and more particularly migrants- and opening up these 'neglected' spaces (Dorai, 2008). Despite the fact that refugee camps still remain spaces of segregation and marginalization, their strong connection to their urban environment, contributes to strengthening their integration to the host city, thus underlining the importance of changing the perception about these 'waiting' spaces.

B. Placemaking

To guide my intervention, I have identified several authors who wrote about place-making, including Jan Gehl, Iris Aravot, and John Friedmann. I will also review case studies that cover the design framework of my study, such as the thesis of Petra Samaha who worked on public shared spaces in Burj Hammoud, and Myriam Bechara who tackled the rehabilitation of the Dbayeh camp focusing on shared left-over spaces. I will then review the works of Project for Public Spaces (PPS) an organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public spaces, and Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs, and Irish urban designer Dr. Arthur Parkinson, who worked on the key role of place-attachment, identity and sense of place in placemaking.

However, this literature does not particularly address spatial influx. It deals with placemaking with a fixed community while falling short of addressing an influx urban condition and a transient community. Hence, my inquiry will further push it to answer to the question of a layer of memory in the midst of urban transformation and displacement. This literature will be applied critically knowing that the community is not permanent and the space is being transformed. It will tackle the issue of how placemaking can discuss, in a space transformation, layers of the city's memory within a historical narrative, rather than the collective memory of a community. What does collective memory mean in this essence? What is city memory? And what layer of memory can we retain while allowing the space to transform?

1. *Theoretical framework*

Following critiques of many failed interventions focused only on design and aesthetics, placemaking, around the mid-1990s, started grabbing the attention of designers and planners who began looking for strategies that foster communal engagement without undermining the key role of design strategies in physical upgrading of living spaces. Placemaking was considered as a 'communal shaping of space' (Samaha, 2015). According to 'Project for Public Spaces' (PPS), an American NGO that expanded the concept for decades into 46 countries, Placemaking is "a multi-faced approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces that capitalizes on a local community's assets and potential. It involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions to the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover needs and aspirations for the place" (PPS). Rather than being an end product, it is a collaborative process that inspires people to collectively reimagine and shape our public realm focusing on public spaces as the core of every community, in order to maximize shared value. In his book 'Cities for people', Jan Gehl argues that in order to create a 'sustainable, safe, lively and healthy city', designers should focus on human relationships, and people's daily practices (Gehl, 2010). A Placemaking strategy is not about promoting better design and aesthetics, but it fosters creative patterns of use, focusing on the physical, cultural and social identities defining a place and facilitating its growth. Mark A. Wyckoff, professor of land policy in Michigan State University, defines Placemaking as: "the process of creating Quality places -with a strong sense of Place- that people want to live, work, play and learn in" (Wyckoff, 2014). Placemaking is therefore a process, a means to end which is creating 'Quality places'. He defines 'Quality Places' as being spaces where people care about due to their strong sense of place. A 'Quality Place' is active, people friendly (designed for people), safe, connected, walkable, rich in mix uses, allows authentic experiences, promotes and facilitates

civic engagement and often offers community heritage, green spaces, public art and creative activities (Ibid, 2014).

According to PPS, Placemaking leads to creating a good public space that "promotes a community's health, safety, peace, happiness and well-being" (PPS, 2017). But what exactly is a good public space?

PPS defines a good public space as a place where people like to be in. A place that makes them feel at home. A place that is safe, well-connected and accessible. It attracts the community by its multi-use, multicultural and interactive aspect, while also promoting community empowerment and fostering communal responsibility (Ibid, 2017).

"*Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they already live great*" Fred Kent, urban planner, founder and president of PPS.
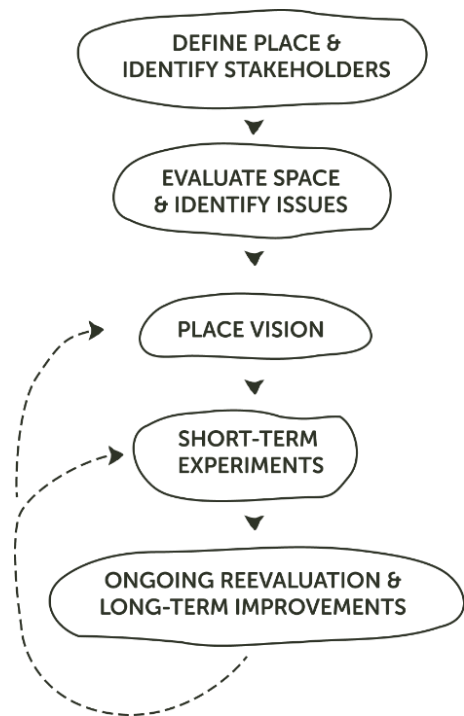
Figure 23: Placemaking Processes (PPS.org)

 In order to get more people involved in observing, planning and shaping a place, PPS uses the 5 step Placemaking process (PPS, 2017). PPS highlights the importance of identifying and meeting the stakeholders first; to then proceed with space evaluation after spending time on site and identifying its assets and challenges which will later on, inform the conception of a vision for the space. Implementation is established through short-term experiments and continues with on-going evaluation through an iterative process until long-term improvements are reached.

Wyckoff defines four types of Placemaking which are different in terms of funding, problems, and outcomes. He illustrates the relationship between standard Placemaking and three different approaches of specialized Placemaking that focus on certain types of quality of life improvements, ways to achieve larger or smaller benefits and ways to test and try some solutions before committing significant money and resources: Strategic Placemaking, tactical Placemaking and creative Placemaking (Wyckoff, 2014).

Standard Placemaking or plain Placemaking is the universal term as presented by PPS. Wyckoff argues that placemaking is used as an incremental and iterative process to improve a place's quality over a long period of time by creating multiple small projects and/or activities. However, this urban design strategy can also implement larger scale transformative projects and/or activities that transform a place
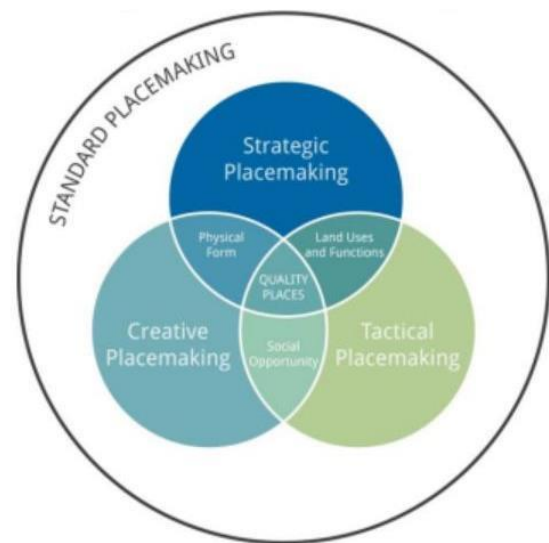
Figure 24: The Four types of Placemaking
(Source: Wyckoff, 2014)

in a short period through providing it a strong sense of place that attracts communities and new development projects (Ibid, 2014).

Strategic Placemaking focuses on a targeted goal while creating Quality places mainly to attract workers and businesses that are looking for talented employees thus fostering significant job opportunities and income growth. This version of placemaking targets knowledge workers in the global New Economy who have the luxury to choose the place they want to live in, and are attracted to Quality places holding many amenities and hosting other talented worker. This approach is a targeted process that expands over 5 to 15 years in specific locations such as nodes, centers and along key corridors. Projects are larger and in fewer locations than the standard Placemaking. **Creative Placemaking** is a process during which "*partners from*

public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social

character of a neighborhood around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking

animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local

business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire,

and be inspired." (Ann Markusen & Anne Gadwa, 2010, cited in Wyckoff, 2014). This

approach provides the community with cultural activities to promote its identity. It aims to

institutionalize arts, culture and creative thinking in different parts of the built environment. It

focuses on interventions that are built around and inclusive of arts cultural and creative thinking

such as public art displays, live-work structures for passersby and local talents, art-themed

transit stations. It also implements entertainment activities such as chalk art projects, outdoor

concerts and movie screening while also aiming to include the kids' ideas in planning projects

through artwork, therefore filling quality places with vitality.

Figure 25: Examples of creative placemaking (PPS.org)

On the other hand, **Tactical Placemaking** is a combination of two separate but related

approaches: Tactical Urbanism or 'guerilla urbanism'[17]–incremental, small-scale improvement

and short term action that results in a long term change, brought by 'Street Plans'[18]- and

'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper' which is a guide of worldwide interventions in most successful

public spaces by Projects for Public Spaces. Tactical placemaking is a low risk and often low-

cost process producing a mix of small projects that creates Quality Places using a phased

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[17] Also 'pop-up urbanism', 'city repair', 'DIY urbanism'
[18] An internationally recognized urban planning, design, architecture and transportation planning firm based in Miami and New York.

approach to change, starting with a short term commitment while targeting and transforming underused public shared spaces.

Figure 26: Examples of Tactical placemaking: community-led installation and pop-up Park (PPS.org)

In this thesis, I will not rely on the first approach (Strategic Placemaking) since it mainly targets nodes and city centers while aiming to achieve large scale urban projects. My main focus will be on 'Creative Placemaking' -that focuses on revitalizing public spaces using creative initiatives that animate places and boost economic development- and mostly 'Tactical placemaking' which is specialized in underused public shared spaces that are my main target in Dbayeh camp. However, how can these approaches work within a transient community and absence of property ownership?

2. *Placemaking in the context of refugee camps*

"*What defines the character of a city is its public space, not its private space*." Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN Habitat. "Public spaces are key elements of individual and social well-being, the places of a community's collective life, expressions of the diversity of their common natural and cultural richness and a foundation of their identity." (2013 Charter of Public Space, reference guide adopted in 2014 by UN-Habitat). According to Hamish Dounan, associate Director of 'Context Landscape Architects, the public space is the 'new backyard' where people bring out the things they do privately: socializing, sports, eating, creating. In fact, a public space becomes more than just aesthetics: it is about exchange, comfort and feeling

secure. Building ownership with the community leads to creating a certain connection between the users and the space, thus fostering social civic engagement. "*When you like something, you take care of it*!" confirms Dounan. (PPS.org).

According to Marsman and Leidelmejjer, livability is defined in general as the "resident's evaluation of the living environment" (Kamp et al., 2003). It is then a 'perceived value based on the interaction between a person and the daily life environment' (Samaha, 2015). The quality of space has always been defined by its users (Ibid, 2015).

In light of increasing global migration, internal displacement and refugee crisis, the topic of public space is becoming more frequent in today's urban discourses especially in those addressing the most vulnerable and unstable cities (Jalkh, 2017). Most refugee camps are built by international NGOs providing a shelter with basic amenities aimed at efficiency. According to Project for Public Places (PPS) it is important to insure housing to as many refugees as possible but it also essential and vital to make these places feel like 'home' since this temporary location might end up being permanent for certain communities (PPS, 2018).
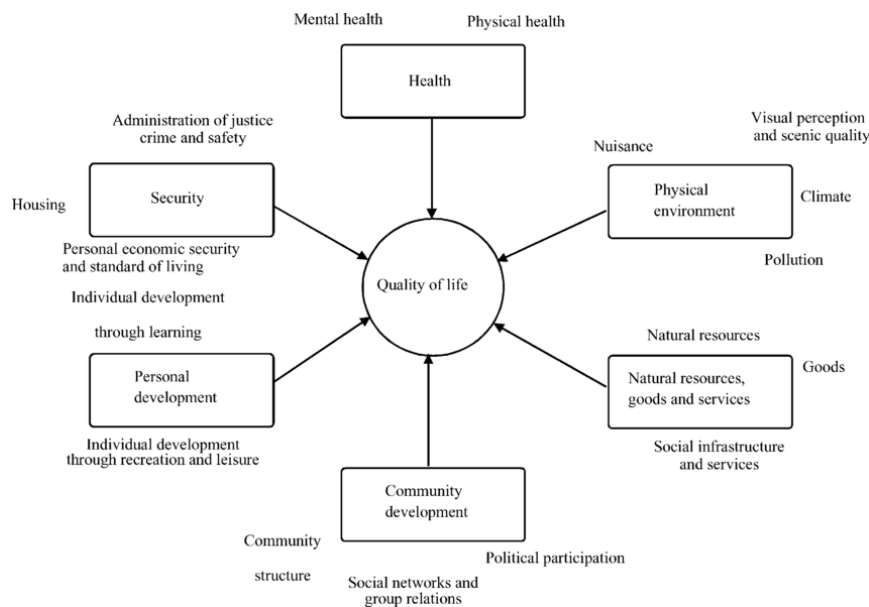
Figure 27: Quality of life components (by Mitchell, 2000 as cited in Kamp et al., 2003).

Today's global refugee crisis can be tackled through public spaces which can play a key role in addressing this issue. However, despite the fact that by definition, a public space is open and accessible to everyone, it can become a space of threat and exclusion for immigrants and refugees. Poorly managed or inaccessible public spaces can actually generate virtual barriers between communities and places by being unsafe, exclusive, or otherwise threatening on many levels. A 'good public space', as defined in previous section by PPS, can be a source of stability and social interaction as well as a space of exchange and healing for refugees (PPS, 2018). PPS works on placemaking for peacemaking, focusing on the importance of public spaces in shaping displaced communities. It also defines places as environments in which people have invested meaning over time. (PPS, 2015). In 2015, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), recognized the role of public spaces in sustainable development by including a target in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda to: "provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for woman and children, older persons and persons with disabilities. The IRC, and Rony Jalkh senior from PPS have been working on exploring ways that placemaking can be used by and for refugees. Many innovative refugee centers focused on inclusion and creative expression. Spaces such as open-air libraries, shared gardens and playgrounds can be places for refugees to spend time but they can also play the role of hubs for cultural exchange and creativity (PPS, 2017). Moreover, the new Urban Agenda, signed in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016, focused on the importance of public space, pointing out the role of quality public spaces in positively affecting health and well-being through boosting social and economic development, enhancing safety and security, and fostering social engagement interaction and diversity (Jalkh, 2017). In recent years, there has been an increasing demand by cities to create viable and meaningful public spaces within slums and informal settlements in urban areas. (Cantada, 2015)
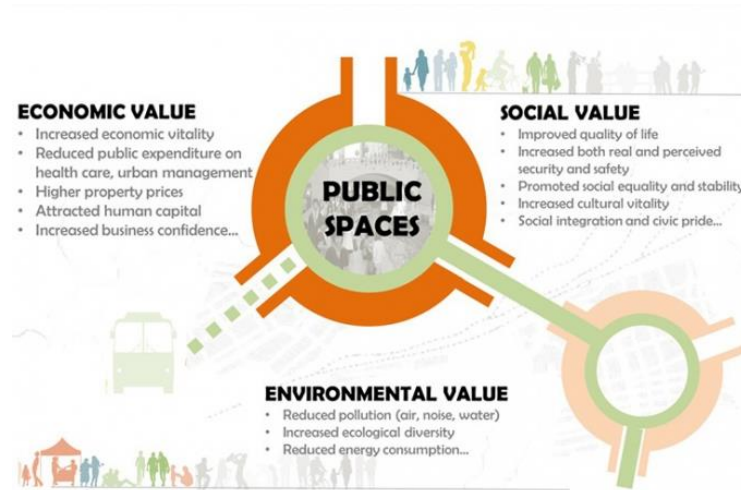
Figure 28: Benefits of public spaces in the poorest parts of the world (Source: World Bank Staff, 2015)

According to the World Bank, cities start to recognize the benefits of public spaces especially in poor neighborhoods (Cantada, 2015). Public spaces:

- Become centers for social interaction, cultural expression and civic engagement

- Boost local economy development

- Enhance environmental sustainability

- Improve health, accessibility, security

- Improve sense of place

Literature from PPS and Archive Global, an international non-profit organization that focuses on the link between health and housing, suggest that including public spaces in urban policies design and programs can act as catalyst for slum upgrading in developing countries. They also argue that "slums or informal communities must be recognized as a valid and unique form of urban growth and development" (Ibid, 2015).

In addition, according to Lefebvre, space is a social product shaped by social practices of individual and collective agents. Urban spatial form and structure and its functions are the outcome of socio-spatial practices that occur in specific political, economic, and cultural spheres. (Lefebvre, 1992, as cited in Samaha 2015). In other words, spaces are shaped by

dwellers' daily practices and communal activities, and the public realm is thus defined by people's identity. Reinventing the public will allow communities to come together and mitigate inequalities aiming for better planned neighborhoods, where public shared spaces are based on shared values and collective memory (Parkinson, 2018). Hence, each person in the community will have a duty to engage in making better places for the right to a livable city based on collective values and concerns (Friedmann, 2010, as cited in Samaha 2015).

Informal settlements have been the center of urban discourses especially in the past decade due to the increase of global urbanization (Samaha, 2015). However, planning and design interventions, despite a significant experience in slum upgrading projects, focus on the legal framework, improving physical housing conditions and boosting local economy. The designers' interest seem drifting away from one of the most common urban design interventions, the improvement of public shared spaces that foster communal connections (Ibid, 2015). Moreover, intervening on informal settlements aims not only to improve the physical environment, but also empower the community to be more actively involved in the development and maintenance of their neighborhoods. (Karimi, K; Parham, E, 2012).

Since the shared and public dimensions have been missing from slum upgrading discourses and are becoming more present today, my main focus in this thesis is the public realm within the refugee camp. I will investigate shared spaces uses and daily socio-practices, and focus on to the placemaking strategy in order to enhance living conditions in the congested urban fabric of Dbayeh camp. According to Friedmann, a successful neighborhood is cherished by its dwellers despite the ill-maintained housing and poor infrastructure. Housing can be upgraded through restoration and infrastructure can be replaced. The neighborhood is valued for many other reasons, one of which is when it offers places of encounter in which residents affirm their identity (Friedmann, 2010, as cited in Samaha 2015). When the public realm offers

places to gather in, to exchange, share, sit in, the sense of belonging and attachment to the place increases (Parkinson, 2018).

To sum up, Placemaking will be used as a tool to tackle the public realm of Dbayeh camp through upgrading the quality of shared open spaces in order to enhance social interaction and shape meaningful spaces of expression, exchange and healing for the diverse communities of refugees.

3. *Placemaking and the question of identity*

To begin with, place-attachment can be defined as an emotional bond developed within people towards a place that makes them want to be there and fills them with safety and comfort (Hernandez et al. 2007, Knez 2005 cited in Hiruy, 2009). It can be experienced individually or collectively and contributes to the development and maintenance of identity. Place identity is "a component of personal identity, a process by which, through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place" (Hernandez et al. 2007, cited in Hiruy, 2009). Self-identity goes beyond oneself to include things and places in which they are existing (Proshansky Et Al., 1983). On the other hand, place-attachment is defined by two components: place identity and place dependence (Parkinson, 2018). Through analyzing the attachment that residents of Rotherhithe in London Docklands have to their residential environment, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) argue that place is linked to identity through: a person's identification with a place -or place identification- and place identity. Therefore, the shaping of our identity is in direct relation with our sense of belonging in a spatial setting. The different ways in which people bond with their 'own' places is a fascinating and still not clearly understood riddle, but seeing that many people manifest tight and particular ties to their home or even other places highlights the notion of place-attachment that can occur on a local level as

much as on a national one. Those special feelings are directly affect people's behavior and are directly linked to their system of values, therefore becoming a central component of identity (Smailes, 2006, cited in Hiruy, 2009).

On the other hand, resettlement which is a long-term complex process of adjusting to a new environment after displacement, strongly affects particularly those coming from different cultures than the host community and immediate hosting environment (Galbally, 1978, cited in Hiruy, 2009). The concept of place-attachment and identity are fundamental in resettlement is a process of constructing and exploring new ways of living. The refugees' attachment to their past home, defines their involvement in this practice. Their way of living in the space of resettlement is guided by looking back to how life used to be in their hometown, through the lens of their particular social values, traditions and communal relations (Anderson, 2006, cited in Hiruy, 2009). Lived experiences of refugees play a key role in shaping their attitudes towards resettlement. Fletcher (2009) elaborates on the assertion that the concept of resettlement is more subject to change than might be thought, by describing how it has shifted from being defined by the perspectives of hosting communities to an emphasis on the concerned socio-cultural, personal and economic processes as a multi-dimensional and multi-level phenomenon.

The emotional bond established between people and the place they live in, creates the roots from which the connection between place-attachment, identity, sense of belonging, placemaking and resettlement is considered in meeting the objectives of my thesis. The concept of placemaking came as a response to critiques of 'placeless' urban areas created by modern urbanism. In the beginning of the 1960s, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch and Aldo Rossi and others argued about sense of place in urban design, and its fundamental role in create sense of community and social engagement. This reaction to 'placelessness', evolved over time to address, through practice, deeper issues such as social justice, economic regeneration, and

community progress (Samaha, 2015). Place-attachment, sense of identity and collective memory, play a key role within placemaking processes (Parkinson, A., Scott, M., and Redmond, D., 2017). The sense of place is defined by physical assets (such as buildings stock, architectural character, landmarks, proximity, and economic opportunities of existing businesses) and social dimensions which include practices, values, collective memory and common interests (Parkinson, A. et al., 2017). By expressing both aspects in a context-sensitive plan, designers and planners achieve greater social responsibility and belonging. (Ibid, 2017). Evaluating how places are valued, leads to a site-specific placemaking response. Public values are thus central to placemaking, in order to ensure that the public space represents communal values that vary between different social groups (Burton, E. and Mitchell, E., 2006). Therefore, Placemaking is not just about the relationship of dwellers to their places; it also fosters relationships between people within places (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, cited in Samaha, 2015)

However, in most low-income neighborhoods the interest of the weakest are often marginalized by those who are in power (Parkinson, 2018) and planning tends to ignore intangible qualities such as sense of place (Stephenson, 2010 cited in Parkinson, 2018). Professionals frequently rely on top-down approaches, undermining place-attachment and people's commitment to where they live, thus leading to difficulties regarding balancing different interests, representing authentic public values. (Arefi, 1999, cited in Parkinson, 2018). Planners and designers must ensure that public space represents public values in order to increase the sense of belonging, thus triggering the public to commit to the space they live in (Parkinson, 2018). Enhancing public engagement also plays a role in enhancing democracy and helps avoid overlooking the least-advantage's interests. (Rios, 2008 cited in Parkinson, 2018). According to Parkinson, if the sense of place is maintained, the community is more likely to commit thus participate in creating better places. Public values should not only be observed or evaluated but also

integrated within the placemaking process. Urban designers and planners must mitigate impacts upon place-attachment through innovative methods of stakeholder interaction (Parkinson, 2018). In fact, place-attachment should be considered through public participation (participatory or bottom-up approach) and people-place relations that change over time due to their tight connection to constantly altering communities (Manzo and Perkins, 2006, cited in Parkinson, 2018).

