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INSIDE/OUT

A LANDMARK OF PALESTINIAN CRAFTS

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BY Dara Dajani Daoudi

About a decade ago, after waiting for hours at the checkpoint on the way from Jerusalem to the West Bank, a man in a black suit standing under the rays of the burning sun approached my Mom's car. I could tell he was a foreigner and I thought he wanted to ask for directions. Instead, he asked Mom where she was heading and suggested that she takes a detour through a place I've never been. The man worked in an NGO (Non Governmental Organization) in the heart of Ramallah. Both he and mom knew the alternative road by heart. That is how, for the first time in my life, I was introduced to a refugee camp, Kalandia.

I still remember every detail of that ride through the camp: buildings were barely standing, there was no road network. We passed between buildings 3 meters apart, and when a car appeared in front of us, one had to drive backwards until he/she found a spot wide enough to let the other through. Children were jumping around barefoot, careless that those cars could take away their lives; it was part of their daily routine. Spots of dirt covered their faces and every inch of their clothes.

When I came to Lebanon in 2004, I thought it was an amazing country, I still do. I was gradually introduced to the politics and religious aspects and, to date, I feel that there's something new to discover every day. Taking part in different clubs at the university, I went on trips to different Palestinian refugee camps, got to learn about the dwellers' lifestyles, how children suffer and what their needs are. I also came to realize that camps can play an active and dynamic part in the city, for there's a whole history and a unique culture behind those walls that can connect the camp dwellers to the city dwellers. Through a program: a series of common traditions and conventions; I will work on an intervention that will redefine the permanent presence of the camp as a productive mechanism in the city; the dynamics and practices that take place in the camp will bear a point of attraction.

Ever since that day through Kalandia, up to these recent days in Mar Elias, Chatila and others, I believe there's something one can do in order to bring the refugees in the camp closer to the lifestyle enjoyed by others in the city. A small gesture cannot be small enough not to flip that person's world around, and now I have the power to do that as an "architect".

“Our relations with cities are like our relations with people. We love them, hate them, or are indifferent towards them” (Burgin, 1996) the camp is like a town within another; the people’s relation with refugees have went from bad to worse, as they are considered to be invaders of others’ lands. My project has developed into an intervention on the periphery of the camp where it will allow direct contact and usage for the camp dwellers but still benefit from a degree of exposure that will attract users from the outer community, and bring them closer to learning about the culture of the camp dwellers.

Taking the dwellers of the refugee camp as an entry point to investigate what can be done to improve their lifestyle and expose them to the outer community through the practices that already exist in the camp; the thesis promotes the role of the camp in the wider context by developing a multi-level analysis framework. The first investigates the city with respect to refugee camps, the integration of the Mar Elias camp in the city in relation to both its location, and the segregation, between the city center and the location of the rest of the refugee camps in Beirut and Greater Beirut. The second analyses the Urban context created in the camp and the necessities the dwellers lack for a better living: I explored the positive aspects the dwellers already enjoy about their environment, the spatial qualities provided by the camp’s formation, what the dwellers value, and the practices that take place, which perhaps create the only communal link between the camp dwellers and the outsiders; in order to benefit from those features in attracting the dwellers out of the camp and into the intervention. The third reveals the role the camp already and evidently plays in the city. It is clearly demonstrated that the presence of the detailed program already exists in the camp, and what makes it stay alive is the enthusiastic participation of the dwellers, the passionate involvement of the organizations, and the keen contribution of the benefactors, the outsiders. What I am doing is merely providing a common place for all that happen, and encouraging the different users to come together.

The approach taken in the thesis investigation is an inside/out approach in which I investigate the camp thoroughly, the daily routines, what dwellers do and how they spend their times, and move outwards to the urban fabric which I want to extend; to the latter, an emerging well developed program, that will allow indirect interaction with the outer community; all incorporated in the intervention.

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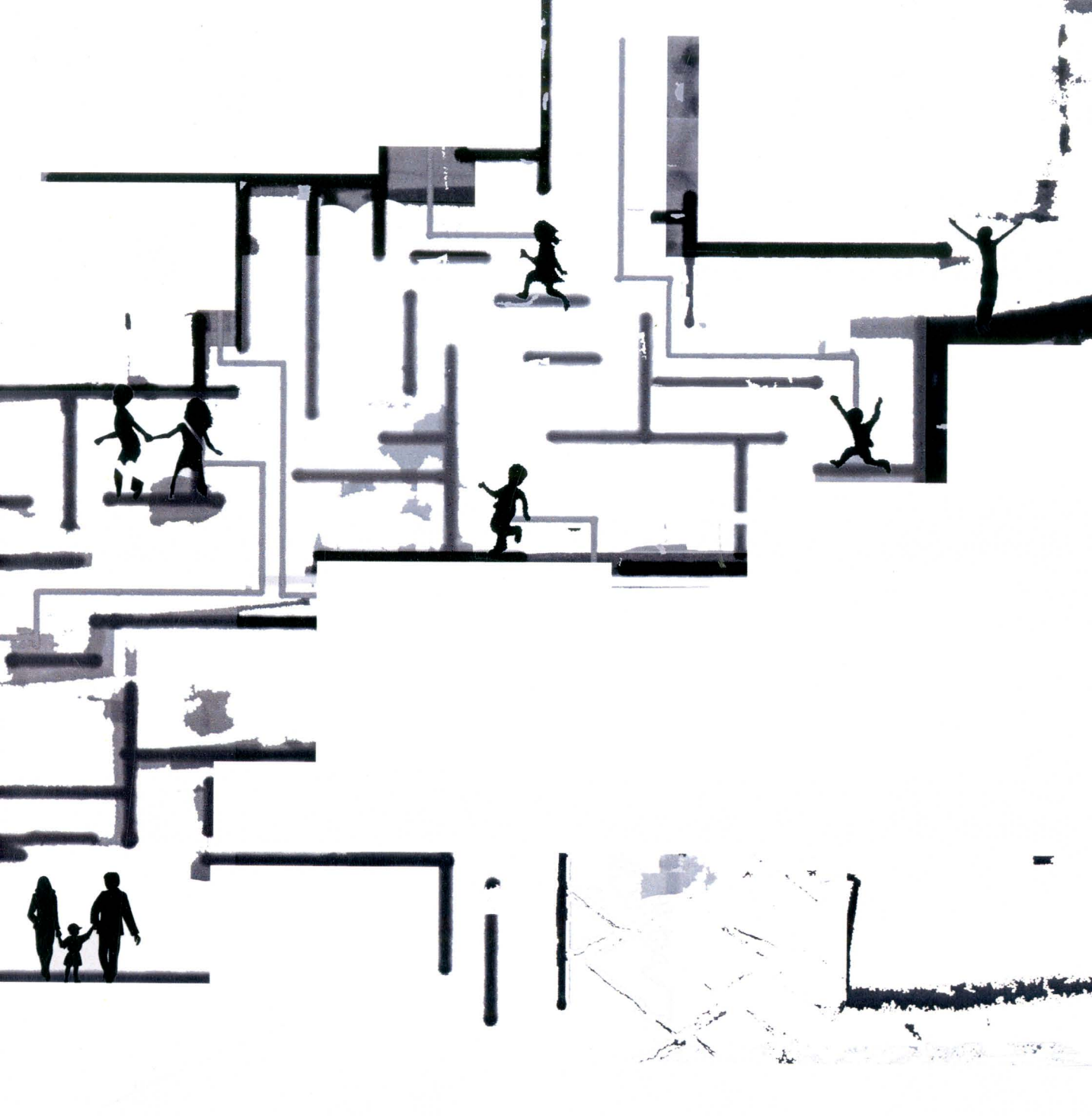
ISSUE, SITE, USER GROUP, PROGRAM, BUILDING TYPOLOGY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990, Palestinian Camps in Beirut have become excluded territories, relatively detached from their surroundings. They are considered to be places outside the Lebanese laws and jurisdictions. They are depicted as “out of city” spaces and analyzed as suspended places, understood as a separate entity from the cities where they are located (Samhan 2008). Lebanese state institutions such as the police and the government are relatively absent within the boundaries of Palestinian camps; properties, economic activities as well as commercial activities are not registered within Lebanese registries. The camp dwellers are denied basic benefits such as security, social services, healthcare and education (Peteet 1987). In addition, The refugee is denied basic civil rights such as the right to decent employment; hence, there is no way he/she can afford sending their child to a decent school in the city, even if the child is smart enough to actually stand out and make it into a respectable school. “If I had the means, out of my six daughters, there is no way I would send Salam to UNRWA School where she benefits very minimal, when she can do much better in a private school” says Ali, a father to seven.

In his book, Agamben argues that “to understand the camp, we have to look first at the *nomos* (city)” (Agamben 2004). The camp is always a production of the city just as much as the city is affected by the camp, by analyzing the intersections between the activities those dwellers strive for, I will be able to develop a vibrant architectural element, primarily for the camp and its dwellers, accounting for their spatial needs, as well as the technique in which they can be smoothly exposed to the outer community.

An obvious point where dynamics between camp dwellers and the city can be investigated is in the operation of a number of Palestinian NGOs that are present in the camp, such as Beit Atfal Al - Soumoud, Palestinian Martyrs' Association, Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, Al Inaach, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Aidoun, Palestinian Human Rights Association... For example, the Inaach inside the camp provides programs that connect the dwellers indirectly to the outer community as explained further in chapter 4.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE

My main objectives are: to create an outreach center that displays and celebrates the camp in the city and allows to expose some of the best cultural artifacts of the camp, to develop a monument that celebrates Palestinian culture, including the experience of exile, in Beirut and serves as a space of intersection between the camp and the city; and to respond to camp children’s needs by providing open play areas that complement the playful maze that the camp already provides.

The thesis takes the urban fabric of the camp as an entry point: to investigate a possible “composition” of an intervention at the border of the camp that celebrates and exposes this architecture to the city. First, the fabric as a play area, a maze if I may, appropriated by the children to their own convenience and playful imagination. Second is the fabric as a spatial embodiment of national memory to be used a texture in the architecture, and a starting point for the transition to the wider city blocks.

In order to make recommendations of an intervention to **improve the life of the dweller** and create a place for one to breathe, along with **a place for the community to celebrate its culture** as well as **create an outreach to the city**, the thesis explores the bits and pieces of the camp that can be extended to the outside attracting those children to that exposure, disregarding matters of security that they are not supposed to worry about in the first place, and investigates the already existing organizations that are working on reflecting that culture creating a connection between the camps’ tenants and the city.

My intervention will be, form of a community center specifically targeting women and children within the camp because, unlike men who seek employment outside, women are generally confined to the camp during the day. Taking into account the users who spend their time around the camp during the day (the women and the children), the ones who will bring the intervention into life, two research questions guide my approach to the thesis project: **How can one develop a place for the camp dwellers to carry out the practices they enjoy? How can the camp’s current urban fabric, the relation between buildings and open spaces, and the way children as a main user group of the project appropriate this fabric, generate a system through which the camp connects to the city in an outreach?**

My research develops an “**inside/out**” approach that begins with a detailed analysis of the camp’s urban fabric and its vicinities, provides an architectural intervention that seeks to “break” the marginalization of the camp in the city by celebrating its presence, and analyzes the existing urban practices exercised by the dwellers (especially women and children) inside the camp and brings them out to the city in a social, cultural intervention for the community that reflects and promotes Palestinian heritage in Beirut.

The significance of my investigation also lies in how to deal with the camp in a way that counters many widely adopted negative stereotypes about Palestinian camps in Lebanon, for they are often thought as problematic spaces, a refuge for terrorists and criminals, and separate from the city (Samhan 2008). Outside observers also often condemn this fabric as “poor” because they fail to understand its qualities, while interviews with dwellers indicate that, to the contrary, they appreciate the geometry in which the houses are laid out because they are organized in a way that ensures accessibility from one place to another in the camp, and the narrow pedestrian paths, formed in between, provide security from outsiders, as well as form some kind of a maze for children which grants them the quality of space they need in order to play their favorite of games.

It is very important to understand the components of the program behind which the children's haven will be constructed, because it embodies the means to attract people in, which is the most sensitive issue in my thesis. My thinking relies on the fact that the Lebanese are already fond of the cultural artifacts produced by the camp dwellers: the embroidery, the dance, etc... so bringing them into a facility of that sort for fascination purposes will be the first step.

THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis comprises **six chapters** organized as follows; Chapter one introduced the topic I am interested in and the objective of my thesis. Chapter 2 explains the multi-level framework of analysis through which I went about the thesis, making my way through the city, into the camp, and out to the intervention. Chapter 3 represents my position vis-à-vis refugee camps in general, and the way I will present my intervention to the camp at hand and its dwellers. Chapter 4 analyzes Mar Elias refugee camp as the place of interest, the way it is appropriated by the dwellers, and the site I have chosen. Chapter 5 illustrates the program I wish to work on, supported by case studies, architecturally and programmatically. Chapter 6 is an expression of my own personal experience at the camp, in relation to the decisions I have taken, and a beginning of design explorations that will guide my way into the architectural intervention.



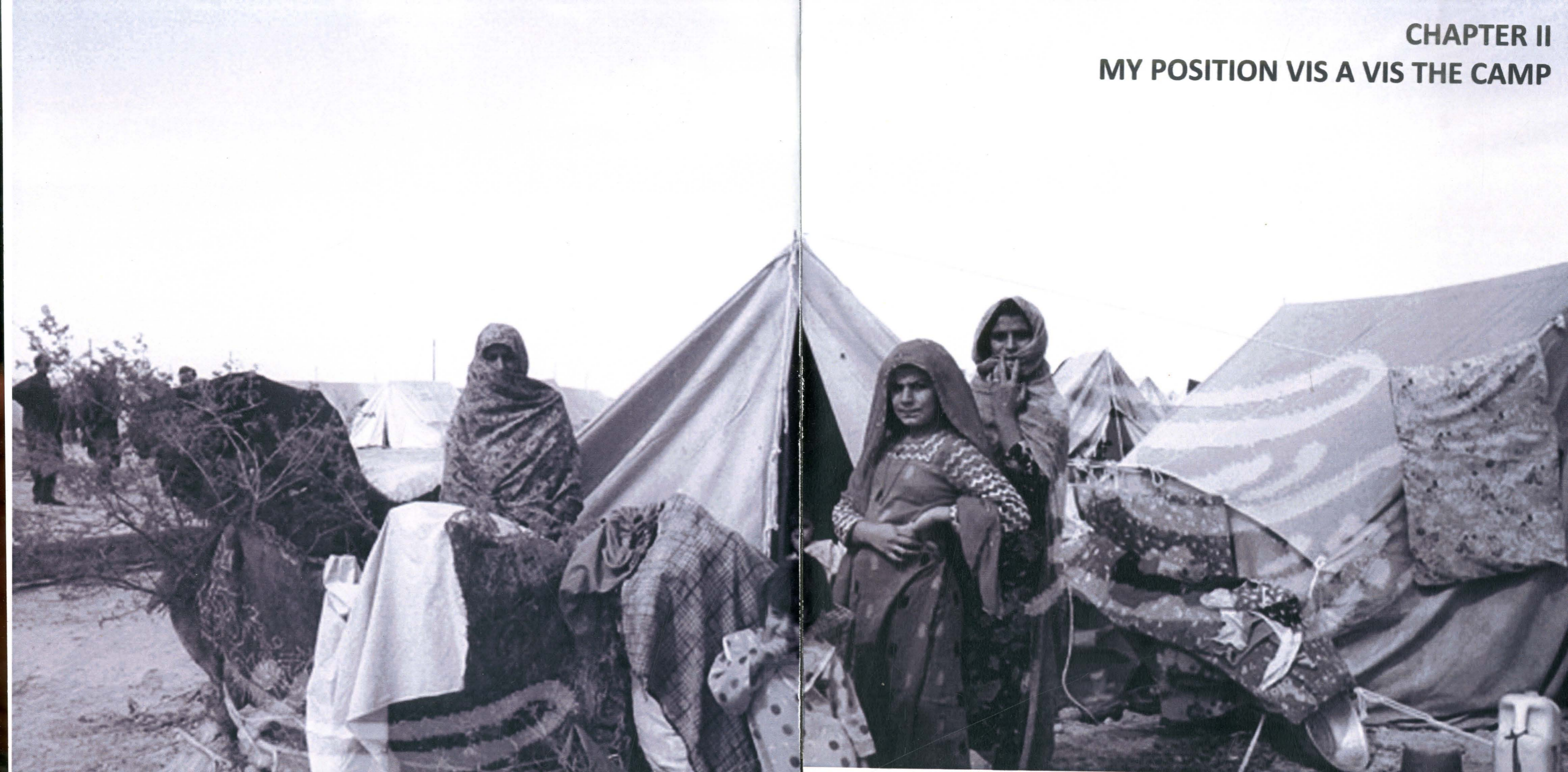
Figure 1.1 The Mar Elias Refugee Camp



CHAPTER II
MY POSITION VIS A VIS THE CAMP



CHAPTER II
MY POSITION VIS A VIS THE CAMP



CHAPTER 2 MY POSITION VIS-À-VIS THE CAMP

THE REFUGEE CAMP

In “Housing Alternatives: The case of the Bourj”, An urban design thesis done by Hanadi Samhan, the author argues that the camp is an active, dynamic, popular part of the city that has provided many low-income city dwellers a safe haven in times of crisis. This is exactly what the camp provides for its dwellers. The camp is a place or an area to which Palestinians who have been evicted from their homes resort in order to continue their lives living in a place they can call “home” rather than the streets.

