

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

SHELTER/HOME COMPLEX:
A STUDY ON THE DAR IN BORJ AL-BARAJNEH CAMP

by
TAHANI YASSER NASSAR

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
June 2020

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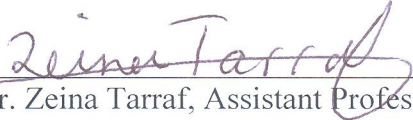
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Josh Carney, for his continuous encouragement towards thinking creatively and bringing up original ideas. I appreciate his support since before this journey with his course “Media, Memory, and Nation” that introduced me to relevant memory theories. I am ineffably indebted to him for teaching me how to chase and defend my ideas.

I extend my appreciation to my committee members, Dr. Greg Burris and Dr. Zeina Tarraf, for their challenging questions and comments at an early stage of this study. I am also grateful to the Media Studies department for awarding me a graduate-assistantship to pursue this degree.

My gratitude extends to Professor Fawwaz Traboulsi for sharing valuable knowledge and readings through the course “Palestine 1948”, and to Dr. Blake Atwood for his course on Arab media studies.

I am deeply thankful to my participants who generously shared their memories, the good and/or the painful, with me.

This thesis would not have been possible without the patience and support of Abd-al-Rahman Jasim– my role model and wonderful husband.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Tahani Yasser Nassar for Master of Arts
Major: Media Studies

Title: Shelter/Home Complex: A Study on the Dar in Borj al-Barajneh Camp

This thesis studies physical space as a medium for meaning from a media studies perspective. It relies on oral history interviews with eight families to investigate the spatial practices that the Nakba generation performed in Borj al-Barajneh camp in Beirut since the first years of their displacement. I analyze these practices that led to the establishment of the dar to understand how Palestinians saw the camp and the houses in which they resided. Following De Certeau's notion of space as a practiced place, I unfold Farah's (2011) interpretation of home/shelter through unpacking Palestinians' history in the camp. The formation of village quarters and the establishment of the dar signify how Palestinians transformed the camp from a shelter into a home. Furthermore, I utilize McLuhan's definition of media to argue that the dar is a medium of communication. I read this medium using Huyssen's metaphor of the urban palimpsest to argue that the dar has changed physically and conceptually from the period of the PLO to its departure from Lebanon. While the dar mediated security, strength, and the homeland under PLO's control over the camp, the withdrawal of the Palestinian resistance forces and its aftermath created memories of violence and disappointment that brought back fragments of the Nakba memories. By shedding light on the oral history tradition and the mediated memories through the dar, I grapple with the concepts of nostalgia, trauma, and postmemory to examine the different relationship Palestinians have to the past and to suggest that nostalgia emerges as a need to cope with trauma. Traumatized by the Nakba, the first-generation longed for the homeland through replicating, to a certain extent, the landscape of their villages. However, the traumatic past was passed on to the following generations through the structure of postmemory. I present two exposures for experiences of a second and a third-generation members to elucidate how fragments of the past leap into the present and affect the succeeding generations. Nonetheless, I highlight the traumatic experiences of second-generation members upon losing the dar after the departure of the PLO from the camps. Finally, I illuminate the experience of a second-generation member who recreated the lost dar on his rooftop to tolerate his loss.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Why have you left the horse alone?
To keep the house company, my son, for houses die when their inhabitants are gone”.
“The Eternity of Cactus” Mahmoud Darwish (1995)

The motivation for this project started after one of my professors gave me several Palestinian films to watch for an independent course on Media and Palestinian Oral tradition. *The Dream or al-Manam* (1987, dir. Mohammad Malas) was a media-text that caught my attention. I recall our discussion on the idea of the film and how it sounded somehow unrealistic to present the night dreams of Palestinians in Lebanon as centered on Palestine. Indeed, if one views the film without regard to its context, it would appear as staged. To have members of different gender, ages, generations, and camps speak about their dreams of the homeland, the Nakba, armed resistance, national leaders, and the return to their villages as a collective seems very selective. A question of how far these narrated dreams are real “night dreams”, fragments and visions that individuals see when they go to sleep, suggests itself.

A woman opens the first scene with her dream of victory (00:00:20 – 00:01:00), another speaks about seeing herself at the Majadleh street in Acre (00:09:50 – 00:10:09), and a third one dreams being hit by an Israeli officer while trying to reach her imprisoned son (00:13:00 – 00:13:36). In the middle of the film, a young girl shares her dream of being imprisoned in a big cell with black iron bars and fog filling the place. She saw herself screaming and crying while an officer hits her to kneel, but she refuses (00:23:13 – 00:23:40).

Other participants share their dreams of encountering Arab and national leaders. A SAMED factory worker says he saw Abdel Nasser, the late Egyptian president, calling to fight in Palestine (00:10:43- 00:11:12). An older man saw Camille Chamoun, deceased Lebanese president (00:18:40 – 00:19:08), and another man shaving at a local barbershop says he saw Abou Ammar (Yasser Arafat) and the late Saudi King Abdul Azziz accompanied by King Abdallah of Jordan (00:19:09 – 00:19:40).

Moreover, a woman standing in a school classroom recounts her dream of arranging a coup and taking over the intelligence office in Lebanon. Though she hardly managed to write words on the declaration form, she could not speak up in the radio station. She got nervous and felt suffocated that the words did not come up (00:30:40 – 00:31:45). In another scene, a child (of around ten years old) in a military uniform describes saving a baby and giving him back to his mother before he gets shot under the olive trees in Palestine (00:21:35 – 00:22:23).

These night dreams were shared with the Syrian director Mohamad Malas during interviews he conducted with Palestinians in the camps and clusters around Lebanon. More than 400 interviews in Borj al-Barajneh, Sabra, Shatila, Ein el-Hilweh, and Rashidiyeh camps were recorded between 1980 and 1981. The following year, Malas dropped the work on this documentary after Sabra and Shatila massacre took place under the Israeli occupation in Lebanon (Porteous, 1995). He felt paralyzed when he knew that many of his participants were killed in the massacre. A few years later, Malas decided to finish the project, and “hours of footage were slimmed down to a mere forty-five minutes of final cut.” (p.15)

The dreams Malas gathered were at the period of the PLO's existence in Lebanon. The Palestinian Liberation Organization was powerful and in complete control over the camps and other areas in Lebanon. Palestinians of different ages in the camps were members in the PLO, and camp residents, in a general sense, were involved in the resistance. While some trained on arms, others took a role in the social and cultural institutes of the PLO. Hence, Palestinians in Lebanon were living the spirit (and action) of the resistance every day. This context is crucial to read *The Dream* and explain the intense dreams and their convergence on Palestine.

In the documentary there are a few scenes that brought my attention to the place where conversations and memories are shared. The woman, who returned to Acre in her dream, sits on the ground with a family member (or neighbor), in front of the house, and shares her feelings while stripping Mulukhiyeh leaves. Though, the camera lens focuses on what the women are doing and saying, I noticed the presence of a young girl in the background of the scene. She stands, out of focus, at the window listening to the conversation between both women. In a different scene, the camera moves between narrow alleys to reach a particular house. An old man, in a suit and traditional "hatta" (a white piece of cloth), salutes and invites the camera into the extended area of his house (00:03:10 – 00:03:27). His family members of different generations (children and grandchildren) sit together in the area which is open to the sun. A third scene, in a similar place, shows an older man wearing a Kuffiyeh and holding a walking cane in his hand. The camera moves a few steps to the inside, where a family sits over coffee (00:08:55 – 00:09:15).

The extended area of the house that the above scenes show is what Palestinians refer to as “dar”. This dar in *The Dream* seems like a silent element, yet a potential object of interest. The existence of an open area with greeneries in the camps, which allows multigenerational members to perform their ordinary practices and share in conversation, suggests its relation to transmitted memories and oral history tradition among generations. The dar in *The Dream* invites many questions regarding its existence in the camp; however, another question I raise is about the dreams and stories the young boy and girl narrated. Although both were born in Lebanon, the traumatic images they describe to Malas revolve around Palestine and the suffering. These individuals have not been in Palestine and did not experience, first-hand, any of the incidents they saw in their dreams. From where do these images come from? Why do they seem intense? Does the dar as a place have any role in facilitating the passing-on of these memories?

Looking for answers on the role of the dar, I noticed that within the field of oral history and memory, the dar appears to be neglected. While there is limited reference to the dar in scholarship, these are often brief mention of its role as a garden or a word that denotes family. For instance, in her article “Palestinian Camp Women as Tellers of History” (1998), Sayigh defines the dar as clan when quoting an interviewee “Al-Birwa (village) was divided into two dars [clans] Kayal and Sa’d” (p.47). In a different work, Roberts (1999) mentions the dar briefly while describing the structure of houses in Borj al-Barajneh camp, “The houses tend to be only one or two stories high and are often set in their own walled area. Palestinians refer to these walled areas as gardens, although they are little more than open spaces of sand where a few fig trees can grow” (p.46).

Having encountered no studies on the dar, I was encouraged to investigate this place. The starting point to write this research was to study the establishment of the dar, and its relation to transgenerational memories. However, through tracing back its formation, I learned from my interviewees that the first-generation of displaced Palestinians established the dar since the early years of exile. This information raised more questions on the dar's significance to its inhabitants and the way they see their houses in the camps.

The objective of this thesis is to study the physical space as a medium for meaning through investigating the initial spatial practices that led to the establishment of the dar in Borj al-Barajneh camp. The study aims to shed light on the development of the dar under PLO's sovereignty and to question its fate, after several destructions of the camp in the 1980s. Most importantly, this project studies the dar from a media studies perspective to argue that physical space can be the medium and the message in light of transgenerational memories.

A. Studying Physical Space from a Media Studies Perspective

It is common for media studies scholars to emphasize their work on the sender, the message, and the receiver. However, it seems relatively rare to find studies that investigate the medium itself. With his famous quote "the medium is the message", Marshall McLuhan (1964) called for an emphasis on the medium, thereby opening the door to a host of new approaches in media studies. This statement backfired, in later decades, a wave of academic theorists and scholars who criticize McLuhan's work as

technological determinism. However, a medium does not necessarily mean a technological/electronic medium. According to McLuhan's definition of media, a medium is an extension of the human body. He considered cloths as the extension of the skin and eventually the house as an extension of the same body part.

Following McLuhan's definition of the medium, I argue that the dar, the extension of Palestinian houses in Borj al-Barajneh camp is a medium of communication. McLuhan was not the only theorist to regard material spaces as media. Friedrich Kittler's (1996) definition of media includes "old fashioned things like books, familiar things like the city and newer inventions like the computer" (p.722). Kittler argued that the city is a medium, and McLuhan previously considered the city like the house, an extension of the human body.

Since the dar is a physical space, like the city, I employ Huyssen's (2003) concept of the urban palimpsest to read this medium as a multi-layered text that has changed in appearance and/or in use over time.

B. Methodology

In the attempt to find answers to the questions evoked by the media text *The Dream* on the establishment, significance, and the present state of the dar, I have relied on the Palestinian Oral History Archive (POHA) at Jafet Library, at the American University of Beirut (AUB). I requested to retrieve the testimonies of first-generation members who lived in Borj al-Barajneh camp. The accounts were narrowed to individuals who lived in a dar with their descendants. After transcribing the testimonies, I traced the genealogies of these families living in the camp and conducted semi-

structured interviews with members of the second and third-generations. I aimed to interview each generation member alone; however, some families enjoyed a group conversation that its dynamic allowed a flow of informal talk and spontaneous memories.

The interview questions were categorized under three themes. While the first questions were about village life in pre-Nakba Palestine (extracted from the testimonies of first-generation members in POHA archive), the second group of questions investigated the history of the dar in the camp alongside the ordinary practices that took place inside it. The last group of questions tackled the elimination of the dar and residents' feedback upon this step (for the families that eliminated it).

My decision to study the dar in Borj al-Barajneh camp was encouraged by Tannock and Sukarieh's article (2013) on the problem of over-researched communities. The authors have taken Shatila camp as a case study due to being the "most heavily researched" camp among other neighborhoods in the Palestinian diaspora in Lebanon. While there are "223 academic articles and 128 books and academic manuscripts written on Shatila" (p.498) in the database of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, for example, the number of academic articles on Borj al-Barajneh are relatively very few.

This problem was also addressed by Sayigh (in Doumani and Soukarieh, 2009), who has considered that there is indeed a hyper-focus on Shatila camp probably because of poverty and tragedy that are considered "seductive forces for academic production and public discourse" (p.9). However, Borj al-Barajneh was destroyed several times during the 1980s and was under siege also for six months.