Considering the identity as a 'situated' process linked with the sense of belonging in a spatial setting, shapes our understanding of place-attachment and sets a clear relationship between Placemaking and identity. In a space of refuge that often hosts different communities, Placemaking becomes then an iterative process in continuous evolution, shaping the space through the values and practices of its transient social fabric. Thus, particular socio-spatial practices that reflect shared values in the public realm of Dbayeh camp should be retained as an identity for the space.

C. Placemaking strategies and Case Studies

Space vs. Place

"A space is a physical description of a piece of land, whereas a "place" connotes an emotional attachment to the piece of land" (PPS, 2015).

When does a space become a place? Abandoned, poorly maintained or inaccessible public spaces can become unsafe and a space of exclusion in low income neighborhoods and refuge spaces (PPS). Therefore, public spaces should be investigated through social practices and not just design (Kim, 2015 in Samaha, 2015). As a result, not every public space is necessarily a meaningful place. Unused dead end roads, abandoned lots, poorly maintained transport stations

or parks are public spaces but they certainly don't contribute to the well-being, collectivity or cultural richness of societies (PPS). Residual spaces are classified into spaces in-between, spaces around, rooftops, wedges, redundant infrastructure, oversized infrastructure, void spaces, and spaces 'below' (Villagomez, 2010 in Samaha, 2015). According to PPS, 'external spaces in-between' are spaces that were public but remained neglected and forgotten, thus lost their positive impact as a people's place. After evaluating more than thousands of public spaces around the world, PPS (2015) argues that a successful public space is presents 4 key qualities:

- It is accessible to everyone: Both physical and visual connections to the surroundings.

- It fosters communal activity.

- It is comfortable and has a good image.

- It is a sociable place where people gather and meet.

The Place Diagram below is a tool developed by PPS as a guide to judge any place.

According to Project for Public Space, a place is an environment with a history and unique identity that is distinct by its users and the way they use it and in which those people have created and invested meaning through the years. Thus, by creating places and not just public space, the communities' well-being can be fostered and developed (Ibid, 2015).
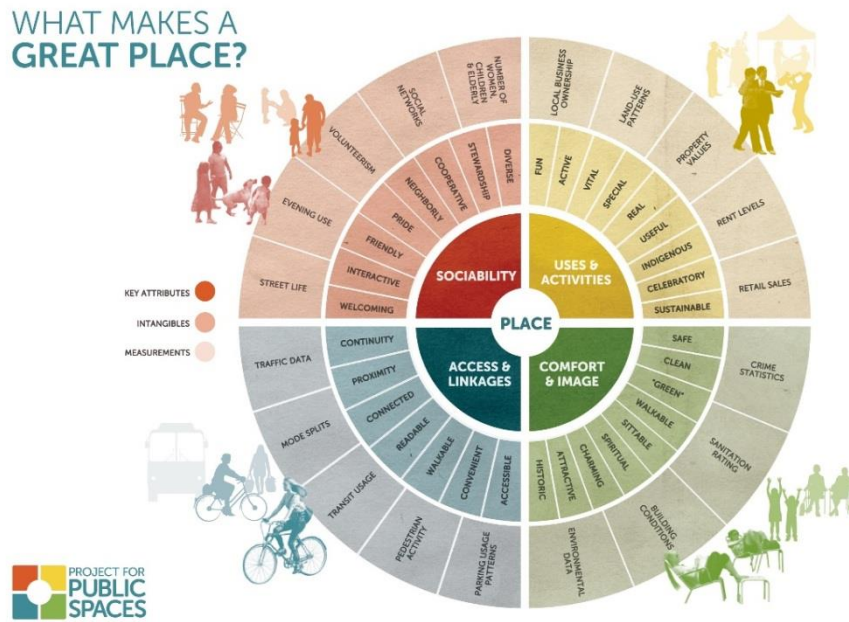
Figure 29: Place Diagram to evaluate a place (PPS.org)

The place diagram includes 4 sections that act as the foundation of a placemaking intervention: Access and Linkage, Comfort and Image, Uses & Activities and Sociability.

The first section addresses the connectivity of the space to its immediate surrounding both visually and physically. Sidewalks, streets to heighten the perception of users and visitors heading the place play a significant role in a well-connected area. It also inspects the diversity of transportation and access to left-over spaces.

Comfort and Image, is tightly linked to the success of the space. It focuses on the users' perception of the place's character and the left-over spaces in terms of safety, comfort and cleanliness, as well as the impact of neighboring built environment. Moreover, the section is concerned about available seating and shade that attract users to the space.

Uses and Activities, is the section that studies the main reason that triggers people to use the space. Activities give a particular character to the space based on their diversity and opportunities for users to participate. They must cater to all ages and abilities and insure a good balance between genders in order to insure continuity throughout the day and seasons.

Sociability, the last section, focuses on people's feeling of readiness to interact easily with the community especially strangers. Moreover, it is interested in how the space is creating a chance for people to meet new individuals in the public realm through communal events such as music concerts, hosting movies or festivals. It is also concerned about the effect of social classes of dwellers on their sense of place and 'togetherness' as described by British social scientist Doreen Massey. This section analyzes as well how people use the space as groups, or individually (PPS, 2015).

"It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished."- William Whyte.

Placemaking plays a key role in transforming a space into a place where people construct meanings over time and are inspired people collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community (PPS, 2015). By strengthening the ties between communities and places this collaborative process allows to shape the public realm through collective practices thus maximizing shared value. Going beyond just aesthetics, better design, building or fixing up a space, placemaking fosters creative patterns of use and the emergence of vital public destinations while focusing on the physical, social and cultural identities that define the place and promote its iterative evolution. Capitalizing on local community's assets and aspirations, Placemaking 'creates good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and economic well-being. Inspired by Jane Jacob and William Whyte's visions based on the concept of 'a city for people', NGOs such as PPS and universities (e.g. MIT) documented placemaking practices across the globe.

To start off a Placemaking process, PPS uses the '**Power of 10+**' concept: 'A great place must at least have 10 things to do in or 10 reasons to be there.' This concept insures that the space offers a variety of things to do to its daily users as well as newcomers (PSS, 2015).

These can include a place to sit, a kids playground, art to touch, music to hear, food to taste, history to experience and people to meet and gather with. Particular or unique activities reflecting local culture and communal values should also be available.

Figure 30: 11 principles of Placemaking as defined by PPS.

The concept of Placemaking progressively evolved through practice resulting in a comprehensive framework that includes 11 principles that define the concept's tactics, tools, ideas and implementation strategies. 7 of these principles are developed below, as they are more linked to my thesis objectives.

1- **The community is the expert:** The users of the space are the most valuable source of insights of how the area functions. They can inform on challenges to be taken into account in order to improve the space and also include their ideas, therefore enhancing vitality and social engagement.

2- **Create a place not a Design**: In order to introduce vitality into an underused space, physical elements must be used to attract people and create a safe and welcoming environment (i.e.: seating, greening…). Pedestrian friendly and people-oriented solutions and developing strong relationships between the surrounding retail and activities happening in public spaces, creates a place with a strong sense of belonging and rich in mix uses and activities that bring people together, and offers an added value to the community.

3- **Look for Partners:** Partners such as local institutions, museums, schools and others are fundamental to achieve the success of a public space improvement project.

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4- **You can see a lot just by observing:** Looking at communal social practices happening in the space and how people are using or not using public spaces helps learn more about the assets and downsides of the space. This will facilitate the choice of activities to incorporate.

5- **Have a vision:** The vision should be inspired from the local community. Nevertheless, the types of activities happening in the space and a strong sense of place are important in a vision for any public space.

6- '**Start with the petunias':** Easy short-term actions such as simply planting flowers can be an action that provide flexibility to expand the space through experimentation, evaluation and incorporation of results into the following steps.

7- **Triangulate:** The concept of triangulation focuses on locating elements next to each other in way that encourages activity. Such as the example of a bench, a trash bin and a coffee kiosk located near a bus stop can create interaction since they offer a more convenient setting for bus passengers and pedestrians than if they were isolated from each other (PPS, 2015). This strategy increases the chances of activity and interaction around combined land uses. As an example, in Lincoln Square, the library is located next to Welles Park which offers a softball field, playground and food vendors, and is within a walking distance to restaurants, a theatre and the Old Town School of Folk Music. This clustering fosters more activity and interaction than if these facilities were located separately. Art installations, markets, temporary kiosks are places where triangulation can be spotted, since these spaces encourage chatting between strangers and exchange of thoughts.

Figure 31: Cluster of activities at Welles park (Source:Placemakingchicago.com)

To sum up, Placemaking is a collaborative iterative process that produces immediate change, through bottom-up interventions focused on inclusion and resulting in direct economic benefits that address specific challenges and highlight the community's assets, talents, and values as well as different aspects of the local culture. Communities worldwide are increasingly beginning to recognize and promote the power of 'place' in transforming cities and enhancing living conditions while shaping safer, healthier and more inclusive societies (PPS). Different kinds of do-it-yourself movements have been created, making changes independently from public authorities and supported by small resources, limited budget, and without any physical plan (Samaha, 2015). 'Tactical Urbanism' and 'Handmade Urbanism' are both working on bottom-up approaches to create places with identity, conversely to top down approaches that are producing meaningless spaces within communities. The 'Open Streets' movement also reclaims streets as spaces for walking, gathering, cycling and other communal activities. The significant shift of aesthetics emphasis from the modern and postmodern years to a more people-centered and place-centered approach is manifesting in new developments but also applied to the retrofitting of many neglected, unused 'placeless' spaces (Ibid, 2015).

Underused urban open space activation

Placemaking interventions were first implemented in high income neighborhoods to revitalize neglected streets and animate left-over spaces in the city. They then started progressively being implemented in low-income areas to improve livability through physical upgrading and promoting sense of place. Flexible, cheap participatory interventions resulted in very successful places (Samaha, 2015). Taking unused pockets from passive spaces to interactive meaningful places that bring life to these areas, where users can

Figure 32: Placemaking adapted (Source: Samaha, 2015)

disconnect from the daily routine and avail from spontaneous encounters while experiencing deep interactions.

Placemaking interventions range from painting a public node or a left-over space, to a neighborhood wide revitalization. They can include (Parkinson, 2018):

o Spaces for arts, concerts, cultural festivals, public art program/temporary art installations, street movies, painting, Food festivals, kiosks, food trucks.

o Markets (temporary or permanent), local products exhibitions

o Mobile Libraries

o Greening, urban parks and children's playground

o Open streets event

o Pedestrian friendly environment: parklets, sidewalks, seating/safe streets.

o Abandoned buildings rehabilitation and conversion into community centers.

Moreover, a **public space program** uses the vitality of the community to activate an unused space by providing a platform of exchange that brings different cultures and together expression of the community's unique character, promoting sense of place through strategies

that help create a programming that creates inclusive communities (PPS). Here are three of the proposed tactics that can be useful for this study:

1- Reflect the culture(s) of the community: Public space should support diverse cultures, individuals and organizations that are already in its vicinity. Public art, performance and music have a strong social effect and influence people's emotions: *"Musicians and entertainers draw people together [but] it is not the excellence of the act that is important. It is the fact that it is there that bonds people, and sometimes a really bad act will work even better than a good one." (William Whyte)*

2- Support Vending: Some of the most appreciated and long-lasting public spaces are centered around public markets that foster natural opportunities for dynamic social and commercial exchange, while proposing local products that boost local economy and sheds the light on the local community's unique character. Markets also provide space for local talent exposure and exchange of know-how, while giving traditions and culture a claim on the public realm.

3- Encourage eating and cooking together: Cooking or eating food is one of the most effective tools that reflect traditions and cultures, and allows connection between different people, thus inclusive placemaking. Bonds can be created over an exchange of recipe and most importantly over sharing a meal. Food trucks, a community oven, long communal tables, kiosks or just a pavilion with seating, can be an easy low-maintenance attraction for the users since "the opportunity to come together and eat is one of the most socially valuable functions a space can perform."

Six case studies of Placemaking interventions are presented here, showing the revitalization of a park, the renovation of a market, the retrofitting of a street, the creation of a plaza, placemaking strategies in a low-income neighborhood and participatory planning and design approaches inside an informal settlement.

Case Study 1: **Showcasing the cultural heritage**

'Tandoor' Oven at Thorncliffe Park, Toronto, Canada.

In 2011, the Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee (TPWC) proposed the idea of a bread-baking oven that changed the fate of one of the most neglected parks in Toronto (Hurley, 2014). The park was drowning in garbage and had no playground equipment for children, except for swings. Today, the park offers arts programs for local kids, a playground area, a basketball court, a community garden, a splash pad and a communal oven. In addition, since 2009, TPWC hosts a regular Friday bazaar in the park, with kid's entertainment, food kiosks, clothes and jewelry vendors. The bazar and different activities presented were a remarkable success since Thorncliffe Park's residents are mostly South Asian originating from countries with street markets traditions, and the neighborhood has the highest proportion of children in Toronto, but had few entertainment options.

Figure 33: The communal Oven of Thorncliffe Park (Source: Hurley, 2014)

The communal oven aimed to showcase the cultural heritage of diverse communities living in the neighborhood, through demonstrating different ways of cooking. Women shared their recipes and thoughts while breaking all cultural and religious barriers.

Case study 2: **Public Market boosting local economy while reactivating local identity and sense of community:** *'Portland Mercado', Portland.*

The city's famous food truck culture inspired the 'Portland Mercado' that supports entrepreneurship by introducing low-cost retail space and business services. The market hosts more than 16 permanent businesses bringing together different cultures through food, art and entertainment along with many outdoor events during the year.

Figure 34: Food trucks filling Portland Mercado.

Case Study 3: **Vacant Lot make-over through Urban Farming**
Community Gardens in vacant lots, Detroit

Figure 35: Vacant lots make -over

In order to beautify the space, local organization Peace Tree Parks began cleaning up vacant lots and worked alongside volunteers to transform the neglected deserted spaces into community gardens to promote healthier eating. "*This is our ultimate goal, to have a garden in the backyard of every household in Detroit, because at that point, we feel like that household has been educated to the benefits of growing their own food* " stated Eric Andrews, old resident

of Detroit. The project aims to create an urban farming environment for dwellers to pick their own products reap the benefits of green spaces and enhance neighborhood safety and sustainability. "*I see people get out more and walk around, so it's a safer neighborhood*" Margie Hackett, Detroit resident. The organizations' ultimate goal is to utilize all left-over spaces into farms right in the middle of the urban fabric in order to provide more access to fresh produce and encourage people to grow their own food while educating locals across the city.

Case Study 4: **Temporary activities revitalizing neglected public place**
'The backyard experiment', a pop-up park in Garema Place, Canberra, Autralia.

During the 2016 International Festival of Landscape Architecture in Canberra, street furniture launched a pop-up park in the underused space of Garema Place (Australia) which aim was to create a small social experiment 'to test the theory that the fastest and most cost-effective way to attract people is to provide more places to sit'.

Figure 36: Proposed plan of Garema Place

Figure 37:Garema Place after intervention

"*When you own something, it has meaning and you take care of it. I think that's the great part about public space. If we can build ownership with the community, then you have engagement and very enjoyable spaces*." Mark Armstrong, industrial engineer.

Inspired by the works of Placemaking expert William Whyte the 'Backyard experiment project', a colorful pop-up park increased foot traffic by 190% in only 8 days while using sixty movable seats and time-lapse cameras to observe and learn about people and their relationship with the hosting space. The project aimed to bring life into a dreary public space that has never been used and in which the community has engaged. Despite the government's multiple initiatives to get people to the space through hosting festival, events and programs, the community always argued that Garema Place needed to be more family friendly and lacked of seating spots or any resting areas.

In order to activate the neglected space through a people-led approach, 6 low-cost techniques were used as minor interventions to achieve the objectives:

- Movable seats

- Colors and bright furniture

- Lighting that adds volume to the space and attracts users by creating a warm atmosphere

- Lawn space and trees for shading
- Community involvement: student and community groups to provide a sense of ownership.

Locals and passersby and volunteers participated in the implementation of the project by painting the pavement, knitting fabrics and hanging them on trees. The empty space was slowly being filled by people who were more and more attracted to the space and the young community particularly university students were delighted to discover a colorful space for gatherings, reading and even taking pictures of a place that has now its own unique character. A clear increase in demographic diversity was also noticed after 8 days in Garema Place which shifted from an intimidating space to a warm and welcoming family-friendly place. According to Shahana Mackenzie, CEO of Australian Institute of Landscape Architects states that the "*Public space is the new backyard*" and a good successful public space is one that can get people out of their home and go for walks while fostering social engagement and ownership. Even though seating furniture were movable, none of the sixty chairs were stolen or lost because the community felt a sense of responsibility and ownership towards the new lively space. Mackenzie asserts that adding free range seating and levels of vibrant colors to a space can change people's perception of it.

Case Study 5: **Participatory strategies in low-income neighborhood**
Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud

Petra Samaha extended the placemaking strategy to low-income neighborhoods by implementing the concept in Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud. She retains from placemaking the importance of participatory design strategies and the focus on shared/public spaces. She proposed a placemaking strategy that tackled transience and the absence of "place" at the neighborhood scale. By adapting placemaking principles such as pedestrianization, temporary

activities, markets, and others, to restore the dwellers' sense of belonging through communal activities that take place in shared spaces (Samaha, 2015).

Figure 38: Underutilized left-over space Before (Left) /After (Right)) (Source: Samaha, 2015)

Neglected Left-over spaces are activated through community events, temporary festivals, and backgammon competitions. Unused spaces become spaces for experimenting LQC (Light Quick Cheap) interventions that promote social interactions while fostering a sense of belonging. Samaha argues that LQC projects allow an iterative process of evaluation in order to reach permanent design interventions and they are inspired by local spatial tactics used by dwellers of Nabaa who are used to instead of expensive solutions, simple and creative strategies to adapt to challenges of their everyday lives (Ibid 2015).

Samaha also activated a neglected underutilized space under Yerevan Bridge by proposing a market to encourage commercial and social interactions and revitalize local economy by organizing the exchange of local products. The market also functions as a communal space where all the dwellers of Nabaa and Bourj Hammoud can rest, gather and buy cheaper products while enjoying diverse services. The market proposed by Petra also presents better work conditions for street vendors who are very common in the neighborhood and can be very chaotic, through helping them deal with a wider range of clients to enhance their income and living conditions (Samaha, 2015).

Figure 39: Unused space (left) under Yerevan Bridge activated by a vibrant local market (right) (Source: Samaha, 2015)

Case Study 6: **Participatory Planning and Design of Shared Spaces in Nairobi, Kenya.**

Many informal settlements in Nairobi struggle from poor infrastructure and lack of public shared open spaces. The Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) cooperate with poor communities by building on their ideas, needs and aspirations to enhance them through technical design. In collaboration with local communities, drawing on their needs and using recycled metal and local lumber, KDI transformed the flooded banks of Kibera River into a poultry farm, a community center offering a school, a health clinic, kiosks and a playground for kids (Samaha, 2015).

Moreover, the Kilimajaro initiative worked for many years on upgrading a soccer field in Kibera that was shut down since it was perceived as a crime attraction. By leveling the field and improving its draining system, the once neglected and unsafe space turned into a communal cultural place that hosts events and concerts. PPS also participated in this project by connecting the field to other facilities such as the river, the school, the playground, a pottery studio, a resource center and a public toilet.

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Figure 40: Kounkuey Design Initiative transforms impoverished communities by collaborating with residents to create low cost open spaces or community centers to improve their daily lives (Source: PPS & UN-Habitat, 2012)

Streets as places

"In a city the street must be supreme. It is the first institution of the city. The street is a room by agreement, a community room, the walls of which belong to the donors, dedicated to the city for common use. Its ceiling is the sky. Today, streets are disinterested movements not at all belonging to the houses that front them. So you have no streets. You have roads, but you have no streets." Louis Kahn, American architect.

Despite the fact that since the beginning of civilization, streets have always been a powerful symbol of the public realm through holding deep social, commercial and political significance, PPS argues that the street became the most contested and overlooked shared public space while also being the most significant. Over the past decades, streets became more of transportation and circulation platforms ruled by cars. Conversely, streets are still strongly shaping communities' physical and mental landscapes. Through naming them after our idols and fallen heroes, in remembrance of leaders or influential artists, streets become sites for both insurgence and celebration, from performance stages for concerts and festivals and even holiday parades to hosting political protests, rallies and revolutions, streets foster community gathering and exchanges thus offering chances to connect in way that no other public space can. Streets were once destinations for creativity, culture, community and were acting like a multi-use town center, like 'places' filled with mix uses offering playground for children while creating an exchange gathering hub for locals and strangers, whereas today, they are mostly ruled by cars.

PPS elaborates on the urge of reversing the trend of viewing streets simply as arteries for conveying cars and turn back the most 'vital public resources' into great 'places' that are people-oriented, encouraging communities to inclusively interact and allowing users to avail from a specific culture and character of a street. The process of turning 'transit routes' to pedestrian friendly 'community roots', involves introducing a greater variety of activity to attract more users.

"Community design isn't about the collection of built things, it's about creating places to encourage connection that allow people to bump into each other and form relationships. I've determined that neighborhood amenities are the catalyst for creating community." David Poppleton, community designer and architect.
PPS introduced some placemaking concept that can be applied to turn streets into places:

a. Creating Multi-use destinations

Case Study 1: *Fargo/Moorhead Streets Alive: Placemaking through active living*

'Streets Alive' an organization by Dakota Medical Foundation, worked on building a sense of community while fostering holistic thinking about alternative transportation and healthy way of living through organizing along the streets cultural and social temporary events that help users experience a better quality of life in an easy entertaining way. Small festivals, music games and other activities have been taking place over the past four years and events have led to a wider conversation about better transportation. During two Sundays of every summer, a three-mile loop across the Red River into Moorhead Minnesota is pedestrianized. Events run for over two or three hours but are attended by hundreds of people. The route that passes through part of Fargo's Central Business District and Civic Center, many parks and two residential areas is also temporary transformed to a street for pedestrians, cyclists and rollerbladers for all ages. A 'Healthy Food Festival" also offered cultural performances such as local American and Latin American dance performances; and interactive games for kids with other diverse art programs along the street.

The intervention's success was linked to high numbers of attendance and more diversity of users, increased awareness of bike lanes, and higher interest from local businesses in sponsoring and showcasing at the events. Due to the implementation of new diverse cultural and communal practices that enliven the street and cater to all ages and different cultures, dwellers are also more inclined towards walking, biking, sustainable development and communal engagement thus fostering a strong sense of place.

