Vertical Property Challenges to the “Rights of Return”: the Case of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon.

Abstract

In the aftermath of the 2007 Bared Palestinian refugee camp event in Lebanon, there has been a growing focus on refugee property rights within public discussions surrounding the refugee camps. The conflicts that arose during the reconstruction process revealed the complex nature of the forces that shape the built environment of the camps. Furthermore, it became evident that their legal status, which was often seen as an exception, failed to account for their vertical expansion, resulting in the emergence of various forms of tenure. The traditional understanding of their genealogy, limited to one form of landownership, disregarded the reality of their vertical expansion. Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon have always existed outside the legal framework of land ownership, with refugees not owning the land itself but rather the houses they have gradually established over the years. This chapter delves into the misconceptions surrounding land tenure practices and explores how the agency of Palestinians has evolved, involving a range of social norms, actors, and rationalizations. The acknowledges relying on this discussion is that if confessional political leaders, policymakers, and urban managers in Lebanon acknowledge the inevitability of urban transitions and recognize the contributions of the refugee society to economic development, it could potentially enhance the status quo of the built environment within Palestinian refugee camps. Based on spatial and architectural ethnography this research is interrogating the vertical expansion in two camps in Lebanon Ain El Helwe in Saida City and Burj El Barajneh in the southern suburb of Beirut. It shows that camp spaces have been permanently crisscrossed by different socio-political forces (local, national, regional, international), within which Palestinian refugees shape their experiences and practices, redefine their subjectivities, and morph their existence. The chapter emphasizes the importance of exploring the vertical dimension in refugee camps, as it helps to comprehend the intricate interplay of geopolitical, institutional, legal, regulatory, spatial, and financial factors that impact the security of tenure. By addressing these multifaceted aspects, we can effectively discuss the tenure rights of Palestinian refugees living in camps while navigating the complex process of negotiating their rights of return.

1 Introduction

'The Tower[1]', a cartoon animated movie, depicts the life of 'Wardeh' and her family in Burj el Barajneh camp. It portrays the everyday life of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and simulates the camps'-built environment in unprecedented minute details. Most astonishing in the movie was the representation of the massive volume of the camp embodied in cramped dense fabric extending in various heights and silhouettes. By interpreting life events up, down and across the floors, the movie showed how refugees inhabit these buildings and what kinds of relationships they developed with their spaces.

Since their arrival in Lebanon in 1948, Palestinian refugees could consolidate their houses and build more floors. Legally, refugees were bound by the camp borders and left with no horizontal space to expand, therefore they resorted to expanding vertically, thus adding more floors to the original structures built in the 1950s (Masri, 2020). They expanded vertically despite state regulations and restrictions (Hanafi, Mohamed Kamel DORAÏ, Les réfugiés palestiniens du Liban : une géographie de l'exil, 2007). Rising in the air up to 14 floors, the building process, in these camps, became a multifold dynamic and processes of creating smuggling channels, and daily negotiations with inter and intra-camp political constituencies. This process was sometimes facilitated, and other times hindered by the Lebanese military and security administration influenced by the state's confessional political system (in which state power structures, legislative, executive, and presidential, are proportionally distributed among confessional communities). The manifestation of the construction process into noticeable verticality in these camps becomes charged with dynamics, meanings, representations, discourses, mechanisms and knowledge (Haraway, 1988) that is worthy of further exploration.

We argue in this chapter that the vertical as a subject can be a new lens to explore the intertwined multi-level relationship between the camp and the city, refugees and the host government, agencies in the camp and state sovereignty. Although sharing similar narratives of growth and formation, camps have been developing into a multiplicity of verticals and different forms of tenure, given the consociationalism political system in which Palestinian camps reside. Verticals have been constructed in a discursive formation of hybrid sovereignties structured by the Lebanese sectarian troika power balance (Sunni, Shia and Maronite) and subject to territorial differences (Khalidi, 2010).

Looking into the vertical helped our argument in two ways: it sets a new paradigm in camp studies which investigated the genealogy of political events (through time and space) that catalyzed or impeded the construction of the Verticals in camps. It also allowed to investigate the ethnography of inhabiting the vertical generating a more in-depth understanding of the camp relation to its surroundings which is deeply rooted in the Lebanese politics.

In the first part of this chapter we, briefly, introduce the Palestinian refugee camps in the literature and the paradox that comes when discussing the vertical expansion in camps. It positions the discussion of camps vertical expansion with property rights in transitional spaces. In the second chapter, we delve into the material conditions of verticality in two camps and critically analyze vertical elements and their association or disassociation with power, surveillance, and control. The chapter concludes with a call to rethink the camp spatiality in the context of Lebanon framing the vertical as a spatial-political dimension of its volume imbued with meanings and dynamics.

[1] https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/tower-review-1119742/

2 The paradox of vertical expansion

The vertical expansion of Palestinian camps in the context of the confessional political system of Lebanon was not properly addressed in research. Nonetheless, conflict over the verticality of the camp is always a matter of concern to the Lebanese state and to the threat it causes to the temporariness of Palestinian camps. It is known that the conflict, when it arises, between Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese state, does not only signify conflict over building one more floor. It extends beyond and embodies different meanings at different times[2]. Although intervention to eliminate vertical expansion is pursued by the Lebanese army, it is induced by territorial power holders (Sunni, Shia, Maronite) and ultimately creates what we have called the 'Paradoxical Y dimension'. It is worth mentioning that in Lebanon, consolidtion of camps was always considered an illegal act and construction materials were always considered as rare and precious commodities in the camp. Moreover, UNRWA officially forbids the building of more than one floor in Palestinian camps (Gabiam, 2016). Paradoxically, Palestinian camps in Lebanon today are concrete multi-story buildings, laying on and holding each other's from falling down (Abourahme, 2015).

Addressing Property rights in the camp is uncommon as Agamben's (1998) research paradigm of sovereign power and bare life has conquered the field of refugee studies in general, and the study of Palestinian camps. Rights in the camp, in Agamben's model, have no existence as the camp is an exception and those living in the camp are confined by the sovereign, reduced to 'bare life' with no rights nor political existence (Martin, 2011; Martin, 2015). This model has affected most of the Palestinian refugee camp studies published since mid-2000 that referred to Agmben's state of exception in one way or another and generating various camp concepts (Tuastad, 2017; Doraï, 2010; Paolo Giaccaria, Claudio Minca, 2011; Stuart, 2013; Martin, 2011; Ramadan, Spatialising the refugee camp, 2013; Sanyal, 2014; Sigona, 2015). In fact, building houses by extending vertical is a material act practiced by Palestinian refugees claiming their rights to housing and their rights to reproduce and to live[3]. Being denied two fundamental civil rights by the Lebanese government, the right to work and the right to own, Palestinian refugees achieved them by extending vertically in their camps. In these acts, the camp is no longer a suspended space of "bare life". The claim of the right to housing is an implicit political claim of the right to everyday life. In this, AbouRahme (2015), argues that the camp, in its built form, is a political representation of the right of return (Abourahme, 2015). Extending vertically to build a new home in the camp does not alter its political representation, rather it creates an internal political representation of the right to everyday life. Building a new home becomes a political act. Designing the vertical extension is a political manifestation of the exigencies of everyday life. Hence, the changing form of the camp had to be kept separate from the realm of political perception and representation of the right of return (Abourahme, 2015). From there, the camps cannot anymore be only perceived as Agambenian's spaces of exception (Harker, 2014; Abourahme, 2015; Ramadan, Spatialising the refugee camp, 2013) in which the political life is suspended. If this perception of the camp as a space of exception is accepted, then extending vertical, which is an act of resistance and struggle, is rendered outside politics and become a silent expression of bare life or illegitimate acts of

[2] For example, extending vertically in Burj El Brajneh within the southern suburb of Beirut, dominated by the Shia party 'Hezbollah', might be interpreted as an implicit agreement and coalition between the Palestinian factions and the party.

[3] A song located on *Diaspora Capital* Facebook page depicts the sufferance of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon by showing construction materials of steel bars, cement bags and construction blocks.
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=610005836112242&id=223816974310825

terrorism (Abourahme, 2015). The questions to be asked here are: is building a home within the camp and claiming the right to the air an illegitimate act of terrorism? Are there legal boundaries for the camp beyond which the act of building a home becomes illegitimate?

A different theoretical approach is proposed by Katz (2015) to address camps extending beyond the Agambian space of exception that does not critically nor dynamically account for the power relations in the camp. He offered instead to analyze the camp as a "political spaces of human agency of struggle and contestation" (Katz, 2015). The intersectionality of human agencies inside / outside the camp, daily struggles of Palestinian refugees, mutli-layered contestations with camp verticality are charged with dynamics, meanings, representations, discourses, mechanisms and knowledge (Haraway 1988) that is worthy of further exploration. Palestinian refugees, who are able to build more floors in the camp, relying on local capital or remittances (Hanafi, 2007), go into daily negotiation schemes with inter and intra-camp stakeholders to fight for their right to housing. By going up, they reclaim their right to the air (Harvey, 2003) that the Lebanese government is restricting by confiscating the refugees right to build vertically.

Property rights resurfaced in the academic debate in the aftermath of Bared camp destruction in 2007 (Hajj, 2016; Knudsen, Decade of Despair: The Contested Rebuilding of the Nahr al-Bared Refugee Camp, Lebanon, 2007–2017, 2018; Halkort, 2018; Abboud, 2009; Ramadan, 2010; Ramadan, 2009). Located in Tripoli city in the north of Lebanon, the camp was destroyed by the Lebanese Army battling an insurgent Islamist group, Fatah al-Islam. Rebuilding the camp was contested and delayed by mainly complex ownership of land and property in addition to political opposition and funding shortfalls (Knudsen, 2011)(Knudsen 2011). In fact, the destruction of Bared evoked the exploration of the meaning and the importance of camps beyond transitional attributes. Ramadan (2010) argued that in refugee camps in general and Bared camp in particular, Palestinians lives are neither meaningless nor unattributed. Although Bared camp was labeled as temporary space in nature in which Palestinian refugees claim their right to return, but it has nevertheless become imbued with meaning and significance over decades of Palestinian habitation and place making. The loss of this space led to the resurfacing of the meaning and importance of the camp entangled with the complexity of rights and ownership claims.