C. Roadmap

In this section, each of the coming chapters is briefly introduced. While the current Chapter I has introduced my research topic, interest, and methodology, Chapter II traces the spatial practices of Palestinians that eventually led to the establishment of the dar. It builds upon the work of May Farah *Home versus Shelter: Place, Media, and Identity among Lebanon's Palestinian Refugees* (2011) and follows De Certeau's (1984) notion of the space to argue that camp residents transformed the shelter into a home. Chapter III relies on McLuhan's definition of media and his call for attention towards medium to argue that the dar is both a medium and a message. Huyssen's metaphor of the 'urban palimpsest' (2003) helps in reading the dar as a multi-layered text that has changed physically and conceptually through time, from the period of the existence of the PLO in the camps to its withdrawal and aftermath. The chapter also suggests that this shift in history, which was reflected in the dar, flipped over residents' perception of the place from home to shelter. Chapter IV emphasizes the trans-generational mediated memories through the dar. It employs the notions of nostalgia, trauma, and postmemory to highlight the different relationships residents have to the past, and to suggest that nostalgia emerges as a need to cope with trauma. Finally, Chapter V provides a recap on each of the main chapters and poses a question regarding the possibility of a third period of Palestinians' history which might flip back the shelter/home.

CHAPTER II

SPATIAL PRACTICES: FROM SHELTER TO HOME

“I locked my closet and kept the key, I was a bride. Tanks were firing towards our village and an Israeli military aircraft above our heads. People were running in all directions, I ran after them without knowing where they were heading. I had no one but myself and my two little daughters. I placed them inside a laundry bowl and held it on my head. The aircraft released something black (bomb) a few meters away that caused a hole in the ground, like a pond. Dust and smoke covered everything, and stones fell on us. I felt something hit the bowl on my head so I slid it onto the ground to find a bar of silver, a fragment like fire on my little daughter’s chest. Days later, she died in Jwayya (Lebanon). My second daughter died after sometime... Now I don’t recognize who was bigger than who... in the camp I had children who I lost when the Israelis invaded Beirut. Years before this happened, I used to sing for my children very sad words, now I ask myself, how could I say such words for little children? I don’t know!”

Many researchers, journalists, and activists who visited Borj al-Barajneh camp know Em Aziz. She is well known in her community for the experiences and the suffering she has been through. When I visited her in April 2019 with Em Amal, a survivor of Tal al-Zaatar massacre (1976), I came to know Em Aziz’s “position” to her fellows. For instance, Em Amal, an elderly woman who lost her husband in Tal al-Zaatar, bowed and kissed Em Aziz’s hand when they met in my presence. I asked Em Amal when we left why she saluted that way, she commented: “This is Em Aziz, God bless her soul, and wipe the suffering she has been through all her life. It’s great that she is still alive and can talk. She believes that her four children are still alive! Just like I believed for years that my husband would come back”.

Both women, like most members of the first generation, were traumatized by the 1948 Catastrophe. However, the Nakba was not a historical event that ended with expulsion, and Palestinians' suffering did not end with their settlement in Lebanon, in fact, 1948 has been a continuous event or an 'ongoing Nakba' (2007) as Sayigh has described. First-generation members were not only traumatized by the event itself and the losses they faced, but they were also silenced and treated as invisible while the Zionist narrative and reconstruction of history were dominant. Studies and literature on trauma have so far excluded the Nakba from considering it a traumatic event like the Holocaust or any other social suffering. This led Sayigh (2013) to examine the exclusion through reviewing the genealogy of trauma genre and its institutional support since 1990, concluding that it denotes a cultural bias and "the fear of stigma of anti-Semitism" (Sayigh, p.58).

In this chapter, I begin with a brief yet necessary historical analysis of escalating events that culminated in the Nakba and the traumatic rupture that Palestinians suffered. Moreover, I focus on the flux of expelled peasant families to Borj al-Barajneh camp, the site of my study, to argue that displaced Palestinians created their own environment through the practices of everyday life. Here, I contextualize my argument moving from May Farah's dissertation *Home versus Shelter: Place, Media, and Identity among Lebanon's Palestinian Refugees* (2011), and following De Certeau's notion of 'space as a practiced place' (1984), to trace the concrete spatial practices that the Palestinians made, which eventually led to the establishment of the dar and the understanding of space as a medium for meaning. In addition to the historical analysis, I pursue this with

punctuated aspects of oral history that shed light on the evolution of the war that has been so far neglected in the scholarship.

A. Historical Analysis

Almost a year before the 1948 Nakba, when the conflict between Zionists and Arab Palestinians was escalating, the UN recommended a partition resolution of two states: one for Jews and the other for Arabs. The plan, which was aimed to redistribute the territories in the favor of the Zionists, would give the minority who held only six to seven percent of the land about fifty-five percent of Palestine (Khalidi, 1988). When the Palestinian leadership and population refuted this decision, rejecting the division of their country, Zionist leaders found a chance to implement 'Plan Dalet' a series of thirteen military operations to conquer coastal cities, control the area given by the UN and territories outside their borders, destroy Arab villages, and depopulate them. The main objective of the plan was to claim a Jewish state of a Jewish majority. There was no room for both peoples, as Joseph Weitz, the Director of the Jewish National Fund, wrote in his diaries (Said, 1979). Consequently, many villages were attacked and evacuated through the use of arms in which, according to Weitz, no village or tribe must be left (ibid).

Systematic attacks of Zionist militias and atrocities against Palestinians started at the beginning of April 1948, before the end of the British mandate. The Dir Yassin massacre of 250 Arabs that was committed on April 9 by Menachem Begin and his Irgun organization, was one of many such massacres (ibid) to frighten neighboring

villages, coerce, and thrust them out towards evacuation. A number of the indigenous people fled to either far areas in the country or towards the borders. Though there was a wave of refugees--mostly of the middle and upper class--who sensed a war coming and escaped in 1947, the largest refugee wave was in mid-May of the following year, and included more than 700,000 Palestinians. When the British left Palestine, it provided an opportunity for the Zionists to enforce ethnic cleansing and compulsory depopulation. According to Abu Sitta (2004), over 500 villages and towns were evacuated and destroyed.

1948 was the year that Arab historian Constantine Zureiq (1948) coined the term “Nakba” (Catastrophe) where “a country and its people disappeared from both maps and dictionaries” (Abu Sitta, p.71). The displaced people became suddenly invisible (Sanbar, 2001). They became refugees in their own country and in neighboring Arab states, mostly Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. The majority of Galilee villagers and residents crossed the Lebanese borders and spent a year or two in nearby villages until the camps started to form.

B. Transformation of Shelter into a Home

In her dissertation, May Farah (2011) suggests a distinction between two types of Palestinian descendants in Lebanon: ‘Malja’ (Shelter) refugees whose displaced ancestors lived in Palestinian camps, and ‘Bayt’ (home) refugees who chose to reside outside the camps among Lebanese neighborhoods. Talking about the third generation that she referred to as “al jeel al mouqawim”, Farah argues that though both groups

share the same homeland, national identity and traditions, place (and media) have significantly influenced the ‘maps of meaning’ for Malja and Bayt refugees.

Since “maps of meaning are related to what the refugees call home and the homeland” (p.28) Farah explains these overlapping terms: “a home is where one belongs and is attached to in the present” while “a homeland is where one comes from, one’s native country; it is the past one still belongs to” even if he is physically not there in the present or may not be in the future (p.29). However, both malja and bayt Palestinians originate from the same homeland and share the same past, so “what distinguishes them is not the homeland, but where/what they consider home” (ibid).

Studying the maps of meaning and Palestinian’s own consideration of a “home”, Farah elucidates that Palestinians living in camps regard their residence as temporary and their houses as mere shelters in a foreign country. On the contrary those who live in Beirut and Lebanese gatherings consider their stay as permanent and call the houses they reside in as homes.

Farah’s study concerns young adults, the third generation whose members were born after 1985 “after the Israeli invasion and the subsequent departure of the PLO” (p.99), and was conducted between 2007 and 2009 in Burj al-Barajneh, Shatila, and Marlias camps in addition to Tariq el-Jdeideh, Sabra and Ard Jalloul neighborhoods in Beirut. However, Farah also refers to the preceding second and first generations, ‘jeel al thawra’ (revolution generation) and ‘jeel al nakba’ (Nakba generation), to note that, regardless of the place they dwelled in Lebanon, they considered their stay as temporary and their return as ultimate due to the first-hand memories and experiences of the Nakba-generation that their children inherited.

Farah refers to significant studies by Sayigh (1979) and Peteet (1995; 2005) to elaborate on how the first-generation re-created Palestine in the camps, from the landscape to the language (dialect) and traditions under harsh Lebanese administration. The internal Lebanese forces suppressed the Palestinians between the 1950s and 1960s “particularly the Surete Generale and the Deuxieme Bureau, closely monitored life in the camps and controlled the movement of Palestinians, including their water usage, construction activities, even minute details such as when they bathed.” (p.82)

This reflection of the homeland in diasporic places suggests something different than what Farah has raised, but at the same time does not completely negate it. Palestinians indeed escaped to Lebanon seeking shelter until their return to their homeland; however, I think that the place they created on the area of the camps reflects their silent resistance to the suppressing Lebanese authorities. The strategy of the Lebanese authorities that aimed to keep the Palestinians as marginalized refugees residing in temporary shelters was resisted silently by the marginalized themselves. Palestinians managed to create a home, a desired secure environment that provides them with a continuation of the homeland.

Referring to the definition Farah has followed, in which a home “is where one belongs and is attached to in the present” (p.29), I suggest that the first generation of displaced Palestinians who resided in Borj al-Barajneh camp started to create a home, rather than a shelter in the camp, holding to the distinction of a homeland and a home. They transformed the given shelter into a home through their everyday practices.

C. Formation of Village Quarters

Village quarters constituted the first stepping stones that led to the creation of the dar surrounding most tents in Borj al-Barajneh camp. Since these quarters attest to the early spatial practices that displaced Palestinians started in the area, it is essential to know how they got started. In this section, I rely mainly on previous studies that included fieldwork in the camp to present the initial practices by which new residents transformed an empty place into a space of meaning as in De Certeau's understanding of space (1984).

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Michele De Certeau explained that the actions and navigations of the ordinary or marginalized individuals are meaningful. Walking, speaking, dwelling, cooking, and many other ordinary practices can be analyzed to understand how individuals see the place they dwell in, the authority or administration under whose rule they exist, and themselves amid this environment.

Certain everyday practices, to De Certeau, are referred to as 'spatial practices' because they shape and articulate places dwellers reside in. These spatial practices that residents create transform the place intended for them by the authority into a space of their own; a space that reflects their culture and the desired living.

Place, in De Certeau's words, is a static site that "implies an indication of stability" (p.117). It is a specific location where its material elements exist in order. Space, on the contrary, is associated with movement and action, for it is to De Certeau, "composed of intersections of mobile elements". It is formed by the effect of human activities and

operations that occur at the material place thus activating and transforming it into a “practiced place”. The practicing of a place, putting it into action, is what De Certeau called a space as he wrote: “space is a practiced place”.

De Certeau’s notion of space that depends on practices and experiences which transform a site (a place) into a living area with a subjective understanding of it seems helpful in reading the spatial practices that displaced Palestinians started in Borj al Barajneh camp since the day the first tent was pitched. Knowing that they were allowed by the authorities, the Red Cross Society, the Lebanese government, and UNRWA, to set up their tents wherever they wanted on the area of the camp, the operation and their choice of pitching tents are meaningful. It signified their hope to restore the village-lifestyle they had lost upon Zionists attacked and occupied their lands.

Since the majority of Palestinians who settled in Borj al Barajneh were peasants, village origin influenced, to a certain extent, the physical and social structure of the camp. In the following paragraphs, I intend to trace back the formation of village quarters from the first tent pitched up to the saturated quarters that led new arrivers to the camp to settle outside their village-origin quarter.

Contrary to the rest of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Borj al Barajneh camp was not established by UNRWA. It was built on private land (Roberts, 1999; Al-Shira’ 1980) then rented and officially established by UNRWA in 1951. The first piece was an empty and agriculturally neglected land offered by the Mukhtar of Borj al-Barajneh, who thought that displaced Palestinians could use it as a shelter until they returned to their lands or international organizations intervened in their case. Soon, more pieces in the

area were also offered by Lebanese landowners (Hatoum, Mneimneh, Sibahi, Mansour, Annan, Daouk, and Rahhal) to receive more Palestinians displaced from Acre and its district villages in Galilee. The majority were from Kuweikat, al-Kabri, Tarshiha, Shaykh Daoud, Sha'b and Ghabsiyeh (Roberts, 1999).

The first tent pitched in the camp was by a peasant family from Tarshiha village, Acre district in Palestine. References contradict in naming the family that arrived first (Al- Shira', 1980; Roberts, 1999) however, they intersect at elucidating how the "Tarashhas" (residents of Tarshiha, Acre) were the first to settle in the area at the bottom of a sandy hill. Their fellows came along once they heard about their stay in Borj al-Barajneh. When they received tents from The Red Cross Society (before the establishment of UNRWA in December 1949) the "Tarashhas" pitched them next to each other, creating a village cluster that became known as "Jorat al-Tarashha" (which is literally translated as the pit/hole of Tarashiha residents). Tarshiha villagers were known for their pride in their education and their readiness to "sacrifice many comforts to invest in their children's education" (Roberts, p.73). Their village in Palestine had a secondary school at a time when other villages did not even have an elementary school.