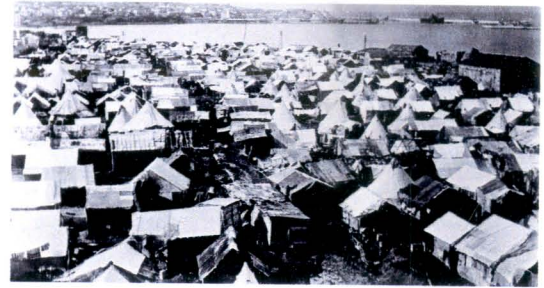


Figure 2.1 Palestinian Refugees

Although the dwellers of the refugee camps in Mar Elias and others enjoy health services and educational assistance provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): a non-governmental organization created in 1950 as a relief organization specifically dedicated to the Palestinian refugees, they are discriminated against by the host country and ignored in its socioeconomic plans. It is essential to point out that the gap between camp and off-camp dwellers in Lebanon is enormous, this can be explained by the fact that the camps in Jordan and Syria constitute open spaces regulated by the host state to look like any residential low-income neighborhood, allowing it to be connected with the surrounding cities, while in Lebanon they are set in closed spaces where urban satellites are located at the urban periphery, they lack green spaces, and have poor access and poor housing conditions (Hanafi 2009).

Since the 1950s, refugee camps in Lebanon gradually transformed from tents to highly dense neighborhoods, as mentioned by Jihane Sfeir (2008). The places where refugees settled in the suburbs of Beirut were poor and segregated areas where not only Palestinians but, also marginalized Syrian, Kurd and Armenian migrants settled as well. The Mar Elias refugee camp was created by UNRWA, around 1952, in the South West area of Beirut. The first inhabitants of the camp arrived by boat following the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, most of them came from Haifa and Jaffa, and the vast majority was Christian. The inhabitants were first accommodated in the Greek Orthodox convent of Mar Elias. However, by 1958, following the camps formation and according to UNRWA figures, the camp hosted 449 registered refugees (Dorai 2009). Today the camp hosts 615 registered refugees and the number is continuously increasing.

Figure 2.2
Emergence of the
refugee camps



At the time, the camps were merely places to foster survival; however, after the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Jordan was crushed in 1970, its leadership was relocated to Beirut and the camps in Lebanon became the centre for Palestinian resistance against the Israeli state and refugee camps in Lebanon “were perceived as “security islands” and treated as an experimental laboratory for control and surveillance” (Hanafi 2009). At around the same period, organizations and institutes were being established in order to lend a helping hand to the dwellers of those camps living in terrible conditions; the organizations engaged and provided necessary services that cater to health, education, culture, and sports in and around refugee camps.

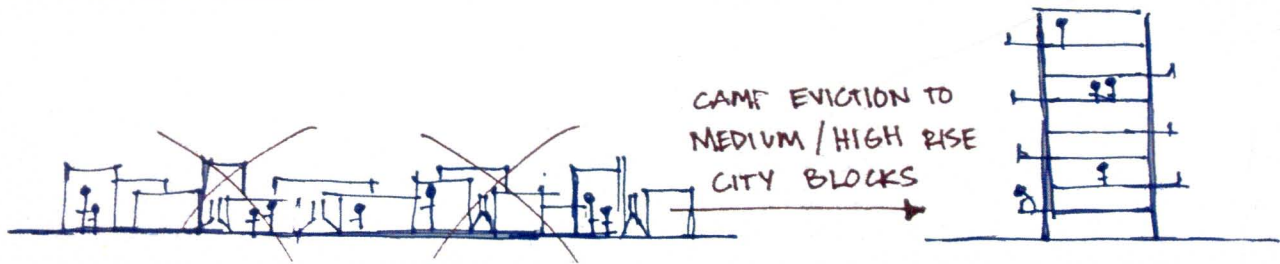
Later, the 1982 Israeli invasion into Lebanon forced the PLO to leave Beirut, and with the Palestinian leadership gone, the organizations’ facilities being confiscated and shut down, hopes of creating more social and economic institutions disappeared. UNRWA was the only organization the dwellers had to cater to their needs. However, despite UNRWA’s efforts, the situation of the refugees went from bad to worse. “Housing problems have become more acute, the economy has deteriorated, and the social environment has reached an alarmingly unhealthy level” (Hanafi 2009). Following that history many NGOs were initiated to help the refugees and secure a better quality of life in which they are barely providing the necessities, “to date, there are 46 Arab and 20 foreign NGOs who assist the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon” (Ajial 2001)

CAMPS AS SPACE

The production of space in the camp does not follow the Lebanese building and zoning regulations that govern the architecture practice. The simple setbacks, total exploitation ratio, minimum lot size, zoning guidelines and others are rules set by the builder himself in relation to the community’s practices and values (Samhan 2008). Since they emerged, “the demographic expansion and structural changes that have taken place in the camps has brought them closer to being slum areas and under-developed urban sprawls” (Hanafi P.8, 2009)

According to Vinit Mukhija in his book “Squatters as Developers?” there are three ways for a government to deal with slums; one is slum clearance where they demolish the slum and relocate the dwellers in medium rise blocks (3-5 storey buildings). Hanadi Samhan, in her thesis, also points out and criticizes that: “the common approach in dealing with informal settlements is to eradicate them, substituting their housing with “western” high rise housing projects that do

Figure 2.3 Camp Clearance



not respond to the local needs on the social, economic and environmental levels” (Samhan P.18, 2008). Slum dwellers inevitably had trouble with slum clearance because they faced difficulties adjusting to a new environment. Governments displace dwellers out of their homes and put them in new buildings, disregarding their lifestyles and what they are fond of in their camps. The worst part is the fact that the government does that believing it’s doing them a favor. Another approach described by Mukhija is slum upgrading, which is when the dwellers are granted legal titles of their properties, in which they will spend money and invest in developing and fixing up their homes, and the government will only help provide basic services such as infrastructure... a third approach to slums used in the mid-1990s by the state government of Maharashtra, in India, is slum redevelopment which is based on demolishing existing slums and rebuilding on the same sites at a higher density.

Another perspective on the matter was that of John Turner’s, an anarchist and the most influential critic of intended housing policies in the 20th century. Turner believed that people have the power to take control of their own lives; however, had some reservations about the effects of state’s assistance. Naturally, when the government is in charge of a project, they don’t deal with it the way the dweller does if he was to be in charge, after all, this is where he lives. What Turner promoted was ‘self-help housing programs’ and a call for consolidation among the dwellers for them to work on their living environment; the end result was that all accept the forms of informal settlements and respect their contribution to the urban fabric, while seeking to improve living conditions through installing sewer networks and other services.

INTERVENING IN THE CAMP

My intention is to provide a community center for the camp dwellers, where they can spend their time and invest their energy, work, play, read, dance, etc... everything they feel like doing already but have no space to do them at. The main element I started investigating when I approached the camp is the existing fabric. My concern developed to tackle the lack of spaces in the camp and how that affects the lives of the dwellers. My purpose is to provide a more hospitable environment with efficient available resources where the dwellers would be able to do their practices. My design explorations are based on observing and investigating dwellers’ lifestyles and practices in the camps, as well as developing a faithful understanding of the spatial elements and the way they are appropriated by the people according

to their needs: an approach I intend to follow in designing my intervention.

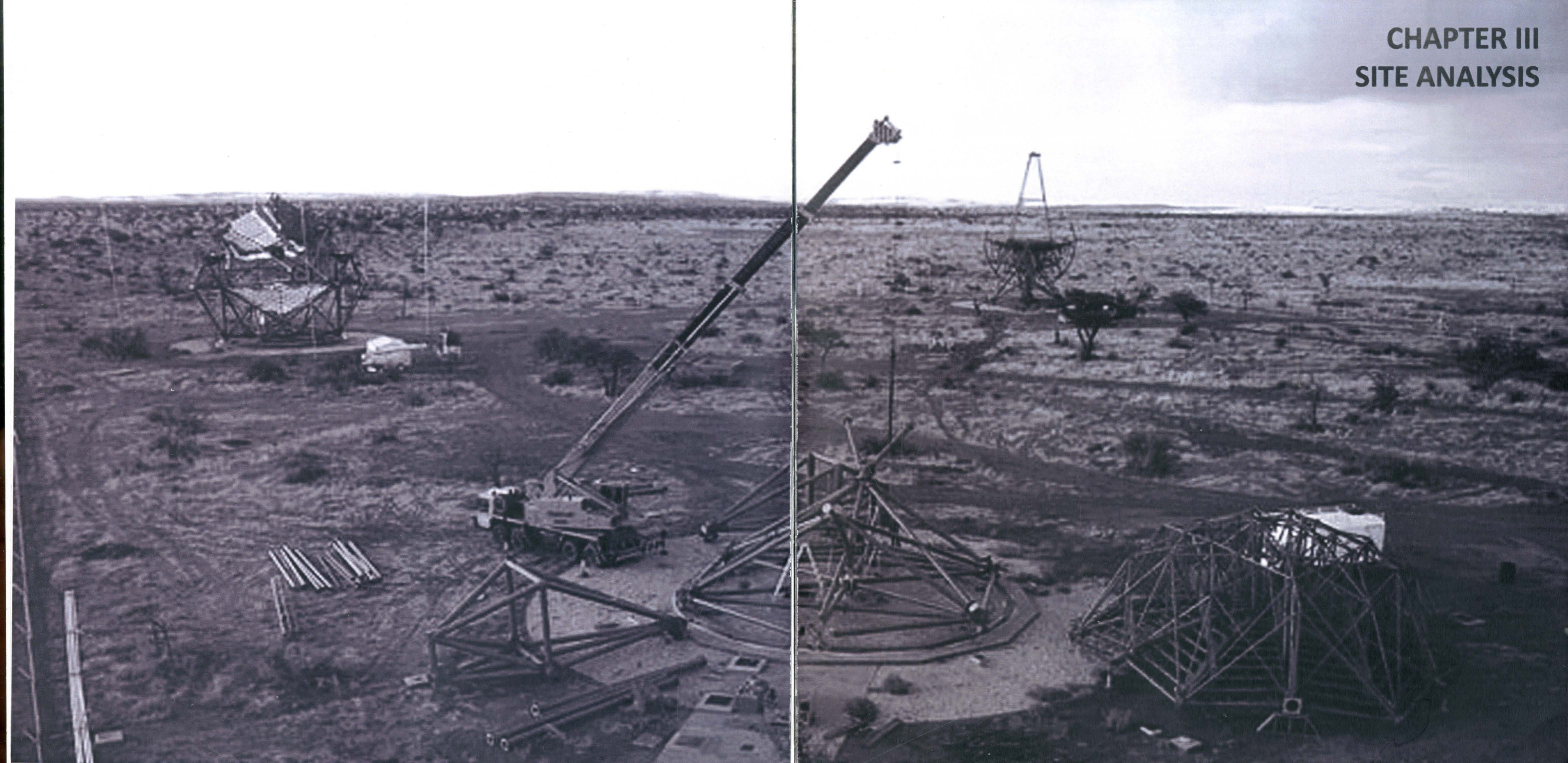
A study of refugee camps presented by the social scientist Michel Agier (2003) is “between war and city”. Agier analyzes the camp and its relation to the city and suggests that the camp works often like a city, in the sense of a place of “enduring organization of space, social life and system of power”. I believe that one must set a sustainable structure for the targeted people in order to give them a sense of achievement and self worth. This will also empower the dwellers on the long run to facilitate other projects. The underlying goals of the project is to maintain the permanent presence of the camp, give the marginalized dwellers hope of a very tangible project that is implementable on the ground, and provide them with a space as well as a psychological boost.



CHAPTER III SITE ANALYSIS



CHAPTER III
SITE ANALYSIS



CHAPTER 3 SITE ANALYSIS

This chapter profiles the case study of Mar Elias Refugee Camp, it introduces the camp's status in the city, an overview of the camp's urban fabric and its development into an urban space, and the dwellers' inner and on-edge activities that provide direct and indirect links between them and the outer community.

The thesis is built on a **multi-dimensional level of analysis**: the macro "the city and the surroundings", the micro "the camp" and the analysis of its fabric, and the link between the camp and the city: "the outreach". The framework explores an understanding of the camp with respect to the city, the camp's unique aspects which allows me to understand the processes of production that will host the best suitable environment for those users not so different from that provided by the fabric of the camp itself, and the interface that will bring those dwellers out and the people in.

THE MACRO: THE CAMP IN THE CITY

This macro level of analysis investigates the place of the camp in the city and its relation to the city neighborhood networks. To choose my location I studied the road trip leading to each of the three refugee camps located in Beirut: Mar Elias, Chatila, and Burj El Brajneh. On my way to the camps, I observed a route starting from the city center, which is a high income region, moving on to middle class areas, to low income areas leading to the camps. The map on the right illustrates the routes which one can take in order to reach several refugee camps in Beirut. For example, if we take one of the routes leading to Sabra, you move from the city center, onto Hamra, Verdun, Ramlet El Bayda, Jneih, Ouza'l, Ghobairy in order to get to the camp, same with Burj El Brajneh, and moving backwards to the high income regions, most of the refugee camps are located far from the city centre.

It is a different case in Mar Elias. Located South West of the Beirut municipality, the camp is situated at the crossroad between Beirut Southern suburbs of Bir Hassan and Ouzaï, Ras Beirut and Cola intersection; it occupies an area of 5,400m². The camp's central location facilitates circulation for both: camp dwellers, who can easily reach other parts of Beirut, and outsiders who wish to visit whether they are from Beirut or from other regions of Lebanon (Dorai 2009). And since my thesis' purpose requires a location integrated within the city, this comes as a main reason to my choice of site.

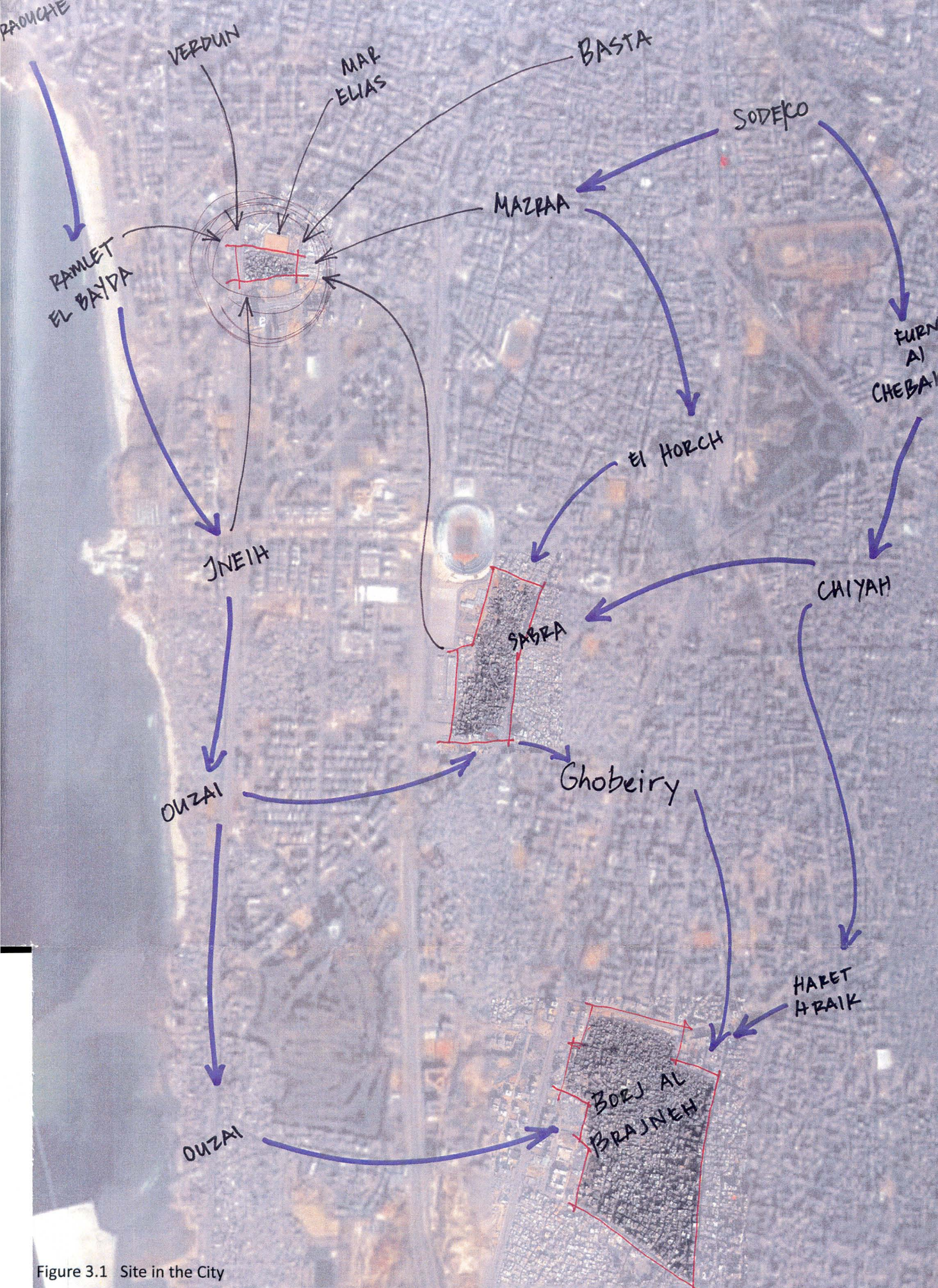


Figure 3.1 Site in the City

- ENTRANCES
- EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES
 - UNRWA KABRI SCHOOL
 - KANAFANI AND IN'ASH KINDERGARTENS
 - NORWEGIAN VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
- PEDESTRIAN PATH THROUGH SITE
- EMPTY USABLE LAND
- FOOTBALL FIELD OWNED BY CHURCH
- CEMETERY
- SERVICES/ PUBLIC SPACES