It is, of course, inevitable to bring land in conflict (Marx, 2016) as a contingent framework to examine property rights within the process of vertical expansion in the camps. Until this day, building more floors in the camps in Lebanon is still considered to be an "illegal act". However, smugglers provide construction material and cement through loose entry locations during hours of less surveillance. Technically, most camp structures are illegal but exist today due to a network of connections based on bribery. Furthermore, Palestinian refugees are denied access to formal housing outside the camp by the Lebanese law which again makes property 'rights' a contingent issue inside the camps. Although some Palestinians are denied from exercising their rights to the air and extending vertically; tall buildings reaching 14 floors are dominating the built environment in many camps. While refugees are claiming their rights to the land in the camps, the Lebanese state remains in denial of these rights and frames them as conflict. To understand the complexity of the situation, it is important to examine Marx 's (2016) argument about conflict over land in the contested urban contexts in the cities of the global south. To Marx, the conflict is often misunderstood as there is an often-implicit hierarchal consideration between 'rights' as superior and 'claims' as inferior. The misunderstanding is associated with a simplistic framing of 'property rights' as a state-law distinction between personal rights and property rights while engaging the state and its power to achieve certain ends. Marx offered an understanding of 'property rights' as relational, constructed, contingent on social context that must be continually 'produced' which makes claims in certain contexts more powerful than formal

rights. He even called for an understanding of 'rights' and 'claims' as both forms of claims to avoid automatically privileging one over the other in assessments of urban land conflict. In the context of Palestinian refugees extending their homes to seek protection in the face of chaos, as described by Nadia Hajj (2016), their claims to their properties become valid, especially when they pay double or sometimes even more than the actual costs of construction.

Methodologically, we adopt a conceptual framework that locates variations in vertical elements in two camps based on their morphology, development history, and function. Our aim is to investigate the story of vertical elements and understand when, how, and by whom they came to exist It aims to situate the camp in recent scholarship that has tried to understand the complexity of the camp beyond a secured material space of refuge (Herz, 2013; Hanafi, 2014; Tomaszewskia, Mohamad, & Hamad, 2015; McConnachie, 2016). This enables understandings of the camp as either an open, immanent and an ever-becoming space (Sanyal, 2014; Katz, 2015; Gabiam, 2016; Martin, Minca, & Katz, 2019) in a wider territory of containment, confinement and detention that constructs an infrastructural network across and within sovereignties and borders (Mahoudeau, 2019; Minca, 2015; Oesch, 2020). We conducted what we called 'section ethnography' for verticality traced in selected camps through which we tried to subjectify the vertical elements and their social life to become the object of analysis (Barry, Born, & Weszkalnys, 2008).We investigated the story of vertical elements and how they come to exist when and by who. To do this we needed to collect spatial data which, when existing, is very contested. They are either too difficult to map or inaccessible when exist. In her PhD dissertation, Maqusi (2017) discussed thoroughly the reasons behind the scarcity of data on the camps and the politicization encountered in the process of collecting such data. Questions of naturalization of Palestinian refugees, the right of return exacerbated by the Lebanese fear from sectarian demographic balance in Lebanon and ultimately the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the wider Arab region. Camp studies have witnessed a broad spectrum of methodological practices including discourse analysis, urban ethnography, case studies and comparisons. These methodologies have been used in the camp without questioning their validity in the space that is presumed to be an exception (Carpi, 2020). Furthermore, many camps in Lebanon have undergone what is called an "over-researched community" (Mayssoun Sukarieh; Stuart Tannock, 2012) being investigated and researched for more than three decades. From the discussions we had after a couple of visits to the field, in Ein el Helwe camp and Burj el Barajne and based on our encounters with refugees and political actors there, we had mixed feelings and reflections about the transcription of the interviews. The fact that one of the authors is a Palestinian refugee born and raised in Lebanon, we had the impression that the interviewees were angry, tired, and frustrated from repeating the same stories of injustices, economic austerity and deception from Palestinian leaders within the camp. Others, through years of being researched, have developed an impressive experience in conveying a prototype narrative of refugeehood that is mostly victimized masking any other aspects of their actual daily lives and practices. When it comes to looking into verticality, which is related to asset accumulation and profit generation. Stories tend to divert attention and camouflage asset accumulation as refugees presume that any sign of wealth might jeopardize their UNRWA support and might cause eventually the loss of their security. On the other hand, refugees are vulnerable populations and questioning them about their expansion schemes and exploring their networks of action to pursue these activities are subject to ethical constraints. We, as researchers, are intrigued to know and to learn about the camp but at the same time, it is somehow unveiling a deep level of intricate legitimate and illegitimate dimensions during fieldwork that might cause unintended harm. Having said that, our intention is not to vilify nor commend refugees, but to try to shed light on an often-encountered problem in researching Palestinian camps in Lebanon and thus design an adequate methodology. It is worth mentioning that data collection for this paper

is part of fieldwork conducted intermittently during three periods. The first goes back to the year 2005, right before and after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the second is before the pandemic and before the explosion of the port of Beirut in 2019 and the third is post-pandemic that started in July 2021 and continued until the end of June 2022.

3 Genealogy of Lebanese Palestinian relationship: The vertical camp, a production of Troika power balance

In the common narrative of recent Lebanese history, the Palestinians have been considered both the cause of Lebanon's troubles and perceived as vulnerable due to their own internal political struggles. Their identity as Palestinians was seen as negative and damaging to Lebanese power balance. The rise and fall of Palestinian Liberation Organization (hereafter PLO) has had major influence in the role of Palestinians in Lebanon and caused major shifts in many periods in different forms until, they were stripped from their arms outside their camps and lost their legitimate territory (in Lebanon) to represent their needs which entrenched their political and social marginalization. The camp dilemma resurfaced in the Lebanese political arena in 2007 with Nahr El bared event. The incident, though having conflicting narratives, constituted a turning point in the camps presence in Lebanon and a turning point in the Lebanese-Palestinian relationship.

3.1 First phase (1948-1964): Years of adaptation, restrictions, and PLO declaration.

During the time that Palestinians arrived in Lebanon in 1948, the country had its own dilemmas (Naor, 2013). In 1943, a "national pact" between the "Maronite" president Bchara el Khoury and the "Sunni" prime minister Riad Sulh determined the way of life of the newly independent Lebanon. The two decreed that Lebanon is an Arab country and would be part of the Arab world, however, its historical ties with the western world will be maintained. The population census conducted in 1932 gave Christian community and in particular Maronite community power preference over the Sunni in term of representation in the parliament and administration. Likewise, the power of the Maronite president is more comprehensive than the Sunni Prime minister and the Shia speaker of the parliament. For the system to function the troika of power have to harmonically issue decisions and any attempt from the president to increase his political influence was faced by resistance from other factions to prevent him from abusing his position and authority. The political balance was maintained as long as no party attempted to increase its power at the expense of another. Once this balance is breached the Troika political system encounters roadblocks. Actually, the National Pact had established a relatively successful consociationalism democracy, but with great vulnerability susceptible to any destabilising internal socio-economic inequalities and external pressures, as was the case in the second half of the 1950 (Kastrissianakis, 2016). Passage of time has proved that the influx of 100,000 of Palestinians to Lebanon in 1948 of majority Muslims Sunnis (85%) and minority of non- Maronite Christians (15%) (Chen, 2018) have disturbed this power balance(Al-Qutub 1989) contributing to the changing landscape of power balance but also being shaped by this power balance (Figure 1).

The waves of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon eventually settled in camps in different areas in Lebanon were related to the logic of Lebanese Troika power balance and political strategies, in addition to other economic factors. Refugees were scattered in the south, east, north, and around Beirut. In the Beginning, the president Bchara el Kkoury welcomed their presence and issued a presidential decree (1165- dated 26th of April 1948) to form humanitarian aid committees in Beirut and regional areas. In 2 years, UNRWA was formed in 1950 (Maqusi, 2017) and took over its responsibility to manage Palestinian refugees affairs in

Lebanon. With the UNRWA, the Lebanese government created the general directorate for Palestinian affairs to provide support for UNRWA work. The security of camps, perceived as red zones, was kept under the close surveillance of the Lebanese state intelligence through the "Deuxieme Bureau" (المكتب الثاني) monitoring any movement within the camps. During this period, Palestinians were facing discriminatory actions by "Deuxieme Bureau" and were not allowed to consolidate their houses in to durable materials[4]. By 1952 one-third of refugees were dwelling in tents or barracks run by UNRWA.

The Lebanese state's discrimination against Palestinians did not target all Palestinians equally. Instead, it reflected Lebanon's fragile power balance among Maronite, Sunni and Shia. Christians and upper class, urban Palestinians were treated differently from Muslims and rural Palestinians. In fact, during Camille Chamoun (Maronite) presidency (1950 and 1960), around 50,000 Palestinians, mostly Christians, were naturalized to increase the population of Christians favouring naturalizing Palestinians Christian and Muslims who were connected to his political allies seeking to make Lebanon a homeland for Christians in the Middle East (Trogoff, 2014; Klait, 2012).

In political term, the discriminatory actions against the poor Palestinians and the Muslims created division between the Lebanese and Palestinians and at the same time created a split along class and religious lines among Palestinians. This was further exacerbated by the fact that urban and wealthy elites were settled in Lebanese cities while the rural and poorer Palestinians were confined to refugee camps.

The aggressive policies of Chehab's regime toward Palestinians led to the 1969 uprising of the camps' residents against the Lebanese Deuxieme Bureau. The latter was characterized by maintaining neutrality in the international arena (headed by westernized allied Lebanese Christians) on one hand and an attempt to fall into line with the policies of Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser on the other (Pan Arab nationalist Sunnis). Nevertheless, Chehab's efforts in neutralizing the Palestinian presence in Lebanon by freezing consolidation activities also provoked criticism from those who wanted to be more Arab, as well as those who demanded westernization (Naor, 2013).

By the 1960, the Naqba[5] of 1948 and the NaKssa[6] of 1967 many Shia families from Jabal Amil rural areas internally migrated towards Beirut's eastern and southern suburbs due to the cutting of economic relations with historical Palestine. By then, Palestinian Refugees were settled in 15 camps in Lebanon distributed along the logic of the country sectarian demographic distribution. Christian Palestinians were settled in the eastern Christian areas (Tal el Za'atar, Jisr El Basha and Dbaye). Muslim Palestinians were settled in the suburbs of Beirut city to become later known as the "misery belts[7]" on lands owned by well

[4] In my interview, Abou shady told me that if the bureau staff hear a nail knock on the wall or see water spilled over from the camp boundaries, they would be subject to jail.