Figure 41: Fargo/Moorhead 'StreetsAlive' (Source: Silberberg, 2013)

b. Showcasing the community on its streets: Talents and assets

According to PPS, 'every community has assets and talent that can be showcased on its streets, whether that's through art, performance, street amenities or special events' and seasonal festivals. These activities and practices enliven the streets and encourage social interaction. They also shape the character of the place that becomes unique and authentic since it reflects the local talents and assets of its dwellers, therefore forming a strong base for place-attachment thus civic engagement.

Case Study 2: *Streets of Kew Garden: Community Arts day, Queens, New York.*

Artists of different culture gather every year on the streets of Kew Garden to showcase their talents. More than 20 local artists show case their work and sell their products such as paintings, pottery, and homemade jewelry. Local organizers aim to give artists a platform to connect with their neighbor and exchange their know-how with the dwellers and passersby, thus also enhancing livability on the street. Many local artist expressed their desire to share their art with people and sometimes need a little bit of recognition according to local artist and organizer Grace Anker. The event also includes interactive activities for kids and young artists such as drawing and painting lessons.

Figure 42: Streets of Kew Garden: Community Arts day (Source: Spectrum News NY1)

c. Bringing the inside out strategy

Sidewalks and streets can be home to spillover of indoor activity (PPS). 'Bringing the inside out' is a key strategy to activate and enliven a street, attract pedestrians and host new users of programming and products. Moreover, outdoor retail displays are very efficient in boosting local economy, attracting new and diverse customers, and activating the street. Displaying merchandise such as clothing, children's toys, furniture, fruits and vegetables, outside of shops encourages footfall and boosts people to spend more time in the space. The outdoor book racks in Greenwich Village in New York City form an attractive cultural hub that fosters conversations and social interactions between booklovers.

Figure 43: Family-friendly programming at the William P. Faust Public Library in Westland, Michigan.(Source:PPS.org)

'Streets are a public stage where life unfolds' (PPS). Hosting parades, festivals, food courts, tick-or-treating, markets, exhibitions and communal gathering streets become the place where everyone is welcome. It's where special encounters and exchanges happen, and where people go beyond their comfort zone and differences. And conversely, it's where protests against injustice occurred for many years. It's also where communal values such as acceptance, friendship, recognition and equality are born then woven into societies.

Alleyways and stairs

Alleyways and passages can be activated through diverse tactics such as art installations (figure 44). Adding lighting, pavement and greenery or simply using paint can transform the space into a welcoming place for the community (figure 45).

Figure 44: Art installation in narrow alley in Quebec (Source: Arch20.com)

Moreover, permanent furniture can also attract passersby and foster social gatherings (figure 46).

Figure 45: Abandoned alleyway (left) in Bourj Hammoud revitalized and reactivated by lighting, greenery and pavement (right). (Source: Samaha, 2015)

Figure 47: Abandoned Street turned into a playground (Source: PPS)

Figure 46: Neglected pathway enlivened through installing furniture and lighting (Source: PPS)

D. Placemaking in Dbayeh Refugee camp

All presented case studies show the large variety of challenges that Placemaking can address in diverse contexts, places through multiple options of interventions that start from low-cost, flexible and bottom-up approaches that include local communities, hence tackle the sense of belonging and eventually influence public policies, local organization and local authorities. Visions, objectives and scales vary from small scale projects such as activating neglected left-over spaces to connecting and revitalizing a low-income informal settlement,

however communal collaboration and participation is always the main key and common process. While some local authorities are sometimes supportive, other can be very weak, disinterested or absent, hence the importance of feasibility and sustainability study of an intervention as well as choosing the optimal framework.

The Placemaking strategy in Dbayeh aims to improve livability and create a sense of place and identity inside this refugee camp through interventions conceived in public shared spaces as catalysts for a greater neighborhood upgrading, while responding to the dwellers' needs. The design interventions in the public realm also aim to recommend that aid agencies intervene in existing refugee camps that are becoming permanent using urban design tools. However, a refugee camp is a place where displaced people develop communal practices and tactics of survival, adaptation and struggle which makes the Placemaking interventions more challenging especially while addressing issues of identity and sense of place. Refugees are more focused on making a living before considering entertainment. Streets are already too tight to host large scale activities and are deprived of sidewalks. Left-over spaces are packed with cars and the urban fabric is highly congested. Nevertheless, since communal collaboration while shaping public spaces fosters a sense of belonging and encourage civic engagement, Placemaking can be adapted to the context of the Dbayeh camp. Relying on refugees to make a difference in the camp is a valid choice since UNRWA, Caritas, St Joseph Monastery and Dbayeh municipality are indirectly marginalizing the camp. I propose then collaborative approaches between key stakeholders and the local community, to insure social interaction and understanding between different cultures while giving refugees the opportunity to shape their public realm by taking part in the design and decision-making process, developing personal capacities and skills. However, collaboration processes with local community could face many challenges and may divert from the main objectives based on the locals' commitment. It can

also be deceiving if it makes unreasonable promises for locals. This is when interventions are implemented incrementally in order to evaluate and test proposed solutions through an iterative process before achieving permanent results.

Design interventions in the public spaces become chances for dwellers to communicate and negotiate together their communal environment. Since there are already many actors inside the camp that manifest commitment and hold a vision with diverse objectives, Placemaking would respond very well to the thesis objectives at the local scale. Refugees are already using and creating Placemaking strategies from the way they appropriate public and private spaces in their everyday lives. Residents are always involved in upgrading and retrofitting their private homes through 'placemaking' interventions. Despite social transience and hopelessness, the curtains that are used for space extensions and privacy, the painted walls to beautify the space, the pots and planters, as well as spontaneous furniture to create outdoor shared places, are all tactics that contribute to upgrading living conditions and adapting to the new hosting environment. This situation can be obvious in every refugee camp in the world. Refugees struggle every day to shape their horrible living spaces through easy, low-cost and creative interventions. Therefore, Placemaking can be very helpful in establishing a clear framework for communal participation that make those interventions more meaningful, thus creating a strong sense of place. The public realm will turn into a cultural hub of solidarity that hosts different communities expressing their values and exchanging their ideas and skills. "Lively, dense, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration" (Jacobs, 1961, p.341) 'Finding these seeds and allowing them to grow through a thoughtfully conceived series of small Placemaking interventions would have a meaningful impact on the livability of the inhabitants' (Samaha, 2015, p.48).

To sum up, Placemaking strategies will be applied in Dbayeh camp to upgrade living conditions by turning 'placeless' spaces into organized shared public places promoting health, wellbeing and communal engagement. Innovative initiatives will be guided by 'Creative Placemaking' approaches that focus on revitalizing public spaces by animating places and boosting the camp's local economy. Tactical Placemaking' approaches that specifically address underused public shared spaces will also shape the camp's network of open spaces. Placemaking tactics such as 'The power of 10+', 'Bringing the inside-Out', 'Multi-use Destination' and 'Showcasing the local community' will be applied in the public realm to reach the diverse objectives of this thesis. Placemaking principles such as pedestrianization, temporary activities and the market concept will also guide my design process. Moreover, the proposed intervention will focus on enhancing existing socio-spatial practices and tactics that reflect the communities' shared values inside the camp in order to retain the space's identity and foster a sense of belonging. A new layer of social (cultural and communal) practices should also be offered in the public realm, aiming to cater to the new generations of the camp and diverse communities.

The challenge remains in getting different displaced communities from various backgrounds and religions to work together on the same table and engage in upgrading a home that is not really their 'home'. Finding common grounds and articulating a bottom-up community-based vision that responds to the needs of all ages and all communities along with the Lebanese society living inside the camp can make it possible. "We can be at home in different places, despite our location" (Hamdi, 2010, p. 32, cited in Samaha, 2015).

CHAPTER IV

URBAN ANALYSIS

A. Reading edges and connectivity: An increased isolated condition

Ever since it was created, the camp has always been physically isolated from its surroundings and this condition grew overtime. During the 1950's the community availed from each of the interactive peripheries of the site, whereas today, after the emergence of development projects, the camp not only remains an enclave but also became more inward and less active. The site that was once physically isolated with interactive edges promoting shared open spaces, grew to be part of the hosting urban environment but remained physically isolated with inactive edges and some small catalysts for change within little communal spaces.

The camp's isolation condition increased despite the urban transformation of neighboring environments:

1. Topography and geographic location

The camp is geographically isolated from its surroundings. It was built on a steep green hill, at a 2 minute drive from Beirut-Jounieh Highway. It is like "a tiny island in the middle of

Figure 48: Map 1-a Dbayeh camp in the 1950's (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 49: Map 1-b Dbayeh camp after the 2000's (Source: Author, 2020)

the sea" (Haddad, 2012). Despite the camp's proximity to the center of Dbayeh town and all its amenities, it exists in a condition of isolation due to the particular topography.

In the 1950's the camp was surrounded by large areas of greenery. Today, a structured modern urban fabric surrounds the informal fabric of the camp. The large green areas are almost completely replaced by new residential development projects on the lots owned by the Maronite Monastery (figures 48, 49).

Since the emergence of residential hubs, the space that was isolated by the green hill is slowly becoming an enclave surrounded by concrete, without any social, physical or spatial connection with neighboring communities. Instead of promoting relationships and exchange of culture with Dbayeh locals, the social gap is getting bigger day by day, despite the increase in population inside the camp as well as in surrounding areas.

On the other hand, the decline of green spaces has directly affected refugees' daily practices: Most of natural spaces used to be a natural playground for children and a local farm where refugees used to sell local products. People also used to grow plants, fruit trees and vegetables in a large agricultural field they call 'Al-Bustan'. The adjacent peripheral road was named after this communal green space. Today, the road is still referred to as "Tari2 Al-Bustan" even though the field lost its original function and is barely used by some dwellers. Social practices will be further developed in Sections C and D of this chapter).

2. *Road Network and connectivity*

The camp is isolated from surrounding cities since it has only one connection to the highway: the only asphalted road which passes through Dbayeh town (figure 50).
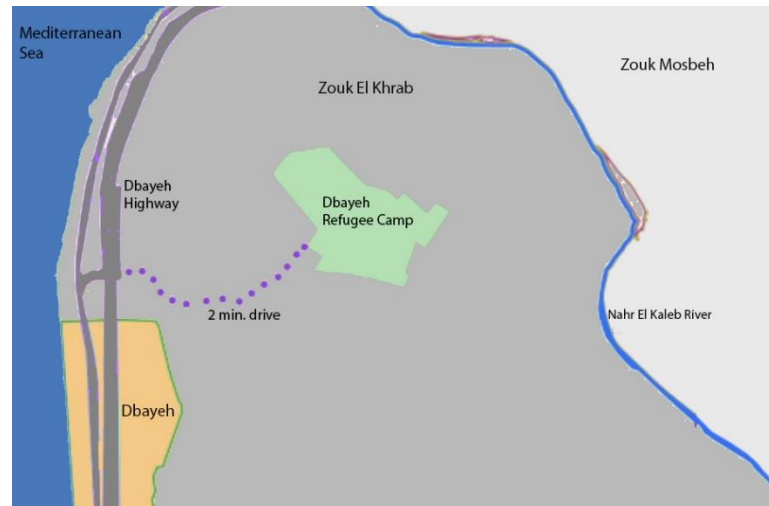
Figure 50: Dbayeh camp's link to the Highway (Source: Author, 2020).

Moreover, the site is poorly linked to its immediate surroundings as described in (Chapter 2, section E). In fact, since it is boarded by new developments, and most internal roads are dead ends, the majority of the camp is disconnected from the peripheral roads of the neighborhood. Only one internal road out of four (Road 2) connects the camp to the outside by a secondary peripheral road that leads to an industrial area.
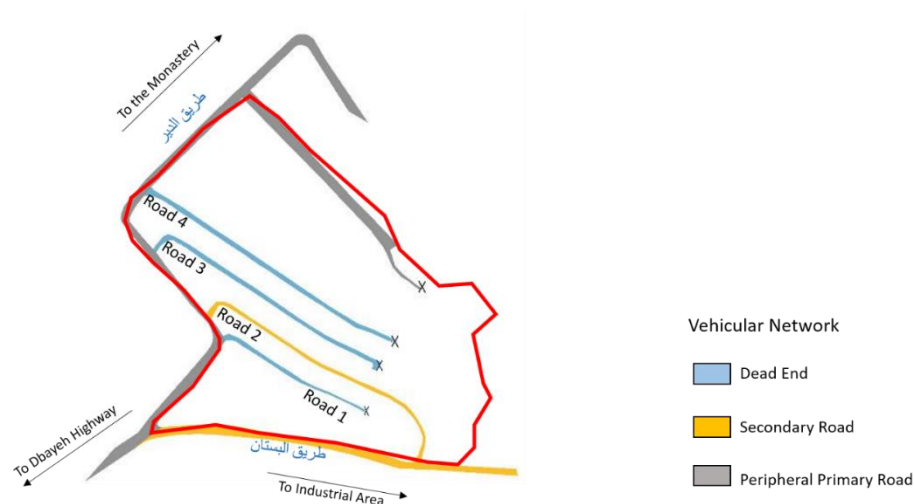
Figure 51: Vehicular Roads Network map (Source: Author, 2020)

3. Edges

In the 1960's the camp was bounded from three sides by a significant area of greenery that disconnected the site from the town. Inhabitants however, made efficient use of natural resources and all edges of the camp were fostering local interaction with immediate surroundings. The camp had no physical barriers and the porous edges of the space promoted an organic pedestrian circulation.

The northern green edge, which was the largest, used to be a playground for children, and residents referred it as the 'Horsh'.

"We used to spend the whole day in the 'Horsh' and get lost between the bushes. I have priceless memories about this place. This is something that today's young generation didn't get the chance to experience! Bird hunters used to fill the forest. Kids were running around from dusk to dawn. We used to take naps on the grass, build castles out of wood and stones, pick and eat wild fruits… We also used to drink rainwater that we found lying on rocks and I'm sure that it was cleaner than the bottled water you buy today! But whenever we got close to the monastery, dogs started to bark to ban us from entering…" (Elias Habib).

Today this large green area, which used to be a porous interactive edge, is replaced by concrete buildings whose inhabitants have no relationship with refugees (figures 52, 53 and 54).

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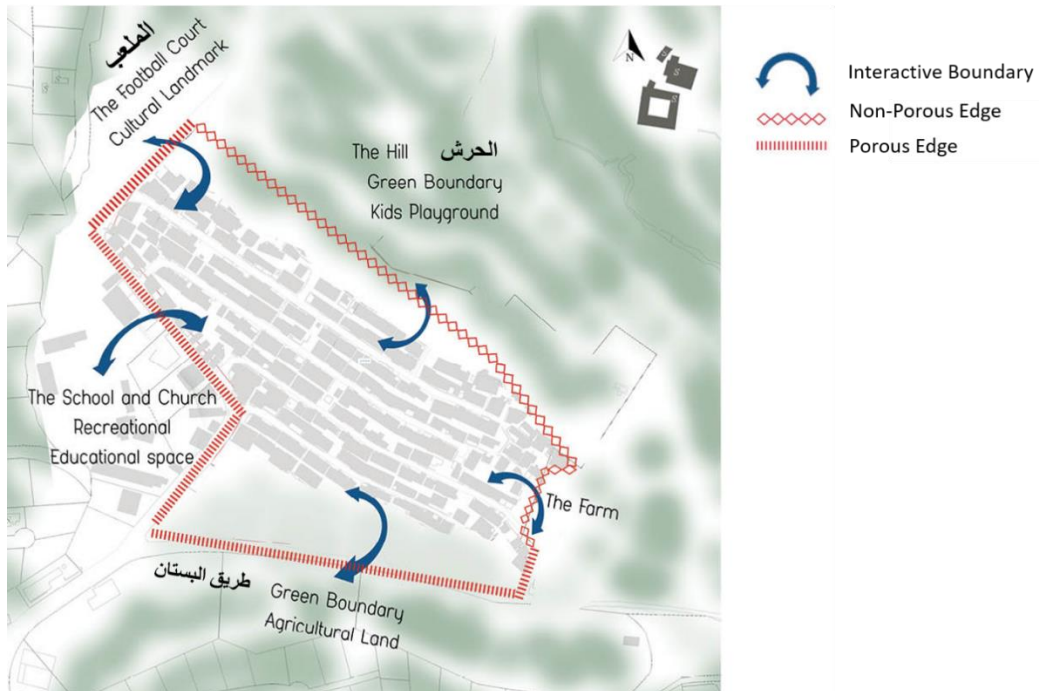
Figure 52: Camp edges in the 1960's (Source: Author, 2020)
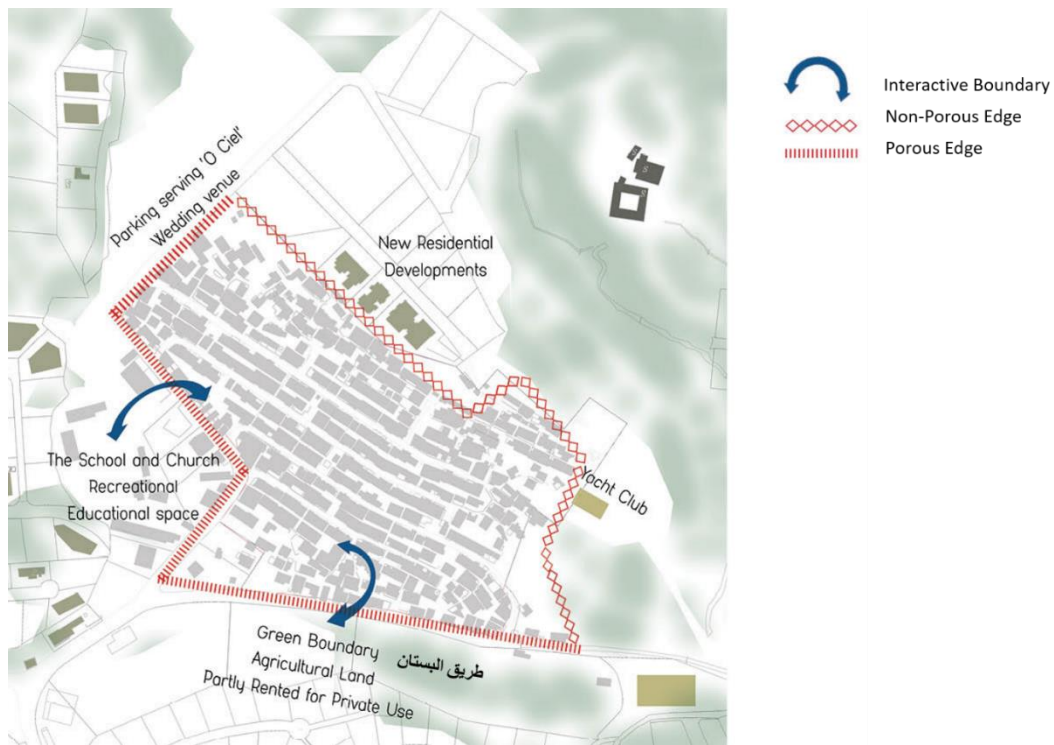
Figure 53: Camp edges today (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 54: الحرش Replaced by a huge Concrete wall separating the camp from new residential Buildings (Source: Author, 2020)

The southern edge was a large agricultural field, named 'Al-Boustan', and was used by most of the dwellers who informally grew local plants, fruit trees and vegetables. The adjacent road 'Tari2 Al-Boustan' was named after this significant cultivated land. Today, half of the agricultural field is transformed into inaccessible private sports courts. All remaining areas are rented by the owner to some refugees that created their own private garden, thus, limiting communal interaction on this edge.

"We used to sneak into the "Boustan" from the "Horsh" side, using trees to climb all the way up the metallic barriers that we perforated countless times. We were often followed by the owner who used to chase us while we ran like crazy chickens! We used to go through all this trouble for one orange! Best days ever!" Karim, 45 years old Palestinian.

Figure 55: Existing private agricultural lands, rented to camp's dwellers that are growing local vegetables, plants, and fruit trees (Source: Bechara, 2017).

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Figure 56: 'Tarik Al Boustan' today (Source: Author, 2020)

The eastern side was bounded by a small private farm, created by a Palestinian family. Milk was locally produced and sold inside the camp, as well as local eggs. This site was completely destroyed by local authorities and sold to a yacht club owner, thus deactivating the edge of the camp.

Figure 57: The Farm replaced by a Yacht Club (Source: Author, 2020)

Moreover, the north-west side was bounded by a sandy football court created by the camp's dwellers. This active edge has always been a cultural landmark that gathered the camp's Palestinian football team and local teams from different regions across Lebanon.

"*Football was the main activity in our camp that brought community members together. People came all the way from Tripoli and Akkar to take part in our regional tournaments*" (Hisham, 30 year old Palestinian).

Figure 58:الملعب   Replaced by a Parking serving 'O Ciel' wedding venue (Source: Author, 2020)

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Visitors from different regions in the country used to come cheer for their team during official local tournaments led by refugees. "*We had plans to upgrade the court and extend it, but unfortunately the civil war stood in the way*" (Elias Habib, 48). Today the field is replaced by a poorly maintained parking lot that serves a large wedding venue, shutting down the vibrant communal practices and totally disconnecting the camp's dwellers from locals and visitors. In addition, on this specific edge of the camp, an informal pedestrian passage connects the camp to the touristic heritage site of Nahr el-Kaleb.

The western edge of the camp was created by amenities installed by UNRWA. The school and the church still have the most important shared open spaces and gathering spots in the camp. Educational and recreational services were both provided in this area. Today, the school, destroyed during the Lebanese civil war, is no

Figure 59: ساحة الكنيسة, the church (Source: Author, 2020)

longer serving its purpose: it hosts occasional cultural activities, summer camps, workshops, study groups and also serves as a gym to the camp's dwellers. Young residents go to public schools outside the camp, specifically in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut.

Figure 60: ساحة المدرسة The poorly maintained spaces of the school yard (Sources: Author, 2020)

Today the only remaining minor interactions are happening on 'Tarik Al-Boustan', in 'Sahit l knise' and 'Sahit Al- Madrasseh'. All the physical changes that occurred on the site drastically affected livability inside the camp. Refugees were significantly more self-sufficient and more connected to local and regional communities through many activities and communal practices.

B. Social Diversity: A greater social diversity while a space of refuge.

1. Refugees' hometowns

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the camp was originally established to house Palestinian Christians from the village of Al-Bassa and Kafr Berem to provide a home for those facing discrimination.

In 1940, Al-Bassa, was one of the largest most developed villages in northern Palestine, very close to the Lebanese border, where Muslims and Christians were coexisting (divided almost evenly). It was known for its Sunday wholesale produce market and regional commercial center. One hundred and fifty members of an agricultural cooperative promoted agricultural development and provided loans to farmers (Reddit, 2017). Bananas, citrus and cereals were the most common products. Therefore, agriculture was one of the main social practices of Al-Bassa's inhabitants who were also used to social mix and coexistence between different religions.