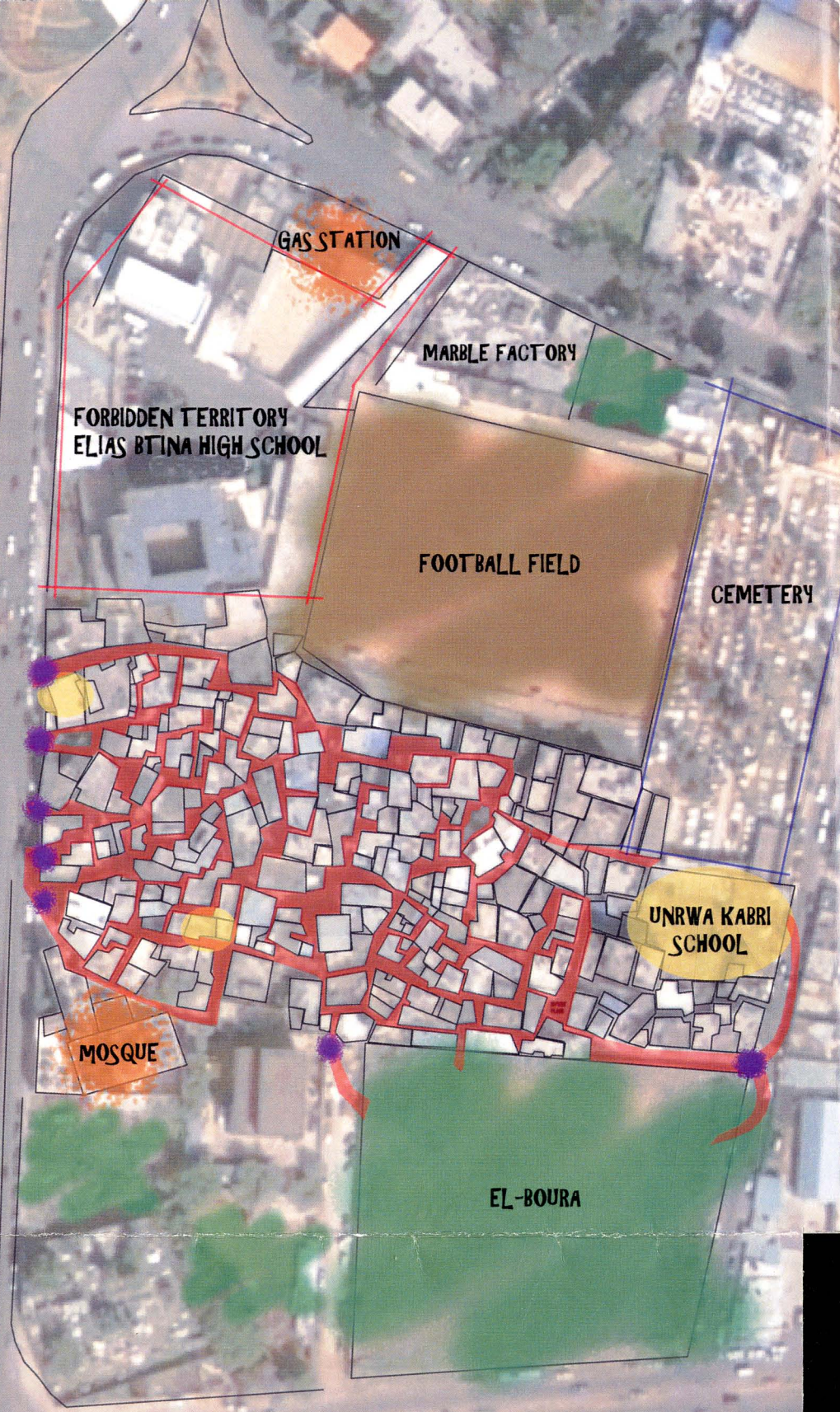


Figure 3.2 Site Investigation

THE MICRO: MY PERCEPTION. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This level of analysis was developed to investigate the urban context and how the dwellers, especially women and children, appropriate the camp to their needs. The buildings' layout constitutes what looks like a maze to visitors: a combination of narrow alleys that meet at a certain point and become a relatively wider space "Left-over space" that is used by children to meet and play (highlighted in the map). My attitude consisted of observing, analyzing and documenting children's activities around the camp, inquiring about how these activities respond to that context created by the urban fabric, and translating those activities to architectural elements. At a later stage, I worked on relating these activities to other practices that take place in the camp which supply an indirect link to the outer city, activities that triggered an interesting program that will deal with both: the dwellers, on a personal level, and the visitors (outsiders), on a communal level. In this part I worked my way inside/out: starting with the analysis of the camp's characteristics moving out to the intervention located on the periphery.

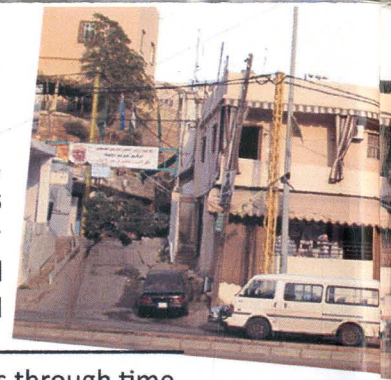
The physical characteristics of the built environment at the camp are determined by the way they emerged, as "uncontrolled" settlements, where there was no planning of the area prior to its occupation; it follows no governmental rules, but rather decisions taken by the dwellers to provide themselves with safety, and privacy. The map on the left clearly shows that the plots have different shapes and sizes, the houses barely provide enough space in between for pedestrian activity, and the narrow space does not allow any vehicular access whatsoever; the dwellers' main concern was to provide a certain degree of security to the camp from outsiders and passersby.

At the time when the camp emerged, the housing blocks were composed of one-floor structures. Today, many buildings reach up to four floors. Families add extra floors when the family becomes larger, and the house is turned over from grandfather to father to son. The construction of the camp is "the product of individual "collective" efforts, in which some houses are built in solid lasting materials" (Samhan 2008), similar to what you see in neighboring areas in the city; others built with poor-quality material, such as steel, metal sheets and such assemblies: constructions that are bound to be destroyed.



Figure 3.3 One-floor structure vs. multi-storey structures

Even though the layout of the camp's buildings seems to be irregular in plan, the urban morphology possesses a certain harmony which allows the camp's dwellers to appropriate it fascinatingly. The camp is organized in such a manner where it allows smooth accessibility from one place to another for the dwellers and the visitors, hierarchy is given to "public spaces" as they are scattered all around the edges or at meeting points in the camp where certain open areas are available.



The prohibition of any spatial extension onto the empty lots adjacent to the camps through time has led to the development of highly dense spaces as shown in the pictures in the previous page. The quality of the environment, provided by high buildings separated by narrow alleys rather than large streets and particular setbacks, is highly congested.

"The camp appears as a pocket of poverty in an urban environment in rapid evolution since the end of the civil war, even if, according to its inhabitants, Mar Elias is perceived as one of the best camps in Beirut" (Dorai P.14, 2009)

"Most of the *barrios*¹ were built without any allowance for vehicular access... the emphasis is therefore on journeys by foot" (Bolivar, 1990s) Circulation throughout the camp happens through narrow alleys that pass between the buildings in an irregular manner; small ramps integrated in the ground formation of the camp dominate the area rather than steps because the slope from edge to edge is barely noticeable. The alleys are not only used for circulating around the camp but, also act as gathering spaces despite their tightness, although the alleys are formed between high buildings that barely allow any sun in; nonetheless, they generate shaded places where people can sit, talk and enjoy an occasional rare breeze during summer when the houses are too crowded and humid.

In my first visit to the Mar Elias refugee camp, I didn't have a map, as I was checking the site out. Walking around the camp, looking for certain elements that I could mark which will later help me locate my way out seemed easy, there were many drawings on the walls, certain wall colors in certain areas (blue, pink, peach, etc...), organizations labels, politicians' pictures, all could help you locate exactly where you are. In comparison to "Moukhayam Bourj El Brajne", which is a relatively bigger refugee camp located on the outskirts of Greater Beirut, inter-connecting spaces in the camp had no logic to them whatsoever. In Bourj, a distributor spine which is relatively wider than other paths, connects them all together, and cuts through the whole camp from one edge to the other; the logic behind it is "the tighter the path gets, the more private it becomes, eventually leading to a dead end" (Samhan 2008).

1 Barrio is an expression used by people from Venezuela to describe an area of self built housing occupying land which belongs to someone other than the occupiers, and in which the residents are mostly low-income families



Figure 3.4 The Markets



Figure 3.5 The Alleys

In Mar Elias, there are no dead ends, the alleys are all relatively similar in width, they are all inter-connected conducting a maze that is appropriated by the kids to enjoy some of their favorite games such as hide and seek and racing. Those alleys get wider when two or more alleys intersect, creating spaces referred to as “Leftover-space”, those spaces are also irregular in form but provide public areas for kids where they can play other sports such as passing a ball around or wrestling for fun, “although very small, their existence is essential to communal and extended human activity” (Samhan 2008)

In order to be able to unravel more about the ways the camp dwellers adapt to the spaces they are living in, I sat with a couple of kids at their homes and provided empty maps, and asked them to trace ways they use while walking through the camp, whether it was to go to school, to visit a friend, to buy something from the market, or even the paths they took while racing and playing hide and seek. I also let them try to highlight their favorite places, as in more frequently visited, on another map.



Figure 3.6 Children tracing the paths they take through the Camp





Figure 3.7 Highlighting their favorite Places

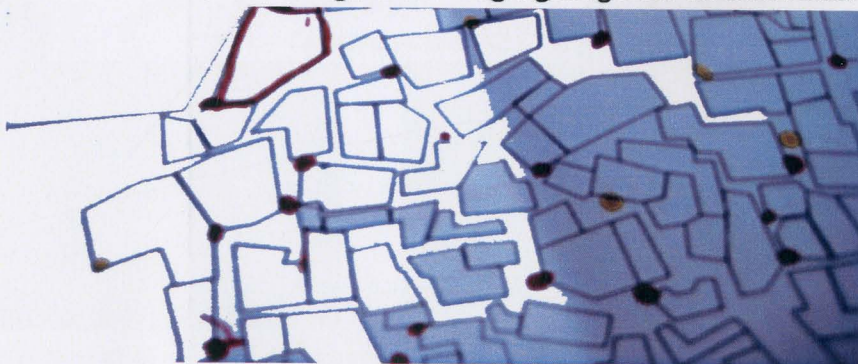




Figure 3.8 Spatial Layouts

Figure 3.9 "Left-over" Spaces

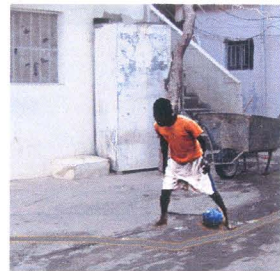




Figure 3.10
Camp Appropriations

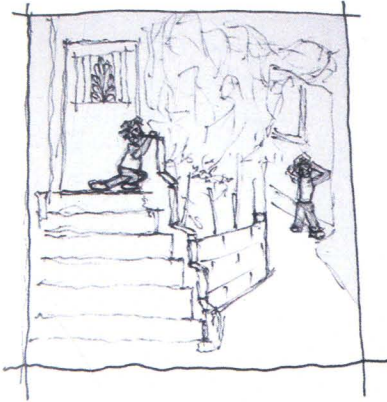
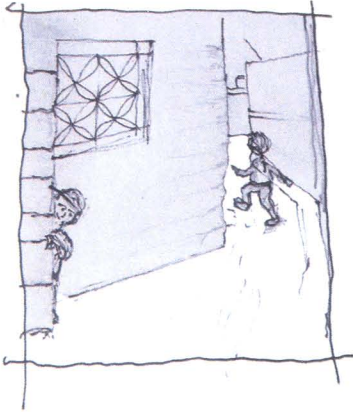


Figure 3.10
Camp Appropriations

Choice of Site

It is not easy to intervene in such a tight space; there is barely any place at the Mar Elias refugee camp for any horizontal expansion. My proposal clearly needs to be located at the periphery of the camp, where it can be in direct contact with the surrounding neighborhood in order for people to be attracted and invited in. Investigating the area surrounding the camp, I noticed a number of empty plots: one in particular is in direct contact with the camp and enjoys direct contact with the main road as well. That piece of land is referred to as “El Boura” by the dwellers. It is already occasionally rented by organizations in the camp to host festivals and play tournaments for the camp dwellers. It is the place the dwellers enjoy going to the most, and at this point, it represents their refuge from the dense and crowded camp when they’re looking for a place to pass sometime in the open air.

2

The eye-catching property is around 9100m² and is located at the southern periphery of the camp. It is owned by a Lebanese lady who is not going to use it due to the camp’s presence beside it, and is willingly looking for buyers. The plot is surrounded by three roads: one main road known as “Gabriel Murr” from the south and is 22 meters wide, and two secondary roads: “Dr. Philippe Hitti” from the east and is 6 meters wide, and “Mar Elias” from the west and is 8 meters wide. “Mar Elias” street in that area is only used to access the refugee camp; however, the two other roads act as connections between different neighborhoods. The main advantage of choosing this plot is having my intervention abundantly exposed.

Figure 3.11
Section AA through Site

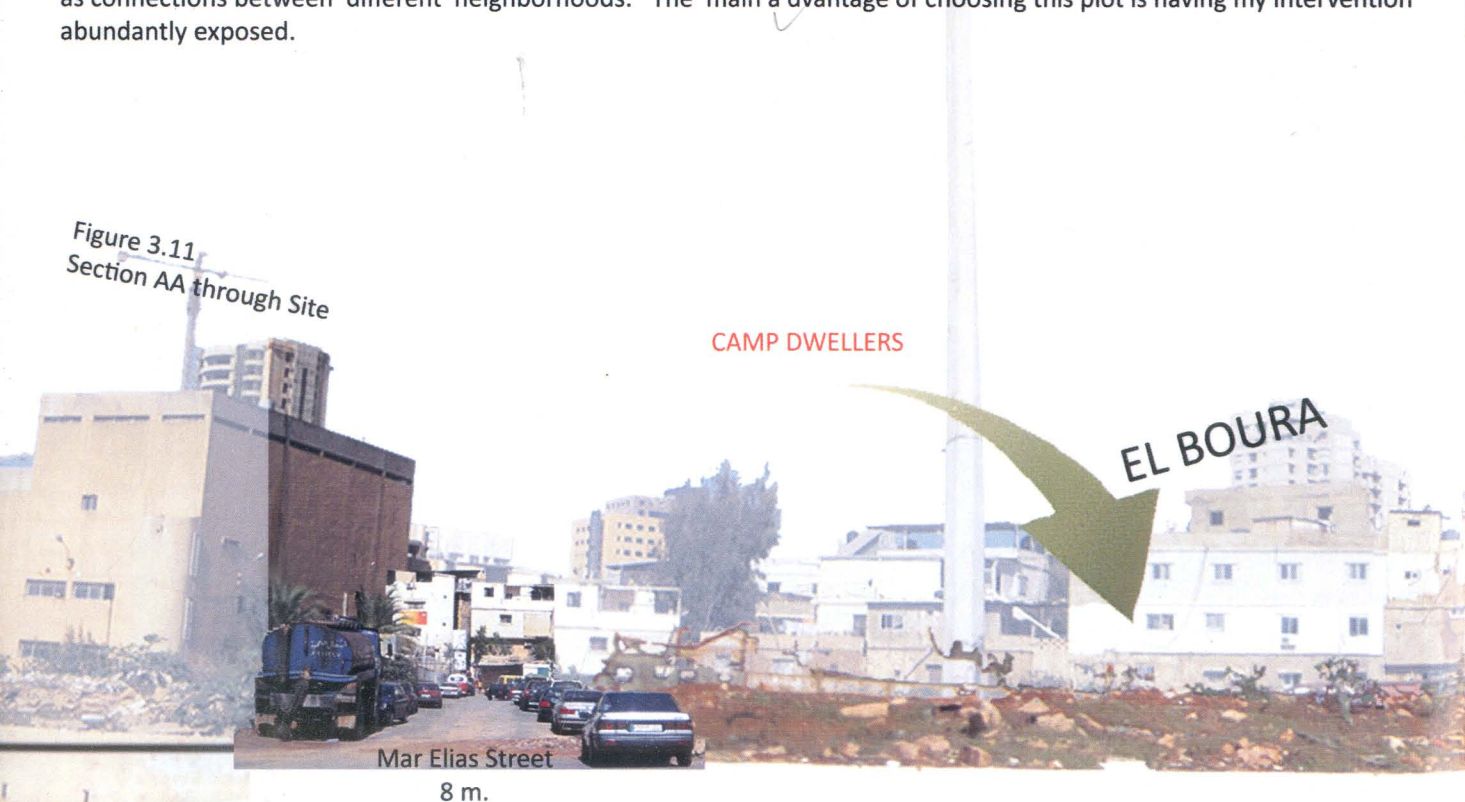
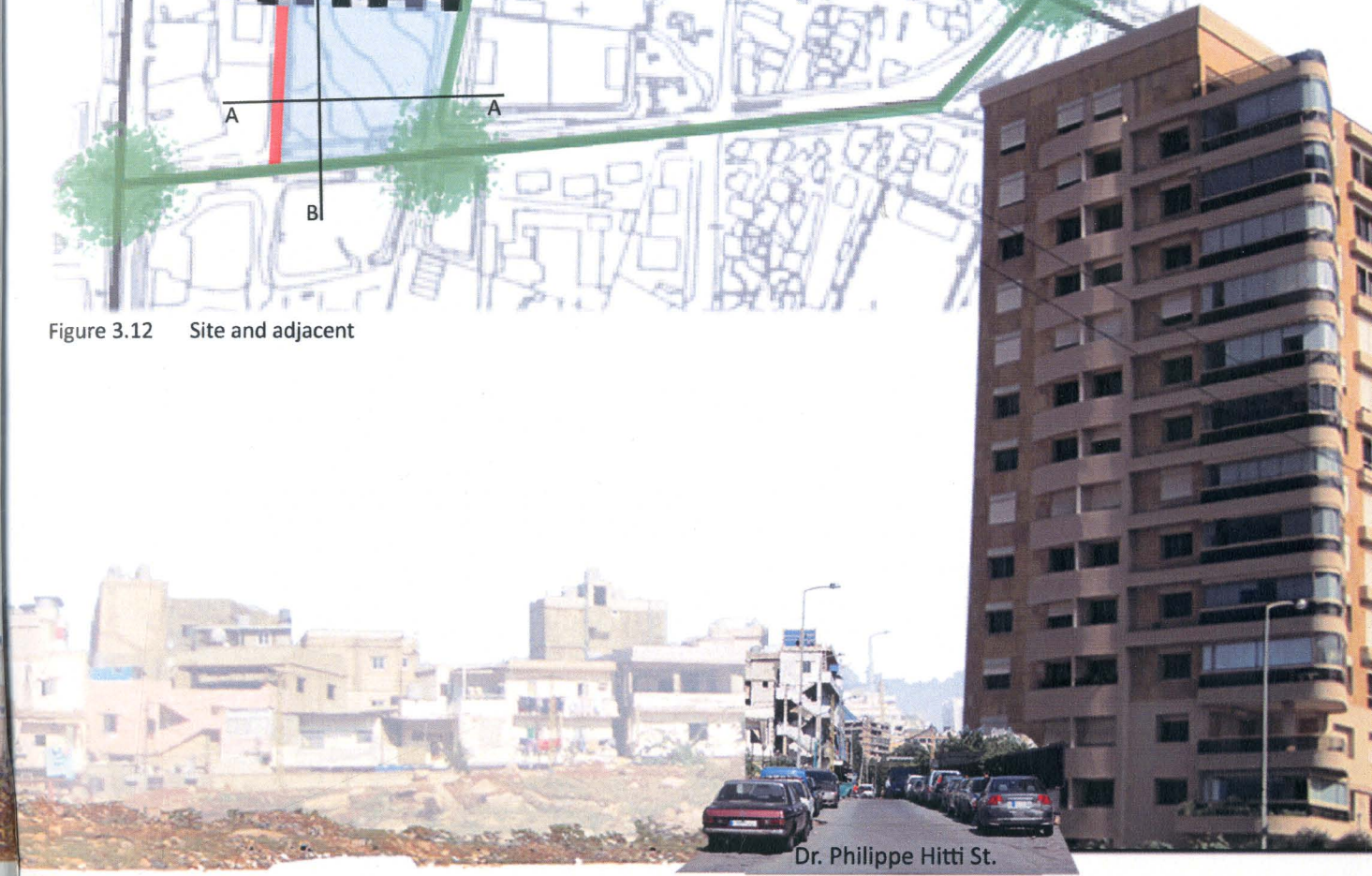