The second batch to arrive was from Kuweikat village. They knew about the Palestinian cluster in the Southern Suburb of Beirut and the potential of a camp, so they decided to settle there after multiple moves in the south of Lebanon. A clash between Tarshiha and Kuweikat peasants sparked the day displaced Kuweikat residents reached Borj al-Barajneh because the "Tarashhas" expressed their unwillingness to let Kuweikat peasants reside near their neighborhood. They knew Kweikat's hot-blooded nature from

Palestine. Consequently, Kuweikat villagers chose another location to settle. They pitched their tents on the top of the hill, which has come to be known as “hay Kuweikat” (Kuweikat neighborhood), believing that they left the pit for the “Tarashhas”.

Similarly, when Al-Kabri peasants came in, they created their own neighborhood “hay al-Kabri” by settling next to each other, and so did peasants from Ghabsiyi, who had stayed for months in ‘Ayta al Sh’ab in the south of Lebanon then moved to Borj al-Barajneh when they heard about the camp. Fellows from Sha’b also created their own neighborhood in the camp. Most families who settled in the camp during the first years after the Nakba and created village quarters kept empty areas surrounding their tents that varied in size. However, when their relatives and former neighbors (from villages in Palestine) came in, some people cut off meters of their land (in the camp) for the sake of others (Roberts, 1999).

When neighborhoods became crowded, new arrivers were encouraged to pitch their tents (or later build their homes) outside the village cluster. For instance, during the civil unrest in Lebanon between 1956 and the turmoil of 1958¹, Palestinians residing in eastern Beirut had to move and resettle in different regions. While UNRWA transported families who lived in Karantina (eastern Beirut) to Damour, some families from al-Maslakh (Beirut, close to Karantina) came to Borj al-Barajneh camp and have lived there ever since.

¹ For further information, see *A History of Modern Lebanon* (2007).

Between 1948 and the early 1950s, the Lebanese government was supportive to the dispersed Palestinians. The Lebanese President Bechara El-Khoury had declared his stand with the Palestinian cause encouraging the community, political and social institutes to help them. The government also launched a “Palestine tax”: a new tax on the Lebanese citizens that included various percentages on the profits of commercial and industrial professions, private cars, in addition to issuing a postal stamp, to aid the Palestinians (Annahar, 1948, p.2).

However, the League of Red Cross Society held the primary responsibility towards providing aid and care to the expelled Palestinians during the first couple of years after the Nakba. The Red Cross provided them with canvas tents. A small, bell-shaped tent was given to small and average families, while pyramid tents (larger in size) were offered to bigger families. Though camp dwellers lived in tents for five to six years, they suffered every winter: strong winds pulled up many tents in the village quarters, and rain turned the surrounding area to the mud. Summer was not easy on camp dwellers either, since it was common that some tents would be torn off under the hot sun. Residents in the same village quarter helped each other to survive the harsh conditions as they were used to, and this helped create an environment of belonging to the quarter reflecting their deep attachment to their villages, “their first circle of belonging” (Sayigh, 1979, p.5).

Although Robert’s study (1999) on the significance of village origin in Borj al-Barajneh suggests that the establishment of village quarters developed naturally and that it was not a conscious decision made by the displaced peasants, it nonetheless concludes

that the camp structure was influenced, to a certain extent, by village origin. The choice to pitch a tent in the village cluster and to name the camp quarters by villages “crafted both a memoryscape and a practical spatial enactment of the lost homeland” (Peteet, 2004, p.94). These initial spatial practices that expelled peasants made in the area of Borj al-Barajneh reflect their attempts to convert the area of the camp into a space of their own, a practiced place that looks like the homeland.

D. Establishment of the Dar:

Despite the scarcity and the harsh conditions which Palestinians were living in camps, it was for them an indication of temporal dispersion. Living in a tent indicated a short displacement and reminded its dwellers that they were in a foreign country waiting for the day they would get rid of the tent. Unfortunately, the day had come, but not as they desired. The removal of tents did not mean their return to the homeland; on the contrary, it conveyed more protracted displacement. The establishment of United Nations Relief and Works for Palestinians in the near east (UNRWA) on December 8, 1949, signaled the beginning of a new chapter in displacement.

After the creation of village quarters, the first spatial practices that convey how Palestinians started to craft their own space in the area of the camp, these concrete practices continued with the establishment of the dar surrounding tents, which has not been tackled or studied yet in the scholarship. However, this time, the spatial practices that residents continued took place under a suppressive Lebanese administration, which

suggests a kind of resistance. In this section, I aim to investigate the early formation of the dar and its physical development from the tent period to just before the emergence of the PLO in Lebanon. I rely on oral history accounts with first-generation members and interviews I conducted with second-generation members. I follow De Certeau's understanding of the spatial practices as 'tactics' made by the marginalized to resist the 'strategy' of the authority.

The interviews I conducted with second-generation members aimed to provide me with stories and memories on how their parents established the dar, and it appears that most of their memories were inherited from the mothers. The role of Palestinian women in transmitting history to the succeeding generations in the form of 'qissas' (stories) and personal experiences was highlighted by Sayigh (1998) who recommends that women's recollections should not be omitted from history writing. Moreover, and as the interviews showed, women had a significant role in establishing the dar and taking care of it. For these reasons, and contrary to the norm that a person is called by his son's name, I intend to call my interviewees by their daughter's name, so instead of saying Abou Mustafa, I call him Abou Raheel (for the father), and Em Raheel (for the mother). This statement is sort of a dedication to women who, despite their suffering, kept narrating the past as they experienced.

Established in December 1949, the Agency (UNRWA) effectively began its work in May 1950 which "aimed at a combined package of repatriation, compensation, social and economic rehabilitation, and resettlement" (Petee, 2005, p.62). However, when camp residents sensed the potential for prolonged displacement, they feared losing not

only their homeland but also the village life they were used to. As a means of surviving the rupture and tolerating the unprecedented exile, Palestinians concerned themselves with creating a space that would restore their villages. The spatial practices that residents started, and that led to the formation of village quarters, continued with the establishment of the dar surrounding tents.

“After around one year of living in a tent, my mom saw that time was passing, and more tents were getting pitched in the area. She was afraid their stay in the camp would last for years so she tried to secure a piece of land surrounding her tent” said Abou Israa (second-generation member) who proudly continued explaining to me: “she was very smart, she brought four pieces of wood and immersed them in the sand forming boundaries around the tent. At first, she placed them near the tent, but every couple of days, she pushed them a meter or two further”. He interrupted the story laughing and complimenting his mother’s strength “braver than many men, she secured a dar for my father and my sister who was a toddler at that time”. I took this chance to ask him about his village origin and the house his family owned in their village, Abou Israa explained that both his parents were from Kuweikat and owned a dar, “My father built a room extending his parents’ house. He also had a donkey that he used to transport olives and other crops from the village to sell them in ‘Akka (Acre) and Haifa”.

Dar is an Arabic word that has multiple meanings depending on its context. It is used sometimes to denote a clan or “Homulih” (in Arabic) like in the example Sayigh (1998) used quoting an interviewee: “Al-Birwa (village) was divided into two dars [clans] Kayal and Sa’d” (p.47). It is also used to refer to a particular house as in this sentence: “the shop is two steps from dar Em Amal”, or to refer to the family inhabiting

the house. Moreover, the word dar is very commonly used by Palestinians in their everyday language to denote an extended area of the house like a house yard, yet it is not just a house yard, it is all of the above.

From 'Amqa village, Heyam (a member of the second generation) elaborated that her mother was responsible for everything until her oldest sister grew up to help. "She told my father to put stones and pieces of damaged zinc sheets or anything available to draw boundaries around their tent. By doing that, she took a wide area that was transformed then to a beautiful dar". She added: "my father had a big heart, but he was always sick until he died with cancer. My mom was patient but a strong woman, she raised ten children, took care of my dad's health, and preserved the dar".

Fatima, a first-generation member from Al-Zeib, who appeared full of energy and enthusiasm in her videotaped testimony, stated that she owned a piece of land near the sea. When I visited her daughter, Amneh, she told me that her mother loved her village a lot and used to work hard "more than my father because he was old while my mother was only fourteen when she married him, so when they escaped to Lebanon her mother "worked inside and outside the house".

Though the majority of the families I interviewed mentioned the essential role mothers played in securing an extended area of the house/tent, Abou Raheel talked mostly about his father giving him credit for the establishment of the dar. "My father was a trouble maker, and neighbors knew him from Palestine, so no one was to get in a fight with him for taking the area in front of his tent."

Between the 1950s and 1960s, the Lebanese authorities monitored the practices and movements of the Palestinians inside and outside the camp. The Surete Generale and the Deuxieme Bureau, Lebanese internal security forces, stood against real enhancement of the shelters for the residents. The authorities were determined that those shelters had to remain temporary including half walls made from wood but still with a tent roof. In 1957-8, the walls were replaced by either zinc plates or cinder blocks made from sand (which do not have any tensile strength to withstand pressure), yet still with tent roofs. It took two more years to allow camp dwellers to replace the tent roof with zinc sheets. Abou Raheel recalled the sound of rain dropping on the zinc roof “in rainy days, you can’t sleep not only from the cold weather and water slipping into the house but mostly from the sound of rain hitting the roof like bullets”. He ironically commented: "This is why we grew up with heavy hearing/some hearing loss" (laughs).

The Lebanese government wanted to prevent Palestinians from expanding upwards “multiple stories were forbidden by the Lebanese authorities as these were signs of permanence suggestive of a de facto resettlement” (Nazzal, 1974). This policy was in place even before the phase of the zinc houses, as Em Aziz (first generation member) immediately remembered “Bahjat”, the Lebanese policeman who kept an eye on camp residents and prohibited them from “hammering even a nail”. I heard the same phrase from Abou Hanan when he described how his father once hammered a nail from the inside of the tent trying to stick a wooden sheet with the cloth of the tent “Bahjat coerced my father to take the nail off”.

Differentiating between ‘strategy’ and ‘tactics’, De Certeau (1984) associated strategy to power and visibility while the tactics are considered tools of the non-powerful and the invisible. Tactics are the everyday practices through which the marginalized resists the strategy of the hegemonic authority. This type of resistance is a silent one that converts ‘a consumer’ of an environment into a ‘silent producer’ by manipulating events to turn them into opportunities.

The Palestinian’s resistance to the panoptic administration occurred through the continuation of their spatial practices that seemed invisible to the authority. At the time the Lebanese authorities prevented camp residents from expanding vertically, they expanded horizontally by building the dar. While construction was forbidden and the use of tools and concrete materials was not allowed, Palestinians planted trees and raised animals. They lived under the surveillance of police officers who kept an eye on the actions and movements of the residents. At a time camp residents could not hammer a nail inside their shelters, they planted part of their dar with vegetables and fruits.

Amneh told me that her mother set a fence around the dar and planted it with vegetables; firstly with cucumber, tomato, and onion. “She wanted to secure our daily need for food from the house, as she used to do in al-Zeib. In Palestine, they didn’t buy food, they used to cultivate what the land grew and relied much on fish, since al-Zeib is near the sea”. Another second-generation member, Heyam, recalls that her mother planted green tea in her dar in addition to vegetables “she used to cherish a cup of green tea in the afternoon while sitting in the dar with my father who preferred black tea”.

Depending on the size of the dar, the area that residents of the camp managed to preserve initially in front or surrounding their tents, Palestinians grew the fruits and vegetables they were able to and raised domestic animals as well. Amneh spoke nostalgically about her mother's dar (contrary to the norm, the dar is usually referred to by the male owner, for example, my grandfather's dar, or in the plural form: my parents' dar) telling me that her mother grew a fig tree which "tasted very sweet. It was a generous tree. We were able to give some of its fruits to our neighbors". Amneh's mother also raised chickens so her family could have eggs and meat.

Abou Israa said that his mother financially supported his father to buy a donkey and use it in transporting vegetables and selling them outside the camp as he used to do in Palestine. "As little kids, we used to stand on a chair, then climb to ride the donkey, but my mom would yell and get us down. She took good care of the donkey and it was her responsibility to feed it" he added. Although Heyam's parents did not raise any animals, she recalled her neighbor from 'Attut family who was lucky enough to mark out a large area around his tent. In addition to many trees from guava to orange and berry trees, he had a cow that provided his family with milk and sometimes gave enough to share bottles with neighbors.

E. Conclusion

Even though Borj al-Barajneh camp has become more crowded since the seventies, in part because Palestinians displaced from other clusters/camps in Lebanon, like survivors of Tal al-Zaater massacre (1976), have come seeking refuge, the quarters in

the camp named after Palestine villages still survive today. Though not all dwellers of the same neighborhood come from the same origin, a relatively large number of families still belong to the same village. Village quarters were the initial spatial practices which, according to De Certeau's notion of space, transformed the area into a "practiced place". Expelled Palestinians crafted their own space, with these practices that also acted as the stepping stones which led to the establishment of the dar under harsh conditions by the Lebanese government. These actions or 'tactics', as De Certeau called, constituted a silent resistance to the 'strategy' of the Lebanese authority that intended to keep Palestinians in temporary shelters. While the strategy aimed to maintain the camp as merely shelter, residents transformed it into a home. In the next chapter, I intend to follow the everyday practices that continued in the dar along with its physical development starting from the period of the emergence of the PLO in Lebanon (the late 1960s) until its withdrawal, through reading the dar as a medium for meaning.