In 1945, Kafar Berem, a small village in northern Palestine, 4 kilometers away from the Southern Lebanese border, was home to 710 people who were mostly Christians. Agriculture was also one of the main practices of the community (Ibid, 2017).

Figure 62: Kafar Berem village, Palestine, 2008 (Source: Hanan Isachar)

Figure 61: Al-Bassa village, 1947, Palestine (Source: Shutterstock)

To sum up, the camp's community originated from two villages which economies depended on agriculture. They both promoted agricultural activity and development. These specific practices are very obvious inside Dbayeh camp: People are very engaged in greening and growing local products such as plants, vegetables and fruits. Other agricultural activities will be further described in this thesis.

Figure 63: Al-Bassa village, Palestine, 1987 (Source: Shutterstock)

2. Social transience

As asserted in Chapter 3, section A-3, refugee camps across the globe sometimes become themselves hosting areas for many new waves of refugees (Dorai, 2010). This pattern is undoubtedly manifesting in the Dbayeh refugee camp.

When the camp was first created, Christians Palestinians were its only dwellers. However, the social fabric first witnessed some transformations when several Lebanese families that

couldn't afford their rent, started joining the camp through the years. Today, 690 Lebanese citizens cohabit with the Dbayeh camp dwellers (Census, 2017). In addition, a few number of Armenian families (less than 2% of the camp's population) also found refuge inside the camp. Furthermore, the ongoing Syrian crisis led to an influx of Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria. Dbayeh camp was one of the first places to offer refuge to Syrians fleeing war in 2012. The camp's dwellers had to cope with, not only the moving in of new residents (Palestinians and Syrians) and increasing number of inhabitants (around 50 families, 284 people) but also religious differences, as Syrians were all conservative Muslims (Blandford, 2015). Similar to the increasing number of neighboring Lebanese communities in Dbayeh, the camp's population was also increasing and altering after the introduction of new nationalities and the start of a peaceful cohabitation between two religions. In fact, the transient community is different from all other Palestinians camps in Lebanon. Despite their cultural and religious differences, they live in a quiet environment:

"*We have been suffering a long time as refugees so we know what the Syrians are going through. Also, as Christians, we have a duty to help them with shelter, food, water, and education*" Elias Habib, Dbayeh camp's representative of the Palestinian Joint Christian Committee (JCC) previously mentioned in Chapter 1.

JCC runs a small school/community center in the camp and enrolled 94 Syrians students up till today (Blandford, 2015).

In addition, this change is social mix didn't affect much the dwellers' practices, however different communities rarely blend in together. Community gatherings between different nationalities are very unlikely to occur but are always peaceful -in case they happen.

"The Palestinians here understand our suffering and that is why they have been good to us. They have been refugees for decades, but we have been away from our homes for only three years." Asma, 48 year old Syrian refugee.

3. *Housing scenarios*

"Lebanese public policies have never addressed slums and their dwellers, despite a reasonable number of studies dedicated to the issue. Laissez-faire has been the rule, although punctuated by violent incidents of eviction" (Fawaz, M. and Peillen, I., 2003). Dbayeh camp refugees have adopted an informal renting system. Different housing scenarios occurred through the years inside the camp. The most notable change that deeply altered the dwelling spaces, happened in 2012 during the Syrian crisis.
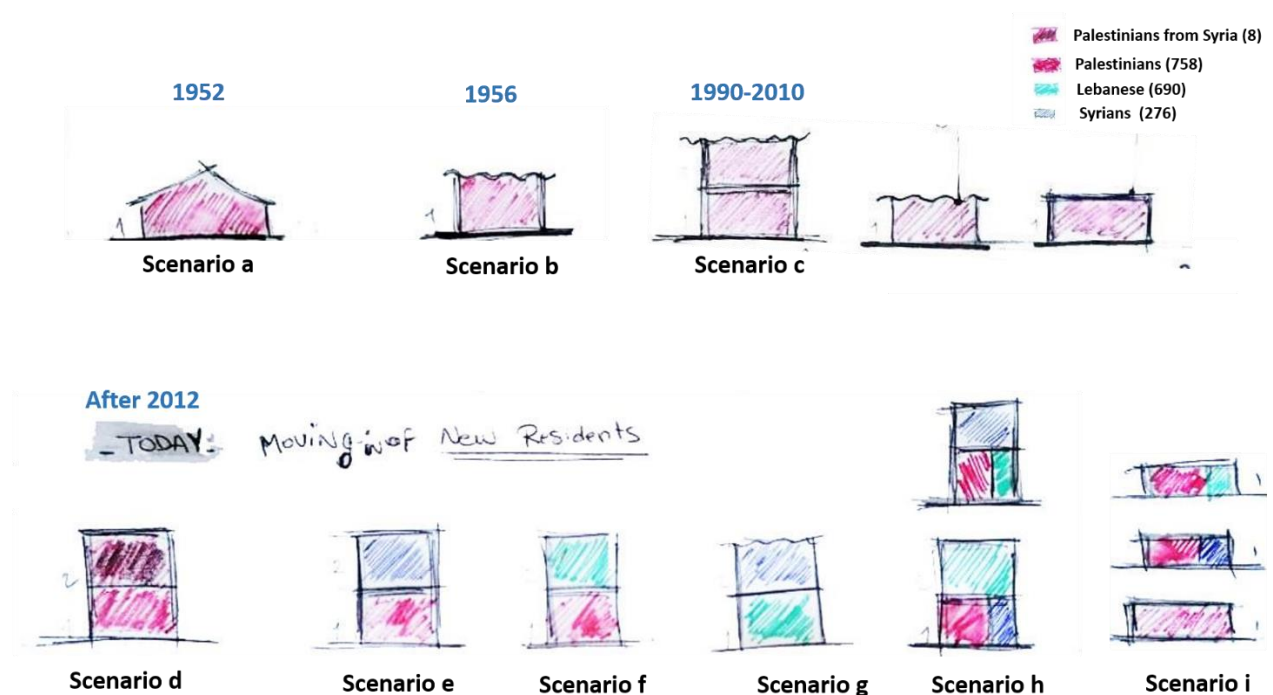
Figure 64: Sketches of housing scenarios through the years in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2019)

In 1952, the camp was first established for Palestinian Christians who lived as one community bonded by their nationality and religion. During the first years, refugees were living in huts (figure 64, scenario a), until UNRWA relocated the camp to the hill and built concrete houses (scenario b). Refugees then started adding one floor to their single storey house (scenario c).

After the move in of new residents, especially after 2012, diverse housing scenarios started reflecting the camp's social structure. According to a Palestinian woman who lived 22 years inside the camp, Palestinians have been informally renting part of their houses to new dwellers,

as a way to earn money. Some rented one floor in their own home to Palestinian refugees (PRS) (scenario d) or Syrian refugees (scenario e) or even Lebanese families (scenario f) who either couldn't afford renting a house or were displaced from Southern villages (50 families) (Nakhal, 2015). Today the camp houses 690 Lebanese citizens (110 families, 53 of them are occupying the homes of refugees). Moreover, many Palestinians left the camp after the Lebanese civil war (Ibid, 2015) and rented their homes to new residents (scenario g). One interesting scenario became very common inside the camp as well: Palestinians rent out one room to the newcomers inside their own home (scenarios h & i).

'The camp consisted of tents and was located in 'Lower Dbayeh', next to the highway. Later on, the UNRWA rented a land from the priests and built a group of two-storey concrete homes with iron roofs…We were restricted from building any solid roof or adding any floors, despite the fact that we couldn't fit in a single room. We gradually started to add rooms and a concrete roofs by working silently and mostly at night. We were bullied many times by local authorities but we were able to create a decent home. Later on, many families started renting part of their house to new residents, in order to gain some money '(Samar, 66).

According to the most recent census, the camp has total population of 1772 residents (Census, 2017): 758 Palestinians, 8 Palestinians displaced from Syria, 276 Syrians and 690 Lebanese.

C. Social Practices: Communal and Cultural Activities

Practices in Dbayeh camp can be generally divided into two categories: Communal activities that are related to interaction among dwellers and links with visitors, and cultural practices that reflect different local cultures and show-case local talents.

1. Communal Activities

As described in section A, the camp transitioned through the years from a geographically isolated but outward-looking space to a physically isolated and socially

marginalized enclave. Today, the space of refuge falls short of land use diversity and shared activities.

 "People here are less engaged and interested in communal practices or gatherings. They prefer either to stay at home or leave the camp" (Elias Habib).

At the ground floor level, small shops provide the neighborhood with basic daily services, such as a minimarket, a barbershop, a toy store, a shisha shop, a mechanics garage, a small café, a dental clinic, etc. Nevertheless, the camp remains rich in communal practices even though they are much less manifested today or adequately provided for.

To begin with, despite the decrease of green areas, refugees are still strongly involved in agricultural and greening activities. Most left-over spaces, stairs, alleyways and roofs are filled with potted plants. Some houses -that are bigger than others- have a private garden where inhabitants grow local products for personal use. The 'Boustan' is still managed by some dwellers that rented a piece of land to grow their own local vegetables, plants, and fruit trees thus, limiting communal interaction on 'Tarik Al Boustan'.

"*We used to avail from the greenery surrounding us. I wish we could benefit from the fertile land we live in today. We could grow our own products and sell them to our community*" (Salwa, 69, Palestinian).

"We could easily cultivate our little lands and use our own products. People here love working in the agriculture field. This may also provide job opportunities and increase the sense of community that has been decreasing over time"(Hisham, 28, Palestinian).

"It would be very interesting if I could grow more daily products for cooking in my little private garden and sell them to my community"(Georgette, 73, Palestinian).

The significant and remarkable greening practices are a particularity of Dbayeh camp that, as opposed to other Palestinian camps in Lebanon, looks more like a village on hill than a refuge space (Figure 65, 66 and 67).

Figure 65: Shatila camp, Lebanon (Source: worldofcamps.org))

Figure 66: Dbayeh camp filled with bits of greenery (Source:UNRWA)

Figure 67: Planted alleyway in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2019)

Furthermore, the wholesale market that used to take place every Sunday in Palestinian village of origin, El-Bassa, also inspired daily lives of refugees. 'Al-Bustan' became a famous road where agricultural activities and sales used to take place before the 2000's when development projects started in the area.

When asked about their free time and the places they go to for recreation, most dwellers stated that they never use the camp's public open spaces since some are inaccessible and always filled with cars. Instead, they visit family and friends in their houses, or go to the school's playground that was rehabilitated by the Join Christian Community for social services (JCC). The church is also mentioned as a frequently visited space for the programs offered to kids and young generations. In fact, JCC organizes many educational and cultural programs aiming to build confidence, enhance personal skills and community ties between young refugees. Throughout the year, the JCC Dbayeh team organizes cultural events, sports day, and a week summer camp in the mountains for the youth. One of their biggest projects is a community

library and study center, established in 2008 in the midst of the camp, aiming to provide kids access to books, educational games, computers and study stations offering support with their schoolwork. The library is open from 9 a.m. till 7 p.m., Monday to Friday and serves children aged from 5 to 14. Over 70 children are enrolled in the library program which costs 3$ per month.

"*Children were the first to come to the center as they were invited to gather for story reading sessions where they listened to stories being read to them and were encouraged to read themselves. Parents started to join and people began to learn to come, browse through books and look for a subject of interest*" (JCC representative).

Other programs such as art, music, drama, lectures and workshops were introduced, turning the library into a community center, which is now the hub of all activities inside the camp. This community hub enhanced social interaction and helped improve living conditions inside the camp:

'He is much happier than he used to be and is more outgoing and social,' reports a staff at the library, talking about a 9 year old boy. 'He regularly visits his new friends from the library and they visit him too. Looking back at his social interaction and behavior and comparing it to the present, one can tell that he was depressed for being so lonely. His family say that the library and its activities have really changed his life' (JCC, 2018).

Figure 68: JCC's most significant communal projects: the rehabilitated children's playground facing the school (left) and the Community centre (right) (Source: Author, 2020)

However, many residents who were interviewed, especially young adults and elderly, are less engaged in the library's activities and communal gatherings. Some argue that they prefer to hang out outside instead of being stuck in one room. Other reminisce on the days when they

used to gather in front of coffee shops and perform live in front of passersby. They even

mentioned the lack of shared spaces and green places to just relax or meditate.

The purple marked streets on the map (figure 69) indicate the children's playground.

"My kids spend their afternoons on the streets. Right after school, they grab their bikes and meet their friends on the road. They have nowhere else to go. They sometimes hang out in the poorly maintained school court" (Julia, 43, Lebanese)

Figure 69: Map of communal practices in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2020)

"My 4 year old daughter is used to daily walks on the streets with her mom. She can't go play alone since the streets are filled with cars. My wife has to keep her company and watch her 24/7" (Hani, 37, Palestinian).

Aside from art and music, the camp's dwellers are highly keen on sports activities especially football and basketball. Hisham, a young talented Palestinian (further presented in the next section), argued that 15 years ago football used to bring communities together and create an interactive hub. Elias also insisted on the need to rehabilitate the football and basketball courts to attract again young generations and foster engagement in physical practices:

Figure 70: Poorly maintained football court (Source: Author, 2020)

"*The courtyard is the only space where young people are able to breathe and disconnect from their routine inside the camp…People are starting to visit the playground more often and are enjoying the new green spaces that JCC created. We tried organizing regional sports games and inviting other teams from outside Dbayeh, - just like in the 1980's- but they refused to play in our poorly maintained soccer field. We need to upgrade these spaces and make them more attractive and sustainable in order to increase the number of people in these major public hubs.*"(Elias)

As a final note in this section, the most important gathering spots (marked in red on the map-figure 69) are the JCC community centre, the school and church with their courtyards, and both ends of 'Road 2'. Dwellers gather outside to play backgammon and card games, smoke shisha or even play music and sing. On the intersection of the primary road and Road 2, (marked in orange) dwellers meet daily in front of the butcher shop on the corner (figure 69). The node between 'Tarik el Boustan' and Road 2 is also a meaningful space for many young and old men in the camp:

"*We love to gather here, around 5 pm over a cup of coffee and a shisha. We often organize backgammon tournaments and card games. It's a space for everyone!*" (Georges, Palestinian).

Spatial Tactics will be further developed in Section D-6.

Figure 72: The butcher shop, an important gathering space for refugees (Source: Hisham Assaad, 2015)

Figure 71: Communal node on 'Tari2 el Boustan' (Source: Author, 2018)

Hisham hopes in addition to be able to revitalize open shared spaces. According to him and his young Lebanese neighbor, there are no adequate working spaces for the youth.

"*We rarely find a quiet place to read, meditate or just disconnect from the daily routine*" (Yara, 26).

The young lady confirms that the camp needs a space for young people to read, research and work on freelance projects, since the library (JCC community center) is always filled with kids and busy with classes for children and women.

To sum up, the camp lost its interactive and inclusive characteristics through the years. Many active edges turned their back on the outside and participated in changing the aspect of vital spaces of the camp (figure 64).

Figure 73: Lost communal practices in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2020)

2. *Cultural Activities: Local Talents, Crafts, Arts, Music.*

Dbayeh camp is a multi-ethno religious neighborhood of lost stories, morphing spaces and threatened identity. The site is home to many talented Palestinian artists who reflect the unique character of its core community.

To begin with, Hani Damouni is a famous talented percussionist and actor who worked with Elias Habib to provide acting and music lessons to his community. Joseph Moussa, also a professional percussionist was the student of a well-known musician named Raji El-Asaad (figure 75) who died in 2014 (Mustafa, 2016). Raji was the song writer of "Mama ya Mama" which was performed by Georges Wassouf who did not bother to credit the song writer. Robert El-Asaad (figure 74, 75) inherited his grandfather's passion for music. The multi-talented 21 year old young man works in a fully equipped recording studio in the "living room" of his tiny two-room house. He plays thirteen musical instruments (such as Oud, table, guitar, piano, etc.) sings, writes lyrics and music and wins musical awards. In fact, talent runs in the family. His father and uncle are also musicians and his aunt a singer. His father's dream is to bring back

the Al-Layali-al-Musiqiyya (Music Nights) band founded by Raji Al-Asaad and his two sons. Despite his outstanding talents, Robert who has his own band today, was unable to reach fame without the means to hire a manager. However, he is eager to obtain a doctorate in philosophy in music in order to open a music school for Palestinians and Lebanese (Mustafa, 2016). Elias Habib stated that if he could think of something to improve the camp's communal life, he would start with expanding the JCC programs and especially the music program.

Figure 75:Raji El-Asaad (left) and young Robert El-Asaad(right) (Source:Mustafa,2016)

Figure 74: Robert El-Asaad today (Source:Mustafa, 2016)

There are four ongoing music classes inside the school with JCC: Guitar, Music theory, Music beat and Organ. JCC also created a local choir of fifty members from the camp: Twenty-five children that are taking music lessons at the school and twenty-five other young talented musicians and singers from the camp.

"We had many famous musicians in the camp but most of them became too old to perform. Also, dwellers can't afford to take music lessons outside the camp and this is why we are trying to provide those lessons at a very low price.(10,000L.L. per month) We are hoping to create a new generation of music lovers to sustain this local talent and share it with communities outside the camp." confirms Elias.

Moreover, refugees are very attached to their cultural heritage. Most of the camp's women, even young mothers, are very talented cooks. Based on field interviews, all of them expressed their desire to share their local recipes and exchange their know-how to other cultures and people from outside the camp. Palestinian and Lebanese women often share their recipes and food. According to Elias, the community center had a (failed) plan to create a communal kitchen where food is cooked by locals to distribute to surrounding schools, thus creating new

job opportunities for local women. Many three-month long workshops are also organized by the community council in JCC library such as Palestinian handcrafts, chocolate decoration and make-up sessions for women.

"Many Lebanese citizens fear the idea of visiting the camp. One of my goals is to invite people in, share with them our local recipes, eat with them and tell stories about Palestine. I want Lebanese visitors to learn about the history of this camp. I want to tell them all the stories my grandfather told me about. I wish to change this negative misconception they have on this camp. I want to celebrate my culture with them." Hisham Assaad, 32 year old multi-talented Palestinian.

Hisham is a talented cook and graphic designer. He also practices food styling and photography. He created a personal blog "Cook in 5 square meter" in order to share Palestinian recipes and stories. He also taught acting courses inside the camp few years ago with a group of young Palestinian professionals in the field, in collaboration with Elias Habib and his team. Hicham expresses his regret over the fact that today the young generation has lost interest in communal activities and art that can bring people together:

"I wish I could teach acting courses again. It seems to me that the camp's dwellers lost hope. I would love to prepare a play to be watched by visitors from outside Dbayeh, as well as give cooking lessons to dwellers and visitors in order to share Palestinian traditional food and culture."

On the other hand, JCC still organizes every year, in the school's courtyard, a three-day end of summer show and festival that features games, and a local talent show involving music, dancing and acting. The organization also worked on many spiritual plays inside the church and a new Christmas play showed in 2019. Moreover, the classrooms in the school's first basement are abandoned since the Lebanese civil war and need restoration. Habib suggested that these teaching spaces could host additional art courses, workshops or even turn into a communal gathering area for elderly, a space that is totally absent inside the camp. The classrooms could also be useful during the JCC two-month summer camp.

Furthermore, carpentry and embroidery are also main local practices of Palestinians. There is only one women left inside the camp Georgette El-Massri who still practices the 'Tatreez', which is a unique style of Palestinian cross-stitch embroidery, originated in the Middle East 3,000 years ago and renowned for its vivid colors and rich textures. The crafts have always been practiced exclusively by women and has been passed down from mothers to daughters "like family recipes" reshaped by each generation. Elias Habib and his communal council also thought about strengthening this cultural practice in a modern way, such as selling local handmade t-shirts, colorful scarves, socks etc., to attract young generations and share the know-how with locals and visitors.

In addition, Anwar Ghattas is a young professional painter and tattoo artist that most kids in the camp visited during the 2000's.
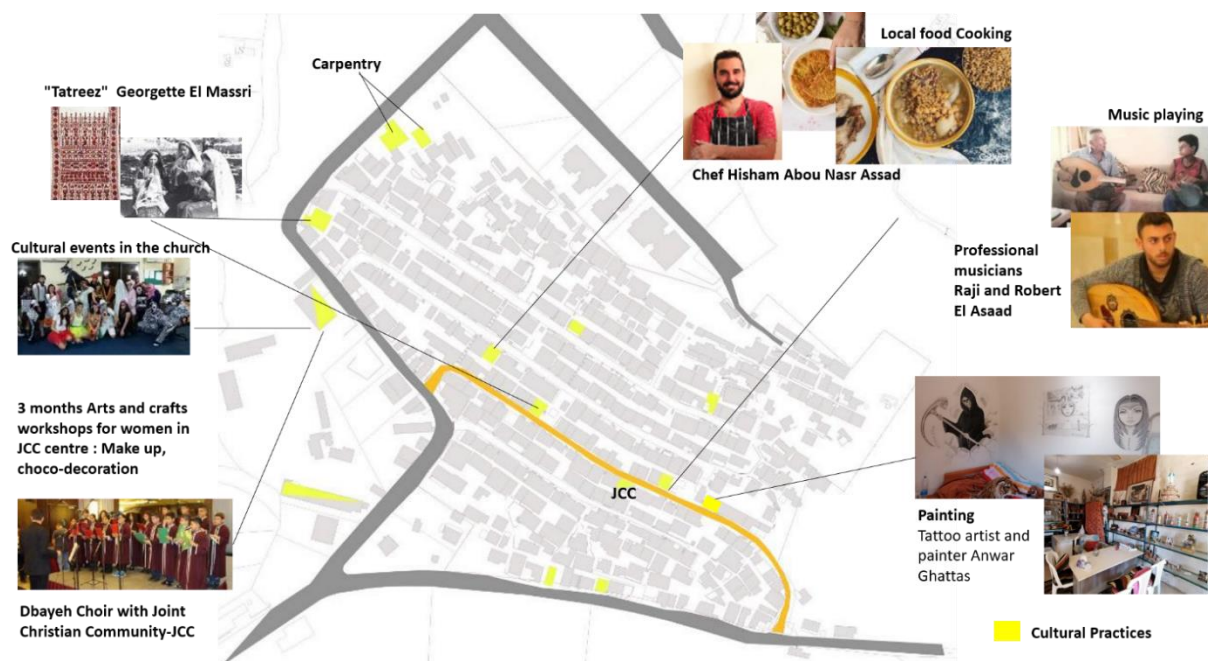
Figure 76: Map of cultural Practices in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2020)

"I drew on the bodies of most of these young people inside this camp! I had more than 5 youngsters coming to my house every day asking me to 'ink them'. And of course I never took money from anyone. It was more of a hobby for me, although I wish I knew how to benefit from my talents as a painter and tattoo artist."