Figure 3.12 Site and adjacent



Dr. Philippe Hitti St.

6 m.



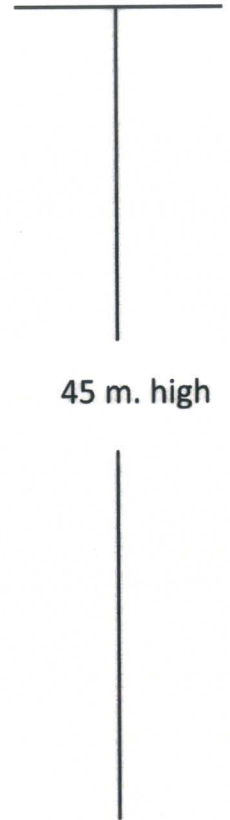
- Set back from Main Road
- Set back from Secondary Road

Figure 3.14 Site Map



Figure 3.13 Section BB through Site

- Setback from a highway is 9 meters
- Setback from a Secondary Roads 4.5 meters
- The buildings reach as high as 50 meters vertically
- The Footprint of the building should not exceed 40% of the land's total Area



45 m. high

OUTSIDERS



Gabriel Murr St.
22 m.

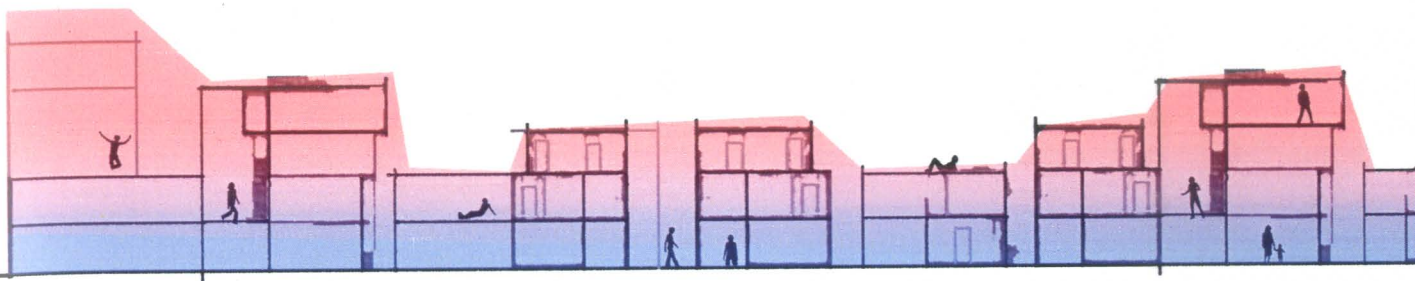


THE OUTREACH: THE LINK

My choice of the camp as it is most integrated by its location does not stop here. According to references, Mar Elias refugee camp nowadays can qualify as an urban space: due to its transformation into a dense built-up area, composed of two to three floor-buildings connected to the infrastructures such as water, electricity, telephone, etc... Moreover, the camp's location has facilitated the development of different sets of activities. A number of Palestinian NGOs are present in the camp, such as Beit Atfal Al-Soumoud, Palestinian Martyrs' Association, Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, Al Inaach, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Aidoun, Palestinian Human Rights Association, etc... (Dorai 2009) Since the organizations are mainly concentrated in the Mar Elias refugee camp, refugees from camps all around Beirut come to it in order to take part in some of these activities. One of the main observations I have found is that women approach Al Inaach Organization in order to get materials of embroidery, but since there are no places at the camp for outsiders to stay and perform the works, they go all the way back home, to Burj Al Brajneh or Chatila, produce the piece of art and come back to drop it off and collect their income. This has turned into a commercial activity and a source of income to the families.

More exposed activities take place at the edges of the camp. The commercial areas are scattered along two strips: the eastern and western boundaries of the camp (refer to figure 3.4). The eastern is composed of small groceries, fruit and vegetable sellers, etc... when the western is situated on the main urban highway from southern suburbs of Beirut to Ras Beirut; it includes car garages, manufacturer of furniture, grocery, etc... Both strips are frequented by camp dwellers, enterprises around the camp and inhabitants of the neighboring districts, simply because it is less expensive for them to go to those places in the refugee camps than any place outside the camp, "the same phenomenon can be found in other camps, such as Al Buss in Tyre (south Lebanon) or Jabal Hussein in Amman (Jordan)" (Dorai 2009)

At this level, I investigated the practices in the vicinity of the camp that bring those dwellers in contact with people from the city. Since the 1950's the population in the refugee camps



■ Camp's establishment: low density, one-floor structures

■ Camp's development: high density, multi-storey structures

Figure 3.15 Camp Development

“has changed due to emigration, internal displacement and social mobility” (Dorai P.2, 2009) other than the activities the children come up with on their own in their environment, my main observation at Mar Elias refugee camp concentrated on the organizations that help the camp’s dwellers spend their time including libraries, training centers, dance and art activities, etc... One organization that offers a broad program that deals with the dwellers as users and brings them in indirect contact with the outer city is Inaach, an association established by a number of Lebanese and Palestinian ladies in 1969, whose goal is the development of Palestinian camps.

My investigation mainly relies on observation, spending time on site, and investigating the organization and its activities. The selection of the organization was based on the practices it accomplished in relation to others, the services it provides, and the particular users it focuses on, as well as its attempts to connect the camp with the outer community (Refer to chapter four for details). Interviewing was also an essential source of information throughout my investigation, for I was able to interview women who worked at Inaach inside and outside the camp, and understand the nature of their relationship with the women and children who are the targets of their programs in the time men seek employment outside the camp during the day. I was also able to interview dwellers who are in direct contact with Inaach from Mar Elias camp exploring and evaluating the positive effect the association has had on their lives: be it providing them with places where their children can develop their skills or presenting them with a trade in which they can earn revenue to their household.



Figure 3.16 Children at Inaach



INA
Association for

جمعية
انعاش
الخيم
الفلسطينية



ASH

the Development of Palestinian Camps



Association for the
Development
of Palestinian Camps

INAASH

Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps



جمعية
انعاش
الخيم
الفلسطينية



انعاش

Association for the
Development
of Palestinian Camps

PROGRAM ADOPTION, INAACH ORGANIZATION AS A CASE STUDY

According to Frank Riessman, who writes about the 'Education of the culturally deprived child', there is a five point strategy for the education of the disadvantaged (Riessman, 1972). The first part is concerned with the building provision, and the second with the nature of experiences that will contribute to the child's increased involvement. In order to create that environment, he claims that "one has to observe the nature of play life among children in a poor and crowded neighborhood (in order) to recognize their inventiveness in devising games and their attempts to construct enjoyment for themselves" (Riessman P.32, 1972). In my investigation, I have adopted that method to build my thesis (Refer to figures and investigation of site in Chapter 3). What I did was go to the camp for several days, just sit there and observe the nature of the dwellers' lifestyles, whether the children or the parents, carefully studying their culture and the environment they live in, writing down the positives that allow those inhabitants to cope with and appreciate the way they have built that environment.

The program that already establishes an indirect connection between the camp dwellers and the outer city and will allow bringing all the elements of the thesis together is that offered by Inaach. Inaach is an association established by a number of Lebanese and Palestinian ladies in 1969, whose goal is the development of Palestinian Camps around the area. Their facilities are scattered around different locations such as Hamra, Sidon, Tyre, and other places around Lebanon. My intervention will be designed as the main headquarters for Inaach, a base point for all its branches to turn to.

Figure 4.1 Inaach Logos



INAASH

Association for the Development of Palestinian Camps



جمعية
انعاش
الخيم
الفلسطينية



Association for the
Development
of Palestinian Camps

The services provided by the association include **daycares**, which host kids from three to five years old, until they are ready to go to the UNRWA school, **evening schools**, to develop certain skills and provide diverse programs for graduating students, **computer labs and libraries**, although the computer labs lack instructors and the library comprises a poor collection of books, the children have no other places to go to or compare them to, so they makes them happy, **workshops**, to produce and finalize the embroidery piece into frames, Kleenex boxes, purses, etc... and **a rotating fund**, which is an amount of money given to an individual, who has had a business and was affected or completely shut down during the war, in order for him to redeem his business; the fund can be paid back to the association in small amounts on an interval of 20 months.



Figure 4.2 Daycare







Figure 4.3 The Library



Figure 4.4 The Computer Lab

“The financial and social conditions of the camps have deprived women and the young of the most fundamental elements necessary for progress and development, for the women are enslaved by need and stagnation, and the young are the victims of international injustice” (In’ash Association Booklet). The Inaach provides women with work, such as producing precious pieces of the Palestinian embroidery; however, the space requirements for such program is barely available due to the camp’s density and congestion, there are no places to work on or store the merchandise at the camp, nor are there places to exhibit their works. The storage facility Inaach owns is located in Hamra, from where the merchandise is brought to the camp, women are called in; they take it and work on it at home, and bring them back when they’re done. As it is, the program offered by In’ash doesn’t only offer the dwellers a place to do their practices; it also provides a program that will result in smooth exposure to society.

Figure 4.5 Embroidery works by women at Inaach





Figure 4.6
Inaach Gallery at Rotana Building in Hamra





Figure 4.7 Pieces of Embroidery produced by the women



Figure 4.8 Mother works at home



Figure 4.9
Packing at Inaach Storage and Administration Facility in Hamra

ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

In order to come up with a program that will cater for the needs of the dwellers, I went about investigating the needs of my user groups. The thesis shows that children of the camps are deprived of having spaces to enjoy a normal childhood: a court to play soccer, a wide space to play “catch me if you can”, a library to study at or even borrow books from, and so on... Without a doubt, the children have managed to accommodate that space in order to play only a few games they became very fond of; however, even though they manage to run around racing around the camp, the poor quality of the ground they run on is dangerous, and even though they managed to find a 3x3 meters square area in front of a market to throw a ball around, they still piss off the market owner for breaking his shelves when they act carelessly. How are you supposed to ask an eight year old to be careful while he is running around or playing ball?

Other broad activities such as the art of embroidery exercised by women around the camp, lacks basic spaces for everything to happen. There are no storage spaces for the merchandise anywhere around the camp, so it only comes in at specific times and distributed to the women who come to the facility and pick them up. The women head back home to do the work, and bring back when it's complete. There are no workshops for the works to be properly finalized, so they're taken outside the camp to workshops the facility have in Hamra in order for that to happen. Come to think about it, providing the dwellers with those spaces will not only cater to their needs but also provide them with job opportunities. Exhibition spaces are also another matter.

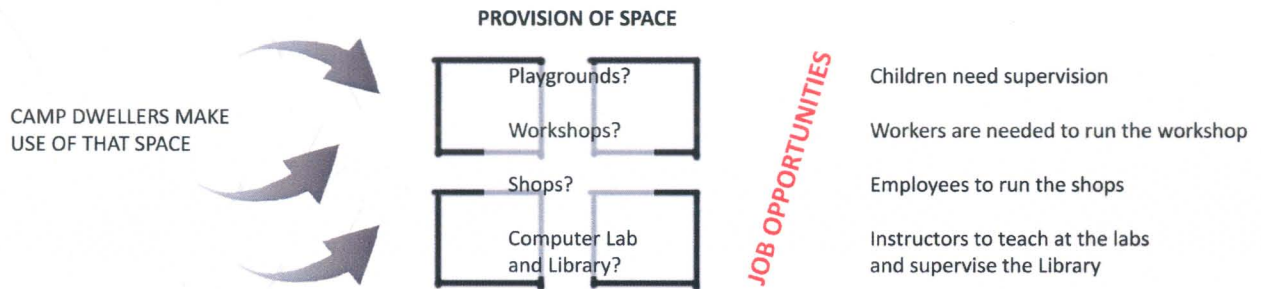


Figure 4.10 Sketch explaining the provision of job opportunities linked to the provision of space

Even though organizations around Lebanon have already attempted to provide spaces for those programs to happen, the provision has been a product of low-income, volunteer work that has not touched half of those necessities. The biggest gesture to provide a place for the camps' dwellers to breathe was a huge club founded by Inaach in Beer Hassan, targeting the dwellers of Chatila; the club provided kindergartens for children below six years of age, recreational and play spaces for slightly older, night schools for the dwellers who wished to improve their learning, and a place to teach the ladies the art of embroidery, for it has become a source of income for families. That club was confiscated and shut down by militias in 1982, during the Civil War.

Around **615 inhabitants** live in Mar Elias refugee camp today, of which 46% are children and 54% are adults. Children below five years of age, 55 pupils, go to nurseries: around 25 to Inaach and 30 to Ghassan Kanafani, while those who are six to eighteen years old, 228 pupils, go to UNRWA Kabri School (UNRWA 2009). Inspired by the ongoing "scattered" program offered by Inaach to the camp dwellers along with the practices they enjoy doing but lack spaces to do them at, my program will be divided into the following:

- Outdoor facilities, playgrounds mainly, along with a soccer field [15x28m²], unlimited access



Figure 4.12 Playground



Figure 4.13 Play Area



Figure 4.14 Soccer Field

- Public Gardens, that are not only located at ground level but also extend to the rooftops. Rooftops of the dwellers houses are used as places where camp dwellers enjoy socializing the most: having an 'Argileh', talking with the neighbors, and spending time with the family on the weekend

- Daycares for the mothers to have a place where they can leave their children during the day until they are old enough to go to schools, guided by Bronfenbrenner: the children should be segregated by levels of ability according to their ages, "consequently, from the preschool onward the child is dealing principally with replicas of the stamp of his own environment" (Bronfenbrenner P.5, 1972).

So there should be **two classes** $14 \times 11 \text{ m}^2$, **308 m^2** . Each specified for two consecutive age groups, ex. 2 and 3, or 4 and 5. In a simple kindergarten, according to both the already existing facility and Neufert as reference, each class should host: a common room, a dining area, a kitchenette, 2 or 3 $4 \times 4 \text{ m}^2$ play and educational - toy areas, a group room and a washroom. Also, a **playground** dedicated to the daycare, separate and smaller from the public one.