[5] The Palestinian Nakba, which means "catastrophe" in Arabic, refers to the events of 1948 when the state of Israel was established and over 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled or fled their homes during the ensuing conflict.

[6] The Nakssa which means "setback" or "defeat" in Arabic, refers to the military and political defeat of Arab armies by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, which resulted in Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights.

[7] In the context of Beirut in 1948, the term "misery belt" referred to the impoverished suburbs on the outskirts of the city. These areas were largely populated by Palestinian refugees who had fled their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and were living in squalid conditions. The refugees faced numerous challenges, including inadequate housing, limited access to clean water and sanitation, and few job opportunities.

off Lebanese Sunni; Shatila, Burj El Barajneh[8] and in the north and south in areas where lands were available to lease (Peteet, 2009)

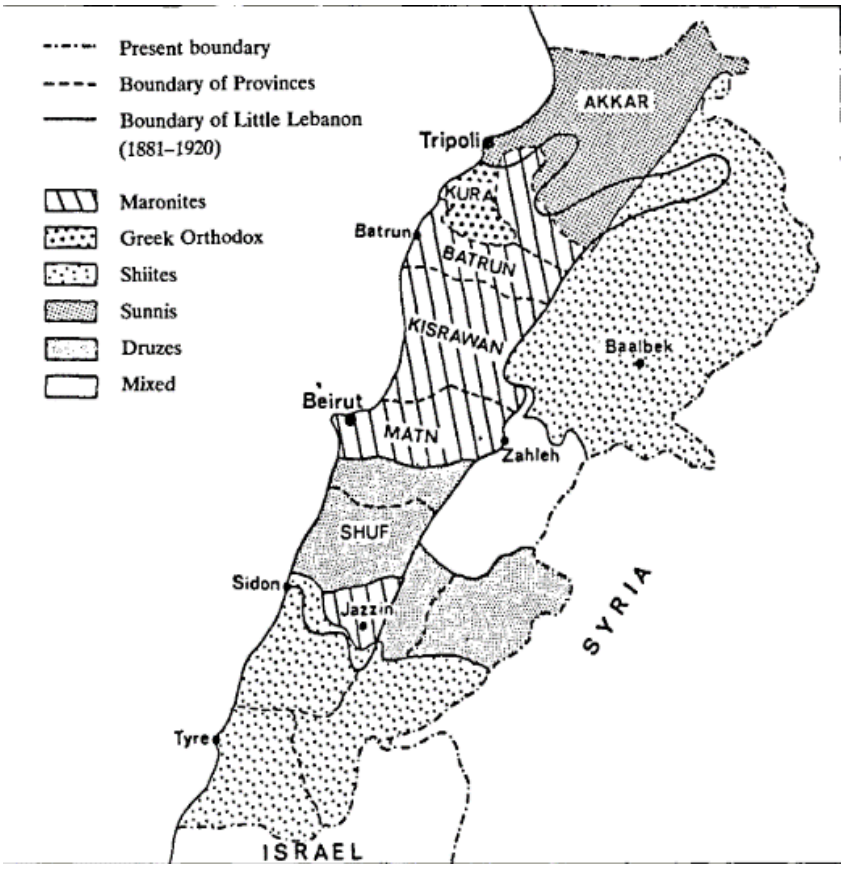


Figure 1: Distribution of community over Lebanon, 1986
Source: Lebanon - Where Demography is the Core of Politics and Life (Soffer 1986)

3.2 Second phase (1968-1982): Years of revolution and the Civil War

The Palestinian-Lebanese relationship during the years 1968 through 1970 changed entirely and irreversibly as Palestinians felt despair following the defeat of the of the Arab armies, led by Egyptian president Gamal Abd el Nasser, by Israel in the Six Day War of 1967. The focus of political organizations in Lebanon and Palestinian political agenda began to divert (Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017). Maronite President Fouad Chehab trying to avoid further encounter with Israel was not in line with Sunni Prime Minister Rashi Karame which resonated on the Palestinian question. Sunnis called for the state coordination (tansiq) with Palestinian guerrillas while Christian Maronite saw coordination as a violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

But what really constituted a seismographic event in the balance of power in Lebanon was the Cairo Agreement in 1969 between Yasser Arafat and the Lebanese army commander, General Emile Bustani. This provided a `thin overlap' `between democratic openness embodied in the Arab nationalist identity of the Lebanese sectarian belonging embodied in the confessional identity and the unconscious quest of power

[8]The exception is Mar Elias which was formed on a Christian endowment land for the Christian Palestinians who left during the war.

holding over the Lebanese territory. This year was the key moment in the renegotiation of the relationship between the camps and the Lebanese state. The authority of the Deuxieme Bureau began to dismantle and Palestinians were free to move, reside, relocate between camps looking for work across Lebanon.

The agreement set the foundation for the development of Palestinian autonomy operation within the camps. It was during this period that camps were consolidated further, and collective toilets disappeared from camps, water wells were dug around the camp, UNRWA schools were provided. According to Husseini (2011) this was the golden age of the camps in Lebanon. Boundaries were expanded, houses were consolidated, and floors were extended. The camp space transformed from a space of waiting and confinement into a space of mobilization and militancy (Peteet, 2009) . From helpless and powerless spaces restrained by the Lebanese authority, camps became zones of autonomy, militancy and self-sufficiency (Atzili, 2010). Nevertheless, the camp spaces in Lebanon, remained ambiguous in the territory of the state and not part of it. They became, unofficially, part of a parallel Palestinian political order and at the same time occupying a domain according to their territorial location in the Lebanese power balance. Clashes between Fateh (PLO military) and Lebanese authority were frequent which led to further discordance and inharmonious attitudes, mainly Sunni/Christian, amongst the Lebanese sovereignty leading to internal conflicts and struggle against the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

At the same time Shia power structure was in a stage of internal competition and transformation between the Zua'ama (Patron, leaders) and clerical political leadership as Sadr'[9]s leadership position among the Shia continued to improve in the 1960s[10] against Kazem al-Khalil (minster in the government since 1958) and Kamel el Asaad (Speaker of Parliament in 1964) (Samii, 1997). The Sadrists were in constant disharmony with the Sunni leaders due to their support for PLO guerrillas accusing the government of not protecting the south from Israel and from the PLO for provoking Israel. The Maronite lost their interest in Sadr sharing same anti-Sunni interest, as PLO presence got prominence in Lebanon. The Sadr found in Syria a potential power hold in Lebanon. In late 1969, Sadr stated that the Alawi sect, was a part of Shia Islam, and in 1973, Sadr issued a fatwa that Alawis were a Shia community. In this, the Shia community in Lebanon found a powerful patron (Naor 2013).

Battles and attacks on Israel continued till 1975, when the civil war began[11], politicians had established their militia, each having their own interests, agenda and national and regional allies and sponsors. Christians represented by main two parties Phalange, Lebanese forces and later General Oun party were all sponsored by the French, USA and Israel. Sunnis most notably the Mourabitoun began to militarize with the assistance of PLO to counter balance the Christian powers (Corstange, 2016) but with divergent national agendas of Pan Arab nationalism (Nasserism) supported by Egypt and pumped up by oil money, Shia militia

[9] Imam Moussa al-Sadr, a prominent Shia Muslim cleric, was born in Iran but spent much of his life in Lebanon. Sadr was a charismatic figure who founded the Movement of the Deprived in the 1960s, which later became known as the Amal Movement. After Sadr's disappearance in 1978 during a visit to Libya, Nabih Berri (the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament since 1992) assumed leadership of the Amal Movement and has headed it ever since.

[10] The Shia, being a minority and mostly rural, perceived Sunni as an oppressive group that didn't have a proper understanding of Islam.

[11] There are several versions of explaining how the civil war was started. I believe reading into the literature; I can argue that the civil war can have 19 different narratives representing the version of 18 different sects in addition to the Palestinian narrative as part of the Lebanese political landscape. Though, Ain el Remeneh bus incidents and the mass shooting of 12 Palestinians is the official date of the civil war start date that is common in all the narratives. Therefore, the war narrative was omitted from this research as it seemed irrelevant and too complicated to be narrated and will reflect some bias to the literature bias that It will refer to (Jens 2000).

formed by Sadr and called the Amal party supported by Syrian nationalism (Assad Regime), , pro-Iran and Russia.

The camps served as focal points for militant activities that became deeply intertwined with urban politics of Lebanon. Palestinians' factions, with their shifting alliances that oscillated between harmony and conflict, engaged in clashes and occasional alliances with hybrid Lebanese militia of Lebanese politicians. Together, they confronted the state army and sought to assert territorial control over Lebanon. During the initial two years of the war, the Phalange party and allied militias laid siege to and effectively "erased" the Palestinian camps located in mixed and Christian neighbourhoods in East Beirut, such as Karantina, Jisr el- Basha, and Tel al-Zaatar and Dbaye. This destructive campaign resulted in the loss of thousands of Palestinians lives and led to further displacement of the Palestinian population (Khalili, 2010)

3.3 Third phase (1982-1989): War of the camps, PLO withdrawal and Syrian intervention.

During this period, Lebanon experienced two significant two milestones: the withdrawal of PLO from the country in 1982 and the war of camps that took place between 1985-1989. These milestones brought about a major power shift, particularly within Shia community, leading to the emergence of Hezbollah as an additional ideological representation of the Shia interests in Lebanon. Hezbollah received baking from the revolutionary Iranian guards, positioning itself against Amal. Amal, previous allied with the Shah regime, raised suspicions due to its perceived connections to SAVAK[12], the Shah's intelligence agency (Samii, 1997). While Hezbollah party has consistently, supported the Palestinian cause against Israel since its formation, Amal party played a significant role within the camps, aligning itself with the Christian Phalange and supporting their intense attacks and sieges on Palestinian camps. The rise of Hezbollah as a prominent force and its alignment with the Palestinian cause further complicated the political and sectarian landscape in Lebanon during this period. The power dynamics within the Shia community underwent a significant transformation, with Hezbollah emerging as a potent player challenging Amal's influence.