Anwar pointed out that there was another talented painter that lived across his street. His eagerness to showcase his works of art was undeniable when he invited me in to his work space, one of the two rooms in the tiny house that he shared with his parents and also talented sister.

To conclude this section, Habib confirms the importance of shedding the light on the camp's cultural diversity as well as rich and unique local talents that could also serve neighboring communities (figure 77). He elaborates on this statement by expressing JCC's vision which aims to encourage and expose local talent in order to foster the exchange of know-how and attract visitors, thus enhance civic engagement and create a sustainable, self-sufficient community for future generations.

Figure 77: Cultural and communal practices in Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2020)

D. Socio-Spatial practices in open shared spaces: Typologies and Associated Placemaking Tactics

"*A good city is like a good party-people stay longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves*" Jan Gehl.

Over the years, Dbayeh camp's dwellers created meaningful public shared spaces and shaped them to feel more like a permanent 'home' and less like a short-term refuge. First, to gain more space, refugees stretched physical edges either by extending their private spaces or merging private spaces with the communal realm in many different ways. Outdoor spaces are excessively used to compensate the missing indoor spaces. Streets, alleyways, stairs, left-over spaces by definition, are all part of the 'public' realm. In Dbayeh camp, public life is not just happening between buildings (Gehl & Svarre, 2013, cited in Samaha, 2015), since the neighborhood expand on the roads, terraces, roofs, stairs, leftover spaces, entrances, etc. The interaction takes place not only between public life and public space but also private life and public space. The inhabitants' amalgamated arrangements reflect a response to a certain need manifesting through an iterative cycle of multiple small decisions. Observing, understanding and interpreting the perpetual production of space along with daily challenges faced by refugees, is crucial to be able to respond to these conflicts.

1. Streets

Aside from also enabling vehicular circulation (figure 79), the camp's four asphalted roads are used for communal purposes such as social gatherings (as describes in previous section). Streets also become children's playground.

Circulation: Vehicular Circulation
Pedestrian circulation

Main **vehicular** roads
Main Pedestrian circulation
Secondary Pedestrian circulation
Least used Pedestrian circulation
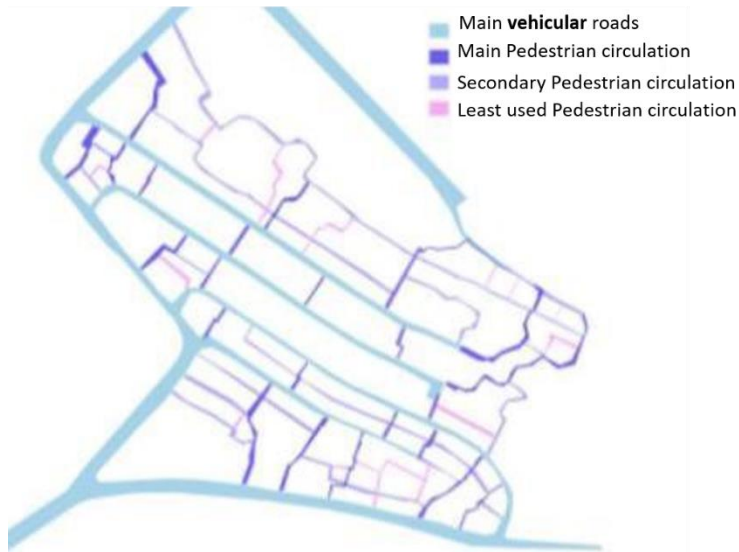
Figure 79: Circulation map (Source: Bechara, 2017)

Figure 78: Kids playing on the streets (Source: Author, 2018)

2. Stairs

Through the organic pedestrian circulation that characterizes the camp, the four roads divide the camp into four small districts that merge with the natural slope and interconnect through a rich network of stairs that link various spaces through three different morphologies (figures 80,81 and 82):

Type A: Connecting one road to another

Type B: Connecting a road to a rooftop

Type C: Connecting a road to a building's entrance

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Figure 80: 'Type A' stairs connecting two roads
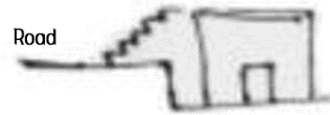
Figure 81: 'Type B' stairs connecting a road to a rooftop
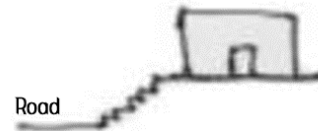
Figure 82: 'Type C' stairs connecting a road to a building

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3. Alleyways

An organic network of alleyways connects the different houses on the steep hill. Some passages are wide enough to facilitate circulation and connect buildings and open spaces while others appear be too tiny to fit an adult. Kids find places to hide inside the neglected abandoned alleys:

"We loved hiding inside our passageways. It was like we had our own huge natural maze where we could get lost but quickly find our way back" Rabih, 28 year old Palestinian. *"My favorite game is running around with my cousins and hiding inside our 'secret passageways'"* (Chadi, 11 year old Palestinian).
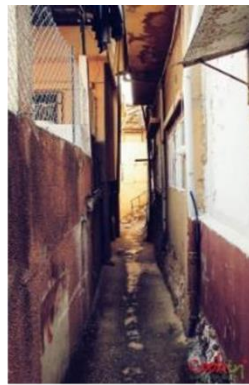
Figure 83: Socio-spatial practices in alleyways (Source: Author, 2019).

Moreover, since gardening is one of the most common activity inside the camp, a unique and outstanding greening activity is taking place inside most of the camp's distinctive passages.

Residents filled most of the empty spots along alleyways with plants, small trees and flower pots.

4. Rooftops

The camp's rooftops are either concrete slabs accessible through stairs added illegally by the dwellers themselves, or unreachable corrugated metal sheets filled with garbage, tires and wood sticks.

Most of the accessible rooftops are abandoned and left unused. Instead of benefiting from the additional space that overlooks the hill and offers a pleasant view of the sea, refugees place water tanks, metal poles and some flower pots on their roofs.

Figure 84: Rooftops of Dbayeh camp (Source: Author, 2017)

Left-over/Unused

Figure 85: Left-over rooftops (Source: Author, 2020)

However, an important number of dwellers made good use of the extra space on top of their homes. Refugees managed to turn many unused roofs into either private spaces such as terraces and gardens, or public shared spaces created by adding metal sheets and sometimes outdoor furniture between two buildings (figure 86).

Figure 86: Accessible rooftops shaping terraces and public shared spaces
(Source: Author, 2020)

Additionally, balconies also play an important role within the camp's public realm. In fact, they are considered as semi-public spaces since they are directly linked to the street thus, foster informal conversations across balconies and to the roads: observing, eavesdropping, glimpsing, kids calling their friends form other streets, parents calling their kids to watch out for cars while playing on the streets, etc.

5. *Left-over open shared spaces*

Many small neglected squares between concrete houses serve as parking spots for residents. Some are small left-over spaces between two buildings, others are large culs-de-sacs in front of a group of houses.

Figure 87: Map of Shared open spaces network (Source: Author, 2020)

a Road 1

b Road 1

e Road 3

c Road 2

d Road 2

f Road 4

G Road 4

118
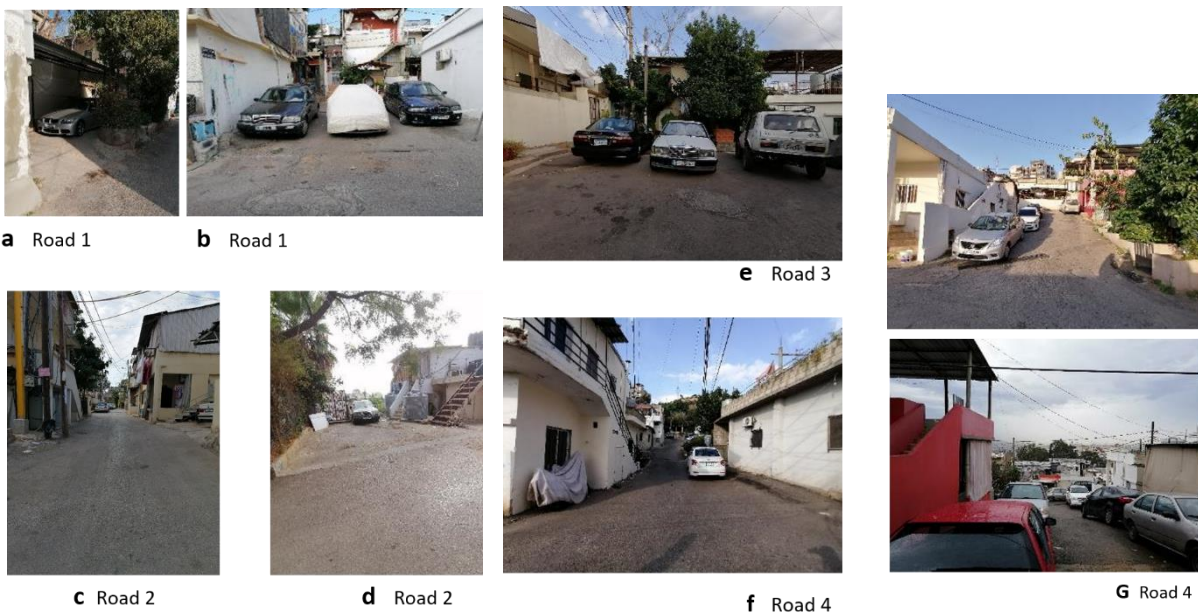
6. *Placemaking Tactics*

All daily practices along with vibrant communal and cultural activities happening in Dbayeh camp constitute in a way a vernacular type of Placemaking, from painting walls to planting trees and flowers, adding furniture, creating extension to interior spaces as well as creating leisure spaces. While ignoring building regulations, refugees make use of every left-over open space to promote expansion inside the camp. They managed to integrate them within their living spaces as tactics to improve their living conditions:

- A significant use of greenery: Many potted plants, flowers or trees, are placed at the entrances, on terraces, stairs and alleyways. Inhabitants are trying to fill every empty corner to lend some greenery to the rough concrete spaces and create an intimate personal garden (figures 88, 89 and 90). Other than greening, pots and planters are used to demarcate private gardens and planted lots.

Figure 90: Private garden (Source: Author, 2019)

Figure 88: Greening the entrance (Source: Author, 2019)

Figure 89: Roof tuned into private garden (Source: Author, 2019)

Greenery is also used to stop and prevent littering between houses and keep the neighborhood clean (figure 91).

"*People used to throw their garbage in this neglected area in front of my house. The smell was horrible and a mountain of trash was forming on my doorstep. I had to do something to stop this! And what better than plants and vegetables to beautify a space? That's when I called UNRWA to remove the trash and started planting flowers, onions, potatoes, mint, zaatar, etc. All the neighbors were interested in my new idea so I decided to share with my community. Everyone is allowed to plant and grab stuff from the little garden!*" Georgette, 72, Palestinian.

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Figure 92: Greening Alleyways (Source: Author, 2019)

Figure 91: Georgette's Communal Garden (Source: Author, 2020)

- Covering and furnishing: Many dwellers transformed open terraces on the roof into playgrounds for children thus extending interior space by installing steel sheets and nylon covers. Others created an outdoor gathering space in front of their home by installing furniture and covering the entrance's open space with clay tiles.

Figure 93: Covered entrance with outdoor furniture (Source: Author, 2019)

Figure 94: Covered roof extending the interior space (Source: Author, 2019)

Furthermore, several communal gathering spots were also created between buildings by adding steel sheet. On the intersection of 'Tari2 l Boustan' (previously described in Section C-1):

"Since we can't find any place to sit and socialize, we used some old furniture and plastic sheets for shading to create our own space to hang out, forget our sad reality and forget our daily routine"(Habib,53, Lebanese).

- Reusing material: Waste materials are reused as an alternative for many needs: planters, curtains for shading or serving as separators to avoid vis-à-vis, as well as space extensions (terrace or small shops next to the house) (figure 95).

- Painting on the walls to beautify the space and make the camp look more like a home and enliven it with colors.

Figure 95: Georgette and Nour's minimarket as an extension to their house, using waste materials (Source: Author, 2020)

E. Findings and Potential of the study area

To sum up, this thesis addresses the following research question:

"How can the Urban Design strategy of Placemaking that builds on exciting spatial tactics, improve living conditions particularly in shared spaces and restore the multilayered identity that links to the campness of the camp?"

By referring to the Place Diagram's four sections that act as a the base of a Placemaking intervention (described in chapter 3, section B-4), it appears that 'Access & Linkage' and 'Uses & Activities' are the main catalysts that can enliven the passive network of shared open spaces of the camp.

As demonstrated in section A of this chapter, Dbayeh camp back in the 1950's, although existing in conditions of isolation, was availing from interactive edges promoting shared spaces and outward communal activities. Whereas today, having undergone endless social and physical transformations across the years, the space transformed into an enclave with inactive edges and some small catalysts for change through little communal spaces in the public realm. Nevertheless, the camp's natural geography as a green hill overlooking the sea, and the rich pedestrian network could be an important asset for enhancing access to left-over open spaces and improving the connectivity of the space to its immediate surrounding both visually and physically. Furthermore, exciting communal and cultural activities, along with small initiatives of social engagement and interaction, serve as a fundamental base for a place-specific intervention that addresses as well the issue of identity. Activities are the main reason that will trigger talented locals to use open spaces inside the camp, while also giving a particular character to the space based on their diversity and opportunities for users to participate and interact, thus tackling place-attachment and sense of belonging.

Figure 96: Most used pedestrian paths (Source: Bechara, 2017)

Cultural Practices
Communal Practices
Gathering/communal Spaces
Lost Communal Practices
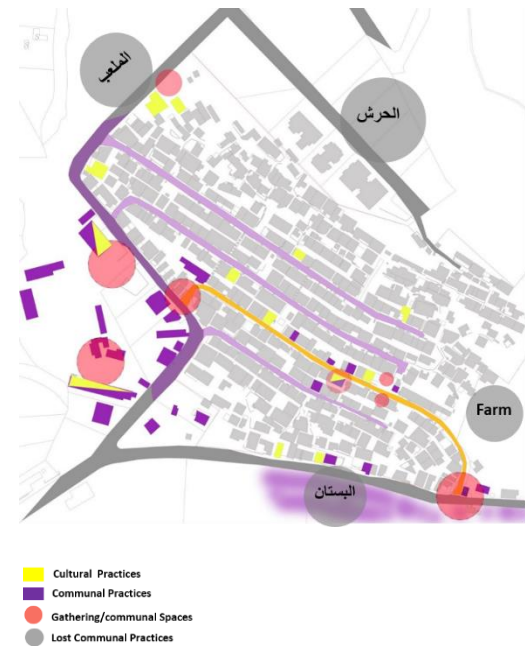
Figure 97: Map of existing communal and cultural practices (Source: Author, 2020)

Dbayeh camp went through frequent alterations in its urban surroundings and massive demographic shifts that strongly affected communal practices, social relations and integration of its original dwellers. This thesis looked at the camp from this perspective in order to understand people' attachment to this place and the role of collective memory and communal values in social practices. The ongoing urban change and increasing limitations over communal spaces and practices shaped a multi-ethno religious population that doesn't have a clear identity, according to most of the camp's residents. Palestinians that grew up in this camp are all very nostalgic not only of their villages in Palestine but also of the days when the camp was inhabited by Palestinians only.

"*Back in the days, before the camp started housing new nationalities, we all knew each other, and we were involved in each other's lives, just like in my village in Palestine. It was the closest we could get to our hometowns. Today, we feel that people are more distant and less engaged in communal gatherings. They prefer going outside the camp for social activities. As opposed to the 1960's, the camp is very calm and dull these days. I miss the vibrant vibes that used to distinguish our neighborhood.* " Salwa, 86, Palestinian.

Out of 1,772 dwellers, 766 Palestinians (43.3 %) today share their camp with 690 Lebanese citizens which represent 38.9% of the camp's population and 276 Syrians which form a minority of 15.60% (Census, 2017). The camp's community suffers from a lack of interaction instead of benefiting from the rich cultural environment they live in.

Figure 98: Percentage Distribution of Individuals by nationalities in Dbayeh camp (Source: Census, 2017)

Moreover, many practices related to the hometown are still manifesting inside the camp and local culture, although struggling to be exposed, is still present through diverse unique local talents of different nationalities especially the Palestinian.

Furthermore, based on research and analysis, the following shared spaces diagnosis also helps respond to the main objective of this thesis:

1-Lack of safe public open shared spaces for communal gatherings:

- Congested urban fabric and overcrowding.
- Left-over spaces are used as parking lots

2- Absence of safe areas for children

3- Lack of activity and vitality in shared open spaces:

- Onward looking camp with less communal engagement in social practices (retreated community with High Unemployment Rate)

4- Social exclusion:

- Lack of communal interaction between the camp's residents in open spaces.
- Lack of exchange with surrounding communities and visitors.

In addition, the area itself presents diverse potentials due to:

- Proximity to landmarks and recreational facilities: Le royal hotel, Water gate, O Ciel wedding venue, Sports Club.

- Proximity to new residential neighborhoods.

- Proximity to Dbayeh center, an important recreational and cultural hub.

This thesis will propose a design intervention that will focus on upgrading the camp's public realm and reconnecting the site with surrounding neighborhoods through Placemaking strategies that restore the multi-layered identity in relation to the 'Campness' of the camp. How is the 'Campness' of the camp defined in this context?

'Campness' of the camp

Camps are being seen as heritage sites and places of significance that are left behind. The intangible heritage is linked to socio-spatial practices that produce a space of walkable experience. The physical reality to sustain the stories behind these practices is to upgrade towards this kind of sustainable development in which we actually continue to create resilience and adaptation towards the car taking over the public realm, and focus on bringing back the greenery and creating people-led, communal and interactive spaces.

Hence, the collective memory will not be linked to the memory of the people but their socio-spatial practices. This thesis addresses the identity of the place itself rather than the identity of communities using the space. The 'Campness' of a camp is thus defined by the place identity that can be compared between two Palestinian camps in Lebanon, regardless of time changes, governance changes and communities identities and values. The 'Campness' of the camp is described by the elements that characterize the spaces in relation to socio-spatial practices that shaped them and made them unique.

What is defining the 'Campness' of Dbayeh camp?

A- A cellular compact structure that:

- Facilitates Social interaction and interdependency.

- Creates shared spaces that foster civic engagement
  and good citizenship.
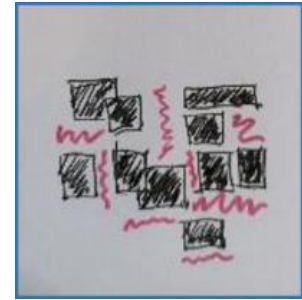
Figure 99: Cellular compact structure (Source: Author, 2020)

B- An interconnected organic pedestrian network connecting open

shared spaces in different levels of the hill.

Figure 100: Organic network (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 101: Greening activity (Source: Author, 2020)

C- A unique and important communal activity: Greening of
private and left-over shared open spaces.

D- Outward-looking particular social and communal practices in

shared open spaces:

- Absence of barrier: Spaces are interconnected internally

and connected externally.
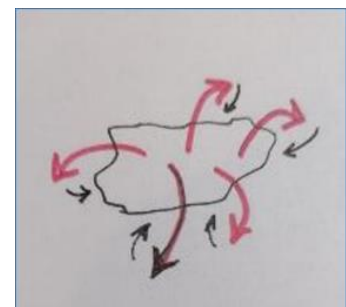
Figure 102: Outward-looking practices (Source: Author, 2020)

To sum up, this thesis does not address the Palestinian identity, but the camp as a physical built
environment produced by communal practices and social interactivity over time. The

'Campness' of the camp which is embedded in the space's definition should be retained as an identity for the space, as a signature or reference (one of multiple layers) of its historical narrative as it moves forward. It defines the camp as a social space of interaction, civic engagement, artistic and cultural expression. Therefore, the intervention should link to the cellular modular physical structure and organic pedestrian network of connected shared spaces. It should also focus on agriculture and greening as main practices and encourage the emergence of new diverse outward-looking communal activities.

Mark A. Wyckoff referred to places with a strong sense of place as 'Quality Places' which are active, vibrant and often with public art and creative activities. Some of the main key elements of Quality Places stated by Wyckoff are mixed uses, creativity, interaction, quality public places, community heritage, recreation and green spaces. Those are clearly the missing pieces in the public realm of Dbayeh camp that has turned into an inward enclave where inhabitants lost the sense of engagement and interaction. It became 'a place to sleep' according to many dwellers that I interviewed. Small occasional active areas are notable inside the camp such as the school and the church. Key elements listed by Wyckoff can help activate the site and implement a new vibe into the reserved neighborhood which activities are now limited to basic daily services and some rare communal initiatives.

As my hypothesis stated, urban design can apply a strategic place-specific approach based on Placemaking interventions inside the camp by addressing the deteriorated congested fabric, the unused shared spaces, the 'Campness' of the camp and the sense of identity building on existing socio-spatial tactics.
The Placemaking strategy will aim to retain and upgrade public shared open spaces, which became too abused and lost their identity, in order to sustain greater interaction between dwellers. Community-focused design interventions informed by community practices will

upgrade shared open spaces and create on the ground dynamics and models that allow dwellers

to further build on and continue to organically engage with the space and its upgrade.

My design intervention will become a framework for other Community-focused projects.

CHAPTER V

DESIGN INTERVENTION

The design intervention's core challenge focuses on enhancing the public communal realm and reconnecting the camp with its surroundings through Placemaking strategies that retain the 'Campness' of the camp. The proposed intervention will first address the camp's isolation and interaction with its surroundings by using Placemaking strategies to improve living conditions particularly in shared spaces and create a healthy public realm and vibrant social space for collective/communal living. While fostering place-attachment and social engagement, these design strategies will then restore the multilayered identity by retaining the 'Campness' of the camp.

A. General Approach

Within the Placemaking approach, this study focuses on two leading strategies; 'Re-activate and Activate':

1. Re-Activate meaningful spaces of collective memory and identity from edges to internal spaces.

2. Activate and create new spaces from edges to internal left-over spaces.

The strategic vision is to create an organic network of vibrant **multi-scale** spaces (Edges, communal hubs, internal pocket spaces), acting as meaningful inclusive places, connecting people inside the camp
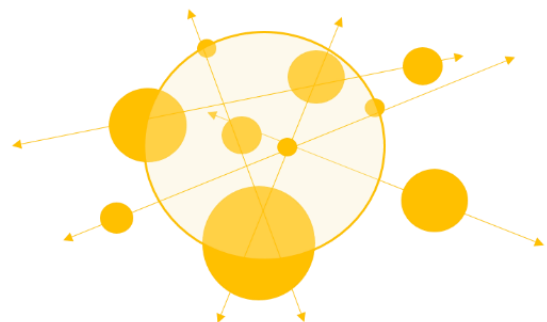
and interacting through dynamic edges to break the virtual barriers with the immediate surroundings. This communal web would be a catalyst for vitality, openness, social engagement as well as commercial interaction and boosting local camp economy. Along with this interactive network, the intervention will propose an overall upgrade to create a neighborhood environment of equal care and sustainable maintenance.

