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PERMANENTLY IMPERMANENT:
URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the long-term development of refugee camps in order to gain a better understanding of how a camp's growth can be anticipated and managed. Refugee camps are conceptualized as temporary way stations. Yet, increasingly, refugee camps have become semi-permanent features of the landscape. As they persist, camps grow into unique urban areas. In this context, how does a camp reflect the political geography of its history? With a global refugee population of 15.3 million, enduring conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, as well as emerging climate refugees, this question is relevant and timely.

As the most protracted refugee situation today, this paper will use the Palestinian refugee situation as a case study. Data will come from scholarly analyses of refugee camps, both individual and systemic, and then from publications by government and non-governmental organization, especially the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, both of which publish data and analysis of their work. Best practices of managing refugee camps are compiled with long-term development in mind, offering recommendations to camp planners and administrators.

While significant scholarly work has been done on life in refugee camps and the socio-political conditions that lead to camps, very little work has been done on the impact of history and protraction upon refugee camps. By studying the progression of Palestinian refugee camps over time, the thesis hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge on a pressing global concern.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

As recounted in the Book of Exodus, Moses led the enslaved tribes of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula. After forty years wandering transiently with poor lodging and unreliable food, the tribes signed a covenant with God on Mount Sinai. In return for keeping the Torah, or law, the tribes received a homeland in the territory of Palestine. The country of Palestine was born in exile and wilderness; it is appropriate that Palestine's greatest challenge continues to be exile and wilderness.

The United Nations passed Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947. The text of the resolution called for a new state to be partitioned between Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine. Israel would be a new homeland for the Jewish people, a refuge after the targeted horror of Nazi Germany. The subtext of the resolution established a shadow state of displaced refugees. During the ensuing chaos of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, approximately 711,000 Palestinian Arabs were forced from their homes (Conciliation Commission for Palestine). Sixty years later, the approximately five million descendants of these refugees are found in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This is the largest protracted refugee population in the world.

The term 'refugee camp' inspires imagery of tents and temporary shelter; this image is incomplete. In addition to Palestine, the world is replete with protracted refugee situations materialized by aging and maturing refugee camps. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identified 38 protracted refugee populations when it conducted a survey in 2004, finding a total population of about 6.2 million with population centers in Central Africa and the Great Lakes, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. The complete survey results can be found in Table 1.

Analyses of refugee camps sit at the intersection of several disciplines, and this paper will draw predominantly upon elements of political science and human geography. The camp will first be situated in a context of political science. On a macro level, the impetus and resolution of protracted refugee situations can generally be traced to political crises and the actions or inactions employed by state and non-state actors to address them. On a micro level, the interactions of states, international organizations, and non-governmental actors manifest themselves in the space of the camp. From this context, the space of the camp can be best described by the traditions of human geography; the spaces occupied by the buildings, road network and overall settlement reflect the priorities and cleavages of the camp, especially those of institutions and residents. The organic, makeshift spaces planned by the camp residents sit in juxtaposition with the strict geometries planned by distant, institutional entities. Taken together, the shifting lines and footprints of the camp's political geography reveal the priorities and intentions, and the conflicts and cooperation of the camp.

This paper is focused upon the camps of the West Bank due to the direction of Sandi Hilal, a Bethlehem-based architect and Project Manager of the UNRWA Housing and Camp Improvement Unit. These camps constitute the longest protracted refugee situation in the world and sixty years of growth. A key weakness of using the Palestinian camps, however, is that they are poorly documented in the early decades. Thus, for purposes of comparison, camps that have emerged outside the region in recent decades have been used as a benchmark for early camp development.

This paper draws upon scholarly analyses of refugee camps, both individual and systemic, publications by government and non-governmental organization, especially the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Where available, it draws upon photographs, aerial photography and maps – particularly those from the UNRWA Photo and Film Archive. For reason of time and logistical constraints, this

paper was unable to incorporate site visits and in-person interviews, which were an original goal
and would have further placed the camp in context.

From the intersection of political science and geography, this thesis seeks to ultimately
answer the question: how does the space of the refugee camp change over time, and what
characteristics of the refugee situation does the shift reveal?

Intellectual Context

The term itself, 'refugee,' is heavily associated with the twentieth century. In fact, the
word's roots can be traced to France in the 1680s ("Refugee"). Derived from the French verb
'refugier,' meaning "to take shelter," it was first applied to the French Huguenots who fled
France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The word slightly shifted in meaning over the
course of World War I, when it evolved from meaning "one seeking asylum" to mean "one
fleeing home." Contemporarily, UNHCR defines a refugee as "a person who, because of fear of
persecution arising from his race, creed, or political philosophy, is living outside his former home
country and is unable or unwilling to avail himself of that country's protection" (United Nations).