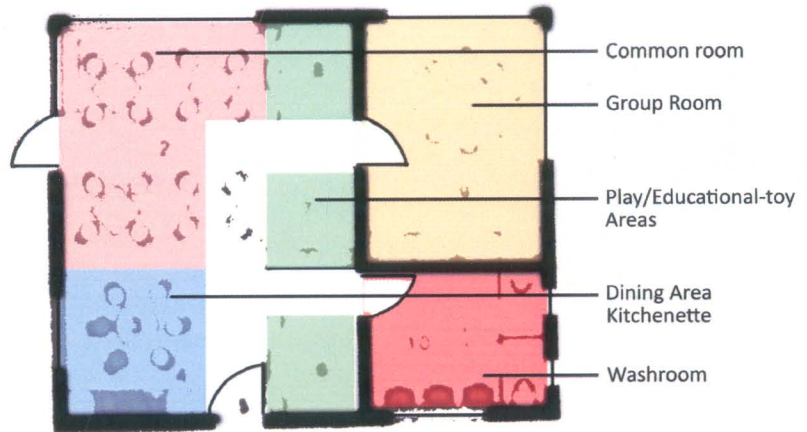


Figure 4.15 Kindergarten Class Requirements

- A training center, defined by Inaach as an evening school, where graduating students, who have failed passing the Lebanese Bacc, can go to in order to develop certain professional skills and learn about things they are interested in. A small educational facility that includes **two classes** [$(7 \times 5) \text{ m}^2 \times 2 \text{ spaces} = 70 \text{ m}^2$]: can be used to offer four different subjects, or more than one to offer a subject that is really demanded, a **teacher's lounge** with its toilets, as well as **toilets** catering for 2 classes, around 60 students, 10 m

- **A library, 200 m^2** , where a rich collection of stories for children and books for adults can be available to all dwellers, as well as a quiet space where they can study other than their crowded houses. The library will account for 100 pupils. It will include **open book shelves, administration area, a reading room, work spaces, and toilets**
And a computer lab, 40 m^2 hosting 30 computers utmost, supervised by instructors, where the children can learn and have fun when they are done with school. I'm not only talking about the children but also dwellers who wish to use it, as it will be accessible through the library, and by everyone above a certain age

too small



Figure 4.16 Computer Labs



Figure 4.17 Library

- Art studios: **3 classes** where children can paint, draw, as well as do some art work, and a place where women can work on embroidery at the same time, **100m²**
- And a **dance studio**: where dance groups such as Jafra at the Mar Elias camp can train for performances without being interrupted, **150m²**



Figure 4.16 Art Classes

- **Storage Spaces, 16m²**, (2x2)m² spaces, one for the embroideries, one for the art studios, and another two for the retail spaces
- **A Workshop, 80 m²**, for the works to be properly finalized. This will also offer job opportunities for camp dwellers
- **An Exhibition Space, 120 m²**, where the facility can host expositions of the arts and crafts produced by the camp dwellers to the outer community, rather than renting out galleries and reception spaces
- **10 Shops** scattered on all three sides, where the traditional pieces can be sold, as well as a way for commercial activity on site where camp dwellers and other city residents can go to and mingle [9m²x 10 spaces = 90 m²]
- **An auditorium** that hosts 200 spectators along with a stage and two changing rooms, **250m²**, where performances can take place, and important lectures can be held

too small.



In bullet pointing what the **USERS** need, I linked each space I have in my program with the user that is going to be using it. I then moved on to relate the spaces together diagrammatically, in four different parts: **Private, Semi Private, Semi Public, and Public**. My main interest was to provide the private play area also known as “the children’s safe haven”, a place that is opened at the time they get off school and a program that is familiar to them, away from all political and social problems into an open comfortable place that they can consider theirs, this part is not only private but is also located at the edge that links my intervention to the camp. The private section is embraced by the wider program constituting of the art studios, the dancing halls, the workshops, as the semi-private element of the program. The program opens up to auditoriums and exhibition spaces, where performances and galleries to exhibit the works could take place, as the semi-public and the shops as the extreme public space accessible to all.