CHAPTER III

THE DAR: A MEDIUM FOR MEANING

In the previous chapter, I argued that Palestinians who resided in the camp since the early years of exile created their own ‘practiced place’. Though it was only shelter and a tent that survivors sought until they returned to their homeland, the promise they had from the Arab armies to return in a few weeks or months evaporated. Their stay was understood to be long, especially with the establishment of UNRWA, a step that influenced the way residents began to see the shelter as their present home. The spatial practices the Palestinians performed recreated their villages on the area of the camp through the formation of village quarters and house dar, which, to a certain extent, self-fulfilled their needs and helped them tolerate their exile.

This chapter studies the development of the dar since the emergence of the PLO in Lebanon until its last days before the departure, suggesting that the armed revolution brought hope, security, and protection to the residents, which was reflected in the prosperity of the camp and the dar in particular. However, the withdrawal of PLO’s forces in Lebanon and its aftermath led to a change in the way Palestinians perceive the dar and their homes in the camp. Within the context of media studies, I utilize Marshall McLuhan’s definition of the medium and his statement “the medium is the message” to suggest that the dar is a medium that has been neglected so far in the study of Palestinian oral history. Moreover, I follow Andreas Huyssen’s notion of ‘urban palimpsest’ to argue that the dar is a palimpsest that has physically and conceptually changed from the period of the resistance to its aftermath. Here, I rely on the visits I

made to the door of eight families in Borj al-Barajneh camp and interviews (and group conversations) I conducted with members of different generations from the same families.

A. The PLO's Impact on the Camp

While the early years of the camp were marked by improper houses and repressive regulations by the Lebanese authorities, the emergence of the armed revolution in 1969 had a direct influence on the landscape of the camp (Sayigh, 1979; Peteet, 2005; Roberts, 1999; Farah, 2011). Palestinians' life changed the day "the Lebanese authorities were pushed out of the camp" (Roberts, p.38) while the PLO took full control over it. This Palestinian sovereignty gave residents the freedom to engage in political activity, created new institutions, normalized ordinary life, and revived their traditions and folklore. (Sayigh, p.173-4). It provided significant welfare and social services to Palestinians in Lebanon (Roberts, p.21) and poured money into the camp through its political, social, and cultural organizations such as SAMED factories, Palestine Martyrs Works Society (figure 2.1 from *The Dream* film) that were established in 1970 in Jordan then re-established in Lebanon a year later. These factories created job opportunities with monthly salaries to the Palestinians in Lebanon camps.

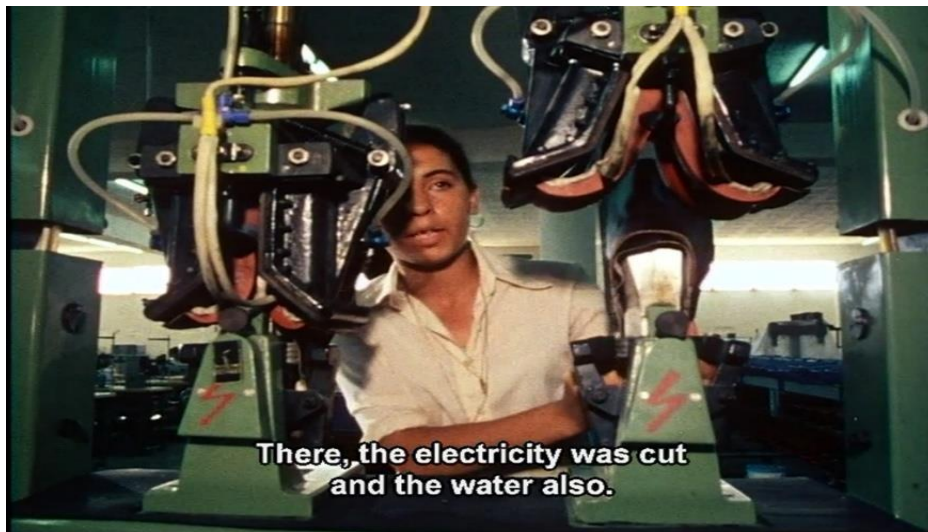


Figure 3.1 A Girl working in SAMED Factory, *The Dream*

The PLO acted as a state through its diversified institutions that supported camp residents with security and protection. “It was a real state that we could rely on no matter the situation,” said Amal, a second-generation member and a survivor of Tal al-Zaatar, while explaining to me how her family has been looked after by the PLO. After her father went missing like many fighters who fought the battle of Tal al-Zaatar, her mother moved to Borj al-Barajneh camp. By coincidence, she met Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman and late Palestinian President, at one of his visits to the camp in 1977, when she was thirteen. When she saw Arafat, “I remembered my father who disappeared in the last days of the siege. My tears fell, I cried a lot. On his turn, Abou ‘Ammar hugged me and asked for the reason, then he wrote a paper—in front of my eyes—adopting me and offering me a paid job at office-17”². Her job was to help the

² Founded in the early 1970s by Ali Hasan Salameh known as Abou Hasan Salameh or “the red prince”

secretary on the “dactylo” (typing machine). Her mother, Em Amal, was also offered a job in the office kitchen, which allowed her to save money and build a house with a small dar, as she described: “I bought a small area that the owner had kept his donkey inside. With time, I was able to transform it into a real house after I also bought the room beside it”. Em Amal spoke with confidence and pride that she, as a single mother, managed to provide her family with a home in the new camp, with the support of the PLO. Surprisingly, when the interview finished, Em Amal pulled a small piece of cloth that was hidden near her chest (where she keeps her key, identity card and money) and showed me a key chain (figure 2.2) manufactured by SAMED factories.



Figure 3.2 Key chain SAMED Factory, *The Dream*

Moreover, the PLO allowed and helped residents to replace the zinc shelters with real cement homes. According to Em Nisreen, my interviewee and a member of the second-generation: “If it wasn’t for the revolution, we wouldn’t have built these houses as I told you, the Lebanese authorities prevented us from any attempt to enhance our

shelters”. On his turn, Abou Hanan explained that the revolution built bathrooms inside the area of the house, contrary to the previous years when camp dwellers had to use common bathrooms built by UNRWA. Commenting on the shared latrines, Abou Hanan said that Yehya S. (a real name) died inside one of those latrines when a thunderbolt hit the bathroom near the entrance of the camp (airport road) that burnt his body. He added that Em Aziz’s son was a witness and he “nervously broke down upon the incident”.

B. Enhancing the dar

The change that the revolution brought to the camp and to the construction of houses included developing the physicality of the dar. The money poured into the camps in addition to the jobs the PLO created through its political and social institutions encouraged residents to build half walls surrounding their dars. According to Roberts (1999), the residents’ houses in the camp are set in their own walled area, and “Palestinians refer to these walled areas as gardens (see figure 2.3) although they are little more than open spaces of sand where a few fig trees can grow” (p.46). Roberts continues to say that “Palestinians with land consider themselves very lucky to own some private space” (ibid). What Roberts has called “garden” is what Palestinians call dar. This extension of the house was not established only to grow some trees, in fact, it was preserved to allow its dwellers to maintain their spatial and traditional practices which altogether constitute the dynamics of the dar. Em Amal described that she used her first earned payment from the PLO to buy cement stones to build a wall surrounding her dar. This was meant to define the area and guarantee some privacy through which

she could move around freely while doing the chores. As she said: “women wash the laundry at the dar, they bake bread and dry Mulukhiyah and herbs like sage, so they need to wear lighter clothes to do the work”.

Furthermore, the dar was kept open under the sun. It was important to maintain its exposure to the sun so plants and trees would grow naturally and its inhabitants would feel that they restored their pre-Nakba lifestyle in terms of owning a home with an extended dar and domestic animals. As Abou Israa expressed, his father had a donkey in his dar at Kuweikat village, and when he settled in the camp he bought another one to carry olives and vegetables on it as he used to do in Palestine. The donkey was kept in the dar just as ‘Attut family kept their cow in the dar and Amneh’s mother raised chicken.



Figure 3.3 Walled but open dars, from *The Dream*

Owning a dar in the camp made Palestinians feel attached to it as they, to a certain extent, were deeply attached to their villages (Sayigh, 1979). They treated this extension of the house as “an open social meeting ground between kin and neighbors, not as a private domestic preserve” since they enjoy the “sight and sound of their families” (p.15). Therefore, when a family of peasant origin has new members, they expand the house by constructing more rooms. More importantly, this expansion occurs vertically to preserve the dar, as Sanaa, a member of the second-generation and a single mother who works in a bakery, explained: “my parents replaced the old shelter with cement and expanded vertically building a second floor for my brother who wanted to marry then”. Sanaa’s daughter Roula, interrupted her mother’s words during a family conversation (they positively insisted on a group conversation rather than separate interviews), adding “I know from my grandma that my uncle wanted to build a room in the dar but she refused because she didn’t want to eliminate any tree, not the three berries nor the clementine or lemon trees”.

While the explicit reasons for fencing the dar were the need to mark their lands in the camp and to navigate freely inside the area, I noticed a slip in the stories of my participants that might suggest a relation between the dar and the armed revolution. It is necessary to mention that the participants dismissed direct questions about any armed actions or practices especially within the context of the dar and their houses. Their negation or deviation from the question contradicts with the memories they narrated about the civil war. For instance, when Heyam was describing to me how her family stayed together in one room (which they considered the safest) from bombs and bullets, she mentioned that the dar was used by armed fighters, including her brother and

neighbors. These fighters kept weapons hid in the concrete water tank and placed sand bags on top of the walls fencing the dar. Also Em Nisreen mentioned that her husband, who joined the resistance in the 70s, insisted on building an underground shelter with two entries, one inside the dar while the second leads to the outside. However, when I asked them explicitly if the revolution used the dar for any militant actions, they generally said no, stressing the social role of the dar. This ambivalence, in addition to their unwillingness to speak about the tactics made by resistance fighters in the camp, eliminated any chance to know whether the physical development of the dar was encouraged by the revolution for security and armed reasons or whether its presence just happened to be helpful for the fighters.

C. A Palimpsest Medium

While most early scholars and researchers in media studies dedicated their academic work to investigate the message being sent through the media, whether emphasizing on its production (sender) or its reception (receiver/audience), Marshall McLuhan brought a significant attention to the medium itself. With his famous phrase “the medium is the message”, McLuhan claimed that studies that focused on the content ended up masking the importance of the medium carrying it. The medium that was for long invisible is, according to him, a message by itself.

However, Walter Armbrust (2012) argues that McLuhan’s notion has persisted as technological determinism in media studies especially in Arab countries. According to Armbrust, the acknowledgment of the medium or the structure of mediation “may

have been (or have become) a kind of self-deceiving common sense, which, to some extent, informs the way new media are seen everywhere, by academics and non-academics alike.” (p.158) Armbrust elaborates that “Particularly for observers of the Middle East, technological determinism is a drum that has been beaten very loudly in recent years” (ibid) to the extent that the term mass media for instance, has been synonymous with television. Sharing a similar concern, Marwan Kraidy (2017) revisits the notion of hypermedia space to reclaim the “old media” including the human body while Hatem El-Hibri (2017) suggests that the ‘spatial turn’ can be helpful in studying media and culture. El-Hibri considers the physical space or place as only a contributing element to the study of media in the Arab countries, but not as a medium that mediates or communicates messages. The question that I raise here is the possibility of the material place to act as a medium in the context of media studies.

In *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), McLuhan defines the medium as any extension of the human body or senses or mind, just as a hammer is an extension of the hand and a microphone is the extension of the human voice. Though it has become naturalized and conventional to think of media as technologies like radio and internet, a medium is not necessarily a technological tool. According to McLuhan, clothes are extensions of the human body, particularly extension of the skin, that “store and channel our own heat and energy” (p.133) and following this manner, the house achieves the same end but for a group or family. As McLuhan stressed, “Housing as shelter is an extension of our bodily heat-control mechanisms—a collective skin or garment.” He considered both extensions of the human body as “media of

communication, first of all, in the sense that they shape and rearrange the patterns of human association and community.” (p.138)

Moreover, McLuhan took further his notion to include cities which he considered as “further extension of bodily organs to accommodate the needs of large groups” (p.133). While Scott McQuire (in Chikamori, 2009) differentiates between medium and city in the sense that “media are basically presented as modern image technologies, whereas the city is thought of as a built environment, or a configuration of architectural structures” (p.150), German media theorist Friedrich Kittler argued that “the city is originally a medium” (ibid.). Kittler (1996) did not consider media based on technologies, but on the elementary concept of media: “Media record, transmit and process information” (p.722). Hence, in Kittler’s definition, media include “old fashioned things like books, familiar things like the city and newer inventions like the computer” (ibid).

While Kittler praised the direct relation that McLuhan drew between technology and the human body, he criticized McLuhan’s position towards the body, believing that McLuhan should have flipped the perspective because technology is the dominant force. However, their ambivalent positions fade when both, each in his own concept, considered the material structure carrying the message as a medium. In other words, both Kittler and McLuhan viewed physical places and spaces, such as the house and the city, as media that communicate messages. This suggests that the dar which is a material place and part of Palestinians’ houses can be considered as a medium of communication.