The term 'displaced person' is often used as a synonym (Kulischer and Jaffe). Coined by
Russian American sociologist Eugene M. Kulischer to describe the refugees, prisoners and slave
laborers forced from their homelands in Eastern Europe during World War II, 'displaced person'
has since been focused by the United Nations to indicate those refugees with international legal
protection. Under this category is the subcategory of 'internally displaced persons,' people who
have fled their homes but have not crossed an international frontier ("Refugees and Displaced
Persons Protected under International Humanitarian Law"). Each group carries shades of
similarity and difference, posing its own challenges to the international refugee system. For the

purposes of addressing those camps built for the three groups, however, this thesis will collectively refer to all three by the term 'refugees.'

In the context of this essay, the term 'camp' can refer to one of three types of camps: 1) planned 2) unplanned and 3) based upon full-assistance. Any definition of the refugee camp must contend with the shades of gray between these categories, the blurred lines between planned and self-settled refugee centers. Thus, this paper will make use of the criteria established in 1955 by a McGill University Professor of Transcultural Psychiatry, H.B.M. Murphy (11):

> Although the physical conditions of camps may vary widely, from hell to hotels, the effects tend to be uniform. The most important characteristics of the camps are: segregation from the host population, the need to share facilities, a lack of privacy, plus overcrowding and a limited, restricted area within which the whole compass of daily life is to be conducted. This gives the refugees a sense of dependency, and the clear signal that they have a special and limited status, and are being controlled.

Thus, the refugee camp will be marked by five characteristics: 1) freedom of movement 2) mode of assistance/economics 3) mode of governance 4) designation as temporary and 5) population size and/or density. The more that a population center adheres to these criteria, the closer it can be considered to matching the definition of a refugee camp.

From a political perspective on refugee camps, Aristotle made the first steps by establishing the analysis of man as a political individual. From there, Michel Foucault advanced theories of biopolitics, the role of human power over life, and Carl Schmitt advanced ideas of the sovereign as the only exception to his own laws. Drawing upon this scholarship, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has led the philosophical discussion on refugees and refugee camps, in particular, his concepts of the "state of exception" and of *homo sacer* as developed in his books, *State of Exception* (2005) and *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995). Relevant intellectual context in human geography is less developed; contemporary thought can be found in the works of geographer Jennifer Hyndman.

The first roots of camp philosophy were laid by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in the 300s BCE. He drew a distinction between the political life of an individual and the individual's natural, subsistent life (Finlayson 2010). Or, as he assigned terms, Aristotle argued the distinction between the *zoē*, the mere existence of life, as marked by living and breathing, and the *bios*, the higher existence between birth and death, marked by human deeds, words and actions.

The first modern roots of philosophy on the camp were established by French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault in his lecture series from 1975-76 at the Collège de France, "Society Must Be Defended" (Kelly 2010). Under his term 'biopolitics,' Foucault addressed the power of the state over the political and physical bodies of its citizens. In his successor lecture on January 10th, 1979, "The Birth of Biopolitics," Foucault argues that the creation of civil society acts as a recent political construct, mediating between the governing need for peace and security and the neo-liberal need for freedom and political rights (Foucault and Senellart 2008). Into this mediating zone steps biopolitics, a collective umbrella for the subtle structural expectations by which the state exerts control.

Further context was laid by German philosopher and political theorist Carl Schmitt, who begins his 1922 essay, *Politische Theologie,* "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (McConkey 2013, 415). Thus, he argues that a state of exception invests a person or government with a power over others well beyond where the law previously existed. The state of exception permits one government to be all-powerful, to operate outside the law. During these states of exception, citizenship and individual rights can be diminished, superseded and rejected. More than a defined period of exception, though, a state of exception is defined by its prolonged suspension of the law.

From this starting point, Agamben takes the state of exception and applies it to camps and to the increase of power structures that a government implements in a time of crisis (Agamben 2005, 2). In particular, he draws upon the state of exception in explaining the Holocaust. In

conjunction with the state of exception, Agamben develops *homo sacer* (1998), a concept dating to Roman law and translating to a "sacred man" or an "accursed man" who can be killed without repercussion by anyone, but who cannot be sacrificed ritually. Thus, *homo sacer* represents the *zoē* stripped of the *bios*. Related to the camp, the *homo sacer* reflects the role of bare life, the simple and unadorned life of such social groups as outcasts, outlaws, slaves, barbarians – and of refugees.