'Creative' and 'Tactical' Placemaking interventions will be used to Re-activate the edges that are full of memory of place and activate new edges, creating a vibrant outside web. On the other hand, neglected internal left-over spaces will be activated into key places that transform the camp into a lively interactive hub, availing from different cultural and historical layers. By promoting shared experiences, arts and culture can then enhance understanding and exchange between individuals from different backgrounds and values. The emergence of new diverse collective activities will also aim to promote mix uses, foster commercial interaction and boost local camp economy by creating new job opportunities. Moreover, the intervention aims to sustain and strengthen existing active internal catalysts of communal engagement. The network of multi-scale active spaces would create internal special bonds between locals while also attracting people from the outside and breaking the hosting societies' stereotype that marginalizes displaced communities.

Furthermore, previously mentioned general/macro thesis objectives are linked to micro design objectives:

- 'Upgrading living conditions inside the camp by improving the quality of shared spaces' is linked to a design objective that focuses on creating safe and secure environments for different groups such as children and the elderly.

- 'Reinforcing socio-spatial practices of different communities and proposing new opportunities' is linked to a micro objective that aims to enhance local talents and facilitate access to Art and education.

- 'Promoting livelihoods, self-reliance and sustainability' is linked to diverse design objectives: Empowering marginalized youth to improve their own economic condition, creating job opportunities, promoting commercial exchange and boosting local economy.

- 'Strengthening the character of the site to inscribe the identity which includes the Campness of the camp while integrating it with its' surroundings', links to micro objectives that aim to first, propose a programing strategy which focuses on designing around existing active spaces and strengthening the communal and cultural practices within shared spaces, enhance agriculture and greening activity, preserve and exchange traditional know-how within the locals of the camp and with visitors from surrounding neighborhoods.

My thesis proposes place-specific Placemaking strategies to transform spaces into places and achieve community needs along with previously mentioned objectives. The design proposal offers a bottom-up community-based approach that focuses on the dwellers' sense of belonging and attachment to the place they live in. It is important to mention that this is an illustrative design for what the process could possibly be, rather than a prescriptive and finalized end product.

The thesis adopts a neighborhood scale intervention providing the camp's community a network of successful and productive spaces by adopting Placemaking principles such as

pedestrianization, mix uses, temporary activities, the market concept and triangulation, to maximize the use of neglected left-over shared spaces and restore the dwellers' sense of belonging through existing and new communal activities that take place in the public realm. The ultimate objective is to design and implement behavior change interventions in shared spaces to improve living conditions by generating places that trigger behavioral change or foster a certain communal practice.

Community Actors

- Local Craftsman
- Local Artists
- Food cooks
- Women
- Merchants
- JCC community council

Figure 103: Community actors involved in the public realm

The Placemaking strategies, that tackle transience and absence of place, propose a phased process that includes three incremental steps of implementation while working on the following spaces:

Periphery EDGES

Communal hub
- The School ساحة المدرسة
- The Church ساحة الكنيسة
- El- Boustan البستان
- The Wall الحرش

Internal Spaces

- Left-over unused spaces
- Existing active spaces
- Stairs, Alleyways, Streets

Communal hub JCC Community Center
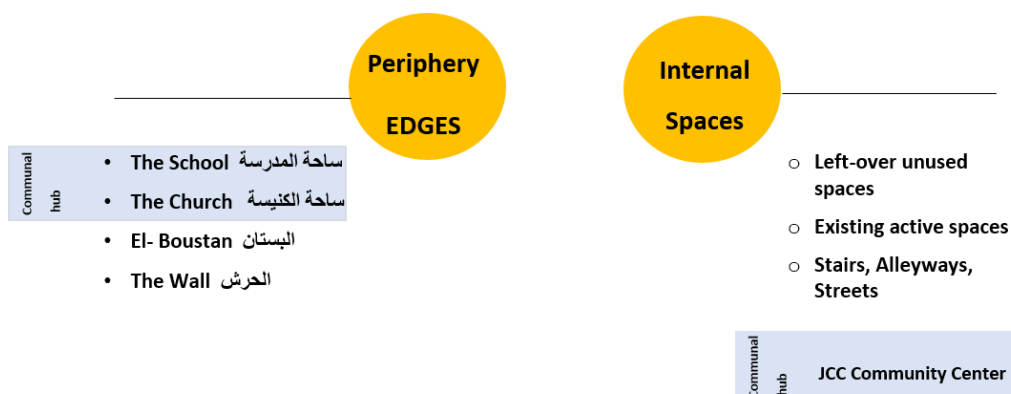
Step 1: The Edge Condition: Re/Activate unused edges and strengthen existing active spaces.

This step focuses on the **Activation** of one new unused space on the edge of the camp; the dumpster \ Parking lot behind the Church, and the **Re-activation** of 4 edges (figures 104 & 105):

1. **ساحة المدرسة,** the school yard, a cultural and historical node where young refugees were murdered during the civil war.

2. **ساحة الكنيسة ,** the Church, a gathering space for the youth

3. **البستان,** a commercial node, where refugees used to grow and sell fruits and vegetables.

4. **الحرش,** the green hill, an entertainment node which used to be a natural 'playground'.
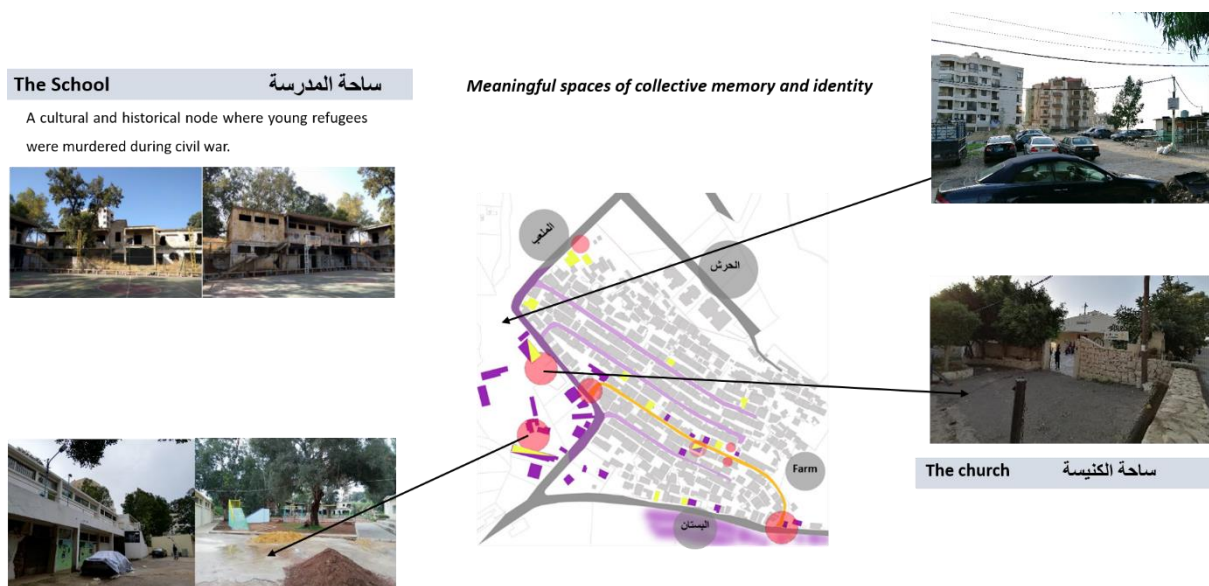
Figure 104: Edges of the camp (Source: Author, 2020)

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البستان

A commercial node, where refugees used to grow and sell vegetables

الحرش

An entertainment node which used to be a natural 'playground'

Farm

- Major gathering spot hosting backgammon, card games and Arguileh
- Few greening activities in the Boustan

Meaningful spaces of collective memory and identity
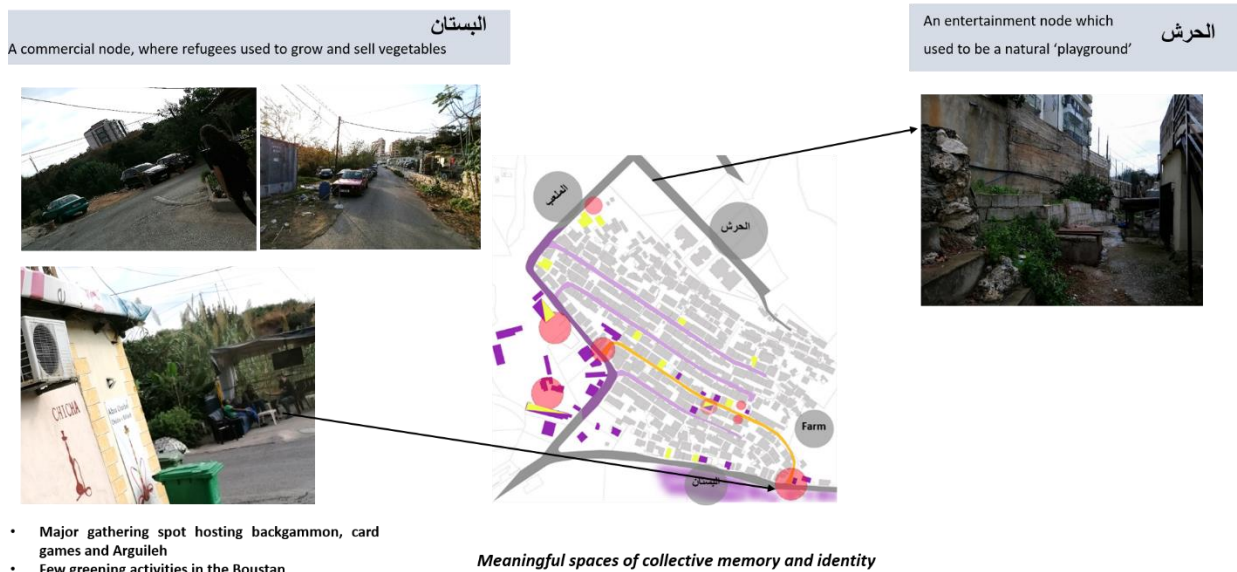
Figure 105: Edges of the camp (Source: Author, 2020)

The programing strategy focuses on designing around existing active spaces and strengthening the communal and cultural practices within shared spaces in order to retain the 'Campness' of the camp. It aims to Re-/activate peripheral spaces through a dual program that first highlights the connection between food, health and education, which are components of one's wellbeing, and also addresses the camp's transformation by linking to older practices and collective memory, while also creating a new layer of activities that pushes the space forward to address new needs of a new generation and a new mix of population. The approach aims to return the camp as a social space of interaction, civic engagement and artistic expression.

Two markets, a square, a performing arts academy for all ages, a Supper club tradition and a children's Playground are proposed within this network of active nodes, catering for all different ages and bringing diverse cultures together while

Children's playground

Arts and crafts **Market**

Supper club Tradition

Performing Arts Academy showcasing local talent

Weekly Food **Market**

Farm

Figure 106: Dual program proposal on the edges of the camp (Source: Author, 2020)

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showcasing unique local talents to encourage communal engagement thus enhance place-attachment.

Intervention concept: The Network of الساحات

The intervention that aims to retain the 'Campness' of the camp will be carrying over the name of peripheral gathering spaces, which are part of the refugees' mental image of these communal places: الساحة . By using existing active buildings as catalyst for shared open space activation I will create a network of ساحات .

Figure 107: The network of ساحات (Source: Author, 2020)

to ساحة السوق, ساحة البستان, ساحة الأولاد will be added to ساحة الكنيسة and ساحة المدرسة ,

create a network of dynamic ساحات.

Furthermore, diverse design interventions will include a modular tool inspired by the cellular urban fabric of the camp: The kiosk. The modules will be constructed by local carpenters and blacksmiths of the camp, using local materials such as steel, wood and textile.
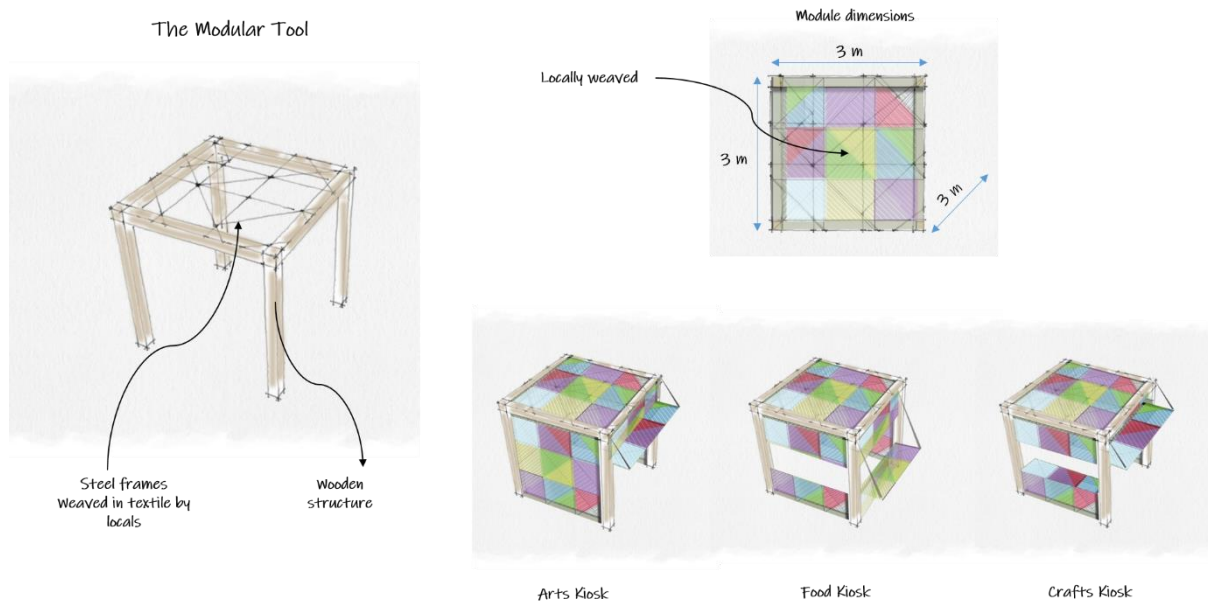

Figure 108: The modular tool (Source: Author, 2020)

a- **The School**   **ساحة المدرسة**

Key Map

Today, the UNRWA school is barely used for limited art workshops and music lessons due to insufficient funds and low maintained classrooms that need urgent rehabilitation. The building also used to host acting sessions but locals lost interest in all sorts of communal activities over time (as described in chapter 4).

The intervention proposes that existing buildings next to the Basketball court (figure 109) will be turned back into
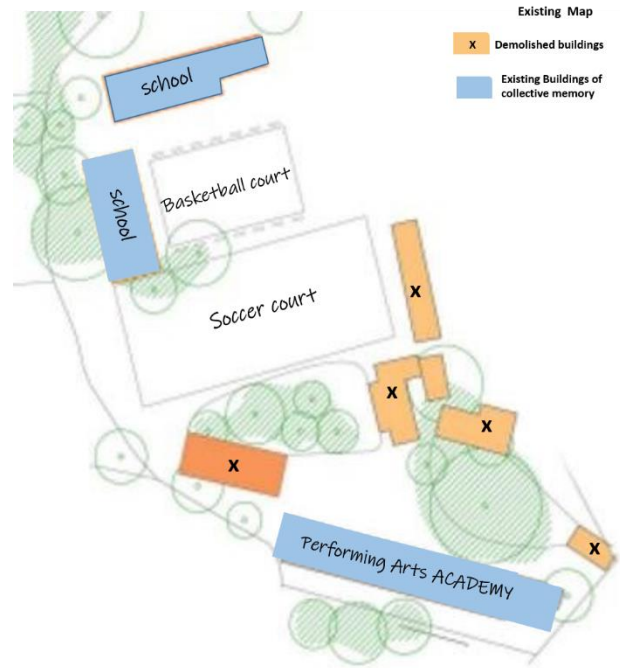
Figure 109: Existing map of the school (Source: Author, 2020)

their original function: A school for kids of the camp that can't afford going to private schools. Moreover, the largest building that hosts today arts lessons and workshops will be turned into a 'Performing Arts Academy' for all ages. In fact, art and music in Palestine play a key role in defining cultural identity, however many children don't have access to this form of education. Moreover, in Lebanon hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who experienced trauma can't find a way to express themselves and let go of their anxiety to start the healing process. Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians need to feel connected to each other and their cultural heritage however, they are deprived of accessing universal language of music and arts. The 'Performing Arts Academy' program can be managed by JCC as a main actor and will include dancing and acting classes for all ages led by locals such as: Hisham Assaad and actor Hani Damouni.

Furthermore new buildings will propose:

- Technical workshops: Carpentry, Blacksmithing, Mechanics led by locals (3 most common jobs inside the camp).

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- Crafts workshops for women: chocolate decoration, Soap making and make-up lessons.

- A Community centre.

- A Gym.

In terms of design, the new communal node are shaped by an organic cellular urban fabric with stairs spreading into the social space, linking to the camp's existing urban fabric. Roads 2 and 3 are linked to the diverse ساحات . The workshops are exposed to the main road, thus showcasing local talent to passersby (figures 110 and 111).

Figure 110: Proposed layout for ساحة المدرسة (Source:Author, 2020)
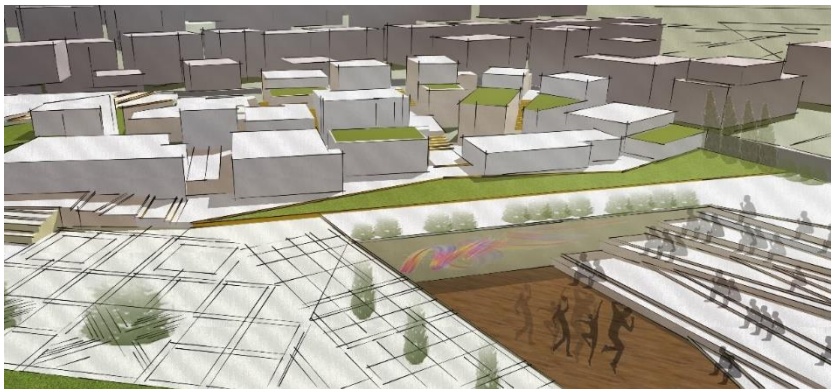
Figure 111: New cellular organic urban fabric with stairs, linking to the camps' built environment and urban steps facing a communal stage for live performances (Source: Author, 2020).

In addition, urban steps with a communal stage for performances will allow a spill-over of artistic activities happening in the Performing Arts Academy.

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All local talents are showcased to the camp dwellers, visitors and passersby on a large platform of expression: Live performances can be seen from the main road, thus attracting more visitors to the new communal hub.

Figure 112: Diverse workshops/activities exposed to the main road (Source: Author, 2020)

"I wish we could go back to the days when we organized shows and festivals, and invited Dbayeh residents as well as people from different regions in Lebanon" Hisham, 28, Palestinian Actor.

Figure 113: View of Sahat Al-Madrassa from the Main Road

"We had Lebanese friends that would come all the way from Jounieh and Batroun to watch our plays and take part in our festivities" Jana, 64, Palestinian.

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b- The Church   ساحة الكنيسة

Key Map

Drawing on existing diverse activities happening inside the church throughout the year (choir, musicals, religious plays, group discussions etc..) and after many failed attempts (by JCC) to organize communal meals in the church square after every Sunday mass or during the week, the open space can be activated by installing permanent furniture to make people come together and eat local food prepared by the dwellers themselves. The church that plays a key role in fostering communal interaction will continue to host social gatherings through JCC activities, and new proposed restaurant with communal kitchens that will also include:

- o Adopting and developing JCC's existing idea of women from the camp cooking and selling local food for neighboring schools

- o Local café-restaurant (led by dwellers) to encourage social gatherings.

- o Culinary Workshops by local women from different cultures such as Nabila Habib, Hisham Assaad, Yasmine.
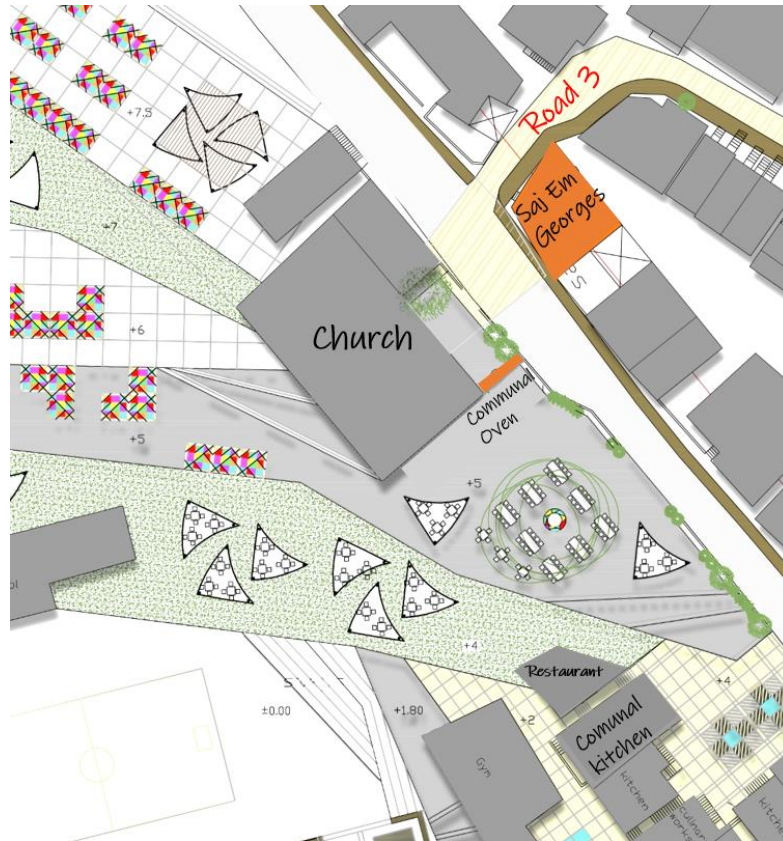
Figure 114: New proposed layout for ساحة الكنيسة *(Source: Author, 2020)*

The communal Oven and 'Supper Club' tradition

"We tried several times to organize communal dinners and invite people to eat together and get to know each other. Food can bring people together and break the cultural differences!"
Elias Habib, Palestinian.