If the dar is a material medium like McLuhan's house and Kittler's city, could it be the message as well? In the Palestinian oral history scholarship, various interdisciplinary studies focused on collective memory and transmitted memory, however, none of the studies (that I have read or come across) tackled the dar (its establishment, role, or significance) nor a physical place (or space) as a medium, from a media studies perspective.

McLuhan's controversial phrase "the medium is the message" acknowledges and stresses on the importance of the medium since it is the medium that "shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action." (1964, p.9). Although the dar in Borj al Barajneh camp came to existence as a result of the spatial practices of its residents (chapter II), it has influenced the inhabitants' practices in turn, favoring family gatherings, conversations and intergenerational transmission of memories. But what is the message of the dar? How can this medium communicate information to the reader? What can it say about its owners?

In *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (2003), Andreas Huyssen uses the term (and notion) 'palimpsest' as a metaphor to read non-traditional texts such as urban spaces which "seemed among the most stable and fixed" (p.7). Huyssen explains that "the trope of the palimpsest is inherently literary and tied to writing" however, it can be used "to discuss configurations of urban spaces and their unfolding in time without making architecture and the city simply into text" (ibid). Huyssen elaborates that "literary techniques of reading, historically, intertextually, constructively, and deconstructively at the same time can be woven into our understanding of urban space as lived spaces that shape collective imaginaries" (ibid).

A palimpsest is “a parchment or the like from which writing has been partially or completely erased to make room for another text” (dictionary.com). It is “a manuscript in which later writing is superimposed on an effaced earlier writing”, which was common in the early middle ages to save the cost of parchments.

(Oxfordreference.com). While a new text is written on the writing material (parchment, paper, wood, or any other surface) replacing the previous layer, the old text does not completely vanish. Instead, its traces re-emerge on the surface of the material, revealing an old layer of text that has been intentionally erased in favor for the new.

The term palimpsest is used in various academic fields such as literature, cultural studies, philosophy, architecture, and urban landscape. It has been used figuratively to indicate an entity that is written over or to suggest a particular form of transformation involving time and changes in use and/or appearance. The visible change is physical, however, it bears conceptual or ideological change as well.

Huysen studies the city as a text including its monuments, architecture, and sculptures, in addition to literary works to explain the relation of palimpsest to memory and erasure. He examines three cities that have experienced social and political traumas: Berlin, Buenos Aires, and New York. Elaborating on the first city-text, Huysen sees that Berlin is “a disparate a city-text that is being re-written while previous text is preserved, traces are restored, erasures documented, all of it resulting in a complex web of historical markers that point to the continuing heterogeneous life of a vital city that is as ambivalent of its built past as it is of its urban future” (p.81). Taking Freud’s remark that “the same space cannot possibly have two different contents”, Huysen elucidates that “the strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past,

erasures, losses, and heterotopias” (p.7). Hence, the study of urban palimpsests which Huyssen made between 1996 and 2001 focuses on objects and practices in the present that reveal traces of the erased past.

Since according to Huyssen, the palimpsest can mediate the complex relation of time, space and memory, in the below section, I attempt to study the dar as an ‘urban palimpsest’ to read its past and investigate it as a medium for meaning. I begin by describing the present state of the dar which constitutes the visible layer in the houses that I visited in the camp, then I investigate the erased layer, the past of this urban text.

Em Aziz, a member of the first-generation who was born in the early 1930s in Sheikh Daoud village, has been a resident of Borj al-Barajneh camp since 1956. When I first visited Em Aziz’s daughter, Sanaa, to ask if she would agree to participate in this research, she suggested that her own daughter Roula accompany me in the visit to Em Aziz’s dar. Though I explained that my purpose of the interview was to trace the early establishment of the dar and its physical development only, Sanaa cautiously reminded me not to address the issue of her four brothers who were “kidnapped” by Israeli soldiers in the invasion of Beirut 1982. Nevertheless, I found that Em Aziz includes her family members in most of her answers to questions about the dar.

Walking from the airport entrance, one of five entrances to the camp, Rola explained that the path to her grandmother’s dar was clear and empty. Most of the multiple floor houses, the mosque, and shops that we saw on the approach are all relatively new. When we reached the house, Rola pushed the green gate which was slightly open and called for her grandmother, informing her that she had guests. Near the gate, there are trees planted on both sides and two paths, the direct one facing the

gate leads to stairs to a second-floor whereas the one to the right leads to Em Aziz's dar. Similarly, the dar is planted with trees on both sides. The branches of two tall olive trees create an arch that we walked under (figure 2.4) towards the door of Em Aziz's house. Em Aziz, who was sitting on a sofa very close to the door and facing the dar, was very welcoming especially with Em Amal, who shares the suffering of losing family members. The presence of Em Amal and Em Aziz's granddaughter smoothed the flow of my interview. In fact, it was more of a group conversation that led Em Aziz to share her memories, the good and the bad. Rola knew her grandmother would share painful memories the moment Em Aziz was telling me how the dar was planted, she swiftly wrote a short note on her mobile and showed it to me "when granny starts talking about my uncles, let her do the talk". That sounded confusing to me because Em Aziz looked fine sharing her experience in taking care of the dar in the 1970s.



Figure 3.4 The dar of Em Aziz

I took the chance to ask her about the tools and items that appeared neglected for many years, yet are still in the dar. There was an old flour sieve hanging on one of the walls (figure 2.5), an outdoor traditional-bread oven (in Arabic, “forniyeh” or “wa’adeh”) kept at the corner with apparently unrelated objects such as wires and other things (figure 2.6), and also a traditional millstone (hand grinder) (“jaroushe” in Arabic) that looked dusty and out of use (figure 2.7). Em Aziz seemed to enjoy retrieving the good memories related to the dynamics of the dar and the practices she, her family members, and neighbors used to perform. “In my neighborhood, there was only one jarousheh and all the neighbors used to come to my dar to grind their grains”, she continued “it was useful in grinding wheat, lentils, beans, and bulgur”. Her granddaughter interrupted to add that there is also a wooden mallet that was used to hammer dried thyme leaves to make za’atar. The sieve was also used to sift the za’atar and eliminate any impurities.



Figure 3.5 An old sieve
42



Figure 3.6 Traditional bread oven



Figure 3.7 Traditional millstone or jarousheh

However, the positive spirit Em Aziz was showing suddenly faded when I asked her about the forniyeh. While she started to describe the way women of her family and close neighbors used to bake Arabic bread loaves on weekly basis, she paused and looked at her granddaughter and said: “dama’at el-zaytouneh, oumi kansi el war’at” translated as “the olive tree dropped some tears, go sweep it”. Though she pointed towards the olive leaves under the tree, she wiped her tears with her shawl. The expression Em Aziz used was figurative, she used the tree to talk about herself. At the moment, Em Amal understood the situation and tried to change the topic but Em Aziz insisted on continuing. I learned from her that in 1982 when the Israeli army invaded Beirut, her four children were forcibly taken by the soldiers “they were kidnapped and when I went to their workplace, I saw them getting tortured. One soldier threatened me and pushed me away. I went back to the camp crying for help”. Em Aziz continued imitating how terrified she was when her daughter tried to warn her to remain silent

because Ariel Sharon, who was then the Israeli War Minister, and Eli Hobeika, a commander in Lebanese Forces militia, were near the camp. “My daughter saw me running towards the camp, she waved at me several times then covered her mouth with her left hand while moving the other one near her neck trying to warn me that they were killing people,” said Em Aziz reflecting on the Sabra and Shatila massacre (1982).

I was trying to understand the stimulus that had triggered Em Aziz to recall this traumatic experience, when she continued, commenting on the oven that she has stopped using since then: “I was baking bread when I heard that they were kidnapped. I took bread loaves and went to their workplace hoping to find them”. To Em Aziz, the traditional stove reminds her of her lost sons, that is why it is placed in the corner and looks untouched for years. Closing the conversation, she said: “I wish I had not lived in this dar, this dar took away my sons. It took away my husband as well”. I was shocked seeing her pointing at a real bomb, a mortar 120mm bomb (figure 2.8) that was kept as a reminder of the camps war that also destroyed parts of the house. This reminded Em Aziz of the bomb hit by an Israeli aircraft in 1948 when she was fleeing the attack on her village (mentioned in the previous chapter) that she commented: “the bomb fragment that slid into the laundry bowl I was carrying my daughters inside; it did not kill them but this one immediately took my husband away.”



Figure 3.8 a mortar bomb

The beauty of Em Aziz’s dar lies in its relatively wide area that is open to the sun. In an overcrowded space like the camp, it is rare to find such relief especially with the narrow (and some extremely narrow) alleys and the multi-floor houses. It is nearly impossible to see any greenery as you navigate inside the camp. However, despite the eye-catching arch of olive trees in Em Aziz’s dar, the area looked neglected. In addition to the disorganized and unrelated objects placed at the dar, tools like the millstone and bread-oven were covered with a vivid layer of dust, and the concrete planters were messy and partly destroyed. I felt curious to know why the dar seemed neglected especially since its dweller is a first generation member who appreciates the dar and planting, so I asked her whether she grew fruits, vegetables, or any plants. Em Aziz used to have grapes pergola, berries, lemon, orange, pomegranate, and guava trees. However, her perspective has changed since the loss of her sons, as she said: “lamma tzahher el nabatat bakba’a, bastehi men wladi” translated as “when plants blossom, I take it off, I feel shy that my sons see the blossom”. She considers it shameful to

maintain the life she had before her sons disappeared, therefore, she gets hurt to see plants growing while being unable to know if her sons were alive. Em Aziz said that phrase and looked towards the wall behind my seat, I turned around to see four framed A4-sized photos of her missing sons.

While I was leaving, a red flower (figure 2.9) caught my attention, it was the only colored plant (other than green) in the dar. I took a photo of it with my mobile camera then came near it and touched it. I was surprised that it turned out to be fake. I asked Em Aziz's granddaughter about it and she told me that her family members intentionally placed it inside the container because real flowers are not allowed in Em Aziz's dar.



Figure 3.9 a fake flower

While this dar was reconstructed, painted, and tiled after several partial destructions, as a conscious attempt by the remaining family members to erase the past inscriptions of bombs and bullets, traces of the dar's history reappeared. As Huyssen noted that the urban space turns into a palimpsest when a new text is rewritten over, transforming its physical appearance through reconstruction, the erased past does not completely vanish. Speaking about Berlin as a palimpsest, Huyssen clarified that its complex web of historical markers constitute a heterogeneous multilayered text in which the previous text is preserved and the traces are restored. Though the visible constructional transformation of Em Aziz's dar had erased the violent traces of the wars, the neglected tools and utensils that have been kept at the dar reveal the historical layers and spatial practices (de Certeau's spatial practices tackled in chapter II) that continued in the dar before 1982.

Analogously, the dar of Em Nisreen (from Kuweikat village) still exists today, like that of Em Aziz. The dar is formed of two parts: one that is considered internal since a second floor is constructed above it, while the second part is two steps lower and exposed to sunlight. Em Nisreen explained that the dar was once completely open and more greenery used to fill it. When I arrived, Em Nisreen welcomed me at her dar and showed me the way to the upper part where I sat on a sofa facing the gate. She brought an office chair that she uses in her small shop and sat next to me. Em Nisreen sells ice cream and a limited variety of electrical stuff (lamps, wires, sockets, plugs) in one of the house rooms which her late husband turned into a shop with a separate entrance.

This dar has gone through multiple changes. According to Em Nisreen, the dar was at its best phase in the 1970s (figure 2.10) because “it was full of life; a lot of trees like lemon and guava. The lemon tree was generous though. I also had a rabbit and a turtle”. She looked towards the gate and rhetorically asked me “do you know what was the first thing I said to my husband—Allah yerhamo—when we built a proper house?” she continued: “I said I want a big dar even it meant fewer rooms”. Her husband was from a peasant family that had settled in south Lebanon since the Nakba. She meant for him to plant the dar and live on the food it supplies. Em Nisreen explained to me that they mostly survived on what they grew in addition to the rations they received from UNRWA including rice, wheat, and milk. There were no bakery shops at the camp so they used to bake their weekly need of bread at home using the traditional oven, like the one Em Aziz still owns today. Preserving food from season to season was common in the camp, they dried tomato, made apricot jam, and ground red pepper.



Figure 3.10 The dar of Em Nisreen in mid 1970s

Moreover, gatherings and celebrations of family, neighbors, and friends took place at the dar. As Em Nisreen proudly spoke “I was the best in Kuweikat village quarter to make Ka’ak. I remember once I made the dough for three families in one day.” She explained that before Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-adha, all women in the camp made ka’ak stuffed with dates, according to the traditions in their villages. The week prior to the Eid, “you could not only smell Ka’ak in the camp but also hear the sound of wooden stamps (figure 2.11) hitting the ground”. Women of the family and close neighbors used to gather every day in one of the dars to help make these sweets. Aside from the cup of tea, Em Nisreen shared pieces of the Ka’ak she made a few days before the interview (figure 2.12). The filling was not only dates as she mentioned earlier, I could tell that it included also chopped walnut and sesame. Em Nisreen smiled and made a gentle tap on her chest and said: “yes, this is my recipe that made my ka’ak popular in the camp”.