In 1982, Israel launched an invasion of Lebanon, occupying Beirut, and forcing the PLO out of the country while also closing their offices. This invasion led to a significant loss of influence for Palestinians in the power balance between Sunni and Christian factions (Suleiman, 1999). They Palestinians found themselves engaged in fierce battles with Christian Maronite factions (referred to as Lebanese right-wing forces) and the Shia-led Amal party, as these groups sought to marginalize the Palestinians and diminish their remaining power within the camps. During this period, divisions emerged within the PLO, with loyalists to Arafat facing opposition. This internal split had a considerable impact on the political and organizational dynamics within camps. Amal, as Shia party, gained additional power by aligning itself with Syrian in the late 1970s. By the end of the war, Amal's leader, Nabīh Barrī, was rewarded with the post of speaker of Parliament, a position that had long been held by elitist Shia figures who prioritized their own interests over the needs of the deprived rural Shia community (Meier, 2014)

In the mid-1980s, Amal launched a war against the Palestinian camps in Beirut and southern Lebanon, aiming to suppress any potential movements against Israel from Lebanese southern territories. The war, known as the "war of camps", took place between 1983-1985 and was fueled by bitterness, threat and

[12] SAVAK is translated as the National Organization for Security and Intelligence. A secret intelligence office established by Mohammad Reza Shah of Iran as a consortium between Tehran, the American CIA and the Israeli MOSAAD.

accumulated anger felt by the Shia community following the Israeli invasion on the southern Lebanon in 1982. The invasion resulted in massive destruction in the south and thousands of deaths and casualties. Syrian allies were divided in their defense of the camps, with clashes between Hezbollah and Amal as well as indiscriminate attacks by the Phalange. Hundreds of Palestinians died, and the siege of camps continued until 16 January 1988, when it was finally lifted under Syrian pressure shortly after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. The second half of the 1980s witnessed fierce struggles for control among sectarian groups, Hezbollah against Amal, and Lebanese forces against the Phalangist. This period saw the emergence of a new power structure dominated by warlords supported by national and international agendas, each fighting their own proxy wars (Figure 2). By the end of this period, the camps in southern Lebanon (Rashidiyya, al-Bass, BurJ al-Shamali, 'Ayn al-Hilwa, and Mieh Mieh were controlled by the PLO and their loyalist factions) (Hanafi 2014). The camps of Beirut (Burj al- Barajneh, Shatila, and Mar Elias) and northern Lebanon (Baddawi and Nahr al-Barid) came under the control of the National Salvation Front[13](Damascus based) (Ramadan, 2009), that had close allegiance with Fateh El Intiffada ,an oppositional faction to PLO (Fateh) led by Abou Moussa[14].

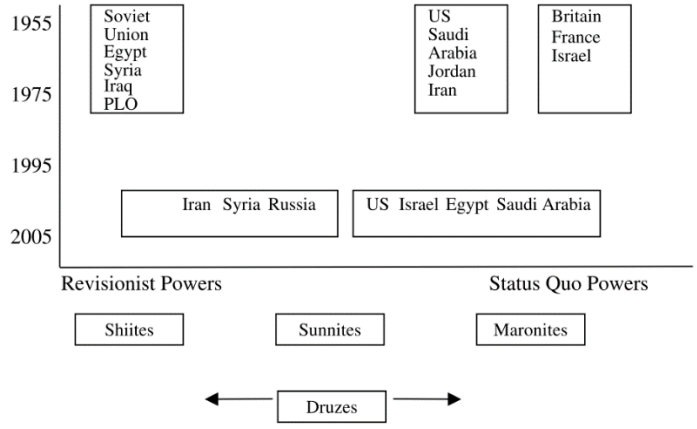


Figure 2: Historical and 2007 powers influence in Lebanon and the Middle East region
Source: From Stability Under Late State Formation: The Case of Lebanon. (Saouli, 2007)

3.4 Fourth Phase (1990-2005): Taef Agreement & Lebanon under the Syrian custody.

The 1990s were shaped by four main events that had a profound impact on the Palestinian Lebanese relationship: Taef Agreement in 1989; the Madrid peace conference in 1991; the Israeli-PLO Oslo accords of September 1993 and the 1998 PLO charter abrogation in Gaza. These events play a crucial role in determining the nature and structure of their relationship.

Taef Agreement and the 1991 Amnesty Law did not dismantle the power gained by the militias during the war, but instead allowed their leaders to enter formal politics, legitimizing and solidifying their control over their respective communities. The agreement also established a temporary Syrian military presence and interference in the Lebanese politics until 2005. Additionally, Taef demanded the disarmament of all

[13] Coalition formed by various Palestinian factions as a response to reject Amman Accord between King of Jordan and Yasser Arafat

[14]

militias except for Hezbollah, which was recognized as an official resistance party with a primary mission to fight against Israel's occupation in South Lebanon.

Taef brought about a seismic shift in the power balance by amending the National Pact of 1943. It redistributed power among the three key positions in the political system and parliament seats. Due to new demographic, social and regional realities (despite the absence of national census), Taef shifted executive power from the Maronite president to the Sunni Prime Minister and changed the ratio for parliamentary seats and positions in public administration from 6 Christians to 5 Muslims toa more balanced 5:5 ratio (Monroe, 2009). While Taef maintained a consensus-based power structure, this consensus often served Syrian interests and extended beyond the traditional troika consensus. As a result, separate territories were governed by different factions, primarily by the Maronite and Shia (Amal and Hezbollah), leaving the Sunni without strong leadership until Rafic Hariri filled the void between 1992-1998 and 2000-2004.

On the Lebanese- Palestinian level, a new Lebanese ministerial committee, was formed to initiate the dialogue. "The Civil and Social Rights of the Palestinian People" was the title of the first memorandum submitted by the Palestinian delegation but the Lebanese committee requested more time to study the Palestinian demands, and the dialogue never resumed, and talks were suspended even in the following multilateral Refugee Working Group in 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. These developments resulted in the establishment of checkpoints at the entrances to the four refugee camps in the south, which became subject to close surveillance. Internally, the camps of the south remained under the control of the PLO and their allies (Suleiman, 1999). Internal disarray in the camps started to rise in the wake of the Oslo accords. Palestinians were split in their support for the accord and political realignment within the camps started to emerge, which made any form of real cooperation within the camps impossible. The Damascus Conference and Gaza Legislative Session in 1998 led to further realignments within the Palestinian resistance movement as a whole, at the national level. On Lebanese arena level, the effect of this conference revived the opposition Sunni alliance, giving the Palestinian groups a focus in reaffirming some of the traditional positions of the Palestinian movement.

Overall, the post war period underwent a slight shift in the Lebanese political rhetoric towards the camps. As being confined and defeated, camps were transformed into places of containment and impotence of self-governance. Nevertheless, the camps' potential to resurface as a national threat endangering the Lebanese vulnerable and newly settled stability has remained. Therefore, camps improvements were forbidden and closely monitored as it was connected to the renewing of the potential for resistance. Before 2001, the expansion of camps was not as rapid as it became when Ownership Law no. 296/2001 for Palestinians was issued. Accordingly stateless persons were prevented from owning any type of property or land. It also prevented any persons to provide assistance if it contradicted the Lebanese constitution concerning the Palestinian resettlement "Tawteen" (i.e. making permanent the Palestinian presence in Lebanon) .

To the Lebanese, any indirect gesture including camps improvement or expansion was pre-step to promote "Tawteen" which implied incorporation of a now demonized other into the national body of regained power balance. The sectarian transformation it would entail, with a significantly inflated Sunni Muslim population, would have threatened the declining Christian population and posed a great threat to the striving fast-growing Shia. It was the worst-case scenario for both the Lebanese and the refugees, yet finding a mutual accommodation in political ideology or rhetoric was unattainable at that time to tackle the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Instead a coherent post-war Lebanese national, rather than sectarian,

discourse was centred on maintaining state sovereignty and diluting the number and role of non-Lebanese in the socio-political order (Haddad, 2002)

3.5 Fifth Phase: 2005-2015: New demarcation lines and the struggle for power.

The year 2005 subverted the power balance and marked the beginning of a new shift in the Lebanese internal politics and the Lebanese - Palestinian relationship. After Hariri's assassination on the14th of February in the same year and the Syrian military pull-out, new divisions came to the fore and were rearranged along pro-Syria (March 8 coalition) predominantly Shia Hezbollah/Syria/Iran axis and anti-Syria (March 14 coalition) centred on a predominantly Sunni Future Movement/Saudi/United States axis camps (Saouli, 2007) respectively led by Hezbollah and Saad Hariri (Hariri's son). Maronite parties were divided between the two. In the same year and under the pressure from the UNHCR, the LPDC was created by the Lebanese government to serve as a platform for cooperation between Lebanese and Palestinian parties and to work with UNRWA to improve the refugees' situation. Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon has led to a period of disturbed tranquillity, and it is still fluctuating from storm to stability until today. Major events from 2005 up till today are: Israeli assault in 2006, Nahr El Bared camp (Fateh el Islam) attack in 2007 and the activation of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), the armed Hezbollah-led takeover of western parts of Beirut in 2008, the Syrian war in 2011 and the implication of Syrian refugees' influx and most recently in June 2019 Labour law enforcement.