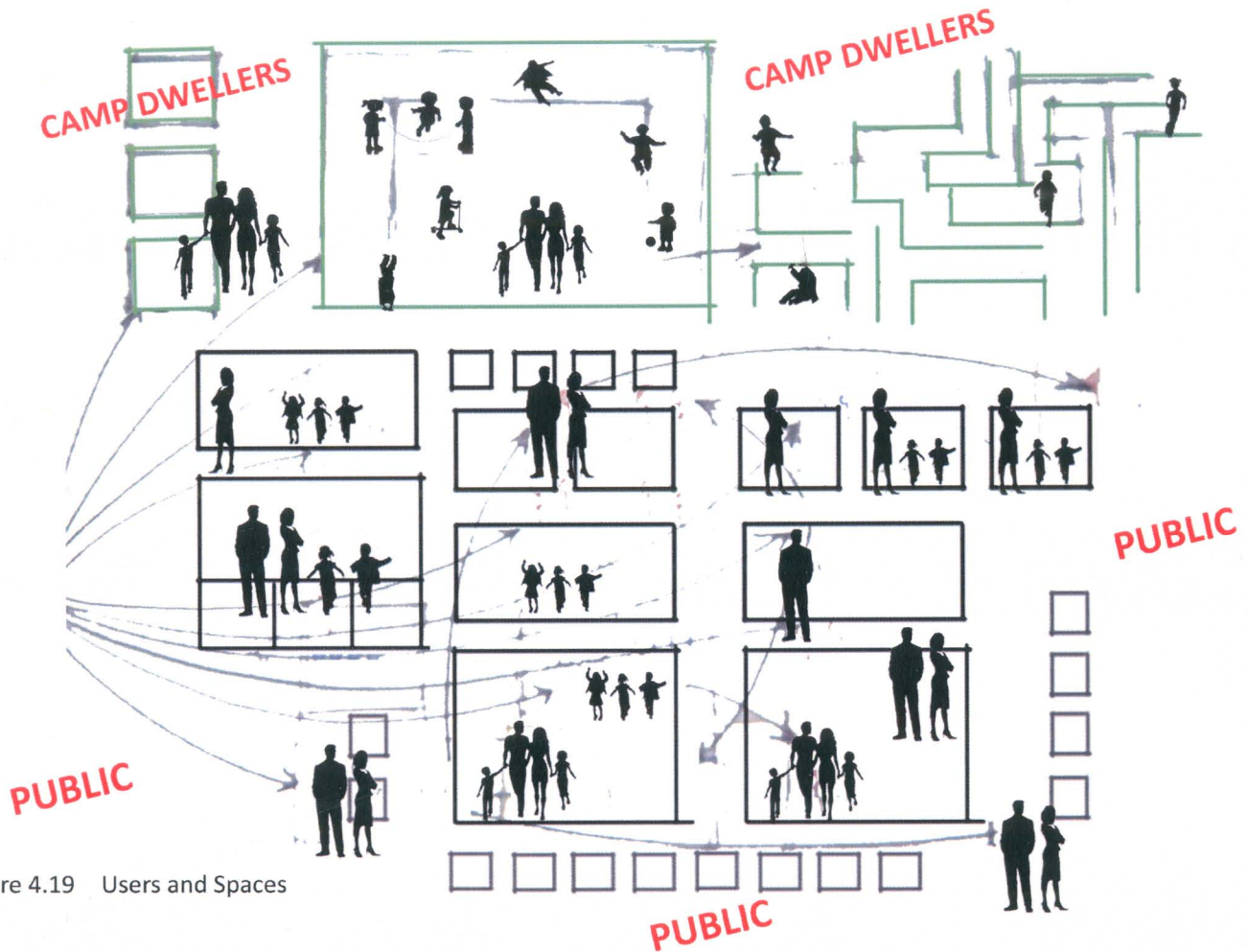


Figure 4.19 Users and Spaces

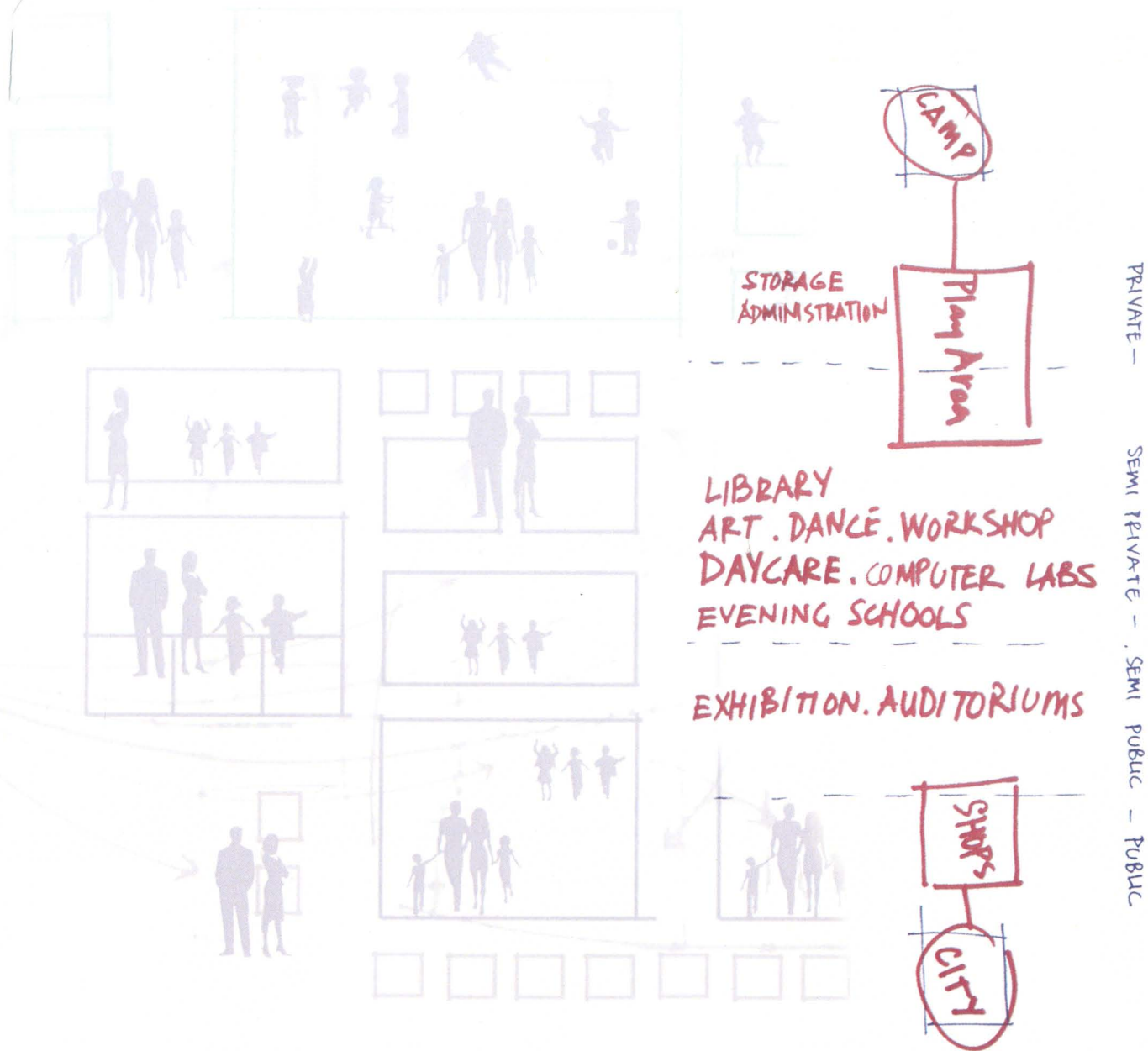


Figure 4.20 Program divided into Private – Semi Private – Semi Public – Public

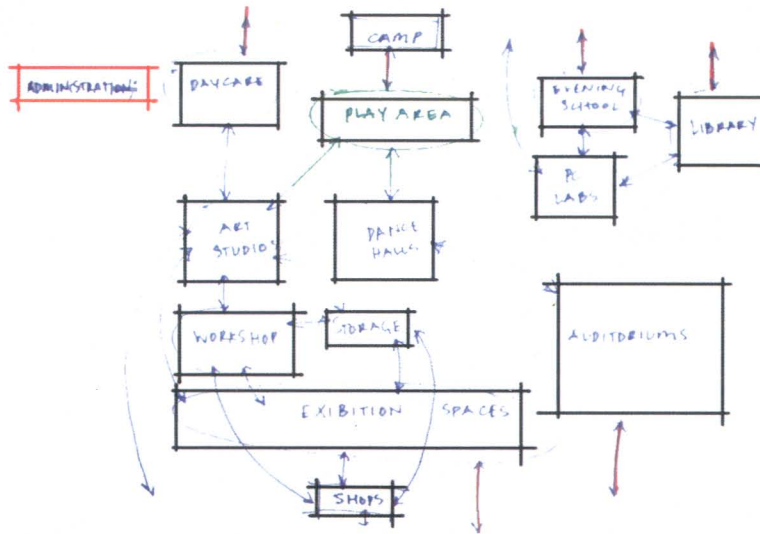


Figure 4.21 Bubble Diagram linking the program

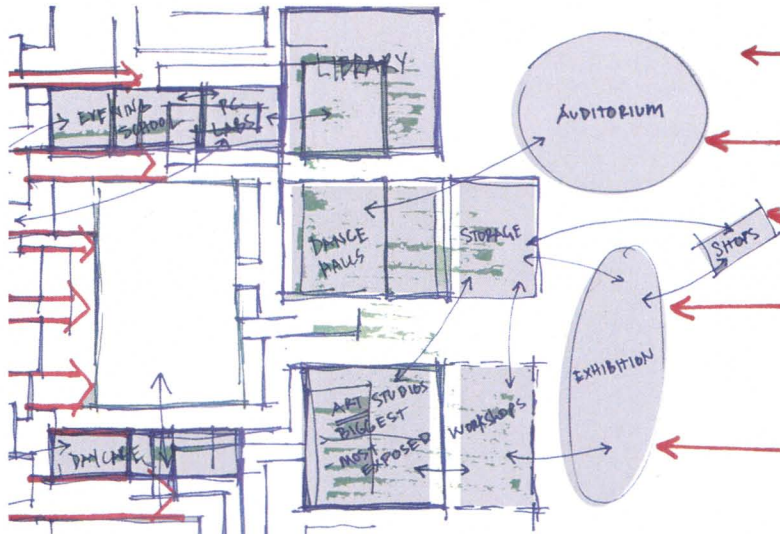


Figure 4.22 Solid vs. Void, Dense vs. Transparent

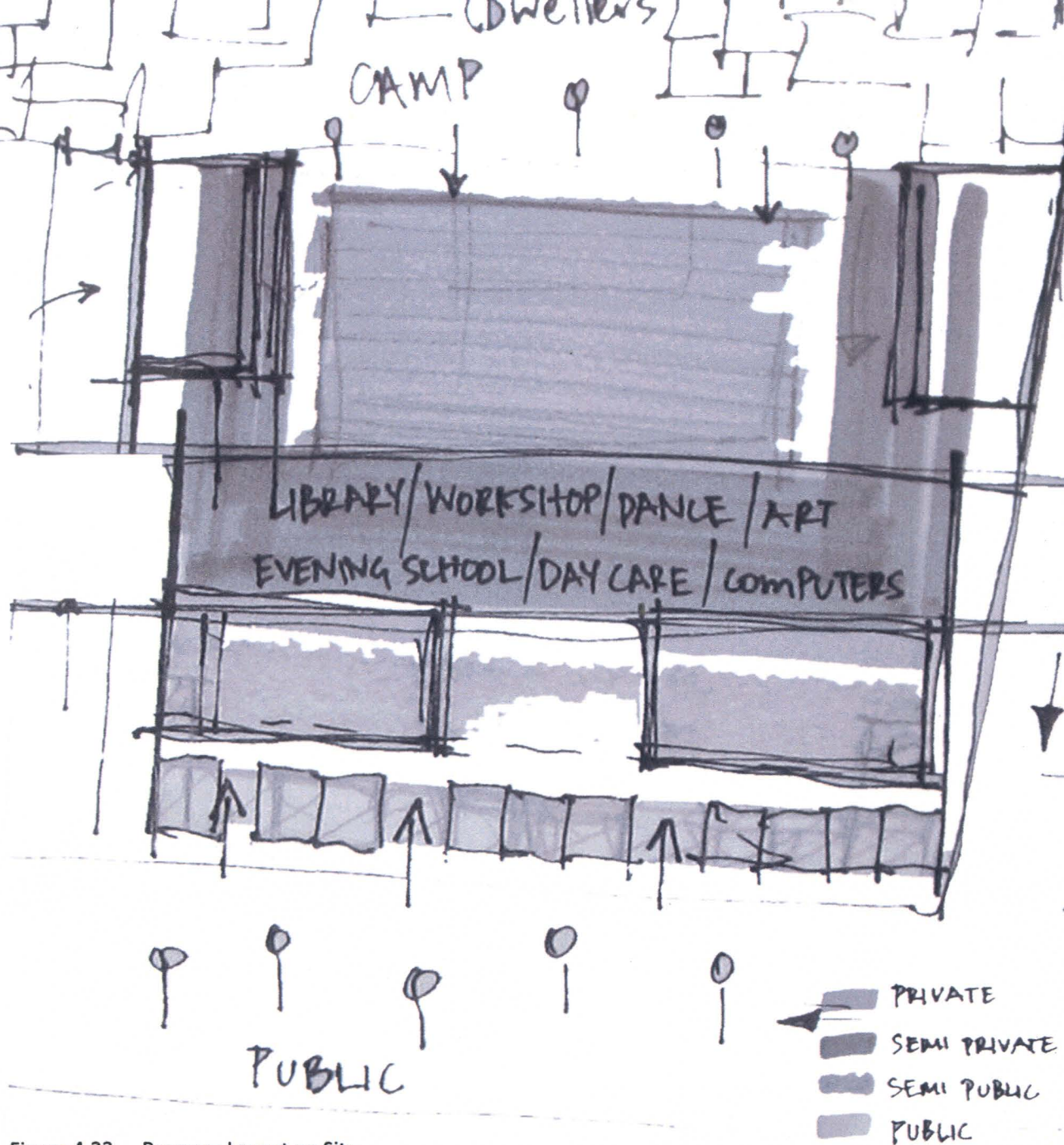
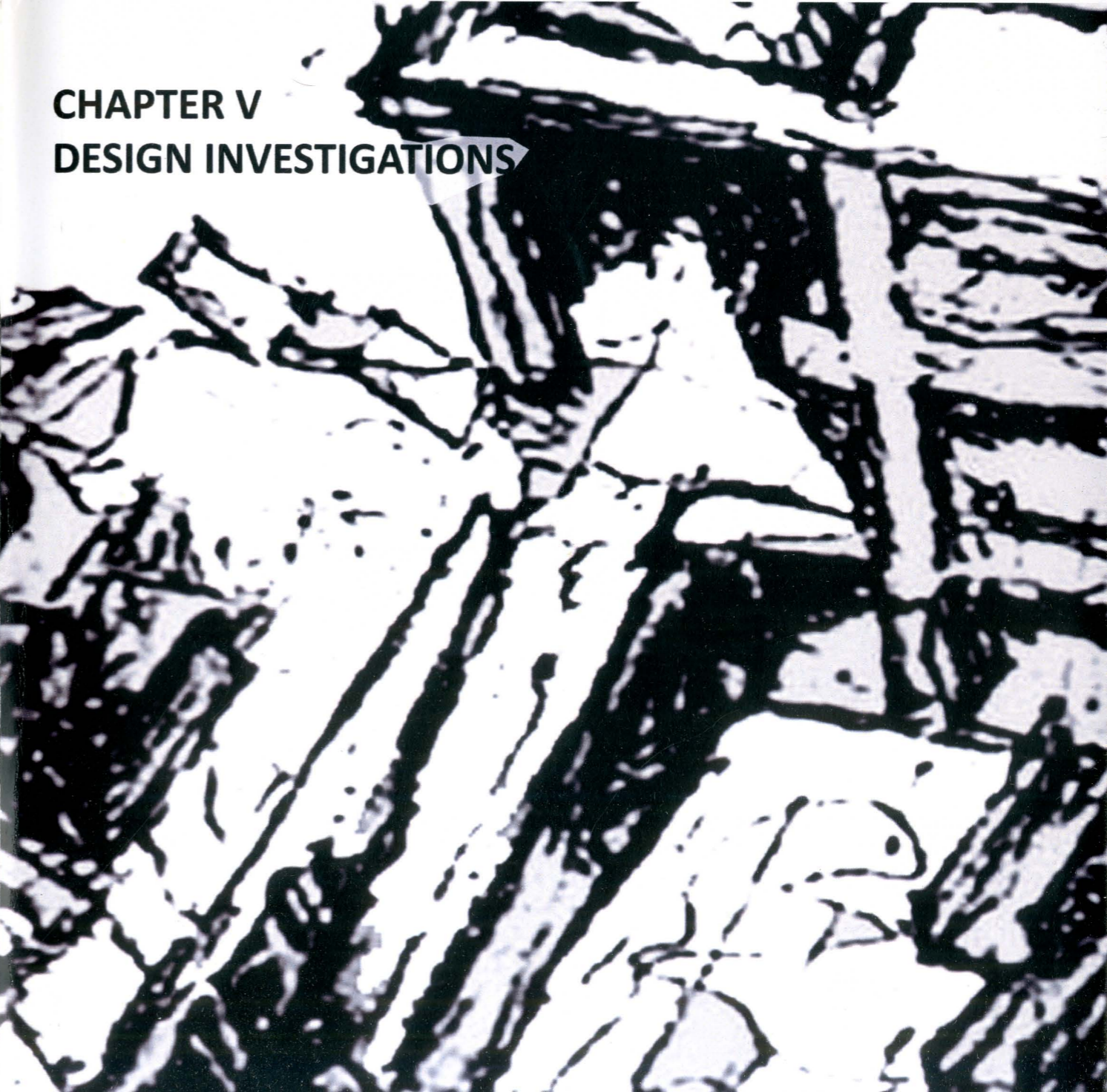


Figure 4.23 Program Layout on Site



CHAPTER V
DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS



CHAPTER 5 DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS

CASE STUDIES... The following are the related projects in which I took special interest in throughout my research. I have divided them into four parts, each act as guidance in a certain direction for my intervention.

IN RELATION TO THE PROGRAM

Not just an inspiration to the program, my intervention is proposed to be the headquarters for Al-Inaach Association, an association established by a number of Lebanese and Palestinian ladies in 1969, whose goal is the development of Palestinian Camps. The association already carries out a program that establishes an indirect connection between the camp dwellers and the outer city (Refer to Chapter 4).

IN RELATION TO THE 'FLIPPING-SECTION' APPROACH

I created sub categories for this part that will help me choose my way of designing in the second term:

1. Plan into section

Historically, **Le Corbusier** was among the first modernists to think of vertical cities. Le Corbusier's attempts in turning a one - program - hosting structure into a small metropolis are evident whether introducing a commercial street into a building, hybrid dwelling typologies, connection between the lower and upper parts of the structure. One of the projects in which his vision of communal living was implemented is **Unites D'habitation** in Marseille. The idea of piercing the private space with public activities brings the structure to life, and that is what I am trying to do in my private/public study. Keeping in mind that the users of the facility are usually isolated from the neighboring areas, as well as the presence of a private part of the program embraced by the rest of it and is located at the edge that is adjacent to the camp: I want to find ways through the program and through the architecture to invite the community in.



Figure 5.1 Unite d'habitation by Le Corbusier

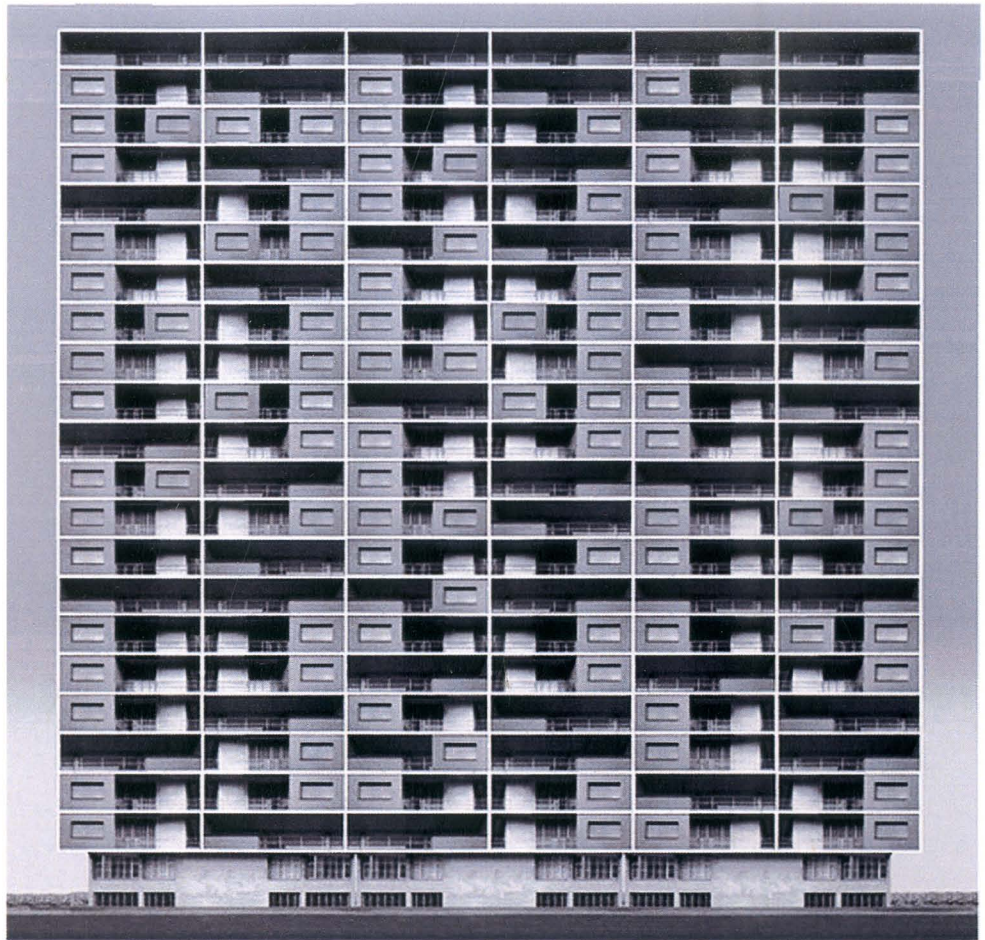


Figure 5.2 Elevation



Figure 5.3 Indoor shot



Figure 5.4 Connection to the outside



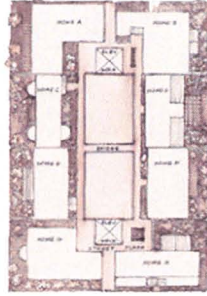
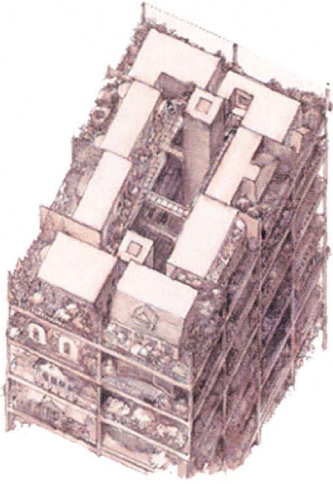
Figure 5.5 Gallery



Figure 5.6 Outdoors



Figure 5.7 View to the Outside



Another example on 'Plan flipped vertically' is *'High Rise of Homes'* designed by SITE. The method is based on stacking suburban houses vertically in a concrete frame structure

James Wines, a founding member in 1970 of the SITE (Sculpture in the Environment) architectural group, described the Highrise of Homes project as a "vertical community" to "accommodate people's conflicting desires to enjoy the cultural advantages of an urban center, without sacrificing the private home identity and garden space associated with suburbia."



Figure 5.8 High Rise of Homes

2. Horizontal to vertical

Contemporary architects, namely **MVRDV**, have a few interesting housing typologies developed and conceived as a horizontal urban block turned vertical. The pictures give you an idea about a housing project MVRDV designed in Spain in which blocks are positioned in a checkerboard pattern next to and on top of each other, leaving wide openings for communal patios throughout the building with views to the city and mountains.

Figure 5.8 MVRDV with Blanca Lleó complete Celosia Residence in Spain





Figure 5.9
Pictures from the structure's inner patios

3. Vertical to horizontal

Lewis - Tsurumaki – Lewis, NY firm, has taken the world trade center as vertical buildings and rotated them to become a horizontal structure. An example i used specifically to illustrate how form follows function, and how the architecture can be manipulated to accomodate whatever specifiities the architect has in his program.

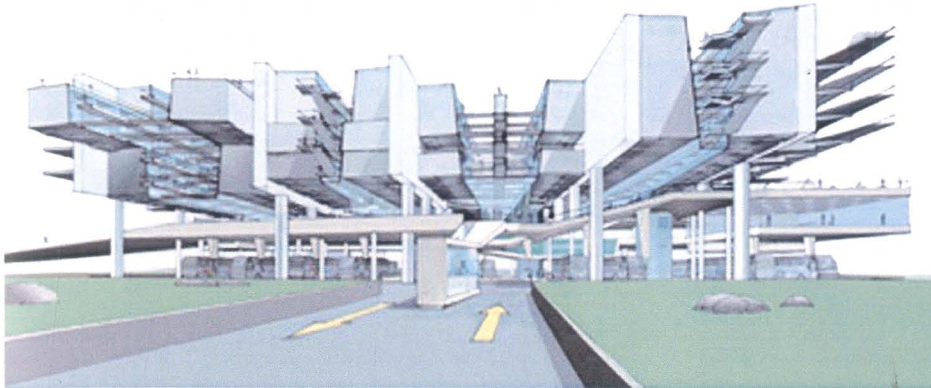


Figure 5.10 Conceptual Sketch

IN RELATION TO SPATIAL QUALITIES

In bringing the program and the architecture together, my interest was concentrated on quite a few projects designed by Charles Correa.

Located in Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, **Ghandi Samrak Sangrahalaya** was built homage to the mahatma Ghandi and is now a memorial Museum maintained in his honor. The characteristics of the building is what allows it to be a museum, be it the open space, the none - glazed wide openings, or even the composition of spaces in which it constitutes a remarkable public space, which I admire the most. In regard to the construction, Ghandi expressed "I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them"