Figure 3.11 Homemade Ka’ak made by Em Nisreen



Figure 3.12 wooden stamps

I noticed that there was a piece of rusty metal on the ground of the dar, near the sofa (figure 2.13). It seemed like a rug covering something underneath. Em Nisreen told

me that it was the door to an underground shelter which they used during camps' war, "Though it is not wide, about three meters by two and a half, we spent a lot of time inside it". Em Nisreen continued describing how she used the soil in the dar to make sandbags. Those "seven sandbags" formed a barricade protecting the underground shelter since the dar was exposed to the 'Amliyyeh side (Lebanese neighborhood on the opposite side to the camp) and most houses were of one to two stories high. A bomb exploded in the dar causing damage of "one-and-a-half by one meter" as Em Nisreen said. The family was terrified but "thank god, no one was seriously injured that day", however, she was shot in the dar one morning while she was trying to hang the laundry. "I was gently throwing the laundry to the washing-line trying to remain invisible to the sniper but the moment I was done, a bullet hit the muscle at the back of my lower leg". Em Nisreen slowly pulled up her dress and showed me the trace of that bullet, it was a hole of around one-centimeter depth in her leg, and commented, "it is not the bullet, the injury, or possibility of losing my leg that I recall most, in fact, the six months siege reminded me that we are living in a camp, unwelcomed in this country". Em Nisreen ended the conversation by these words "we are not a state, we are a limited camp, they sieged it for six months and many people starved to death".



Figure 3.13 The dar of Em Nisreen (and the underground shelter)

The shift in Em Nisreen’s narrative is worth studying. When Em Nisreen talked about the revolution and its visible existence in the 1970s, she spoke with confidence and recalled mostly pleasant memories related to the dar that brought peace and security to its residents. The stories she shared revolved around the trees she grew, the pets, the traditional practices and gatherings with the family and neighbors. On the other hand, painful memories of war, siege, hunger, injuries, and death which also are associated with the dar were narrated with a choky voice and a reminder that the house she lives in and the camp she resides at, are no more than shelters. Furthermore, Em Nisreen used the expression “we are not a state” commenting on the wars that occurred after the PLO withdrew its forces from Lebanon, while the PLO was always referred to as a state in Lebanon because of its political representation, social and economic and cultural institutions in the camps.

The two interviews with Em Aziz and Em Nisreen so far suggest that the emergence of the PLO in Lebanon with its sovereignty and armed resistance, in addition to its institutions, influenced the spatial practices of the camp residents. These residents came to believe that until they returned to the homeland, they would live in a space that felt, to a certain extent, like their villages and at homes that would partially compensate for those they had lost. This was reflected in the proper construction of the houses and the physicality of the dar including its dynamics, from social gatherings and celebrations to food preservation, that became more visible than in the pre-PLO years. However, the withdrawal of the PLO's forces and the consequent wars on the camp influenced people's perception of the camp, the home, and the dar they live in, especially after the partial destruction of their houses and the loss of family members. Residents became disappointed in the revolution that had brought hope, strength, and confidence.

Unlike other participants, Abou Raheel, a member of the second-generation, spoke frankly and expressed his opinion regarding the PLO bluntly, which made his wife concerned; she apologized twice and wanted to make sure the conversation was not recorded. Abou Raheel thinks that the revolution in the camps was a "hoax, it looked real while it was a bunch of irresponsible people who weren't up to our expectations". He continued by noting that no revolution could survive "by assigning inappropriate individuals in important positions through the wasta". Abou Raheel meant that individuals without proper education and experience should not be in leadership or administration.

Abou Raheel recalls that the dar was eliminated in the early 1980s, the same period the PLO was forced to leave Lebanon. Through addressing a direct question on the reason behind the elimination of his dar, it appeared that Abou Raheel did not want to talk about it. He stared for seconds then simply replied: “it just happened immediately after the withdrawal. In the present time, I wish we kept the dar as a social place for family and friends.” I made another attempt at the end of the interview (while making sure I wrote some information correctly like the name of his village, the properties they owned in Palestine, and the year his family arrived to the camp) to get more details on the elimination decision. He refused to state a solid reason elaborating: “things were changing in the camp and we thought the dar is no longer needed. We extended the house to have more rooms”. Abou Raheel’s words about the need for more rooms contradicts his reply on my inquiry about the property of the house. The house with its roof had been their property since the 50s, and the expansion of the house could have been vertical without the need to transform the dar or eliminate it.

This dar meant a lot to Abou Raheel’s father. It was his favorite place, especially the sofa under the grape pergola where he used to “enjoy a cup of tea before going to work and another one after dinner”. His father was a ‘Ataba performer who would write poems and sing them at weddings and occasions. He wanted his son to learn ‘Ataba too, to memorize the poems he wrote. “He tried to teach me several times. He asked me to write them down so I would memorize them”, said Abou Raheel, who admits failing to achieve what his father desired. Surprisingly, he went out of the room for a few minutes then came back holding the notebook that had the poems written by his father (figure

2.14). His father also listed the lands he owned in Kuweikat (10 pieces) as a means to keep a record of the family's properties.

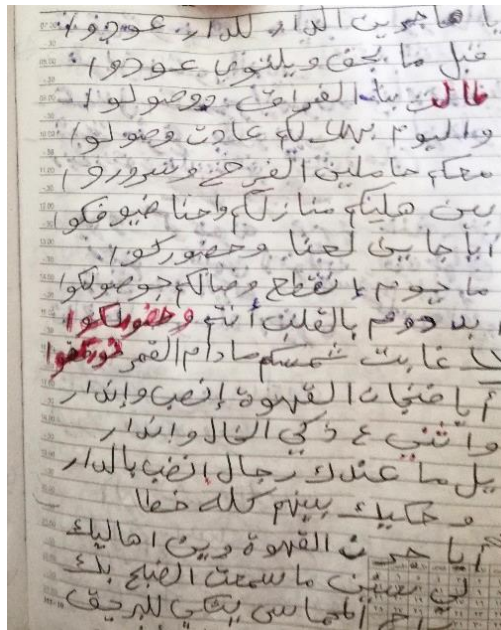


Figure 3.14 one of the poems written by Abou Raheel's Father

In his recorded and archived testimony, Abou Raheel's father performed a piece of 'Ataba which he wrote against the revolution. After he sang the first two lines, he paused and commented: "let's dismiss this one, it is against the revolution". The interviewer insisted on his to completing the piece:

You who have abandoned the dar, to the dar return
before its stem bends and dries (meaning before it's too late)
the man who left us while he is still young (or physically able to fight)
I wrote down his name in this book...
We believed in you
You, some organizations,
Yet we got nothing
But devastation and frustration,
"We're going to free the land", you said

But even centimeters we did not get
So leave us alone because
You have nothing but songs!

The conversation with Abou Raheel shows that not only the physicality of the dar has changed, but the owner's perception of it has also been influenced. At a time it was an essential part of the home where all family members would sit together in the evening to talk about their day at work or school, and neighbors would enjoy an early-morning chat over coffee or tea. The decision to eliminate the dar reflects a change in the conceptuality of the dar to its dwellers. To Abou Raheel, the material change occurred after "the revolution failed" as he stated. Despite his negative opinion against the revolution, he mentioned that his father had believed in the PLO, in its initial years when it brought power and recognition to the Palestinians of the camps. Abou Raheel's bold words regarding the revolution seem to come out of disappointment. The hope and security that the revolution insured through its sovereignty and institutions in the camps led Palestinians to redeem their confidence and strength especially after the repression of the Lebanese authorities between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s. However, the "withdrawal of its forces was shocking to the Palestinians in Lebanon" as Abou Raheel expressed.

Besides Abou Raheel’s dar, the dar of Abou Israa was also transformed, but to a shop this time (figure 2.15). Though shelves and tools fill the area, I noticed some signs that indicate a different phase, a past that has been erased with its traces nonetheless, as Huyssen notes, “still visible” Indeed they gain visibility from being irrelevant to the new change. The original metal gate of the dar still exists although a new glass door was added (figure 2.16). Moreover, there is a faucet with a sink and mirror separate from the bathroom which was common in most dars (figure 2.17). Because “guests are welcomed at the dar” such facilities were used instead of going inside the house and using the private bathroom. Abou Israa also noted that neighbors and extended family members gathered in the dar over lunch, coffee, or on occasions like the engagement of his sister that took place in the dar.



Figure 3.15 the present state of the dar of Abou Israa



Figure 3.16 the original metal gate of the dar



Figure 3.17 faucet, sink, and mirror separate from the bathroom

Though the elimination of the dar or its complete transformation in many houses did not occur in the same years, it took place after 1982 and the reasons I have obtained from my participants for this change differ. To Abou Raheel for instance, his family needed more rooms to satisfy the increasing number of its members, though he said during the interview that they “could have expanded vertically and kept the dar”. Another reason communicated by Abou Israa was “the dar has changed a lot lately and we thought it can bring money by investing in it”. However, the interviews with the first and second-generation participants intersect at seeing the dar as a social place for gathering and strengthening family bonds which have been weakened after the elimination of the dar. According to Abou Raheel, “my children don’t know their extended family members, because visits have become very rare. The house, a living room, or the salon does not offer what the dar gives.” He explained that in the dar, members of different generations meet not only on special occasions but on a daily or weekly basis. Children can play while their parents, grandparents, and guests (extended family members, neighbors, or friends) share a conversation. Abou Raheel saw the dar as a generational melting pot, the contact with different generation members is “something we have lost once we lost the dar,” as he said. Though Abou Israa is the one who took the final decision among his siblings to eliminate the dar, he troubled me with his description of the dar: “the dar is the soul of the house, and a house without a dar has no soul”. He stressed on comparing the houses with a dar and other ones without a dar: “the family that owns a dar is probably a happy family, despite the many problems it might be facing. Try it yourself, the moment you visit a house with a dar, you feel the beauty and freedom.” Abou Israa concluded: “the house is a prison if it has no dar”.

The nostalgic feelings towards the dar are tied to the period of the revolution's control over the camps. The stories and memories shared by my interviewees are recognizably categorized into historical shifts in the camps: the positive change brought by the PLO with its sovereignty and institutions and the period following the PLO's withdrawal. These two periods were reflected in the state of the dar and the way residents perceive it, though in the present time, there seems to be a kind of reconsideration and evaluation regarding the transformation of the dar, especially in the interviews with Abou Israa and Abou Raheel. As I learned from the interviews, the PLO's withdrawal was considered by camp residents as a betrayal of their faith in the revolution. Residents were "left alone", as Em Aziz stated, with no leadership to protect them and secure their camp.

The historical shifts are two layers of texts that the dar stores. Even with the dar's complete transformation, traces of the past still appear. Following McLuhan's definition of a medium, the dar is an extension of the human body, the bodies of its dwellers. The dynamics and the spatial practices of its inhabitants were favored and influenced by its physicality, as the oral history interviews and the recorded testimonies (in this research) suggest. According to De Certeau (1984), the spatial practices, including dwelling, navigating, talking, planting, and cooking, are ordinary actions that signify how dwellers perceive their place, the authority, and themselves. The spatial practices that started in the camp in the first years following the Nakba elucidate how Palestinians changed the area into a practiced place. Living under the control of the Lebanese repressive authorities, residents could not build anything concrete, yet they planted the extension of their tents that later became the dar. Their spatial practices that

were invisible in the form of what De Certeau calls ‘tactics’ became visible with the presence of the PLO in the camps. Moreover, the political representation with the revolution’s power and institutions exerted a visible change on the landscape of the camp, the houses, and the dars. This suggests that camp residents, under the sovereignty of the PLO, came to consider their houses as homes, until they return to Palestine.

Though the analysis may seem to contradict Farah’s understanding (2011) that residents perceive the camp and their houses as shelter and not home, this apparent contrast is actually a sign of a more complex reinforcement. Farah’s study looks at how Palestinians in Lebanon view their places in the present time, which is the period I consider in this research as the PLO’s withdrawal and its aftermath. The interviews I conducted showed that after the withdrawal, residents started to eliminate the dar and this elimination reflects the shift in the way they see their stay and their places in Lebanon. Palestinians learned that their homes in the camp are no longer “homes”, they are “like any other houses anywhere”, as Heyam described.

The dar as a physical space is also a medium in Kittler’s definition of media, it stores and communicates messages. However, in McLuhan’s famous phrase “the medium is the message”, the dar as a medium, alongside the medium of oral history, is the message. It is the medium here that needs to be read to understand how its dwellers perceive the place they live in. Through the metaphor of ‘palimpsest’ and Huyssen’s notion of the urban palimpsest, the dar as an urban space stores different texts (layers of information), each text represents a specific period of the Palestinians’ history in the camp.