In the aftermath of 2006 Israel war on Lebanon and the massive destruction of the southern suburb of Beirut and the south of Lebanon, the Sunni- Shia axis became more divided. Although Sunni, ideologically speaking, are against Israel, the national attitude both Christian and Sunni leaned toward more peaceful and neutral relation with Israel. By that time, the Syrians troops and intelligence had withdrawn from Lebanon and Hizballah lost its regional allies. Its internal position had been also weakened as the majority of the ruling coalition were calling for its disarmament. In response, Hezbollah attempted to reconstruct itself not only as the war victor but also as the sole defender of Lebanon from yet another aggression by Israel. The new invented image that the party conveyed to the Lebanese power holders, both Sunni and Maronite, and to its community was portrayed by zealous effort to reconstruct the southern suburb of Beirut and the destroyed areas in the south of Lebanon in unprecedented duration (Samhan, 2008; Fawaz, Hezbollah as urban planner? Questions to and from planning hisotry, 2009). Hezbollah with its political allies and supporters, demanded in return for a greater share of the political power troika. In this period, Lebanon endured a return of instability and volatility unseen since the civil war due to the protests (pro- and anti-government), violent clashes in Beirut and Tripoli, political assassinations, targeted bombings, internal conflicts mediated by regional and international attempts of negotiations, deteriorating economic situation, and a recurrent question of the place of Hezbollah (and its arms) in Lebanese politics (Rizkallah, 2017)

In the years following Hariri's death, the focus on the Palestinian refugee "problem," diminished in comparison to the growing concerns surrounding Hezbollah. However, the Palestinian issue, quickly resurfaced with unexpected event at Nahr el-Bared camp in 2007, which significantly impacted the Shia-Palestinian relationship . Fateh el Islam, an extremist militant Sunni Islamist group took from Nahr El bared Palestinian refugee camp a niche to launch their attacks on the Lebanese army. The Lebanese government, through their Lebanese armed forces (LAF) fought back and succeeded after two month of continuous shelling and bombardment of the camp from the outside to take control over Nahr El Bared (Czajka,

2012)[15].Clashes prolonged to Ain el Helwe camp, where Jund al- Sham[16] (being very strong in Ain El Helwe) vowed to rise in support of Fatah al- Islam. The Lebanese government has voiced concerns about the possibility of a "chain reaction" that could trigger conflicts in other Palestinian refugee camps. This situation has led to a notable shift in the discourse surrounding the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, transitioning from a focus on conventional state-centric security to emphasizing the importance of Palestinian human security (Long & Hanafi, 2010)

Following this turning point in the Lebanese Palestinian relationship, Hezbollah's relationship with the Lebanese state deteriorated and reached a breaking point with a telecommunication network ban issued by the Lebanese state against Hezbollah. In May 2008, Hezbollah took control of the western part of Beirut and refused to retreat until the ban was removed. With the escalation of tensions between the Sunni-Shia axis and the Maronite, Palestinians in the camps witnessed worsening economic conditions and refugees started to use their dwellings in the camp as a source of income. This resulted in the emergence of a rental market catering to the poorest urban dwellers, particularly in Beirut camps, were many single migrant workers and domestic workers resided (Samhan, 2008)[17].

The Syrian war from 2011 and the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon started to ring the threat bells (Rizkallah, 2017) exacerbated by the events of "Al Assir[18]" riots in the summer of 2012 (Peri, 2017). The increased number of refugees had implications in Lebanon for political reasons. A more serious implication was labelling Syrians refugees as the "Other-Palestinians" conjuring negative emotions of the Lebanese (mainly Shia and Maronite) sufferance during the civil war. On the other hand, it also deepened the tension between Sunni and Shia representing the two major rivalry in Muslim sects: The Sunni al-Mustaqbal (Future party) and the Shia Hezbollah. For the Sunni, the involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian conflict (officially declared in 2014) would have a leading role in importing the sectarian rifts the conflict generated in Syria to Lebanon. For Hezbollah, fighting in Syria was claimed to withhold attacks from ISIS protecting the sovereignty of Lebanon. The landscape got more worrying in the summer of 2012. A protest movement initiated by Al Assir in Saida city provoked significant clashes similar to the ones in Tripoli. Al Assīr protest movement was attributed to the increasing power of Hezbollah creating a deep frustration that has spread among the Sunni community based on a feeling of powerlessness. The events were circumvented by the Lebanese armed forces who put an end to two weeks of sad events in Saida. What had been dormant lines of division between the two Muslim sects, was animated, turning the country into an exhibition of political

[15] The control over the camp by the LAF, a multi-confessional national organization that can legitimately lay claim to representing the Lebanese sovereignty, challenged the primacy of Hezbollah's armed wing and put it question. The presence of a robust LAF proven by Nahr EL bared Events was considered by Hezbollah as a long-term threat to their existence

[16] Jund Al Sham is an extremist group that was founded in 1988 by Palestinian Mohammed Ahmed Sharqieh, also known as Abu Youssef. Sharqieh was a member of the Fatah movement before separating and working with several Islamic groups. Jund Al Sham was formed by incorporating members of a group called "Ansar League" after the assassination of its leader. Jund Al Sham operates in the Ein El-Helwe refugee camp in Lebanon and has a fundamentalist ideology that rejects Shiites and Christians. The group has issued statements criticizing Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin(Hamas founder), Iran, Hezbollah, and others (Dot-Pouillard 2015; Murrah 2008; Rougier 2015)

[17] Five years later after Hariri's assassination, in 2010, a law was proposed in parliament to grant Palestinians full civil rights. Christian were unified in opposition to granting Palestinian rights and the hope for a better living for Palestinians was gone for last

[18] Ahmed Al Assir rose from being a mere local Sunni cleric to a prominent fundamentalist preacher by strongly criticizing and opposing Hezbollah. He started arranging sit-ins against Hezbollah, removing Hezbollah posters in Sidon, and organizing protests. These events escalated in 2012, leading to gunfights in August, clashes in November, and subsequent violence in June 2013. The situation eventually culminated in a battle in the Abra district between the army, backed by Hezbollah, and Ahmed Al Assir's supporters(Laizer 2016).

and confessional affiliation and political confrontation into new demarcation lines between Sunni and Shia (Zisser, 2017).

4 Burj El Barajneh

The camp is located in the southern suburbs of Beirut and extends in parallel along the old Airport Road. The camp is located 1 km away from Beirut's International Airport. It is bounded by Abd el Nasser Street to the east and Amlieh Bridge to the North separating it from Haret Hreik. The southern side is bounded by "Hay el Balbakiyyeh" (Baalbakiyeh neighborhood) and the informal settlement "Raml" (sand). The camp is located on a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the Lebanese government. The land on which the camp was set up is a mixed of musha (communal land) and private land (CLERC, 2012). The lots were leased by the UNRWA from the Lebanese government.

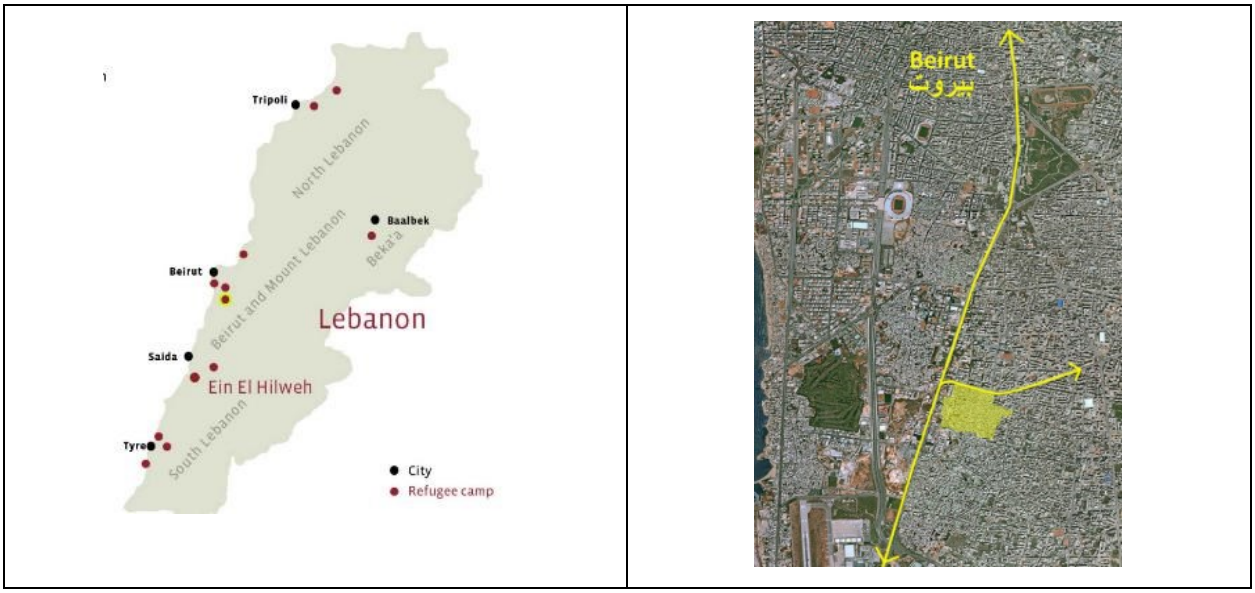


Figure 3: Bourj el Brajneh location in Lebanon and its relation the highway

Source: Retrieved from Maqusi , 2017. P. 180, https://www.anera.org/stories/ein-el-hilweh-palestinian-refugee-camp-in-lebanon/

The camp currently houses a population of 20,340 individuals, occupying an area of 173,000 square meters. Based on the comprehensive population census conducted in 2017 (LPDC, 2017). Burj el Barajneh has the highest concentration of Syrians, totaling 8,790 residents comprising more than 48% of the total camp population. The current number of Palestinians in the camp stands at 8,219 which makes up 45% of the population, while Palestinian Syrian refugees and individuals of other nationalities account for 7%.Burj El Baraajneh is relatively small in terms of area and highest in term of density and building heights. There are 1250 concrete buildings constructed on foundations capable of supporting two stories, though most buildings have four or more, lacking formal structure. Some buildings in the camps reached 10-11 & 14 floors. The camp is bound by northern and western highways which mark a clear physical limit for further horizontal expansion of the camp.

Figure 4: The skyline of Burj El-Barajne refugee camp
Source: retrieved from Chamma, 2018

Burj El Barajneh exponential growth is is deeply influenced by the dynamics of sectarian power balance, specifically the Sunni-Shia axis, that have shaped the southern suburb of Beirut. c argues that the power balance among Sunni, Shia, and Maronite communities continues to be influenced by ideas, interactions, and responses to communities that seemingly exist outside the traditional Lebanese sectarian framework. Understanding Lebanese sectarian politics and conflicts requires considering the presence of other communities, particularly Palestinians and Syrians, as well as Lebanon's geopolitical context. However, it is important to note that the presence of Palestinians and Syrians in Lebanon is not homogeneous. The sect and social class of individuals belonging to these communities play a significant role in shaping their involvement in politics and power dynamics. In the case of Burj El Barajneh, its evolution from a temporary camp for Sunni Palestinian refugees to a high-rise, densely populated area attracting Syrian migrants and refugees is closely linked to its proximity to the Shia power stronghold in "Dahiye." Therefore, the growth and transformation of Burj El Barajneh cannot be separated from the broader dynamics of sectarian power and the diverse roles played by different communities based on their sect and social class. This complex interplay between geography, politics, and sectarianism shapes the power balance in the area and contributes to the ongoing dynamics of Lebanese sectarian politics.