Furthermore, a 'Supper Club' tradition can be introduced in the new communal hub. The tradition consists in hosting weekly communal meals. Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian women will be able to organize collective meals that each time represent one of the different cultures inside the camp, therefore fostering exchange of culinary know-how and promoting social gatherings through the act of "eating together".

A communal oven (Sajj) will also be installed in the 'Saha' to allow exchange of recipes and cultural eating traditions. The intervention aims to showcase the cultural heritage of diverse communities living in the neighborhood, through demonstrating different ways of cooking. Women of the camp can share their recipes and thoughts while breaking all cultural and religious barriers. This initiative will also encourage the business of 'Sajj Emm Georges' located right across the street to 'Sahat Al-Knise''.

Visitors will also get the chance to learn about the camp's cultural particularities. By encouraging eating and cooking together, the inclusive space will reflect the camp's dwellers' diverse traditions by allowing connection between people from different backgrounds (from inside and outside the camp).

"I would love to organize communal dinners to share my Palestinian recipes" Chef Hisham Abounasser, 28.

'I wish we could exchange recipes with residents from different cultures and people outside the camp" Jeanette, 62, Lebanese.

c- The Arts and Crafts Market   ساحة السوق

Key Map

The unused space behind the church will be activated and turned into a meaningful place for local talent exposure and exchange of know-how, while giving traditions and culture a claim on the public realm.

Figure 118: Old parking lot before intervention (Source: Author: 2019)
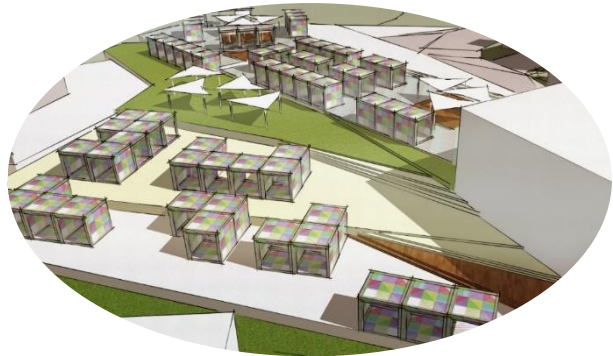
Figure 117: New communal space after intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 116: Proposed plan of ساحة السوق (Source: Author, 2020)

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The market hosts temporary[19] arts and crafts exhibitions, visible from the main street that links the camp to the rest of Dbayeh. The kiosks manufactured by locals from the camp create both gathering and exhibition areas. Dwellers of the camp have the chance to expose and sell their local products to those living inside the camp as well as visitor coming from surrounding neighbourhoods and different areas in Lebanon. Wooden items created by local carpenters, paintings, local soap, tools made by local blacksmiths, pottery, handmade event decorations, modern Palestinian embroidery items such as t-shirts, pillows, towels, bed sheets etc., and many other local crafts will be sold to local and visiting communities.

The communal hub creates new job opportunities and boosts the camp's local economy while fostering natural opportunities for dynamic social and commercial exchange. It also strengthens the sense of community through showcasing local talents while also attracting visitors from the outside.

"I would love to exhibit my crafts and get the chance to share my talent" Yasmina, 57, Palestinian Artist.

Gathering & Exhibition Areas

Arts & Crafts kiosks

Figure 119: ساحة السوق (Source: Author, 2020)

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[19] Based on seasons and holidays.

"There are many talented artists that would love to teach the young generations about Palestinian embroidery and cultural crafts" Elias Habib.

Figure 120: ساحة السوق (Source: Author, 2020)

d- The weekly Food Market

ساحة البستان

Key Map

Agricultural fields in the 'Boustan' will be divided into cultivated lands rented to the dwellers of the camp. Local products will then be sold in a weekly food market located in the 'Boustan' facing the intersection with Road 2, thus strengthening the existing communal gathering node.

Food Kiosks following the hill topography link to the same cellular urban fabric of the camp. Small passages with stairs connect the different levels of the market that also offer many gathering areas within commercial spaces.

Figure 121: The Food Market proposed plan (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 122: Food kiosks and Food trucks animating the weekly market (Source: Author, 2020)

The market aims to create a sustainable and self-sufficient community inside the camp, by providing new job opportunities, enhancing local economy and fostering social engagement.

Figure 123: Gathering areas within the network of food kiosks (Source: Author, 2020)

e- **The Playground**   ساحة الأولاد

Key Map

Figure 124: Playground proposed plan (Source: Author, 2020)

The large concrete wall separating the camp from new residential buildings is used as a main structure to create a safe playground for children with several gathering areas for parents.

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Padded colourful platforms and climbing nets create dynamic and safe spaces for kids.

"My kids spend their afternoons on the streets. Right after school, they grab their bikes and meet their friends on the road. They have nowhere else to go. They sometimes hang out in the poorly maintained school court" (Julia, 43, Lebanese).

Figure 125: Before the intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 126: After the intervention: Safe playground with Padded colourful floors and climbing nets (Source: Author, 2020).

Step 2: Re/Activate Internal Unused shared open spaces (Left-over & Rooftops)

Mostly used as parking spots, neglected left-over spaces can act as key places where the camp beats in life and productivity. If activated, these nodes can foster social sustainability and generate new opportunities for communal interactions between locals and visitors.

Figure 127: Unused shared open spaces (Source: Bechara, 2017)

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Figure 128: The camp's most created communal open spaces: السطيحات (Source:Author, 2020)

The camp's most created communal spaces are extensions of private internal spaces on the roofs: السطيحات. The design intervention proposes to extend the concept of سطيحات المخيم and create a network of 'Public Living Rooms' through the modular element constructed by locals: the kiosk.

Since the public realm of Dbayeh camp mostly unsafe, car dominant and consisting of small unused spaces within a congested urban fabric, the intervention aims to activate an upper story shared open space network, offering diverse activities that sustain practices of collective memory while also proposing a new layers. Streets and rooftops will turn into 'Places' by using diverse Placemaking strategies[20] and tactics such as: 'Bringing the inside out' strategy, showcasing

ARTS AND CRAFTS

PERFORMING ARTS

VIDEO GAMES

POP UP LIBRARIES

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[20] Previously mentioned in chapter 3, section C.

the community on the streets, creating multi-use destination, and the 'Power of 10+' strategy that offers at least 10 things to do in a successful place:

- Meet people
- Place to Sit
- Read
- Play Music
- Enjoy coffee or Shisha
- Snacks
- Board Games, Cards, Backgammon
- Shading and Sun
- Arts and Crafts
- Urban Gardening

Figure 129: Ten things to do in the diverse shared open spaces of the camp (Source: Author, 2020)

The 'Stayhat' will encourage the participation of different social groups, ages and religions, hence fostering social engagement and place-attachment. "So, they could be imagined as zones of agreement: areas for positive encounters and enjoyment that generate other ways of coexisting, where a local community can gather together, developing different activities, meetings and workshops under beautifully designed, colorful roofs" (Garcia, 2015)[21].

After mapping all existing local talents inside the camp along with old communal practices that disappeared over time (figure 130), the network of public living rooms (سطيحات) (figure 131) offers shared upper stories that 'Activate' unused spaces by proposing new practices and 'Re-activate' spaces of old practices linking to collective memory:

سطيحة التطريز :   Palestinian and Lebanese Totriz workshops by Salma, Georgette Al-Massri and Salwa.

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[21] in "Creating Spaces of Peace, Dialogue and Coexistence in Venezuela", Retrieved from
http://sustainablecitiescollective.com

سطيحة القهوة : A Cultural Coffee shop offering Pop-up libraries, entertainment spaces with board games, cards, backgammon and a space for Shisha.

سطيحة الموسيقى : Music workshops: 'Oud', Guitar, 'Derbakke', Piano lessons led by local professional musicians Raji and Robert El-Assaad, Georgette El-Assaad and Joseph Moussa and Hani Damouni.

سطيحة اللعب : An Extension of **ساحة الأولاد** playground offering a giant game of 'Snakes and Ladders'.

سطيحة المسرح : Urban steps for gatherings, shows and plays led by Hisham Assaad and actor Hani Damouni.

سطيحة الرسم : Painting and Digital Art workshops catering for both old and new generation led by Yasmine and Anwar Ghattass.

سطيحة الشاشة : Video games kiosks and movie screening for the diverse generations.
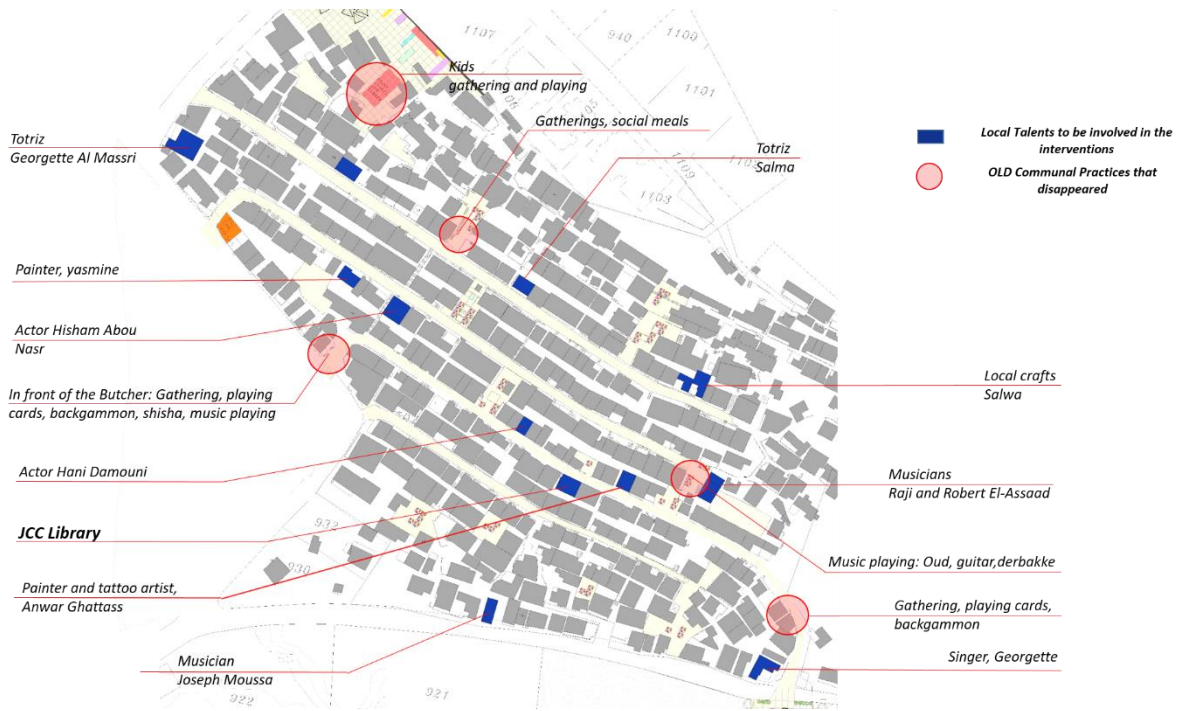
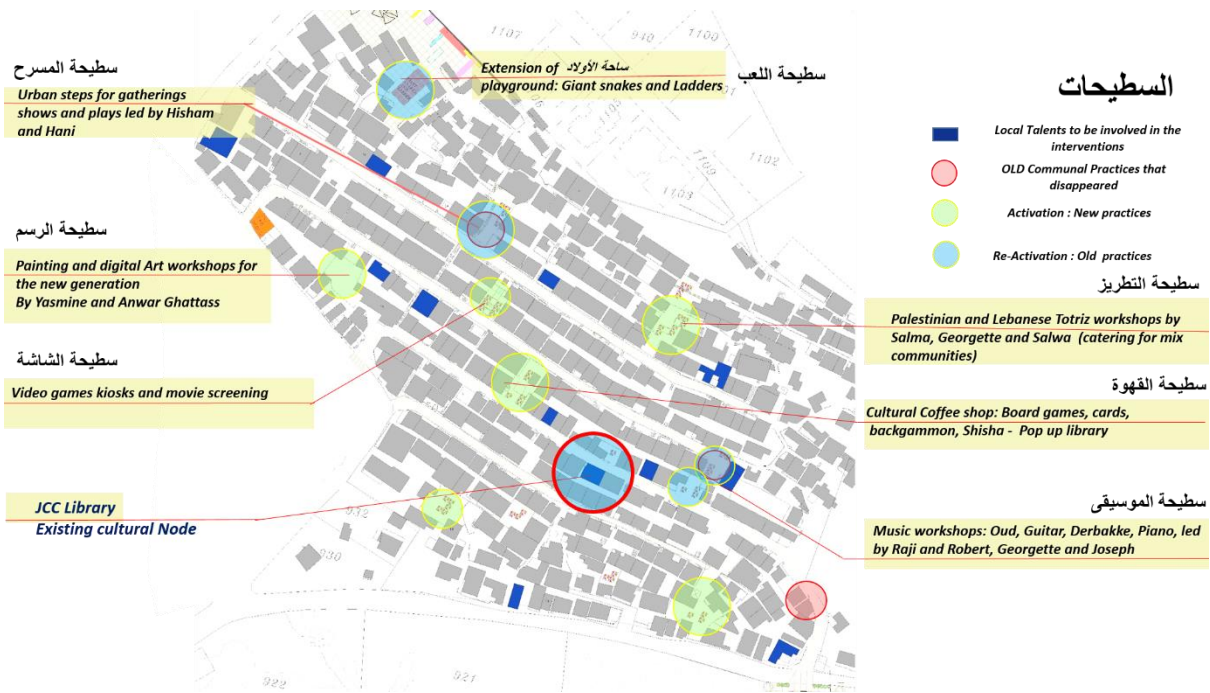*Figure 130: Map of existing local talents and old communal practices that disappeared (Source: Author, 2020)*

Figure 131: Proposed network of سطيحات (Source: Author, 2020)

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JCC Community Centre: An existing cultural hub inside the camp

The JCC study centre is another active node, but as opposed to other hubs it located inside the camp. Today the centre is used for study sessions, arts and crafts workshops and acting lessons.

"There are no adequate working spaces for the youth. We rarely find a quiet place to read, meditate or just disconnect from the daily routine. The JCC center is always full." (Yara, 26, Palestinian).

"The camp needs a space for young people to read, research and work on freelance projects, since the library (JCC community center) is always filled with kids and busy with classes for children and women." (Hisham, 28).

The intervention thus proposes to transform the centre into a public library for young adults and elderly, offering new reading and working spaces as well as a cultural coffee shop. All kids activities, lessons and workshops that used to fill the small library, will be shifted outside the camp and take place in the new proposed community centre in 'Sahit Al-Madrassa'. JCC centre becomes a space to focus on personal work or relax while reading a book and drinking coffee.

Step 3: Upgrade the pedestrian network: Streets, Stairs and Alleyways

Figure 130: Vehicular and Pedestrian Networks (Source: Author, 2020)

Streets, alleyways and stairs will be upgraded through basic safety and accessibility measures[22].

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[22] Streets, alleyways and stairs will not programmed, nor designed.

To begin with, since most streets, alleyways and empty left-over spaces are invaded with cars, solving the parking issue will allow the camp's dwellers to benefit from diverse types of shared open spaces. A vehicular network upgrade (figure 133 & 134) aims to reduce car usage inside the camp while creating a safe pedestrian-friendly neighborhood by:

Figure 131: Parking strategy proposal (Source: Author, 2020)

- Banning on-street parking.

- Proposing two new parking lots (by utilizing two peripheral unused lots) for residents who could park at a walkable distance of 250 meter radius – 3 minute walk.

- Offering 1 Guest Parking facing ساحة المدرسة.

- Linking vehicular Dead-ends to the outside, while facilitating car circulation inside the camp (figure 134).

Figure 132: Updated Vehicular roads (Source: Author, 2020)

To begin with, Road 1, a two-way dead-end street, will be turned into a one-way street and merge with 'Tarik Al-Boustan' a two-way street. Road 2, a two-way street which is the only road that connects the camp to the outside from both ends, will turn into a one-way street and remain connected to 'Tarik Al-Boustan'.

Roads 3 and 4, two-way dead-end streets, will create a one-way loop by merging together inside the camp. All internal streets will then turn into one-way streets, with no on-street parking allowed, while connecting the camp to its immediate surroundings.
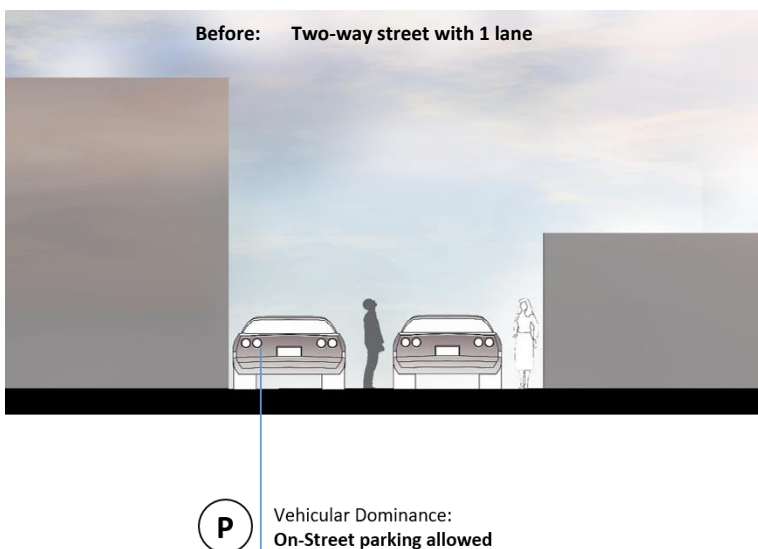
Street Upgrading

Figure 133: Street section before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Streets of Dbayeh camp are unsafe due to diverse factors such as the absence of street lights, absence of safe pedestrian path and vehicular dominance in relation to on-street parking and two way streets that barely fit one lane. Streets also lack of vitality and greenery.

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Trees
enhancing
greenery

Street lights

1.2m　0.8m　3.2 m　1 m

2 m

Minimize
vehicular
presence

Car vs. Pedestrian
Pavement + Sidewalk to
define the pedestrian realm

Bollards for
protection
No On-Street
parking allowed
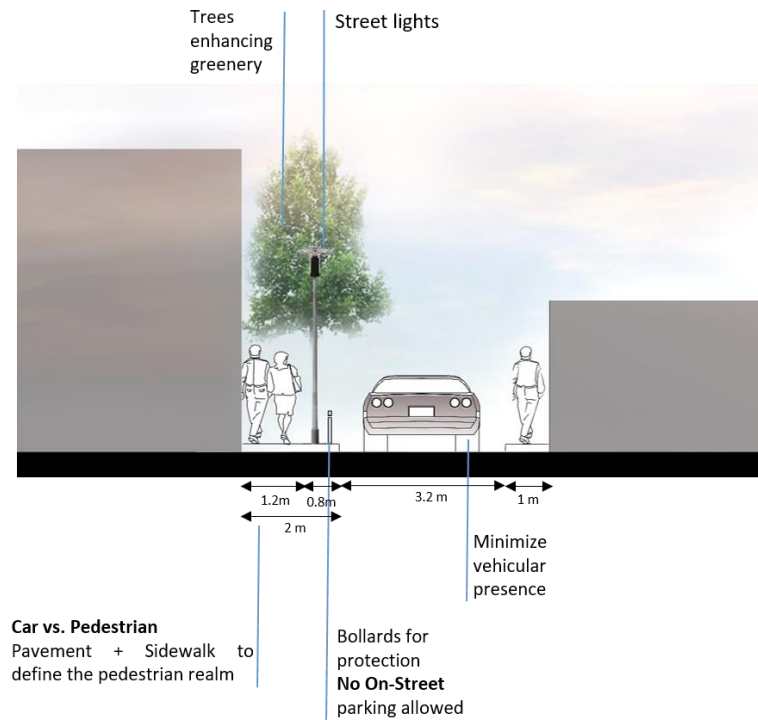
Figure 134: Street section after intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

The thesis proposes a Pedestrian-friendly network of streets that offers paved sidewalks from both sides, thus defining the pedestrian realm: One side will be wide enough (2 meters)to be planted with an alley of trees, the other one (1 meters wide) will be enough to insure the safety of pedestrians. Minimizing the vehicular presence, adding streets lights and bollards to prohibit on-street parking will enhance the feeling of security.

Stairs and Alleyways Upgrading

Figure 135: Stairs section before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Stairs and alleyways will be upgraded through adding greenery to enliven the space, and a handrail to enhance the safety feeling.

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Figure 136: Stairs section after intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 137: Alleyway section before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 138: Alleyway section after intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

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In addition, alleyways, an important part of the pedestrian network, are much less used than stairs and mainly considered mere passageways without any potential for activity. Art can be an answer to enliven these narrow pathways and turn them into a dynamic social space with unique hidden experiences. Active initiatives led by dwellers, such as starting with a mural somewhere and maybe a graffiti somewhere else, could be the beginning of shaping meaningful unique public spaces.