D. Conclusion

The visits and observation of the present state of the dars of my participants in Borj al-Barajneh camp showed that the intentional reconstruction of the dar after the destruction and its visible physical transformation, whether partial or complete, still holds traces of the past. Suggesting the dar as a medium of communication allowed me to read it as a content, as a text. The notion of the urban palimpsest facilitated the examination of the dar's physicality, including the tools and signs that indicate an older text of the palimpsest. Moreover, these signs constitute traces of the erased past, which has re-emerged creating a multilayered text in which each layer conveys a specific history and enables, as Huyssen explained, the reading of rich memories. The neglected dar of Em Aziz, including the utensils and objects that have been intentionally left unused for years, raised questions regarding her view of the dar, especially when compared with the memories of social gatherings and food preservation. The interviews also suggest that the change that has occurred to the dar was both physical and mental, and that the decision to eliminate the dar was to a certain extent influenced by the withdrawal of the PLO, the political and armed Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, and its aftermath that reminded Palestinians with their experiences during the Nakba.

The erasure of the past was not only an erasure of violent material destruction of the dar, it was in some cases an erasure of a past consideration of the shelter as a home, or in other cases the conscious attempt by residents to forget their disappointment in the PLO that had once made them visible to the world and brought the hope of return. This conscious erasure of the past, the elimination of the dar, is probably considered by Abou Raheel for instance, as a need to move on, to survive after multiple traumatic

experiences—what Nietzsche called “creative forgetting”. In the next chapter, I aim to focus mainly on the families that have eliminated the dar to study their feedback after its elimination.

CHAPTER IV

NOSTALGIA, TRAUMA, AND THE DAR

In the previous chapter, I argued that the dar, the extension of Palestinian houses in the camp, is a medium of communication according to McLuhan's definition of media. I suggested that in the context of Palestinian oral history, this medium can serve as a message that would explain how residents of the camp view their places (house/home). Employing Huyssen's notion of urban palimpsest, I argued that the dar is a multi-layered urban text that has changed from the years of the presence of the Palestinian resistance in the camp to the events (wars) that followed the withdrawal of Palestinian forces from Lebanon.

As the preceding two chapters included accounts of Nakba and post-Nakba generation members who owned or still own a dar in Borj al-Barajneh camp, the first part of this chapter relies on the same interviews to emphasize the mediated memories through the dar. However, the second part focuses on the interviews I conducted with second-generation members who lost the dar intending to investigate their feedback and experiences after this elimination. Following the notions of 'nostalgia', 'trauma' and 'postmemory', I aim to highlight the different relationships these residents have to the past to suggest that nostalgia might be a need to cope with trauma.

A. Nostalgia, Trauma, and Postmemory

Although nostalgia refers to a positive feeling towards a period in the past, the origin of the term represents a contrasting conception. In *The Future of Nostalgia*

(2001), Svetlana Boym traces the origin of the term and its progress throughout history. Nostalgia was coined by Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer in 1688, who defined it as a “sad mood originating from the desire for the return to one’s native land” (p.3). During that period, nostalgia was believed to be a medical disease with symptoms like seeing ghosts, hearing voices, losing appetite, and high fever. Individuals who suffered from nostalgia had the tendency for suicide which made doctors consider it as a serious, yet curable disease. The term originated from Greek roots “nostos” which means “return home” and “algia” that denotes “longing”. It developed from the conception of a disease to a “public threat” in the eighteenth century, then to a strategy of survival with the advent of modernity. Through the adoption of nostalgia, displaced people could tolerate the “impossibility of homecoming” (p.12).

Therefore, the longing for a home that no longer exists (or never existed) unfolds two ambivalent feelings: a positive sentiment towards the home and a painful feeling of its loss. Boym describes this relationship:

A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images—of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface. (p. xiv)

The second component of nostalgia, which deals with the feeling of loss, overlaps with the concept of trauma that is generally defined as “an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.” (Caruth, 1991, p.181) In other words, trauma is a negative

feeling characterized by an inability to deal with the past effectively because of an extremely distressful event.

While trauma and nostalgia are often used separately to describe different relationships to particular pasts, both terms are linked. In the case of forced displacement, exile, or loss of the home or homeland, the displaced people would be traumatized by the rupture. Their memories of the event are painful, and their suffering is likely to continue with them in the new destination. In response to the loss of their home, the displaced people generate a feeling of nostalgia to the period that precedes the rupture. This yearning for the past is, according to Boym (2001), a rebellion against the present.

In the Palestinian context, the 1948 ethnic cleansing and forced depopulation of villages displaced Palestinians to multiple destinations. The first-generation members were traumatized by the Nakba, which has been a continuous source of suffering for them and the succeeding generations (Sayigh, 2013). Moreover, their longing for the past and the desire to restore the lost home were evident in the spatial practices they made since the first years in the camp. The formation of village quarters and the *dar* are two of the ordinary practices that, according to De Certeau, when analyzed, can help us understand how dwellers see their places and themselves. However, this chapter focuses on post-Nakba members who were born in the camp, the only home they experienced.

Second-generation members learned about Palestine and their identity from their parents who, when expelled, preserved their spatial and cultural practices in exile. Even under harsh conditions and repressive regulations by the Lebanese authorities,

residents of Borj al-Barajneh camp managed to transform the shelter into a home. Forming village quarters named after their lost villages and establishing a dar that extends their homes, replicated, to a certain extent, a potential landscape of the homeland. This generation that has never visited Palestine still knows the homeland from stories and practices of their parents. Nevertheless, UNRWA schools had a role through teachers who were mostly from the camps, despite the administration instructions and warnings that came against mediating national and resistance knowledge. Moreover, the Palestinian national identity was intensely reinforced in the 1970s (in the camp) with the PLO's institutions.

Learning about the past from the first generation, within the context of the home, involves being vulnerable to the traumatic experiences of the parents. Alongside the nostalgia they inherited, the positive memories, sentiment, and fantasy of the homeland, second-generation members are likely to inherit the trauma of their parents. The relationship that preceding generations have to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of the parents is referred to as 'postmemory'. Marianne Hirsch, who studies the transmitted inter and trans-generational memories of the Holocaust, proposed the term 'postmemory' and defined it in *The Generations of Postmemory* (2012) as "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before" (p.5). The first-hand traumatic memories are transmitted to the "generation-after" affectively through stories (oral tradition), behaviors, and images that the post-generations grow up around.

Although Hirsch uses the Holocaust as the traumatic and historical reference to her work on postmemory, she acknowledges that it can no longer serve as the limit to

historical trauma and memory, especially after “the brutal dictatorships in Latin America; after Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfour; during the aftermath, globally, of the events of September 11,2001; and in the midst of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict” (p.18). Therefore, the notion of ‘postmemory’ is theoretically and practically relevant in studying the mediated traumatic memories from Nakba-generation to the following generations.

B. Mediating Nostalgia and Postmemory

The dar, an essential part of the home, was a generational melting pot where members of different generations met regularly. Family, extended members, neighbors, friends, and guests were welcomed at the dar. The spatial practices the Nakba generation continued in the dar suggest that the physicality of the medium facilitated the transmission of memories from first-generation to the succeeding ones. Rooms were considered private though houses included a living room or a salon, but the latter was mostly used in winter to welcome guests.

It can be said, based on the interviews with second and third-generation members, that inhabitants spent most of their time inside the dar. Women used to wake up early to bake bread on the furniyeh (traditional bread-oven) once or twice a week, wash clothes by hand, do the chores, water the plants, and cook. According to Sana, lunch was ready by noon and all family members used to eat together, “it wasn’t accepted for a family member to miss the meals with the family, unless there was a good reason for that”. After lunch, enjoying a cup of tea was common, as Abou Hanan

said, then men were used to take a nap on a sofa or at the dar while women continued the chores. Amneh recalls that her mother who was skilled in embroidery tried to teach her stitching and sewing “I remember her sitting under day light and stitching cloth. My mother had prepared a white embroidered piece of cloth that she held on the day of my wedding singing to the crowd and gently swaying with a candle in the other hand”. This gesture, as her mother taught her, is a tradition from her village al-Zeib. In pre-Nakba period, mother of a bride used to sing “mawawil” in the celebration march from the dar to the field (or orchards) waving with a white cloth to signify the purity (and virginity) of her daughter.

Preparing food seasonally for preservation took place in the dar. It was a collective effort as Em Wael described when she joined the group conversation (interview) conducted at Abou Raheel’s house. Em Wael, a first-generation member who was born in the 1920s in Palestine, came in to check on Abou Raheel upon hearing that he was sick. However, the moment she knew that there was a conversation running on the topic of Palestine and the dar, she soon made herself an active participant. Em Wael is a typical peasant Palestinian woman with a high-pitched voice that indicates her self-confidence and an authentic dialect and accent that, for the first minute, stimulated my imagination of the village life. “Aza yamma”, she said to interrupt my question to Abou Raheel, as a chance for her to participate in the conversation. (The word Aza is a common dialectical word, used with no particular need or meaning in this context; though its literal meaning is consolation.) Em Wael continued describing how she, with the help of her daughter and daughter-in-law, used to dry a considerable amount of Mulukhiye, red pepper, peppermint, sage and other herbs. As she ironically compared

the amount of food and effort in the dar with those at the village, she used the word “Aza” again, “Aza weenik w ween moonet Falastin,” denoting the large difference between the quality (and quantity) of food and life.

Em Wael’s stories of the pre-Nakba life appear to be influenced by a touch of fantasy and little exaggeration. To her, like to Em Aziz, Em Nisreen and Em Amneh: “hal-ad kanat 7abbet el bordakan wallah” meaning that the size of an orange fruit used to be almost triple the size of one now. I heard a similar phrase from Abou Hanan (second-generation member) “my mother loved to tell us stories from Palestine. She told us about my grandfather’s land that ‘the bare eye can't see its end’”. These images and the continuous share of stories about the past reflect the collective nostalgia which first-generation members have for Palestine and their villages. Such memories of pre-Nakba life, which are by and large positive and peaceful, mediate to the second-generation the desire to return home.

However, traumatic memories of expulsion and displacement are tied to and revolve around the Nakba. The postmemory, the relation that the second and third generations have to the past, is not mediated by a recall, instead, as Hirsch (2012) explains, it is mediated by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. Descendants are overwhelmed by inherited memories and shaped by “traumatic fragments” that their effects continue into the present. The following two incidents of Em Aziz’s son (second-generation) and granddaughter (third-generation) suggest that the past has influenced their memories and consciousness. The first incident is narrated by Sana (Em Aziz’s daughter) about what happened with her brother.

When my brother immigrated to Denmark at a young age, he was unaware of his school teacher's background. One day when the teacher asked students to write about what they hate, he wrote that he "hates Jews". The teacher was mad at him but confused at the same time; she told him she is Jewish and requested that he justifies his statement. Upon that, he wrote: "I didn't know that you are Jewish, if I knew, I wouldn't be sitting here. You depopulated our village, bombed it, and expelled us from our homeland. I wasn't born yet to defend it or to help my mother, who was forced to escape alone with my two sisters who died because of you....Because of you, Israelis came after us to Lebanon and killed my father, and you kidnapped and killed my four brothers who I know nothing about their fate. If it weren't for the Nakba, we wouldn't have fled to Lebanon, and if it weren't for the invasion of Lebanon, I wouldn't be here today".

Sana's brother is overwhelmed with the traumatic past, the effects of which continue into the present. While the boy was supposed to write a small text for a language class, he projected fragments of inherited memories on the present situation. Though these painful memories seemed first-hand, especially through the tone he used, they were not. In the text, he said he hates Jews while he meant Israelis. This slip signifies how his mother's narrative influenced his reconstruction of the past memories because peasant Palestinians, especially first-generation, use the word Jews to refer to Israelis. While this incident of Sana's brother differs in content and context from Rola's story, both indicate a mediated postmemory.

Rasha, a kindergarten director and a puppeteer, inherited her grandmother's skill of storytelling. As she said, "My grandma told me a lot of stories about life in Palestine, our village, and her experience in the Nakba". Em Aziz once made her a stuffed cloth-doll and soon, creating puppets and performing puppetry shows became her chief hobby, one in which she invests much time and labor. Rasha created two characters: Em Nasrat and Abou Nasrat (figure 3.1), first-generation members who were expelled from Palestine in the Nakba. Abou Nassrat in the show "Mahattat" (Stations), self-written and performed by Rasha, goes to the UN to deliver a speech on behalf of the displaced Palestinians. He "exposes to the world the depopulation of Palestine villages and the massacres committed by Zionist militias" and narrates how his generation reached Lebanon, describing the situation of the camp in the early 1950s. Abou Nassrat then goes to touch on the oppression that Palestinians experienced in Lebanon in the 60s, eventually tackling the current state of the camp as a deprived and marginalized space.



Figure 4.1 Rasha and her puppets Abou Nassrat and Em Nassrat

At the end of his speech, Abou Nassrat meets Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the UN (2007-16), who encourages Abou Nassrat and promises him to support the Palestinian cause in general and the camp in particular. When he returns to his wife feeling victorious after the remarkable speech, Em Nassrat asks about Ban Ki-moon's reaction and promise to the Palestinians. Abou Nassrat enthusiastically imitates the general-secretary and says: "he put his hand on his mustache and promised me to fulfill his obligations". Ironically presented, Em Nassrat replies: "Oh no, Ban Ki-moon doesn't have a mustache."