Until 1958, the consolidation process of the camp started with dwellers relying on stone for walls, and only roofs remained in zinco because the Lebanese government had banned Palestinians from consolidating their houses. The situation remained the same until Cairo Accords in 1969 consolidated the authority of the PLO which allowed refugees to improve their houses and upgrade their roof (Schiocchet, 2014). High buildings (4-6 floors) started to appear in the camp, replacing the one to two story houses. Within the same period, the rural-urban migration to the city of Beirut was growing and Shia community were coming from the south and found in area close to the camp of Burj el Barajneh an area to settle in and the area of Ramel el Ali (in Burj el Barajne) started to grow (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003)

In the early 1970, the PLO dug artesian wells in the camp for water provision and purchased electric generators for electric provision. Within the same period, the PLO had a strong-armed presence in the camp and they not only controlled the camp but also the nearby Raml al 'Ali. Up until the 1977, the area remained under the authority of PLO, and they interfered in everything even in adding floors to buildings. By the end of this period, PLO lost their power when Fateh were forced out of the Lebanese war arena. By 1982-1984 and in the wake of the camp wars, the camps' growth was negatively affected by the armed conflict (Tiltnes, 2005). During this period, Burj camp was under siege of Amal Party for sixteen months, leading to the

depletion of its population, destruction of its infrastructure and service facilities, and to its physical damage. It is noteworthy to mention that the creation of the Amal party, founded by a prominent leader from the Shia community, emerged as a response to the Shia's requirement for an armed faction. This need arose due to the existence of Sunni and Christian Maronite militias already engaged in power struggles and seeking to expand their influence in Lebanon. The establishment of the Amal party provided the Shia community with a means to have fighters and protect their interests (Samii, 1997).

The camps' growth was also limited by the Syrian Army who controlled the entrances of the camp with military checkpoints. Like other camps the military checkpoints existed until the Syrian Army withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005. Before this, Burj camp developed within a rental market for the very poor of the city dwellers, mainly Syrian single migrant workers and domestic workers who found work in the city of Beirut but couldn't afford to live within it. In addition, there is not an efficient public transportation that links the city to further away lower rent housing areas. By 2005 after the assassination of PM Hariri, tensions further increased with the political atmosphere turning against Syrians in general and many Syrians left the camp (Samhan, 2008)

Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the bombardment of the southern suburbs of Beirut, the camp witnessed a vacuum of control by the Syrians or by Hezbollah whose priority was the reconstruction process. The camp grew exponentially in that period until the 2007 incident of Nahr El Bared when Hezbollah readjusted its position on the camp and regained control on access and actors. The takeover of west Beirut in 2008 by the Hezbollah (Party of God) repositioned the security of the camp under the jurisdiction of Hezbollah whose ranks was supplemented by some Palestinian officials (mainly some Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad representatives) and former members of the Brigades of Resistance (Saraya al-Muqawama). These groups do not belong to Hezbollah, but are military trained by them (Dot-Pouillard, 2015). In Burj camp, Hezbollah's combines a security coordination with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad on one side and with the popular and security committee on the other side to avoid any clashes between Shias and Palestinian Sunnis. Nevertheless, coordination is not always successful when, in September 2013, fighting erupted between Hezbollah members and Palestinians at the entrance of Burj camp, the issue was sorted out later by political directions and coordination.

Maintaining security and domestic relationships with all Palestinian factions in Burj camp from Hezbollah's perspective is a question of legitimacy: on the ideological level, "the liberation of all Palestine" is still at the core of its narrative. Pragmatically, the Party has to always intervene to prevent any sectarian conflicts with Sunni Palestinian population often living near its popular strongholds.

Since its establishment, Burj el Barajneh exponential growth has been fueled by the politics of dual sectarian power balance (Sunni– Shia axis) due to its location in 'Dahiye' (Figure 4; Figure 5). The camp presence as temporary housing of Sunni Palestinian refugees to be transformed later into the highest and densest camp in Lebanon attracting, in the last few years, Syrian refugees had a lot to do with its proximity to the Shia power stronghold in 'Dahiye'.

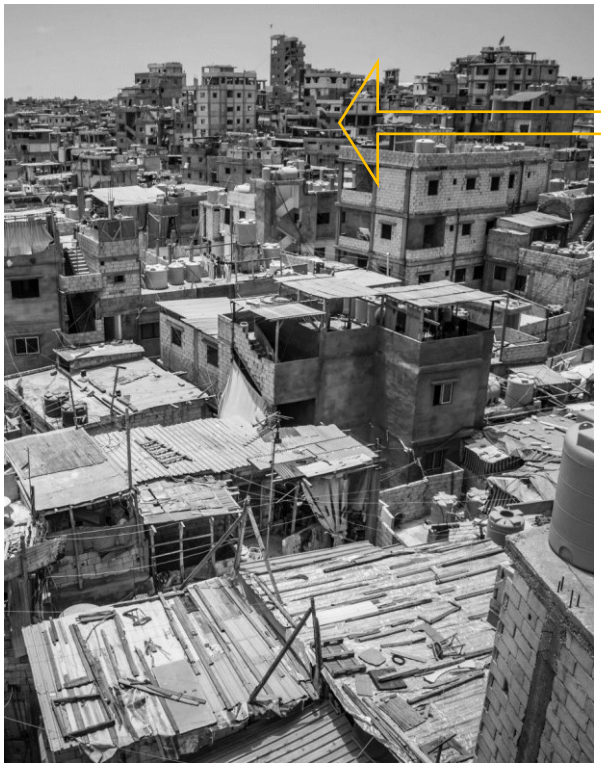
Within the mystery of the dense high-rise buildings that the camp encloses and knowing that the verticals in the camp are 49% inhabited by Syrians, my focus was to understand how the presence of 'the other'[19] within 'the other[20] ' affects the camp being itself labelled as the 'other "place in the city (Fincham, 2012;

[19] Syrians with respect to Palestinians
[20] Palestinians with respect to Lebanese

Oddenino, 2018; Sanyal, 2014). The majority of Syrians inhabiting the verticals are families who fled the war and found jobs in the city of Beirut. Most of them had connections with relatives, mainly single workers, who used to live in Burj el Barajneh before the Syrian war[21]. The rent ranges between 120 and 150$.

Construction materials are smuggled to the camp and their prices are 3 times higher than the market price due to the bribes and networking additional costs. Nevertheless, new buildings are replacing old ones to build higher and existing 3– 4 floors buildings are expanding vertically. According to my interviews, Hezbollah keeps a close eye on the construction process, and it won't be possible to build in the camp without the implicit consent from Hezbollah. The party monitors all related activities and coordinates with the popular committee to investigate the new tenants. A clearance has to be issued before proceeding with the tenancy in the camp. Close surveillance was imposed on the camp in the aftermath of the 2015 bombing of the Burj el Barajneh area and the arrest of suspects in Burj el Barajneh camp. In fact, since 2005, Hezbollah's indirect control over Burj camp increased until it became the de facto power holder.

[21] Before 2005, Burj el Barajneh provided a rental market for the very poor of the city dwellers, mainly single Syrian migrant workers and domestic workers were developing. The camp provided low rent and low infrastructure services cost for city dwellers who work in the city of Beirut and can't afford to live within it.



A Comparison between an image taken in 2018 and a survey conducted in 2008 (Max height is 4 floors) shows an exponential growth in vertical growth in Burj camp

Figure 4: Bird's-eye view from Bourj el Barajneh Camp

Source: retrieved from Chamma, 2018

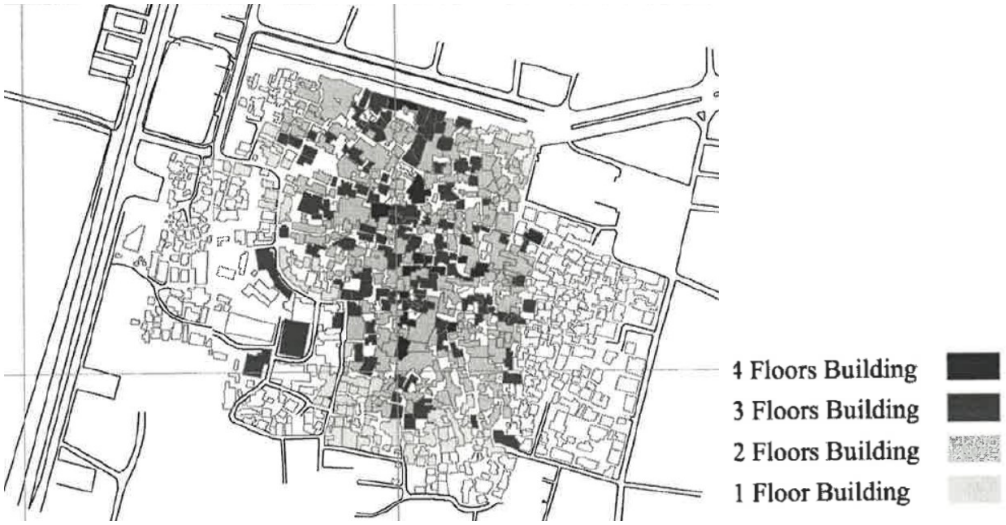


Figure 5: Building Heights

Source: retrieved from Samhan, 2008

There are 1250 concrete buildings constructed on foundations capable of supporting two stories, though most buildings have four or more floors, lacking formal structure. Some buildings in the camps reached 10–11 & 14 floors. In fact, higher buildings are often regarded as safer compared to medium-height buildings due to their structural integrity. Medium-height buildings, on the other hand, can be seen as expanded structures, typically resulting from the addition of extra floors to the ground level, which was not initially designed for such purposes. They have expanded over time and often face challenges in terms of

structural stability. This has led to compromised structural integrity, increased vulnerability to natural disasters, and a higher risk of collapse or damage during unforeseen events[22].

The relation of power to the height of Burj camp goes in line with (Harris, 2015) argument about the inverse relationship of power to the height in two ways. The uprising heights in Burj el Barajneh assume power of refugees over their host, however, it is in fact under direct subjugation to Hezbollah power and control. On another level, Syrian refugees inhabiting these verticals had affected social cohesion in the camp. Two of my informants' relatives have left the camp with their families as they didn't feel safe and comfortable living in the camp especially that they have daughters and might be harassed by the youngsters (Syrians) on the street. The presence of the 'other' in the camp inhabiting the Verticals is diluting the camp social quality and repositions it into hybridity and conflictual space.