Figure 5.11
Stone floors, brick piers, roofs
of wood and tiles

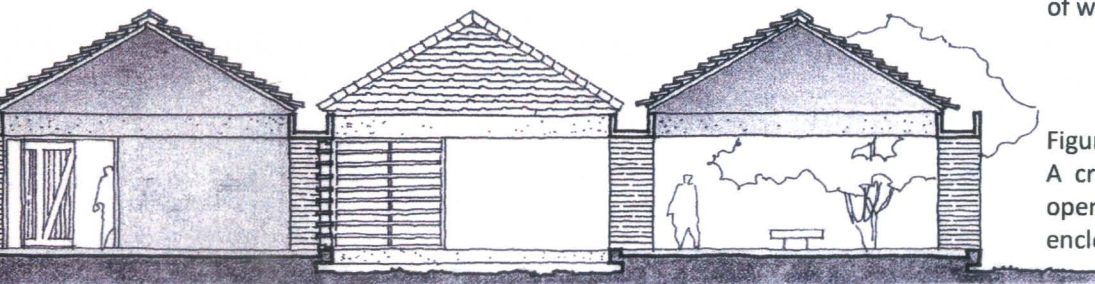


Figure 5.12
A cross - section through the
opened, semi-closed, and the
enclosed

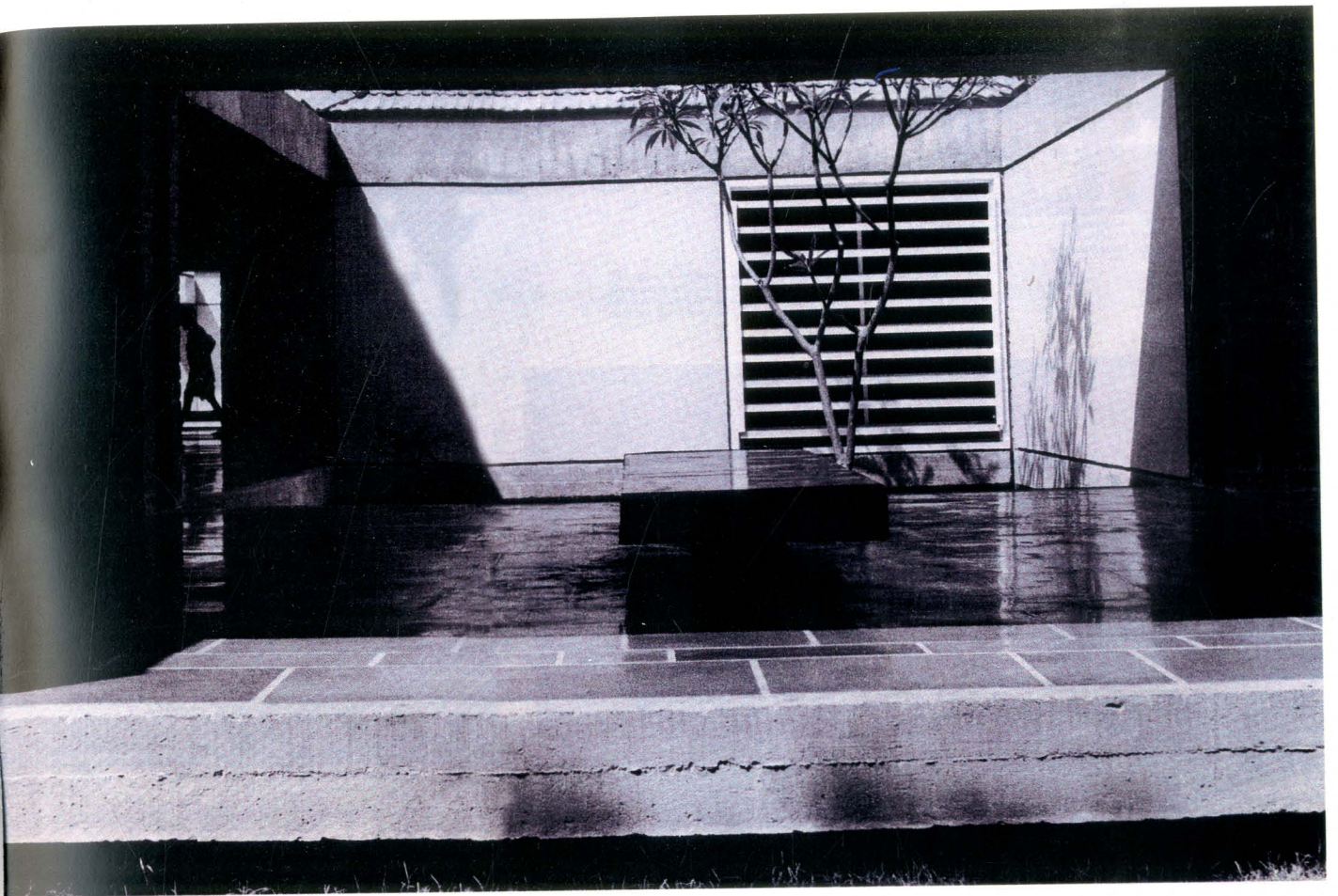
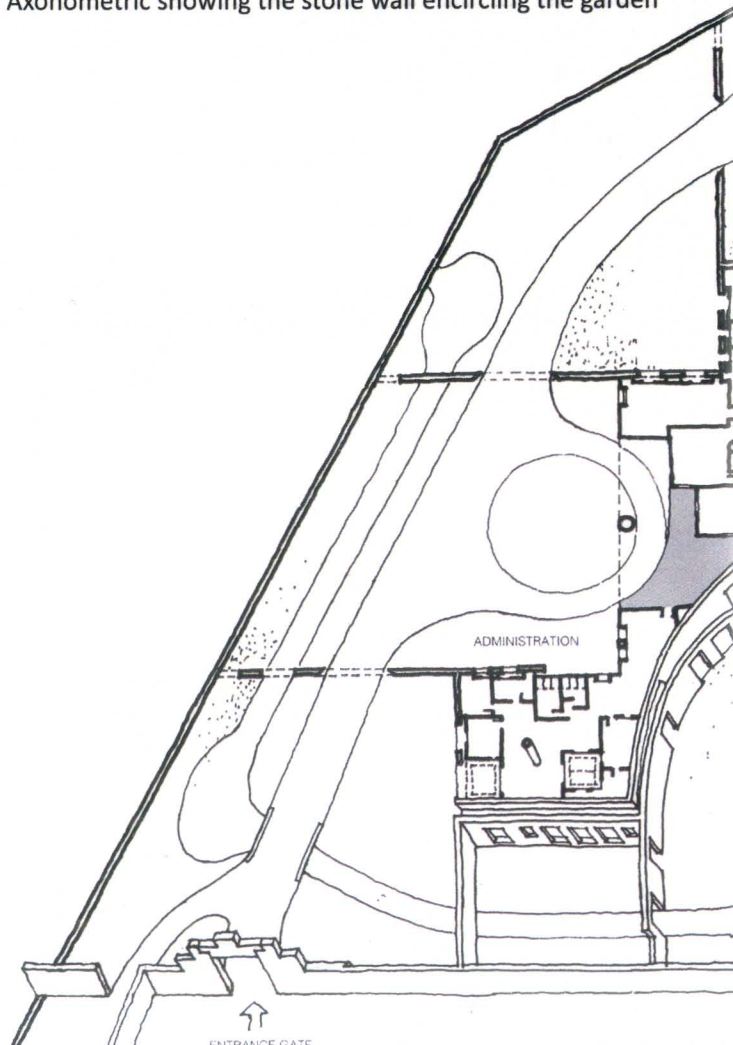


Figure 5.13 A shot of both the openness and the enclosed Spaces

The openness in Gandhi's memorial museum seems to be extreme in comparison to *JN Centre for Advances Scientific Research*, located in Bangalore, the project exhibits unique connections between the structure and the landscape incorporated within, square-ish voids that throw you from the inside into the openness of the green gardens and vice versa, and elements of shading reflect the shadows in an artistic manner.

Figure 5.14
Axonometric showing the stone wall encircling the garden



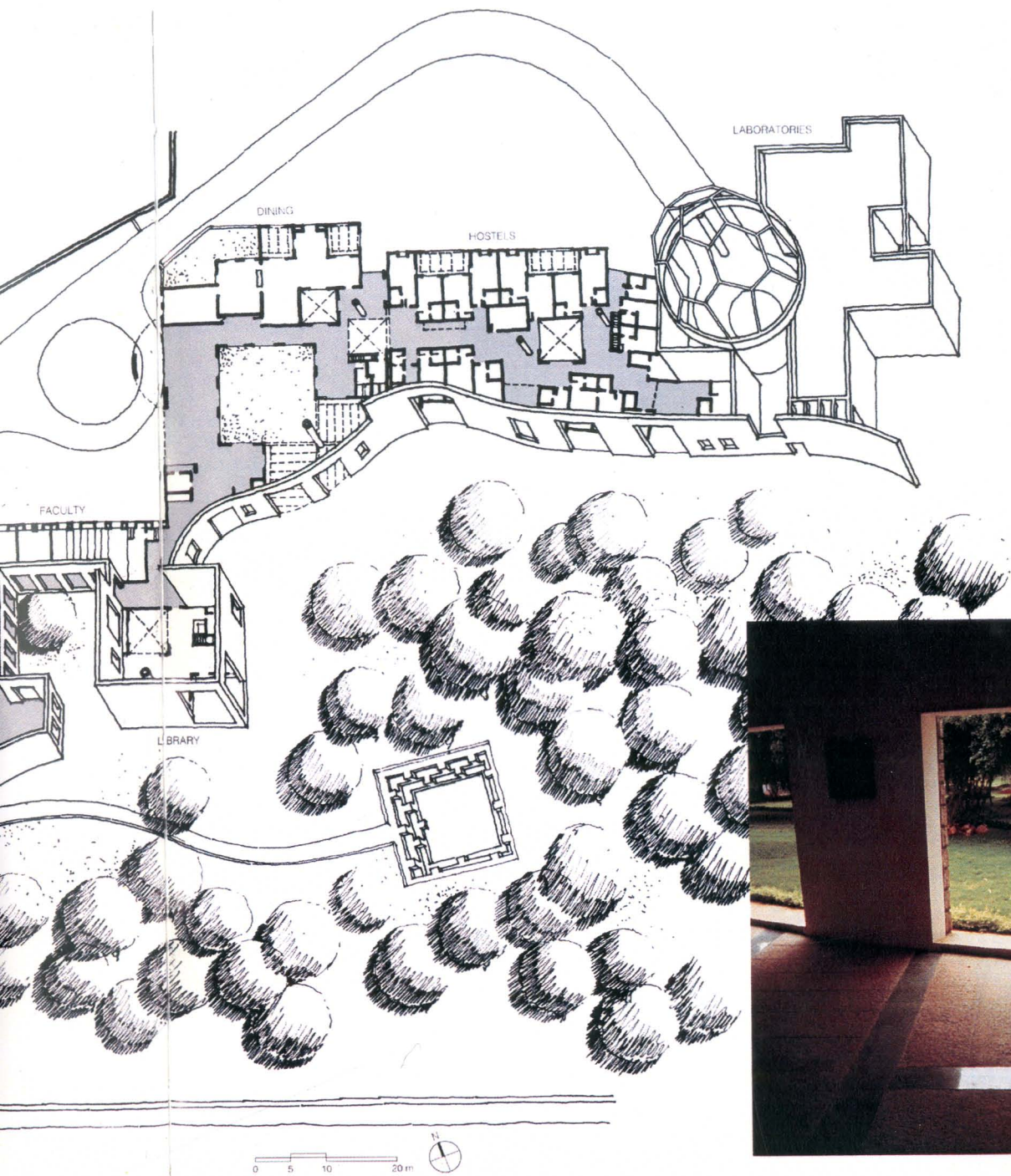
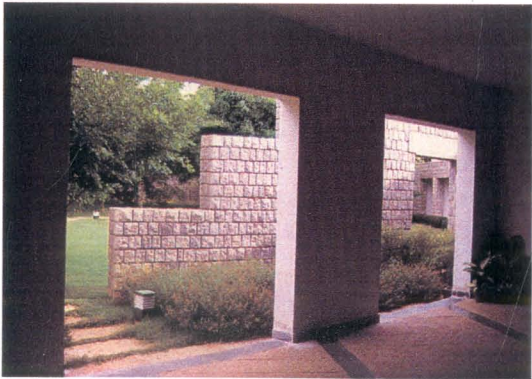
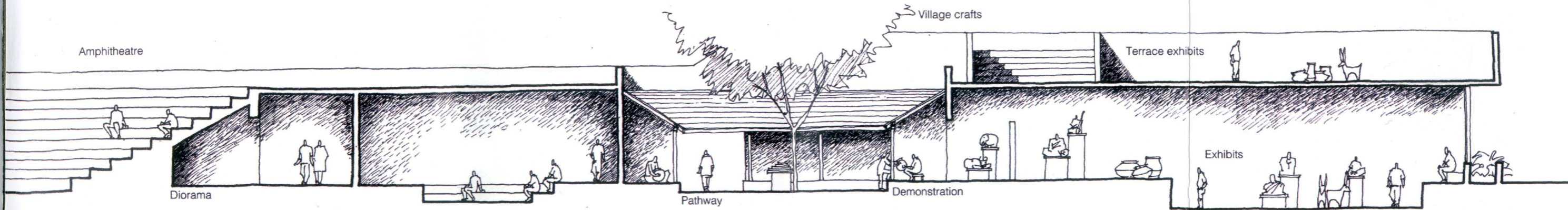




Figure 5.15 View from the garden towards the building space



The National Crafts Museum, built in Delhi, a structure organized around a central pathway. Walking along that path you can catch glimpses of the cultural exhibits lying around. The project constitutes a longitudinal section in which the whole program comes together horizontally, laid on one ground floor.



Another project I took special interest in for the same reason is **Bharat Bhavan**, built in Bhopal; it includes a museum of Tribal Art where the architecture exposes the program.

Figure 5.16 Interesting Sections through two elongated cultural projects

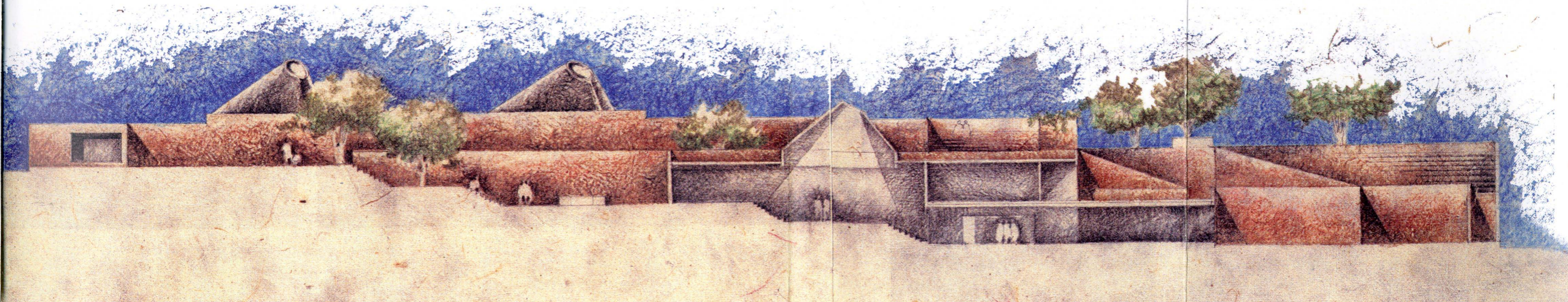




Figure 5.15 View from the garden towards the building space

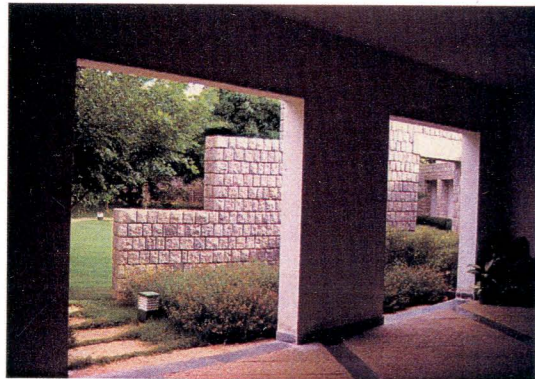


Figure 5.17 Openings between the inner courtyards and the outer spaces

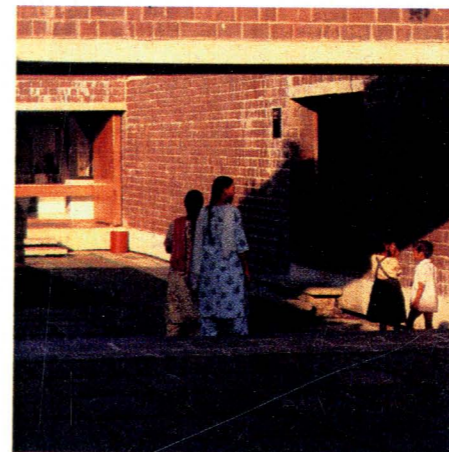
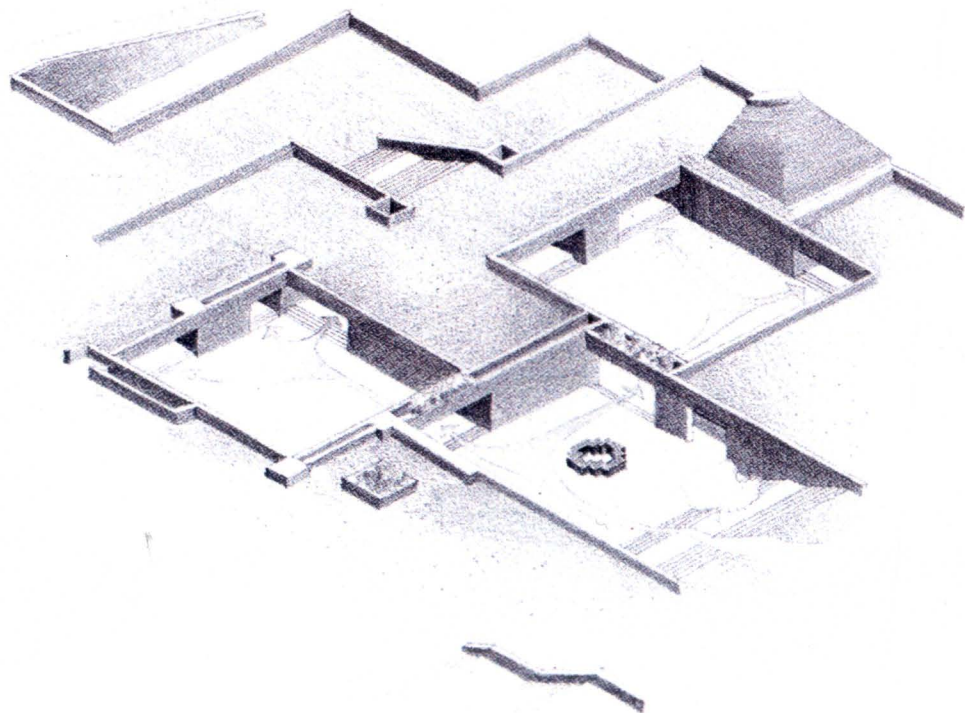


Figure 5.18 Cultural Performance in Progress





DESIGN EXPLORATIONS

In setting the guidelines which will steer my way into the architectural intervention, I have adopted specific elements that intrigued me along the way.

I believe the architecture creates the user's experience, in a museum you have these long hallways that you walk through gazing into those paintings and statues trying to figure out which part of history went down at the time it was produced, in a hospital every hallway is embraced by several rooms separated by a door behind which a private story of a fragile individual is waiting to be solved, in a school, a harmonious combination of spaces and playgrounds come together to form a place where people can resort to a calm place where they give what they have and take what others have to offer, and at the same time create friendly bonds with those classmates out on those playgrounds... what I want to create is a complex of entertainment, recreational and educational facilities for the camp dwellers that will allow them to get in contact with outsiders: city residents.

According to Lefebvre about spatial practice, "that which is empirically observable is only one of the three moments of social space... the perceived, the conceived, and the lived", that which he explains further as "the spatial practice", "representations of space", and "representational space", respectively. Spatial practice is the way the space is perceived by the elements representing it, you take a look at the furniture, if you see a bed, you directly assume it is a bedroom; if you see a shower you know it is a bathroom, etc... Representations of space on the other hand perhaps are the more integrated elements that hint on a certain space that exists, such as having long outdoor perspectives along with galleries surrounding them as public space, certain geometry that points out whether it's a traditional house, a museum or a cemetery... Last but not least is the representational space where no matter how the space looks or is built from, what is dominant is the way it is appropriated by its dwellers "appropriated by the imagination", a simple example is the way the very children of informal settlements appropriate the small pedestrian alleys in between their houses as play areas.

In my design and in reference to my collage I intend to bring out what the people enjoy best at the camp, both programmatically and spatially. The fabric unravels gradually, as it breaks out from the very foundation that forms the camp to a more sophisticated structure that will draw people of the outer community into that site. My first step lies in pointing out the elements of the program that are essential for the intervention to run just like the way it exists today and linking them together in schematic diagrams; followed by proposing the best types of spaces that will host each component, taking into account the specific user that's going to be spending most of his time in that space.