B. Detailed Design Area

The design intervention will propose a zoom-in on a specific area that includes: (figure 141)

- The most used stairs

- Links to a peripheral Cultural Hub: ساحة المدرسة

- Includes 3 سطيحات that will be designed in detail.
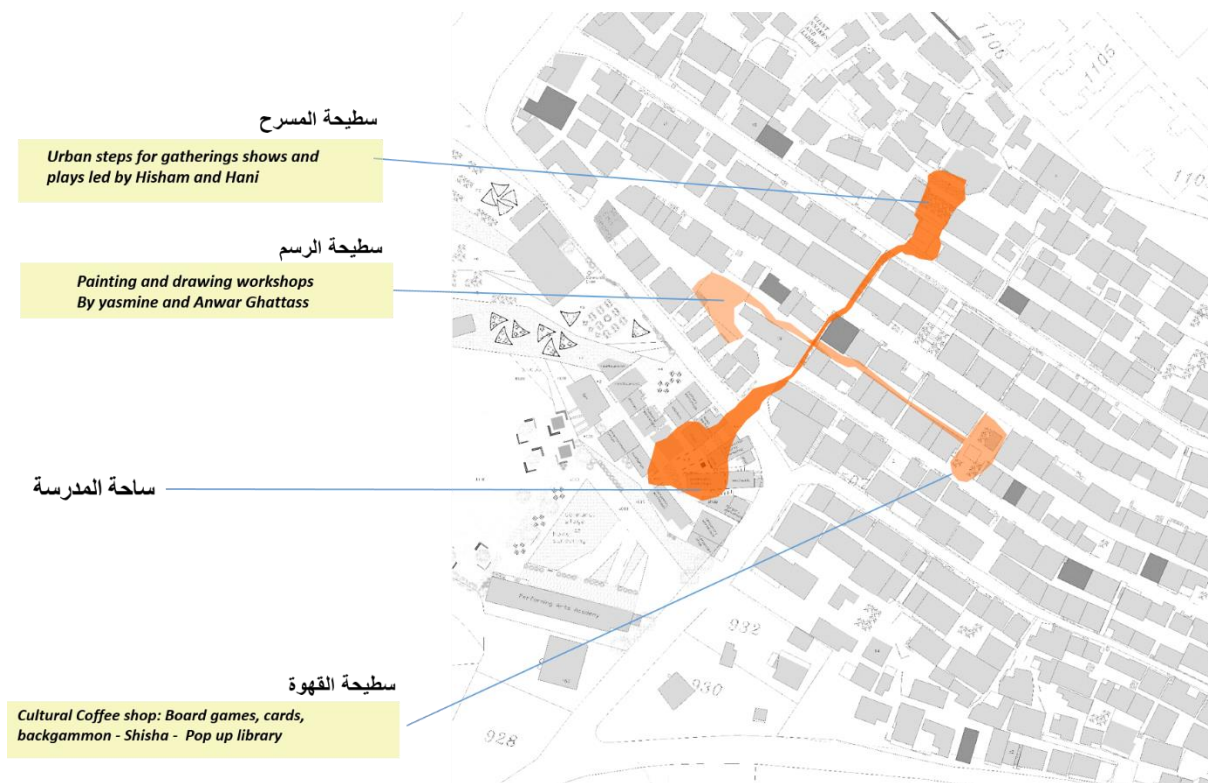
Figure 139: Detailed Design Area (Source: Author, 2020)

سطيحة المسرح

Figure 140: Before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Six kiosk modules are used to create on the ground floor level, acting and 3D animation studios, hosting workshops led by professionals Hisham Assaad and Hani Damouni. These modules' roofs form an outdoor stage (Stayhit Al Massrah) that is facing urban steps for gatherings while watching shows/plays produced during these local workshops.

3 x 3 m
6 modules : Acting Studios
& 3D Animation workshops

Figure 141: After intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 142: Ground floor Studio Plan (left) and roof stage plan (right) (Source: Author, 2020)

سطيحة القهوة

Figure 143: Before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

In this 'Stayha', the kiosk module will be used in diverse dimensions to create on the upper level, a multi-use platform of spaces offering a cultural coffee shop, a reading space, pop-up libraries and outdoor seating/gathering spaces.

2 modules
Cultural coffee shop 3 x 3 m

2 modules
Reading space 2 x 3 m

Outdoor Seat
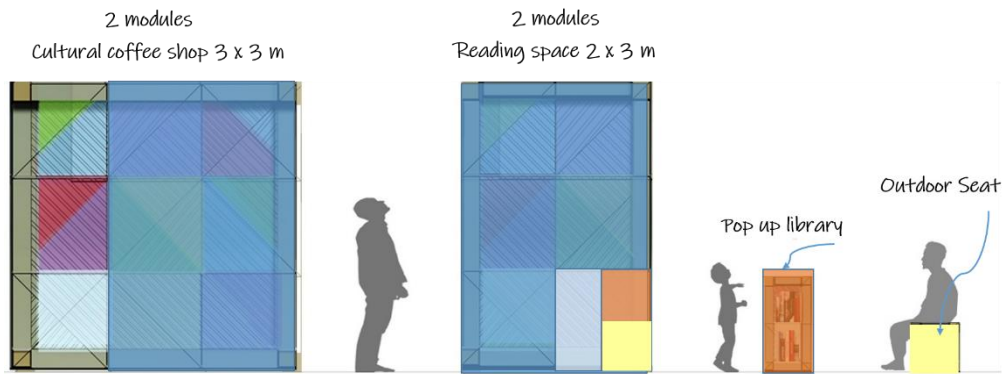
Pop up library

Figure 144: Kiosk module divided to create diverse spaces (Source: Author, 2020)

سطيحة القهوة

Cultural Coffee shop: Shisha -Board games, cards, backgammon - Gaming - Pop up library

Cultural Coffee shop

Pop up library

Reading/working Area

Unused ROOFTOP : Shared سطيحة & Urban gardens

Pop up libraries are installed on the open ground floor which is designed for gatherings while using seating modules and urban steps (figure 146).The cultural coffee shop on level 1 will include an entertainment area that gathers the young and elderly of the camp, by proposing diverse inclusive activities such as a backgammon tournaments, shisha, card games, electronic and board games, movie screening, etc. The outdoor spaces on level 1 offer hammocks and a communal swing. The adjacent house's unused rooftop is part of the communal 'Stayha' and a network of new urban gardens.

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Figure 145: Ground floor (left) and level 1 (right) plans (Source: Author, 2020)

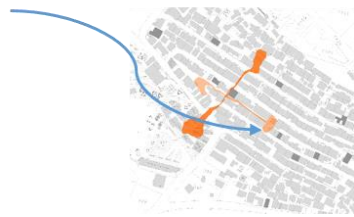*Figure 146: Mass Plan (Source: Author, 2020)*

سطيحة الرسم

Figure 147: Before intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

3 modules Indoor space

3 modules Outdoor extension

1/3 module balcony

Figure 148: After intervention (Source: Author, 2020)

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'Stayhit El Rasem' uses 3 kiosk modules to create indoor spaces and 3 others for outdoor extensions. 1/3 module is also used for balconies. This hub offers on the upper floors (level1 and 2), Painting and Digital art studios hosting workshops for different generations, led by professionals from the camp such as Yasmine and Anwar Ghattas. Level 2, offers an extension of these creative spaces to the adjacent building's unused rooftop (figure 151). The open ground floor is designed for outdoor exhibitions filled with seating spaces and canvases for artists, thus exposing local talent and foster exchange of cultural know-how (figures 148 and 150).
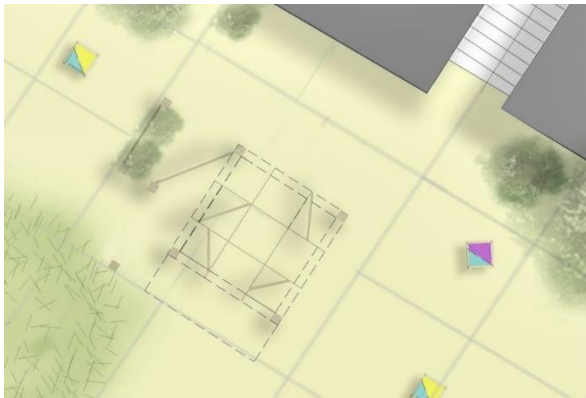
Figure 150: Ground floor exhibition plan (Source: Author, 2020)
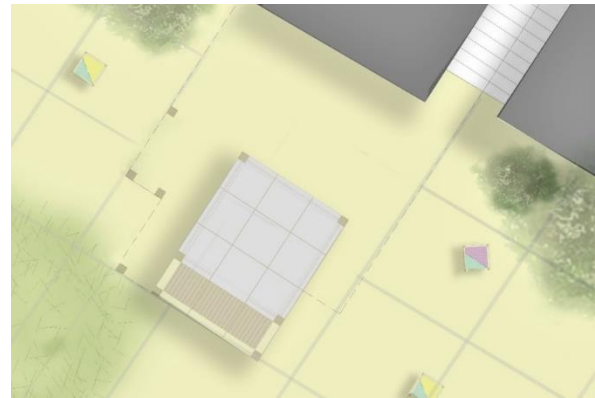
Figure 149: Level 1 studio plan with balcony (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 151: Level 2 studio plan with outdoor extension on adjacent roof (left) and mass plan (right) (Source: Author, 2020)

Figure 152: Mass plan of 'Stayhit al Rasem' connected to the main road through stairs (Source: Author, 2020)
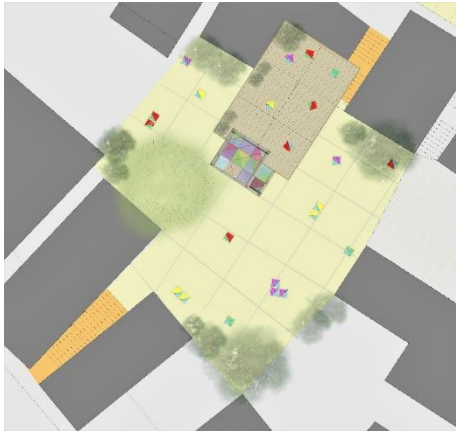
The creative node is also directly linked to the main road that connects the camp to the rest of Dbayeh town. Local talent is thus directly exposed to visitors and passerby.

Figure 153: Main Road sneak peak at 'Stayhit al Rasem' (Source: Author, 2020)

To sum up, the design intervention produced a network of vibrant multi-scale spaces connecting people inside the camp while interacting, socially and commercially, through active edges to break virtual barriers with the outside, supported by an upgrading of the street, stair and alleyway networks within safety standards.

Figure 154: Network of multi-scale spaces (Source: Author, 2020)

"The public space is the **'new backyard'** where people bring out the things they do privately: socializing, sports, eating, creating" Hamish Dounan, associate Director of 'Context Landscape Architects.
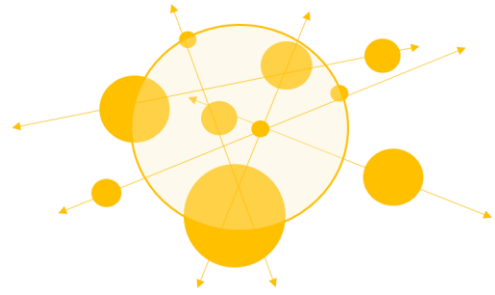
C. Implementation Framework and Negotiations

The intervention proposes a balanced Public/Private partnership between three main stakeholders: the community representative: JCC community council, the managers of the land: Dbayeh municipality and the renters of the land: UNRWA, through the following steps:

- **Negotiations between UNRWA, 'Deir Mar Youssef' and Dbayeh municipality:**
UNRWA should negotiate with 'Deir Mar Youssef' owner of most of the lots, to include the unused land behind the church in the camp area, and allow UNRWA to use all vacant lots as public spaces in exchange of:

  - Upgrading infrastructure and utilizing unused space for communal uses only (without buildings).

  - Possible additional incentives: Dbayeh Municipality grants the monastery density bonuses in other lots, and the camp's dwellers share a percentage of the market profit.

- **Extension of rented land by UNRWA:**
With the help of the municipality, UNRWA will negotiate to rent some private agricultural lands of 'Al Boustan' from their owner to the camp's dwellers in exchange of shared profit from the food market.

- **Inclusion of the camp's local community** in the Public\Private Partnership board (PPP) and hosting round tables and forums to enhance social engagement and sense of belonging, thus reinforcing the bottom-up community-informed approach.
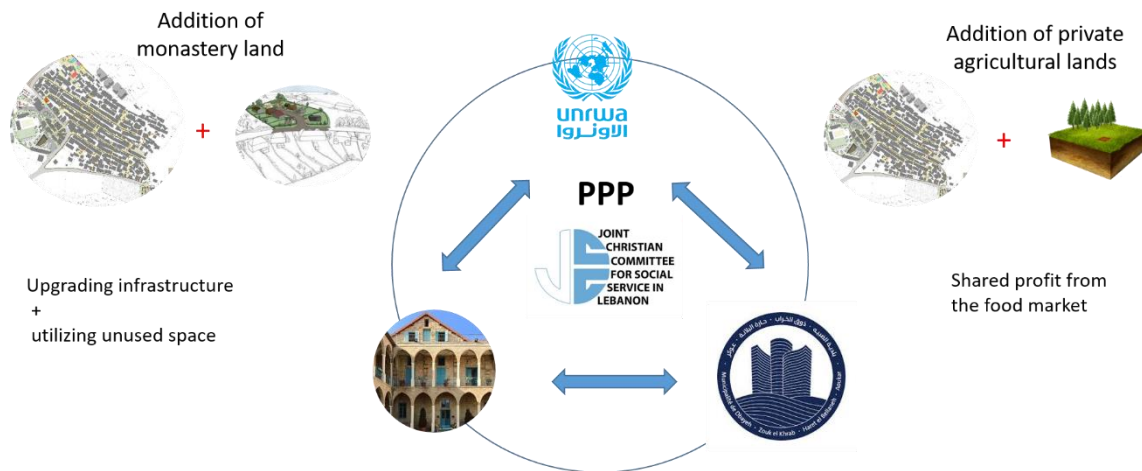
Figure 155: Negotiations between main stakeholders (Source: Author, 2020)

▪ **Construction conditions and regulations:**

The construction follows a three-phased process:

Phase 1:

• Refurbish the old school and open it to the kids of the camp since education is top priority.

• Build the gym and community center to respond to camp community needs.

• Install 5 kiosks in each of 'Sahit Al-Boustan' and 'Sahit Al-Souk' to offer new job opportunities to the highly unemployed camp population.

• Create 'Sahit Al-Awlad', 'Sahit Al-Knise' with the communal oven, and the Arts Academy to start workshops and classes for locals and visitors.

• Create 'Stayhit Al-Mousika', 'Stayhit Al-Ahwe' to foster social gatherings.

Phase 2:

• Build 5 technical workshops that are exposed to the main road.

• Build the restaurant and communal kitchen.

• Install 5 additional kiosks in each of Sahit Al-Boustan and Sahit Al-Souk. (10 kiosks in total).

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- Create 'Stayhit Al-Massrah' and 'Stayhit Al-Rasem' to expose more local talent.

- Create 'Stayhit Al-Le'eb' as an extension to 'Sahit Al-Awlad'.

Phase 3:

- Build 5 additional technical workshops that are exposed to the main road.(10 in total)

- Install 5 additional kiosks in each of Sahit Al-Boustan and Sahit Al-Souk. (15 kiosks in total)

- Create two additional 'Stayhat'.

Additional phases can be similarly and incrementally applied, depending on the project's efficiency and community needs.

Further constructions conditions and guidelines:

- Camp local carpenters, blacksmiths and all laborers in the construction field should be the main working force on site.

- Engage all camp local artists in the weaving and finishes phases.

- Use of camp local material: wood, steel, textile, tires.

- **Management conditions and regulations**

- All Public spaces are managed by the JCC community council, under the supervision of UNRWA and Dbayeh Municipality. The JCC community council led by Elias Habib (who is unanimously named president every year since more than 10 years) is representing diverse nationalities inside the camp, from Palestinian to Lebanese, Syrians and others. Elias has always been behind all creative initiatives and attempts to enhance living conditions inside the camp. Unions of Artists (led by Hisham Assaad)

and Laborers (led by Georges Bechara) will be added to the council in order to represent the actors of the public realm.

- It's a purely 'Camp operation' where only camp residents are allowed to sell food and products to the larger public, thus creating social and commercial interaction. The kiosks are exclusively leased, rented, run by the Dbayeh camp dwellers in order to avoid competition with Lebanese counterparts living outside the camp.

- Both **Crafts and Food Markets** are communal nodes where commercial interaction with the outside world can happen. These become spaces of empowerment for the camp dwellers, while also being spaces of interaction at the social and economic level through diverse exhibitions, sales and multi-use kiosks.

- Since all interviewed camp dwellers expressed unanimously their eagerness to share their know-how, talents and culture, all workshops, classes and businesses will be led by camp locals to create job opportunities inside the camp and boost the camp's economy.

- **Funding**

    "*UNRWA used to be more involved in our daily lives. Nevertheless, they weren't quite responsive when most of our homes flooded following the infrastructure works they initiated in early 2000's. I waited 9 years for them to come fix my home that drowned below street level.*"(Georgette, 68, Palestinian).

Since UNRWA nearly stopped funding camp operations since 2012, it cannot be considered as the main funder of this project. However, based on the legal jurisdiction that the municipality still has over the camp and building on my interview with the mayor of Dbayeh, having the municipality finance the project is a very viable option since the mayor Kabalan Al-Achkar is not treating the camp outside its jurisdiction and has actually taken several personal initiatives over the years in order to enhance the camp's living conditions:

"It is not considered a burden on Dbayeh anymore. Today, the camp is not really a camp and I don't understand why people are still calling this neighborhood a 'camp'...I just contributed many years ago, on a personal level, by asphalting all internal roads of the camp to improve accessibility on the hill. I also helped improving living conditions by funding small interventions. I wasn't representing the municipality of Dbayeh since the camp does not fall in its scope of administration."

Al-Achkar also insures that *"taking care of the 'camp' means taking care of Dbayeh. I cannot consider this space outside of my zone of jurisdiction. I would be lying to myself first, if I perceive the camp as an extraterritorial land with no relation to my town.'*

The public/private partnership becomes also an economic formula for long term projects, by giving an incentive for the municipality to fund the proposed projects in exchange of rent fees for the kiosks, and camp dwellers will pay the rent while getting profit from selling products.
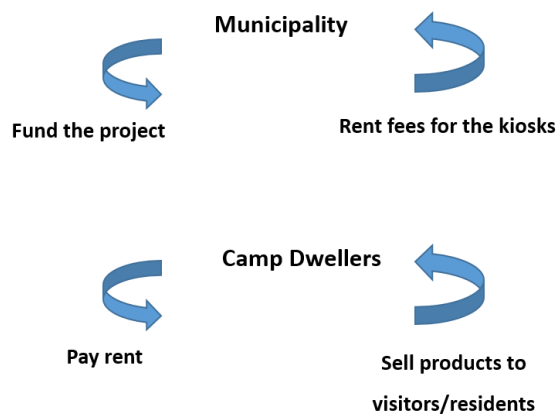
Moreover, the multi-scale project will need further fundraising projects and a possible financial collaboration with UNRWA can be negotiated. A form of contract can assign the execution part to the municipality that can delegate the task to its contractors who will be managing the operation on the ground.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the issue of post-camps conditions in Lebanon and the camps' relation to their hosting community. Camps established by hosting societies or aid agencies in response to an emergency situation as a temporary settlement, are often perceived as marginalized extra-territorial spaces. 174,422 Palestinians that reside today in 12 camps across Lebanon are denied basic rights, categorized as refugees and considered intruders. This study offered a different perspective that would serve both, the camp community and the hosting society. This thesis has also shed light on one of the oldest Palestinian camps that is not known to many. Dbayeh camp, a site that presents diverse socio-spatial particularities when compared to other Palestinian camps in Lebanon, was nearly absent in urban discourses.

This research has tackled interesting issues such as absence of place, connectivity, transience, 'Campness' of camp and sense of identity building on existing socio-spatial tactics, in a Palestinian camp that has been existing in Dbayeh for more than 60 years. This site was an interesting case study for Placemaking because of its diverse communities of different nationalities and religions. Due to internal dead ends streets, the space was mentally secluded from the mobility map of people in the area. With no physical barriers and a history of social exchange between camp dwellers and surrounding neighborhoods, the camp grew to be a social space of interaction, civic engagement and artistic expression, despite a partially physically isolated condition on a green hill. This particularity started to fade around the year 2000, when the camp was slowly turning into a physically and socially marginalized enclave in a modern residential urban fabric. The space became an onward looking camp with less communal engagement in social practices, lacking of safe public open shared spaces for children and

communal gatherings, and missing social interaction with surrounding communities. However, the cellular compact structure that facilitated social interaction and interdependency, created shared spaces that foster civic engagement and good citizenship. An interconnected organic pedestrian network connecting open spaces in different levels of the hill and a significant greening activity of left-over and private spaces, as well as existing outward cultural and communal practices in shared spaces, were all key catalysts that guided my design intervention.

As my hypothesis stated, urban design can apply a strategic place-specific approach based on placemaking interventions by addressing the deteriorated congested fabric that lacks public shared spaces, the campness of the camp, segregation and connectivity as well as the sense of identity building on social spatial tactics. After studying refugees' behavior in relation to the evolving space and through understanding the tight link between social transience and space identity, the public realm of Dbayeh camp was remodeled while responding to the residents' needs and offering meaningful places of exchange, healing and understanding. Temporariness and transience helped define the 'Campness' of the camp that shaped through urban planning and design, its' communal space which reflects the community, while also connecting the camp to surrounding neighborhoods instead of having it as an extra-territorial space in the hosting area. The community-focused intervention informed by existing social practices upgraded shared open spaces inside the camp and created on the ground, dynamics and models that dwellers can build on and continue to organically engage with the evolving space. The emergence of new diverse collective activities promoted mix uses, fostered commercial interaction and boosted local camp economy by creating new job opportunities and a platform for both social and commercial exchange with surrounding communities. The design intervention offered a network of vibrant multi-scale spaces connecting people inside the camp and interacting through active edges that broke virtual barriers with the outside. This communal

web works as a catalyst for vitality, openness, social engagement as well as commercial exchange. Other than the interactive network, the study proposed an overall upgrade to create a neighborhood environment of equal care and sustainable maintenance.

In terms of challenges and limitations, the dense and congested urban fabric of Dbayeh camp was one of the obstacles that I faced during my field work. I had a hard time recognizing and remembering places. Mapping people in relation to diverse tiny spaces and localizing different practices in a tight fabric was also very confusing during the field work that lasted more than a year. The lack of trust between UNRWA and the local community that lost hope was also a problem. Dwellers were fed up with fake promises and their careless attitude was dominant during most interviews. It was hard to make them believe in any change and even harder to push them to express their needs, desires and dreams. Moreover, another challenge was to create a site-specific intervention that reflects today's residents' needs while retaining the spatial identity of previous communities. But the main challenge remains in how to sustain the constant change happening inside the camp. This relies on shaping a clear spatial identity by creating a sense of attachment through participation that fosters social engagement, and cultivates ownership and responsibility towards the space refugees reside in, therefore insuring a healthy public realm and the projects' permanence.

Although this thesis is crafted for a specific place, it can serve as a model for other camps suffering isolation and poor living conditions. By translating the concept of Placemaking inside refugee camps, this study showed that strategic urban design interventions can improve livability and create a sense of place and identity. The proposed intervention thus becomes a framework for other community-based projects inside existing refugee camps that present similar contexts across the world by being physically and socially marginalized or perceived by hosting locals as extra-territorial communities. Building on existing socio-spatial practices

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inside a camp through Placemaking strategies, and considering public participation as a mandatory process in any planning/design strategy would foster bonds and exchanges with major stakeholders, thus leading to site-specific arrangements responding to local community needs and reflecting the camp's particular practices, cultures and values. The thesis therefore recommends that aid agencies intervene in existing refugee camps that are becoming permanent in urban settings, using urban design tools.

What will the designs that come from a community based-interaction look like and how will they be represented by professional designers who take on the role of facilitators rather than authors of projects? The resilience of low-income communities should be understood and acknowledged through understanding the processes that make the city work, and not by commanding it (Samaha, 2013). Design interventions would therefore play a key role in enhancing living conditions instead of worsening the situation.

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