Internationally, the "state of exception" is observed in the state of emergency declared post-September 11, 2001 by the American George W. Bush Administration (Ek 2006). The liberal states of the West, generally held as bastions of human rights and enlightened democracy, have increasingly cited extraordinary measures to justify harsher immigration and asylum policies. A prominent example of this state of exception is found in Guantánamo Bay and the suspension of *habeas corpus*. As Agamben writes, "What is new about President Bush's order is that it radically erases any legal status of the individual, thus producing a legally unnameable and unclassifiable being. Not only do the Taliban captured in Afghanistan not enjoy the status of POWs as defined by the Geneva Convention, they do not even have the status of people charged with a crime according to American laws" (Agamben 2005, 3). The permanently temporary qualification of "enemy combatants" as *homo sacer* creates a state of exception.

That said, the creation of *homo sacer* and the state of exception are not recent phenomena. Agamben referred to a continued state of exception under Nazi Germany. As he framed it, "The entire Third Reich can be considered a state of exception that lasted twelve years. In this sense, modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system" (Agamben 2005, 2).

From the discipline of human geography, philosophical consideration of the refugee camp is generally both limited and recent. One prominent critique of the international refugee system has been advanced by Jennifer Hyndman, Professor of Social Science and Geography and Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Canada. As she argues, the international standardization of refugee camps ignores the local historical and cultural context (Hyndman 2000). When maps, statistics and assessments are made by UNHCR and UNRWA, they are made with good intentions but ultimately are made without reference to the historic configurations of power. They create and distort the power relations between international organizations and refugees. In short, she argues, the international refugee system tries to make orderly and scientific a field that is inherently messy and locally specific.

The refugee camp itself has roots as old as those of its intellectual context. The contemporary refugee camp sits at the confluence of actors and design characteristics rooted in generations of thought on the idea of the planned purpose-built camp. Recent decades bear the strongest mark upon the modern refugee camp, however, and the stamp of the Cold War and asylum trends can be seen in the contemporary phenomenon of the protracted refugee situation. This historical and political context is reflected in the political and geographic spaces of the modern refugee camp.

Chapter 2 History of the Purpose-Built Camp

Seen from above, Dadaab refugee camp in eastern Kenya looks like an organic sprawl of tents, littering the burnt red desert. Dadaab is, in fact, home for approximately 500,000 Somali refugees (Sundlin and Nyqvist 2010). It is the largest refugee camp in the world, the third largest city in Kenya, and unplanned as the camp appears (see Figures 1 and 2), it is the product of an international refugee system that in turn draws upon over two millennia of camp planning. Three neighboring camps were founded in Kenya in the early 1990s (Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera camps) and each was designed to United Nations standard operating procedure (see Figures 3, 4 and 5), only to grow precipitously in the following two decades, mutating into Dadaab Refugee Camp. The family ancestry of the planned, purpose-built refugee camp is not a recent development. How then did UNHCR settle upon the current building system? What are the roots of this system? How did the roots shape camps to their current purpose?

Figure 1: Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya[1]

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[1] Sundlin and Nyqvist 2010

Figure 2: Dadaab Refugee Camp Aerial Photo 2011[2]

Figure 3: Dadaab Refugee Camp Photo 1992[3]

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[2] *Dadaab Refugee Camps in Kenya, 20 Years on – in Pictures*
[3] Ibid.

Figure 4: Dadaab Refugee Camp Aerial Photo 1992[4]

Figure 5: Dadaab Refugee Camp Aerial Photo 1996[5]

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

First, what is the equation of infrastructure behind a purpose-built camp? The complexity of a camp is a direct function of the complexity of the supply and logistics operations of the sovereign entity that supports it. Consolata Kwadi has been a Logistics Officer with Dadaab refugee camp since March 2005 (World Food Programme Fighting Hunger Worldwide). As she describes her role at Dadaab, the logistics at a refugee camp involve ensuring sufficient storage facilities, the provision of sufficient food and on-time delivery of food and non-food commodities. Specific to refugee camps, logistics officers also coordinate the stocking, monitoring and delivery of calorie-dense High Energy Nutrition Biscuits. Food must often be measured and mixed before it is distributed. Officers work with partner agencies and organizations to provide medical attention, shelter, water and sanitation, education and even vocational training. In the end, Consolata is responsible for feeding 500,000 people every two weeks. The camp is essentially a spontaneous urban agglomeration, and the camp owner must be able to supply that agglomeration with, at a minimum, nutritious food and clean water.