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

PERFORMANCE

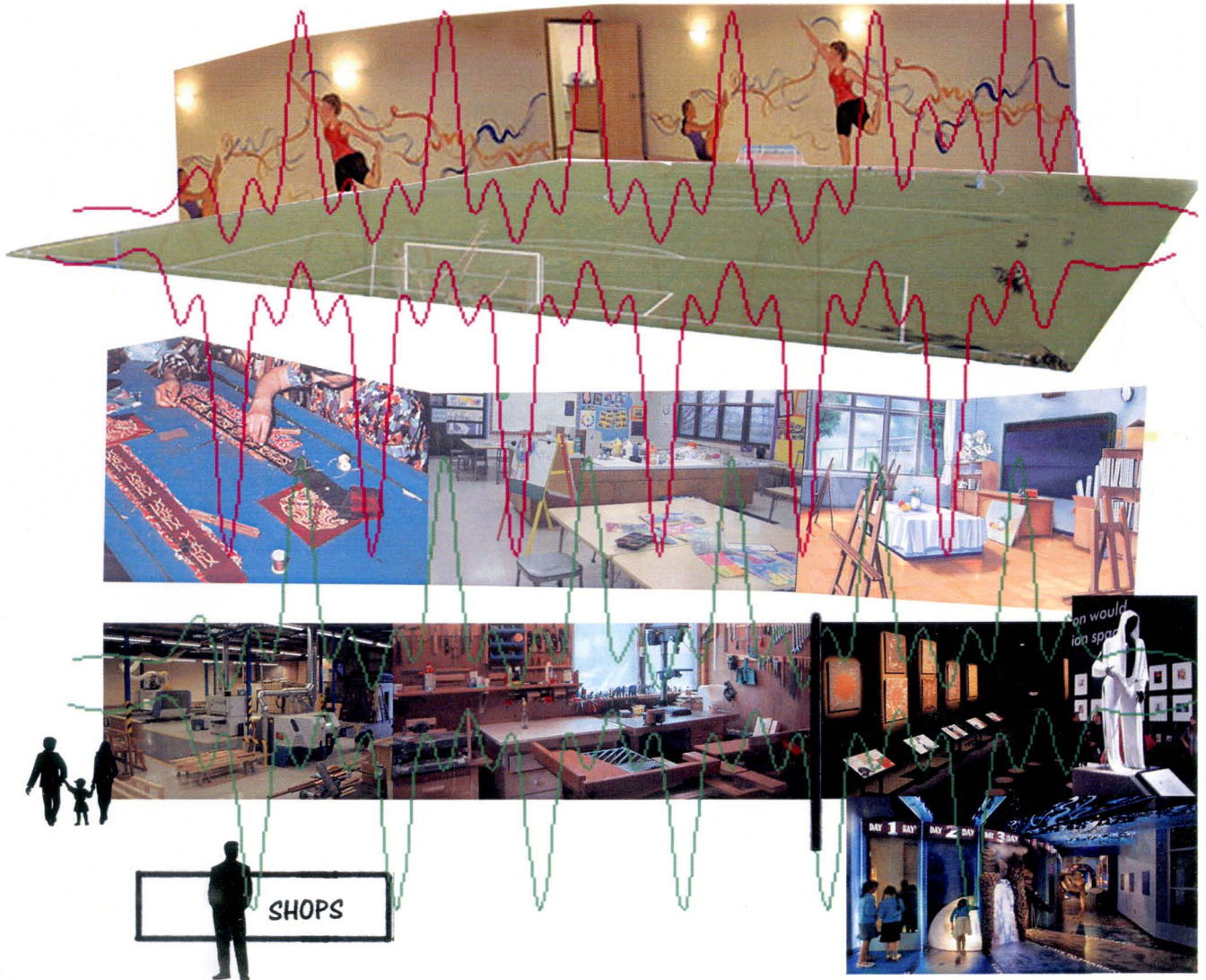
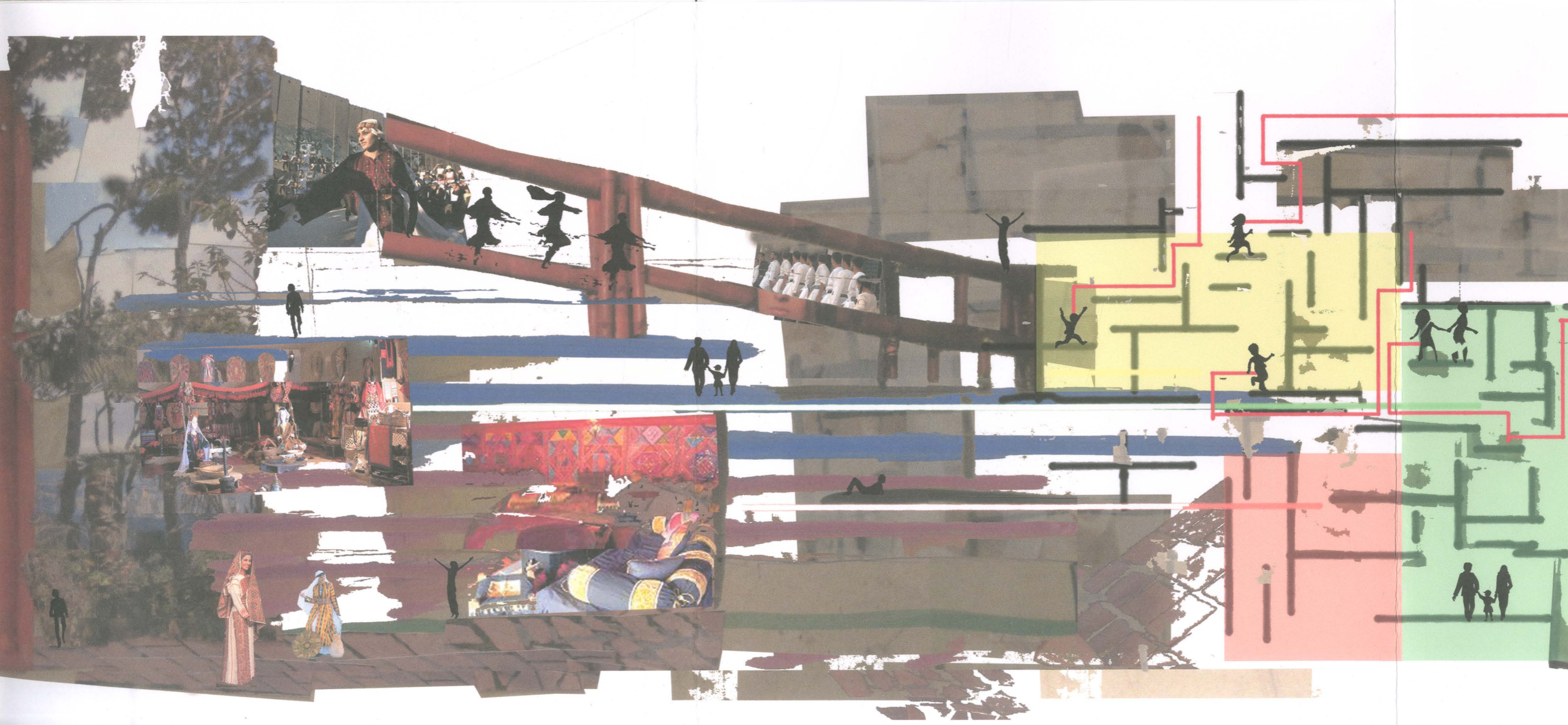
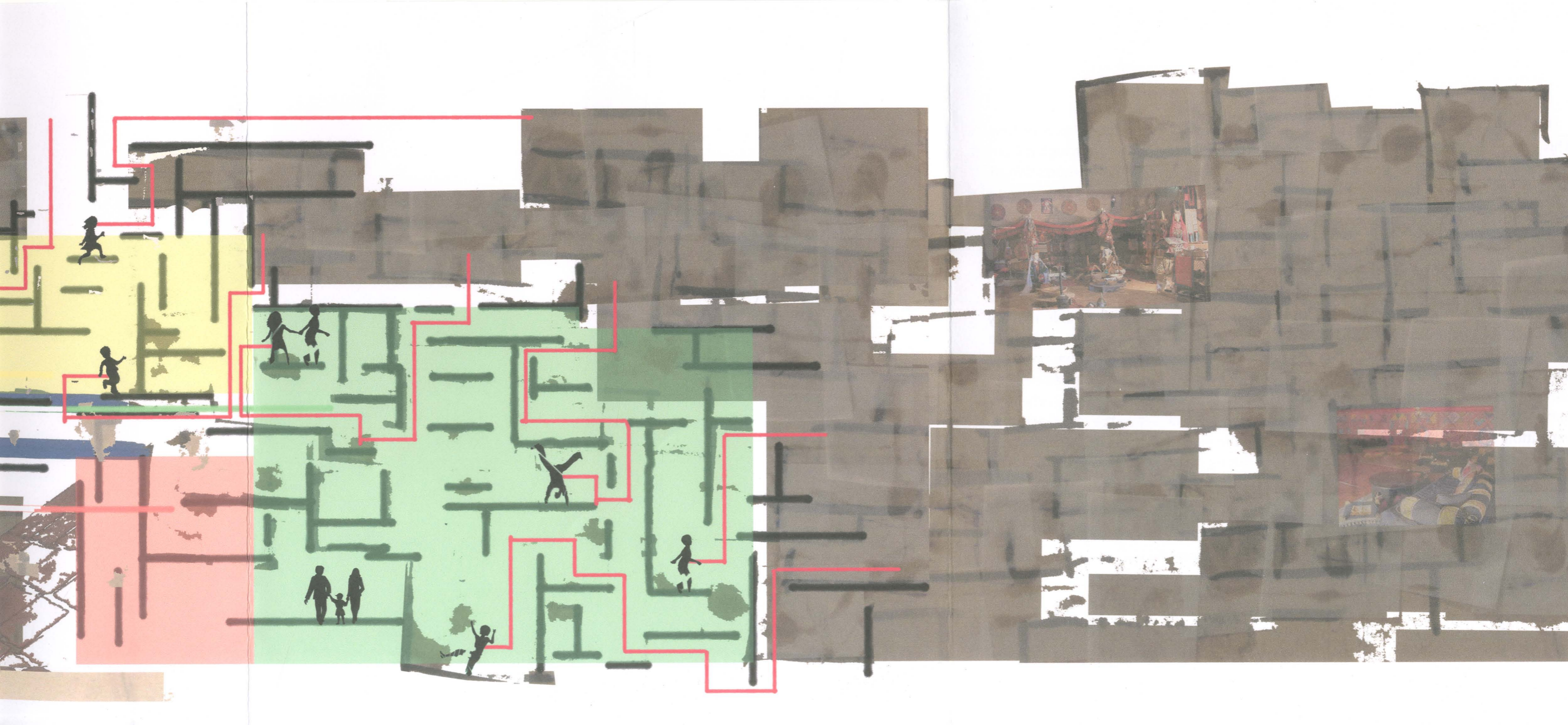
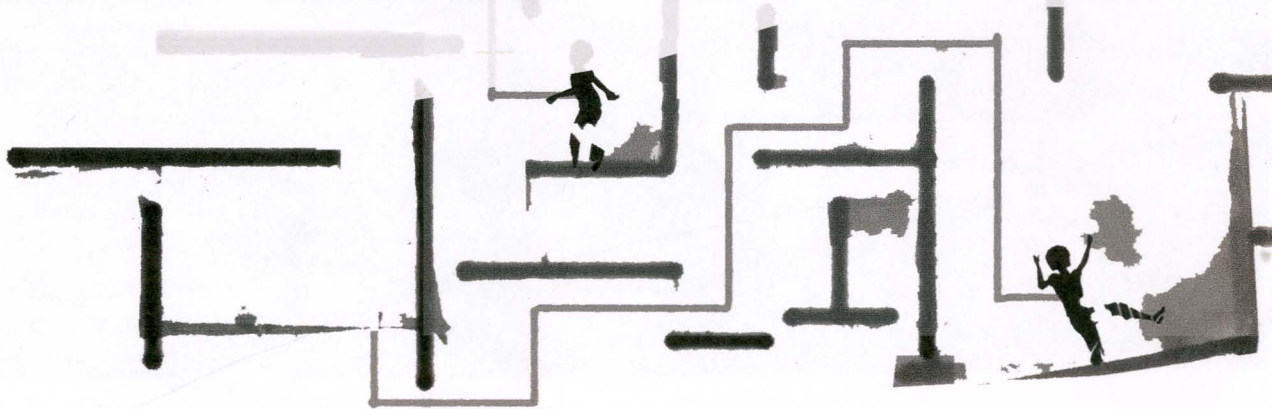


Figure 5.19 Diagram illustrating expected users' activity around the facility throughout the week





The folded collage says it all. It can be read both ways as a Plan and as a Section. This piece of art summarizes the whole thing. Making your way through it from the right to the left, the first vague portion represents the camp, a composition of square cuts of transparent paper laid on top of each other to represent the density of the refugee camp. If you look closely you would find sections of traditional Palestinian tents: those represent a glimpse of the culture that exists in the camp. Moving to the edge of the camp, the green represents the children's haven: the playgrounds, the courts, the gardens, all embraced by the wider program. Within the green space I used the maze, which exists in the fabric of the camp and the children use it to play and move around, in order to represent the children's play area, which can also be interpreted as a multi-storey structure in sections. Change of color into red and yellow signifies you moving into another part of the program, perhaps the art studios or the dance halls. The collage continues to unravel other parts of the program and the architecture in the plan/section manner. In the last part, I only represented the parts of the program that will act as the outreach, the exhibition spaces along with the costumes of the Palestinian heritage, in addition to the debka dance performances that will be taking place in the auditorium.





CHAPTER VI
GUIDELINES AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6 GUIDELINES AND CONCLUSIONS

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE... ISSUE, SITE, USER GROUP, PROGRAM, TYPOLOGY...

I approached Mar Elias camp with the hope of being able to provide the dwellers with a place to breathe; a place for the community to celebrate its culture, and create an outreach to the city. Spending time around the camp I went about introducing a certain timeline for the childrens' activities: Where they are located at certain times? What they play? Where they play? An investigation conducted in relation to accessible playgrounds and opening hours of their schools and entertainment facilities located in the camp. In my documentation one can see that there are no spaces for kids to play, to read, to enjoy a good dance practice or to draw, even if the places are provided they are highly controlled, either by working hours (permission to access them), or their poor quality that set certain limitations.

Since I managed to unravel the existing relationship between camp dwellers and the empty plot located at the southern periphery, "El Boura", I have decided that it would be a pleasant spot, for my intervention to take place. 'El Boura' is close enough to the camp dwellers to reach and facilitate, and at the same time finds its way out to the public through its other edge that touches the main road which connects both Cola intersection and the main highway that takes you from Ras Beirut to the Southern suburbs of Beirut.

In order to reach a program that will fulfill my intentions, I investigated the dwellers' daily activities, in spending time on site and keeping track of their whereabouts, I was comparing between the lives of the children who live in the refugee camps and the children who live in the outer community. For a clear comparison between the camp and the city, Agier tried to look for "sketches" (images) of urban life that exist in the city and could link it to the camp, in my approach I started looking for practices that the dwellers enjoy doing that are common and could link them to the outer community. I dealt with several organizations that mainly provided necessities for the dwellers: what they were doing perhaps was a step further but was not enough due to lack of space, not to mention they were not available at the times the children actually needed them. The children go to UNRWA Kabri school five days a week from 8am to 1pm, they get off school to find out that the organizations around the camp that provide entertainment such as computer labs, libraries and art rooms for them to paint have closed their doors, so when they're done with their homework, they end up running on that rough ground of the alleys between the houses trying to enjoy a good game of hide and seek before it gets dark. Friday is the only day the children can head to the libraries, computer labs and art rooms provided by Inaach and Ghassan Kanafani Organizations, because school is off and the organizations are opened.

The program Inaach offers already portrays an indirect relationship between the camp dwellers and the outsiders. The user group it deals with is the children and the women on site during the day when the men are out at their jobs trying

to make a living. In bullet pointing what the users need, divisions of spaces in my intervention unraveled, which I was able to architecturally relate and break up in four different parts. My public/private approach contrasts what already exists in the camp where you can't really tell what is public and what is private, walking around the camp I had access to all the alleys, all the stairways located at the entrances, and if you end up spotted by the inhabitant no matter whether he knows you or not, a good hospitality gesture rises inviting you into their homes and into their families. The same applies to the children playing around, running and hiding doesn't stop at the alleys but extends into the market places, on all stairs, and into the houses.

The program and the activities themselves guide the inner typology, to demonstrate that not only the program is inspired by the already existing activities, but also the environment in which these activities take place is extended to the outside into the intervention: simple courts and mazes dominate the outdoors for the children, the idea of a maze (solid vs. void) can also guide the programmatic unraveling of spaces gradually one after the other, in the public-private manner explained above until one reaches the rooftops that can be green public spaces used by the families

In conclusion, my concern was to maintain the existing intimate practices that the dwellers enjoy taking part in, and familiar spaces that they enjoy appropriating, by recreating those spaces where they can enjoy doing what they do. From that, my user group developed to account for all camp dwellers, introducing the haven for the children, taking into account the spaces for women to work, and the other employees that will help supervise and run the facility; this will not only strengthen the social ties between the dwellers, but it will also give them a sense of worth and provide them with available open spaces to meet. At this point my user group became primarily the children and women who are at the camp during the day when the men are out at their jobs, they are the ones who bring the project into life, and the jobs at the workshops can perhaps be done by the unemployed men at the camp.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of my field visits, observations and activity documentations, I created the previous framework which forms the base of the artistic collage that brings it all together: **socially, programmatically and architecturally**. The necessity to devise an intervention that is based on what already exists lies in the means to protect the spatial quality of the living environment, maintain social relations already existing in the camp, and exposing the dwellers to air, light and people of the outer community.



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