The story created by Rasha indirectly reflects her grandmother's painful experiences. It is not only the story of the puppetry show that signifies the transgenerational memories, but also the symbolism of the characters and signifiers involved in the play. For instance, the mustache resembles, in addition to masculinity, the keep of promise in the Arab culture. If a person swears with his mustache, he has to either fulfill his promise or shave it because not keeping his word makes him less of a man. Furthermore, Abou Nassrat's search for help turned to be worthless since, according to the plot, he probably asked (or believed in) the wrong representatives. Abou Nassrat's disappointment might suggest a link to Em Aziz's anger towards Palestinian's political representation, which she mentioned more than once in her audio-taped testimony and the interview I conducted with her. "If we had good and powerful leaders, they would have helped me find my sons who were kidnapped by the Israelis in the invasion of Beirut."

Postmemory is not an identity, as Hirsch clarifies, it is a structure of transmission and a way of thinking that describes the relationship of the generation-after

to the traumatic memories of the first generation. Applying it to the Palestinian case requires an understanding of the relationship that post-Nakba generations have to the traumatic past of their parents. Moreover, through reading the creative works or oral narrative of these succeeding generations, postmemory has the potential to explain the way Palestinians see and understand their present, and more importantly, what they hold as their future. The postmemories that Rola, Sana's brother, and post Nakba-generations recall as if these memories are first-hand, suggest that the past will be remembered and told when the Nakba-generation disappears.

C. Losing the Dar: Trauma and Nostalgia

While in the previous chapter I emphasized interviews with participants who eliminated their dar in Borj al-Barajneh camp, in this section, I aim to present the feedback of the residents who lost their dar. I am mindfully using the words "eliminated" and "lost" distinctly to differentiate the participants who were against this elimination from the family house. This extension of the house was an important part of its structure. It served as a medium that allowed residents to maintain some spatial practices of pre-Nakba life and mediated memories of the past to post-Nakba generations.

Since the dar is the only real experience of a home that the second-generation members lived, its loss was painful to some of the participants. However, the reaction of the remaining participants differs, perhaps because the decision to eliminate the dar was in not their hands. Below are three feedbacks I highlight for Em Nisreen, Heyam, and Abou Hanan who felt hurt by the disappearance of the dar:

Heyam's response to my question on the disappearance of the dar:

My brother wanted to expand the house, as I was told, "There would be some changes to the house". (She paused for seconds). He didn't make changes, he killed the dar. Why didn't he tell me or tell my sisters? Maybe because he knew we would have prevented him from suffocating the house like this. When I heard he eliminated the dar, I decided not to go there. For more than a year, I didn't visit the house. [Heyam took a breath, held the cup (an Arabic cup with no handle) between her hands, and took a sip.] After more than a year, my second brother who lives there as well, on the second floor, got sick. I went with my husband to check on him but the moment I pushed the gate inwards, I was shocked. There was no dar, he killed it. I couldn't help myself. [She remained silent for less than a minute.] You can ask my husband, I couldn't breathe, I felt choked and my tears fell. My husband led me to the outside and tried to calm me down. I never repeated that visit.

Heyam was shocked upon seeing the dar eliminated from the house. Her response was so emotionally intense that her family could not grasp it, as her daughter Sara told me. While it is normal to feel uncomfortable towards unexpected change, Heyam's reaction signifies a traumatic experience. The words she used to describe the complete transformation of the dar: "killed the dar" and "suffocated it", are usually not used to speak about physical spaces. In fact, they reflect how she saw the dar as a living place that has a soul.

Em Nisreen's feedback:

I thought that my brothers were going to invest in the family dar after my parents passed away. They mentioned an intention to build one room

with a separate gate and rent it, but they transformed it totally. I don't like to talk about this. I don't know, I change my way in order not to pass from the alley that leads to the dar and I avoid visiting my brother who lives there, our relationship is not the same anymore.

Unlike Heyam, Em Nisreen did not share her emotions. She repeated the idea of not wanting to talk about the incident, though her description of how she avoids seeing the house explains her distressfulness. To avoid passing through an alley just because it leads to the house means that she cannot deal effectively with the event. It appears to me that she tries to escape this change by cutting ties with her brother, though not completely.

Abou Hanan's response:

I couldn't imagine losing the dar. It was supposed to stay there for the whole family, for my children and grandchildren as well, but I knew that my objection would create hatred in the family... After all, he is my big brother. Honestly, since the day he eliminated the dar, I felt I had nothing for me there. I mean I go to visit him but very rarely, not like before. I don't know it's like I lost my parents again by losing the dar".

It is noticeable that the main concern for Abou Hanan is the social life the dar facilitated. While his words revolved around family and the desire to maintain strong bonds with its members, he mentioned that his visits to the place where his brother lives became decreased intentionally after the elimination. Losing the dar reminded him of his parents that, as he told me, "would never have allowed this" if they were alive.

The experiences of Em Nisreen, Heyam, and Abou Hanan suggest that the loss of the dar was an emotional shock to them. They were not to agree on the elimination if

they had the choice. The disappearance of the dar appears to be traumatic in the sense of provoking distress, pain, and escape. However, Abou Hanan’s positive memories of the dar and his desire to return or bring it back to the present made him transform the rooftop into a dar. Although it is not “very similar to my parents’ dar, I wanted to compensate for the lost one”, said Abou Hanan. To him, the dar has to survive from a generation to another to maintain the social relations and family bonds. The images below from his rooftop show a painted landscape on the walls (figure 3.2), a fence of stone painted almost to the half of the wall, and behind it, there are two big trees with birds flying in the sky. On the other side, the wall is also painted, but the colored stone wall of the dar looks incomplete or partially destroyed (figure 3.3). At the bottom is a water fountain (figure 3.4) decorated with artificial greenery on its sides, the water flows out of the ground like a natural spring. Next to the fountain, there is a decoration like ancient ruins. Abou Hanan’s rooftop dar reflects his longing for the family’s dar that he lost when his brother eliminated it. This nostalgia can be understood as a reaction to the traumatic experience of the loss and a rejection to it.

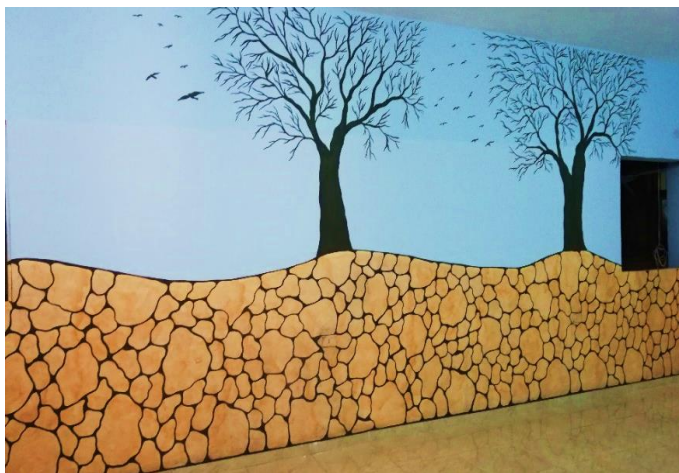


Figure 4.2 The painted walls of the dar



Figure 4.3 the other painted wall



Figure 4.4 Water fountain and decorations like ruins

D. Conclusion

Although nostalgia and trauma are commonly viewed as distinct and contradictory concepts, they are linked in the feeling of pain. While nostalgia represents a positive feeling towards a lost home; the loss itself includes pain. This pain of loss intersects with trauma. According to Boym (2001), yearning for the past is a rebellion against the present. Therefore, nostalgia can be suggested as a reaction or a need to cope with trauma. This relationship between nostalgia and trauma can help understand the relationship Palestinians have to the past. Hence, as I tackled in chapter 1, the spatial practices by which Palestinians transformed the camp into a space of their own, reflects their longing to the pre-Nakba life. This nostalgia came out as a need to tolerate displacement.

Both notions are critical to understanding how the dar as a medium facilitates the transmission of past memories. The structure of the dar makes it a social space for all members of the family. This contact of different generations stimulates conversations and oral narration of past events, including the traumatic memories of the first-generation. The relationship that the generation-after have to the trauma of their parents is well described by what Hirsch calls ‘postmemory’. Postmemory reflects the effect of traumatic experiences on the present life. As applied to the Palestinian case, the experiences of Rola with her puppetry show, and Sana’s brother’s encounter with his teacher, mediated postmemory. These creative works and projections on the present life situation help us understand how they view and comprehend things. For instance, Abou Nassrat, a puppet and a fictional character created by Rola, reflects her distrust in the Palestinian leadership. This way of thinking is influenced by the traumatic experiences of her grandmother, who overwhelmed her children and grandchildren with her memories. Similarly, reading the incident of Sana’s brother offers an understanding of how he comprehends and understands his present circumstances.

By presenting the experiences of residents who lost the dar, I suggested that their loss is a traumatic event. Heyam’s words like “he killed the dar” and “I couldn’t breathe” signify how she saw the dar as a living space, and eliminating it was painful to her. Moreover, Em Nisreen’s escape and her avoidance of passing through the alley that leads to her parents’ house also reflects how painful and distressed she felt. Finally, I present Abo Hanan’s rooftop dar that he built after the loss of his parents’ dar. The traumatic event he experienced stimulated a longing to the past that precedes the event,

which led him to restore or recreate the lost dar. Hence, I suggest that nostalgia is a need to cope with a traumatic past.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that physical space is a significant medium for meaning, which, if investigated, can explain and elucidate how its dwellers perceive it. Moving from a brief historical analysis of the culminating events that led to the Nakba, Chapter II focuses on the flux of expelled Palestinians to argue that these people created their own space in the area of Borj al-Barajneh camp. It follows Michele De Certeau's notion of 'space as a practiced place' (1984) to trace the initial spatial practices of the residents and to unfold May Farah's (2011) interpretation of the camp as a shelter. By unpacking Palestinian's history in the camp, I argue that the formation of village quarters and the establishment of the dar, the extension of camp houses, during the first years of displacement signify how residents transformed the shelter into a home. Chapter II also investigates these spatial practices as tactics against the repressive strategy of Lebanese authorities, which aimed at keeping the camp as a temporary shelter for its residents.

In Chapter III, I follow the development of these practices, which became visible with the emergence of the PLO in Lebanon (and in the camps), to further the understanding of how camp residents viewed themselves and the place they dwell. Emphasizing the dar, I utilize Marshall McLuhan's (1964) definition of media as extensions of the human body to argue that the dar is a medium of communication. While this medium signified security, strength, and the homeland under the period of the PLO's control over the camp, the withdrawal of the Palestinian resistance forces and

its aftermath created memories of violence and disappointment that brought back fragments of the Nakba memories. To read the dar through Andreas Huyssen's notion of urban palimpsest (2003), I rely on Fredrich Kittler's (1996) argument of the city as a medium and McLuhan's consideration of the house as a medium, to suggest that the dar is a palimpsest that has changed physically and conceptually from the period of the PLO's presence to its withdrawal. The chapter also highlights the changes that occurred in the dar of the families I interviewed, particularly residents' perception of the dar after the departure of the Palestinian resistance. The oral history interviews suggest that the transformation of the dar, or its elimination, reflects residents' disappointment and their understanding of the space they dwell as shelter, not a home anymore.

The purpose of Chapter IV is to shed light on the mediated memories through the dar. Defining the dar as a social space and a melting pot for different generations, I represent the collective spatial (ordinary) practices that continued in the dar. The physicality of the dar facilitated inter and trans-generational memories of the past. Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the different relationships residents have to the past through grappling with the notions of nostalgia, trauma, and memory. While nostalgia and trauma are often used inversely, I argue that both terms are linked, and suggest that nostalgia can arise from a need to cope with trauma. For this aim, I start with the first generation of Nakba, that traumatized by the rupture. These expelled Palestinians transformed the area of the camp into a practiced place, a space that looks like the home. Their nostalgia for the homeland was transmitted to the second generation through the practices which occurred in the dar and were accompanied by the oral narration of positive memories of pre-Nakba Palestine. Nonetheless, the traumatic past

and the painful experience of the Nakba were also passed on to the generations after through the structure of postmemory. Following Marianne Hirsch's notion of the postmemory (2012), I present two exposures: one for a second-generation member and the other for a third-generation member. Their experiences elucidate the mediated postmemory and offer a potential understanding of how fragments of their parents' traumatic past leap into the present and influence their lives. Furthermore, Chapter IV relies on the interviews with residents who lost their dar, and illuminates their feedback towards this event. The way these residents describe their loss of the dar suggests that this loss was traumatic to them. Finally, I take the experience of Abou Hanan, a second-generation member who reconstructed the lost dar (at his parents' house) on his rooftop, to suggest that this form of longing is to compensate the loss. Nostalgia, as presented, is a need to cope with trauma.

At this point, I pose a question regarding the re-creation of the lost dar. What if Abou Hanan's replication of his past, the childhood dar, is not the only experience in the camp? It might be one of several but different experiences that I could not reach because of the small number of participating families in this research. However, if there appear such spatial practices in the future, could it suggest a third period of Palestinians' history in the camp? A period, in light of this thesis, that grapples again with the 'home versus shelter' understanding of Palestinian's life in the camp? Will it be related to the potential permanent resettlement in Lebanon, if the "Trump's deal" took away the right to return to Palestine?

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