What, then, has been the gradual evolution to the contemporary iteration of the purpose-built camp? The first forbears of the purpose-built camp are found in the Roman military camp. The Roman military camp formalized certain standardized features of a purpose-built camp (Morris 1994). It adhered to the road structure of an east to west decumanus road crossing a north to south cardo road. It pioneered the idea of standardized amenities, from a forum in the center of the camp to an arena outside the camp walls. While they were explicitly designed as a tool of conflict and of pacification, the Roman military camps pioneered the idea of a purpose-built camp and beget rudimentary city plans from England to Iraq.

The next iteration of the purpose-built camp is found in camps designed to hold the 'other' during conflict. Such camps are alternately described as prisoner-of-war camps, detention camps and concentration camps. One of the first modern prisoner-of-war camps is found in the

American Civil War, during which the Confederacy maintained a camp to house prisoners-of-war at Andersonville, Georgia (Percoco 1993). One inmate at Andersonville was Robert Knox Sneden, a Union mapmaker enlisted in the 40th New York Infantry Regiment (Onion 2013). Two months after his internment in Andersonville, Sneden drafted a map of his surroundings (Figure 2).

As depicted, Andersonville was essentially a rectangular enclosure, inorganically strung across the ravine of the Sweet Water Lick creek. Within, the camp was a disorganized melee. Converging upon the banks of Sweet Water Lick were the confused, unregulated masses of Union prisoners-of-war (see Figures 6 and 7). Without, the space around Andersonville was carefully controlled. Confederate gun emplacements sit on high ground around the camp boundaries, enforcing a two-wall killing zone between the interior and the Georgian woodlands.

The next such form is found during the Second Boer War from 1899 – 1902, during which British forces employed concentration camps to house and pacify the Dutch-descended Boer civilian population in South Africa (Jewell 2012). The camps were born of a scorched earth campaign to flush out Boer guerrillas. In total, the military established 45 tent camps for Boer refugees and 64 for black Africans. The basic tent camps were uniform and clearly temporary. In late 1901, the British government created the Fawcett Commission to determine the validity of criticism leveled at the camp system. After five months of study, the Commission found that 154,000 civilians had been interned at an appallingly high mortality rate (Pakenham 1979). The leading causes of death were diseases such as measles, typhoid and dysentery; they were exacerbated by harsh and unhygienic living conditions, including a two-tier ration system with intentionally meager rations for the families of men still fighting.

The internment camp passed through several evolutions in the coming decades. Through World War I, in particular, internment camps were implemented in Canada to house 8,000 individuals identified as citizens of Austro-Hungary, Germany or Turkey ("First World War

Internment Camps a 'Difficult Scar' for Canadian Ukrainians"). The internment camp reached its

metaphorical depths in the cauldrons of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. The industrial horror of

the concentration camp reached its peak in Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau,

Treblinka and many infamous others (Hördler 2011). The archetypal Holocaust camp is often

viewed to be Auschwitz-Birkenau, outside the contemporary town of Oświęcim, Poland. The

longer term 'concentration' camp of the complex was found in Auschwitz I (Figure 8). This

section was comprised of orderly, regimented barracks separated by barbed wire and access

roads. The geometry of the camp was ruled by right angles and discipline. Next door to

Auschwitz I was Birkenau, the 'extermination' camp of the complex. Again, while much smaller,

this section was defined by the same disciplined order of barracks. Separating Auschwitz I and

Birkenau was a rail line, providing a ready access to supplies, guards and prisoners. Found

outside the prison itself are the extensive administrative buildings for the camp. These were

relevant not only for the immediate camp governance, but for coordinating supply logistics to

Germany and the eastern front, and for coordinating local work programs. Such programs became

increasingly important. In early 1941, the chemical conglomerate IG Farben made plans to

establish a factory seven kilometers from the camp. The camp administration, rail and housing

were important components in IG Farben's plans to use camp labor. Approximately 45 additional

satellite camps were established around Auschwitz to service similar prison-industrial

arrangements.

In addition to the concentration system, whether for extermination or interment, some 35

million men and women spent time as prisoners-of-war in World War II (Kochavi 2005).

Furthermore, over 110,000 Americans of Japanese descent were interned in the American West

during the War (Robinson 2010), as were smaller numbers of Japanese-Canadians. These two

types of camp experiences complement the more common narrative of the concentration camp.