Figure 6: The vertical: Palestinian out migration

Source: Hanadi Samhan, August 2019

[22] According to a report published by AlNashra news in December 2022, it has been revealed that thousands of houses within the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are in a state of severe disrepair, posing high risks to the residents. This alarming situation has been corroborated by the Palestinian Institute for Human Rights (Shahed), highlighting the absence of viable solutions to address this pressing issue.

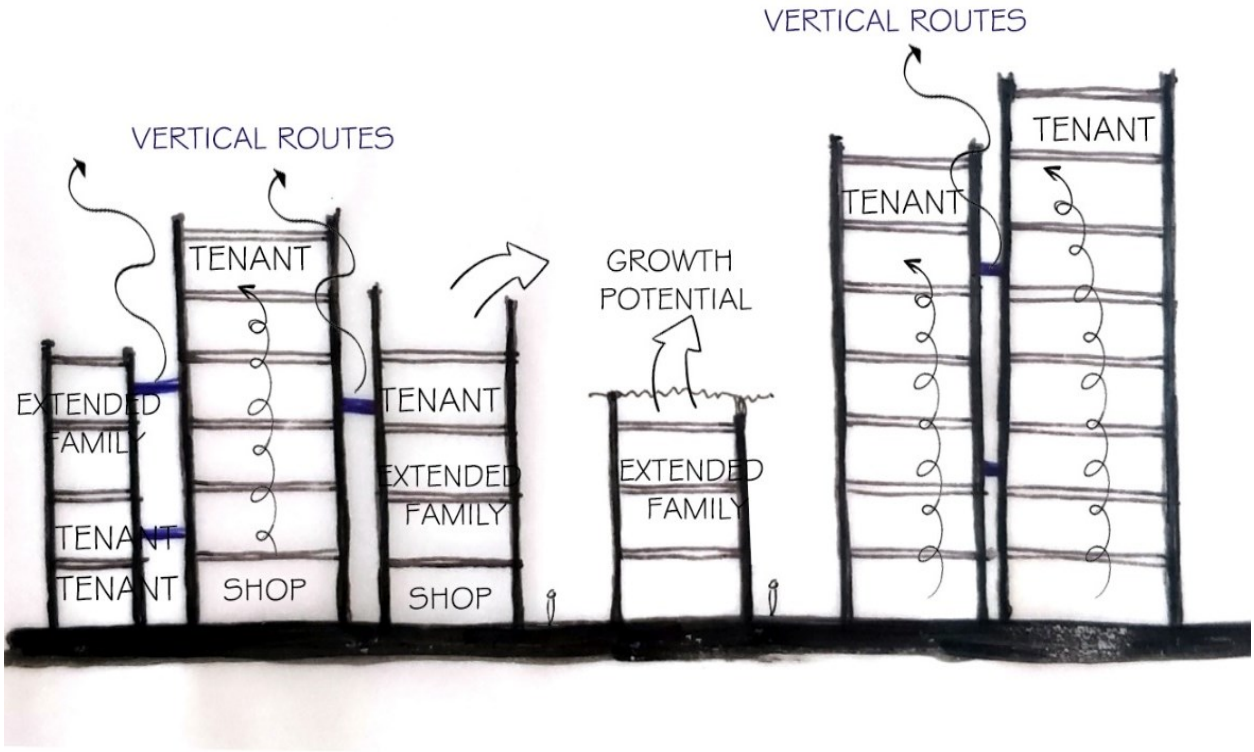


Figure 7: Burj El Barajneh Camp Verticals

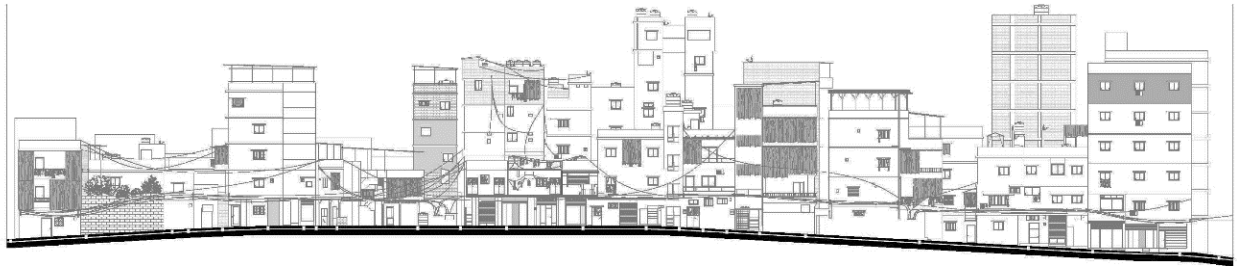


Figure 8: Section in Burj El Barajneh Camp

Source: Hanadi Samhan, September 2022.

5 Ein El Helwe camps

Ein El Helwe is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon located 3km south-east the city of Saida (OCHA, 2017). It was first settled in 1948 by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Originally established on 290,000 m2 inhabited by 40,000 refugee (LPDC, 2017)[23], Ein El Helwe and its adjacent gatherings is currently inhabited by 41,557 Palestinian refugee, Syrians, Palestinian Syrian refugees, Lebanese and other nationalities (LPDC, 2017) spreading over 1,500,000 m2 (OCHA, 2017).

Figures 9: Ein el Helwe location in Lebanon and Ein El Helwe neighborhoods distribution
Source: Adapted from "Who is Ein el Helwe?" (Ghandour,2013).

Ein El Helwe is the least researched camp as it is widely perceived to be the most dangerous camp in Lebanon and has been recently described as a "tiny 1.5 square Kilometer cinder block camp" within "lawless boundary" (Zaatari 2017) in which thousands of armed extremist militia find an incubator for their activities. It is the largest camp in Lebanon and the densest in term of population. It has the highest concentration of Palestinian refugees who are most active compared to other 12 camps in Lebanon[24] Ein El Helwe is known as the capital of the Palestinian Diaspora[25] (Amiri, 2016) and currently considered by the UNRWA as the microcosm of the Palestinian political universe, with virtually all PLO factions, Syria-aligned ("Tahaluf"), extremists, and Islamists represented and in constant competition for influence and power. The camp lies on the out- skirts of the southern Lebanese port city of Sidon, which has a majority Sunni Muslim population while serves as the gateway to southern Lebanon with majority of Shia population. The camp includes eight neighborhoods, each of them formed through a different process of "encroachment, appropriation, and/or negotiation with the surrounding areas that include both squatting (illegal land occupation) and informal land subdivisions" (Ghandour, 2021). Historically, Ein El Helwe camp was always under the dominance of PLO; however, the Islamist extremist security threats were escalated after 2007 Bared camp attacked the Lebanese Army. Notably, groups hostile to the Lebanese army and Hezbollah, and that also have ties to Jihadist groups inside Syria, such as Shabab al-Muslim,

[23] 29, 672 in 1983 source, PLO, statistical bulletin (Al-Qutub 1989)
[24] Southern camps (Miye ou Miye, Burj el-Shamali, El-Buss, Rashidiyeh), Beirut camps (Bourj- el Barajneh, Shatila, Mar Elias), Northern camps (Biddawi, Nahr el Bared) and to other camps in Beka'a (el Wavel) and Dbaye.
[25] http://web.archive.org/web/20171014234155/http://www.khiyam.com/news/article.php?articleID=2747

Fatah al-Islam and Jund al-Sham (Koss, 2018), amongst others, are now operating from Ein El Helwe. Three elements were observed in EEC and analyzed using the vertical lens. The first was the Security wall that surrounds the camp, the second is the mosques minarets and third is high rise buildings.

Figure 10: Ein el Helwe location Key map
Source: Retrieved from Google earth

With the influx of Syrian refugee to Lebanon, Ein El Helwe attracted the highest number of Palestinian Syrian refugees (3350 PSR), in particular their numbers have increased in the camp exacerbated by the destruction of Yarmouk camp in Syria by the end of 2013 (Bitari, 2013). The Influx of PRF has fueled political unrest in the camp and increased the demand on the rental housing in the camp. Rental housing also seemed to be attractive to Palestinian refugees who cannot afford to extend their parents' house. The average building height in the camp is 3-4 floors. These are mid-rise buildings that were built during the 70's, when Fateh was very powerful in Lebanon and in Saida in particular. These buildings are either still inhabited by extended Palestinian families or rented out to Palestinian refugees as original owner were able to leave the camp (Figure 11)

Some buildings extend beyond 4 floors reaching 6-7th floor. One unique building caught my attention as it was high, can be called a tower in the camp. It belongs to the "Jamiya (Association of Islamic charitable projects). A Sunni religious organization that is known to be pro-Syrian (Suleiman, 1999) (Figure 12). A four floor building newly built by a pro-Hezbollah wealthy Palestinian refugee, who is claimed to work in money laundering.[26] The building is newly built and being rented to Palestinians and Palestinian Syrians while the owner lives in the upper floor. We learned that the roof is reserved for the owner and is made inaccessible to the lower floors (Figure 13).

Finally, there were many one floor houses in the camp whose owners are unable to expand them or consolidated them. They were in deteriorated conditions and waiting for the unknow (Figure 14).

[26] Such accusations need to be further corroborated by more in-depth field work. The information I received was form my informant son who took me in a tour in the camp.

Figure 11: Palestinian Extended Family Figure 12: Building owned by Jamiya (Association of Islamic charitable projects)
Source: Samhan Hanadi, 2019

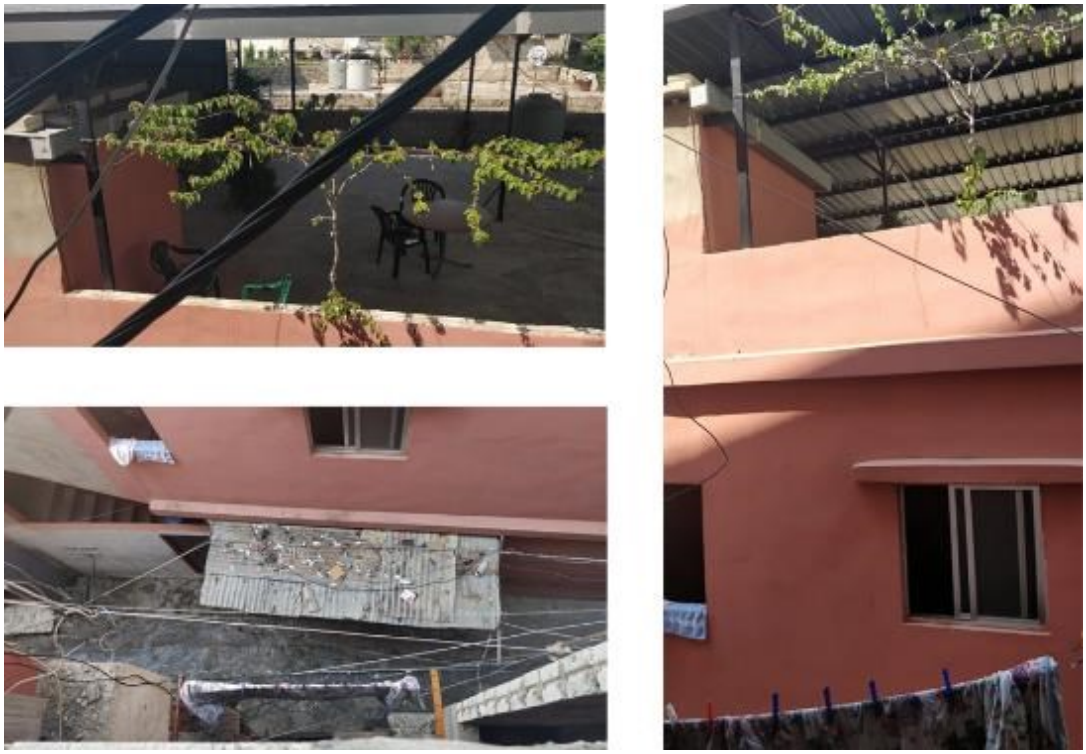


Figure 13: House owned by pro-Hezbollah Palestinian refugees.
Source: Samhan Hanadi, 2019

Looking into the verticals; the power and the heights are in a paradoxical relationship. The highest visible buildings are inhabited by the most vulnerable groups as higher floors. They are usually cheapest in rent value as elevators are not provided in the camp reflecting an opposite model to the verticals in the

city. The highest floors (penthouses) are inhabited by the wealthiest and most powerful. The mid-rise buildings from the 1980s hold significant meaning and value for the residents as they serve as witnesses to the PLO's golden age in the refugee camps. These structures symbolize the power and dominance of Palestinians over their camps during that time. They represent a tangible reminder of the collective struggle and resilience of the Palestinian people in their quest for self-determination and the preservation of their cultural identity within the camp environment. The post 2008 mid-rise reflects a more top-down power relation where owners take over the heights. Finally, the horizontals, one floor buildings and deteriorated ones, in my opinion forge within their flatness, prospective possibilities to expand into the verticals. They are the few speculative lands in the camp that many are seeking to take over and reconstruct.

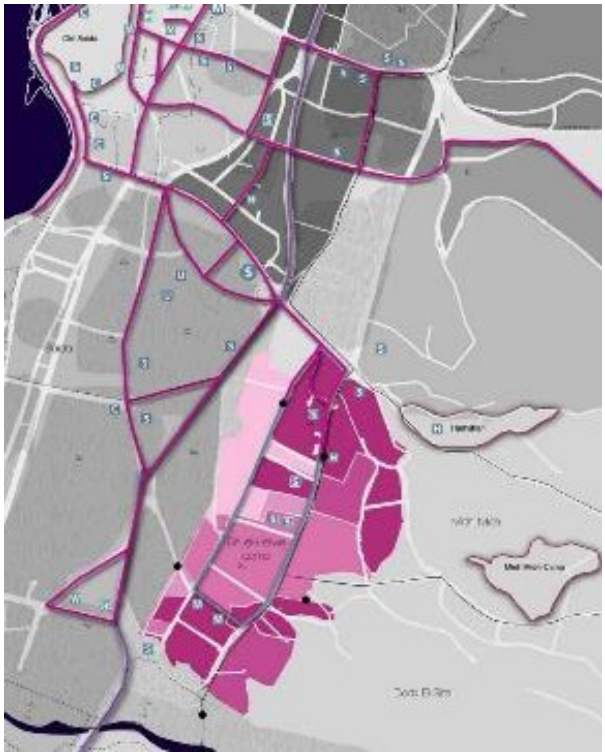


Figure 14: Horizontals; one floor depilated houses - *Figure 15: Rental houses in is Ein el Helwe camp* .
Source: Samhan Hanadi, 2019
Source: Retrieved from Who is Ein el Helwe, Ghandour,2013

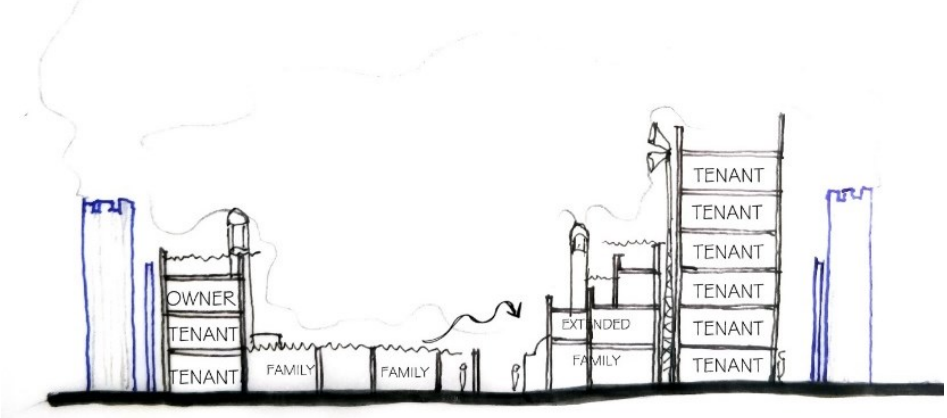


Figure 16 : Ein El Helwe Verticals

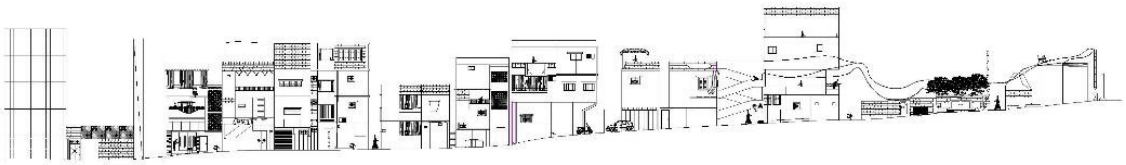


Figure 17: The verticals and their types (illustrative section)

Source: Hanadi Samhan, September 2022.

6 Conclusion

The chapter is a call to re-think the spatiality of Palestinian Refugees Camps in the context of Lebanon by using a novel lens of analysis that is the Vertical. The analysis of the Vertical, the subject of investigation, in three camps uncovered power relations between the camps and the hybrid sovereignty of the Lebanese state. In fact, it showed that the delicate sectarian power balance in Lebanon (Sunni, Maronite, Shia) has affected the verticals since the early years of their consolidations and more noticeably in the last fifteen years marked by power turbulence. The position of camps in Lebanon has since changed from neutrality and invisibility into power shifters. Their positions have also changed from one territory to another. Competition to take over their spaces by power holders has placed them in a conflicting position. By purposefully isolating the Palestinian community, legally, socially and economically, the Lebanese state structure established a temporary political and economic environment. They intentionally left Palestinians without many fundamental rights and in a "legal limbo" (Knudsen, 2009). The country's hostile policies towards camps, since their establishment, has laid to the formation of a transitional space (Hajj, 2016) that is constantly labelled and dealt with as exceptional as per Agamben a space that is only included in the political structure by its exclusion. Even if the Agambenian theory is effective in analyzing coercive camp environments, it appears that camps that their own residents have constructed or altered require a different analytical strategy (Katz, 2015). The camp is being examined more and more as a site of political action and resistance. The act of building higher is a political action and an act of resistance that the Palestinian are performing to claim their only permitted space in the city. Building becomes both formal and informal means of safeguarding their assets and resisting state assimilation to varying degrees of effectiveness. Verticality becomes a strategic construct of their property rights that not only protects their assets but also enables them to navigate the challenges posed by the evolving political and economic landscape. The analysis showed that they adapt and iterate their approaches over time. Significant turning points, such as in 1948, from 1969 to 1970, and in 2007, witnessed Palestinian communities responding flexibly to changes occurring within the refugee camps.

This highlights the resilience and adaptability of camp spaces, as they strategically select elements of their communal identity to effectively address the challenges they face. By employing a malleable approach to their property rights, refugees navigate through periods of uncertainty, preserving their assets while preserving their autonomy and distinctiveness. The call to understand the vertical in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon at this particular time is very much needed as camps have been contested by the influx of Palestinian refugees from Syria for the past six years in the aftermath of Yarmouk camp destruction in Syria (Bitari, 2013). The Syrian influx has worsened the living conditions in camps, increased the pressure on its infrastructure and changed the sociocultural quality of its space[27].

What we thought needs further investigation, in the Lebanese context of hybrid sovereignties is how Lebanese-Palestinian– Syrian intra/inter power relations and multiple sovereigns have enabled the production of "verticals" in Burj el Barajneh camp. Verticals in Burj is creating a complex relationship between two populations; Palestinian refugees, Syrians that mirror each other's political, economic, social, and spatial conditions and yet remain distinct from one another and from their host population, the Lebanese. In the specific context of Burj, the conceptualization of the urban within the camp becomes a challenging task, particularly considering the vertical expansion inhabited by the "other" group of Syrians, within the presence of the "other" group of Palestinians, all while being influenced by the dominant power of Hezbollah. One approach to understanding the camp is to emphasize its dynamic and fluid nature, shaped by constantly evolving human interactions that are mutable, imperfect, and contingent. This perspective highlights the complex interplay of social forms, multiple systems, and networks that possess varying degrees of agency, collectively contributing to the production of urban spaces within the camp.

Understanding the vertical in the camp as a socio-political constructed entity, embedded within larger networks and power structures, allows us to appreciate the complexities and nuances of urban life within this unique setting. It encourages us to explore the multifaceted processes through which urban spaces are produced, enabling a deeper comprehension of the camp's spatial dynamics, social fabric, and the diverse experiences of its residents.

[27] Bourj el Barajneh camp density is 1459 Person/Hectare compared to 227 P/H in Ein el Helwe.

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