These terrible applications of modern planning and supply were reapplied following World War II to house the many displaced persons of the conflict (McLaren). Following defeat in 1945, West Germany was forced to reintegrate about nine million refugees from 1944 to 1958. While many were returning home, many others of German ethnicity were returning to a homeland that their ancestors had left centuries prior. They spoke the language of their new, Eastern European homes and were essentially refugees in their own homeland. During that time, former internment and concentration camps were used as 'halfway houses' to prepare the refugees for integration. The camps themselves went unaltered from their original purpose as the West German government and cooperating militaries shuffled refugees out of the camps and into self-supporting homes and jobs as quickly as possible, thereby avoiding a protracted refugee situation and the development of a permanent refugee culture. This situation is typified by Föhrenwald displaced persons camp, built originally by Nazi Germany to house laborers for an IG Farben plant and then repurposed by the United States military. As seen in Figure 9, the streets of Föhrenwald are labeled by twelve American states as street names as well as one named after President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. By the end of 1945 alone, about six million displaced persons had been repatriated. The remainder were slowly repatriated or settled in new countries such that in 1953, the total number had dropped to 250,000 still under mandate.

Figure 6: Map of Andersonville Prison[6]
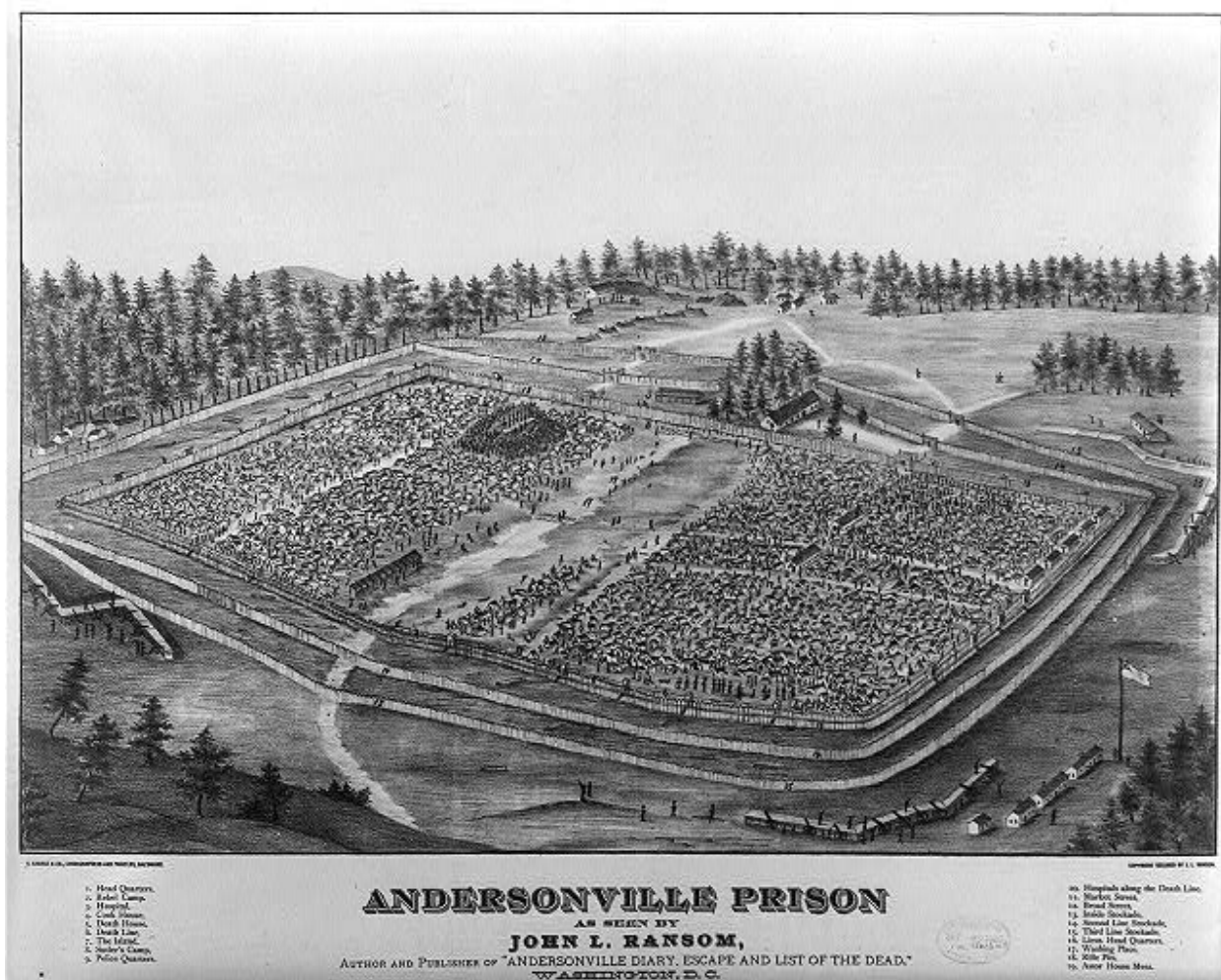
Figure 7: Map of Andersonville Prison[7]
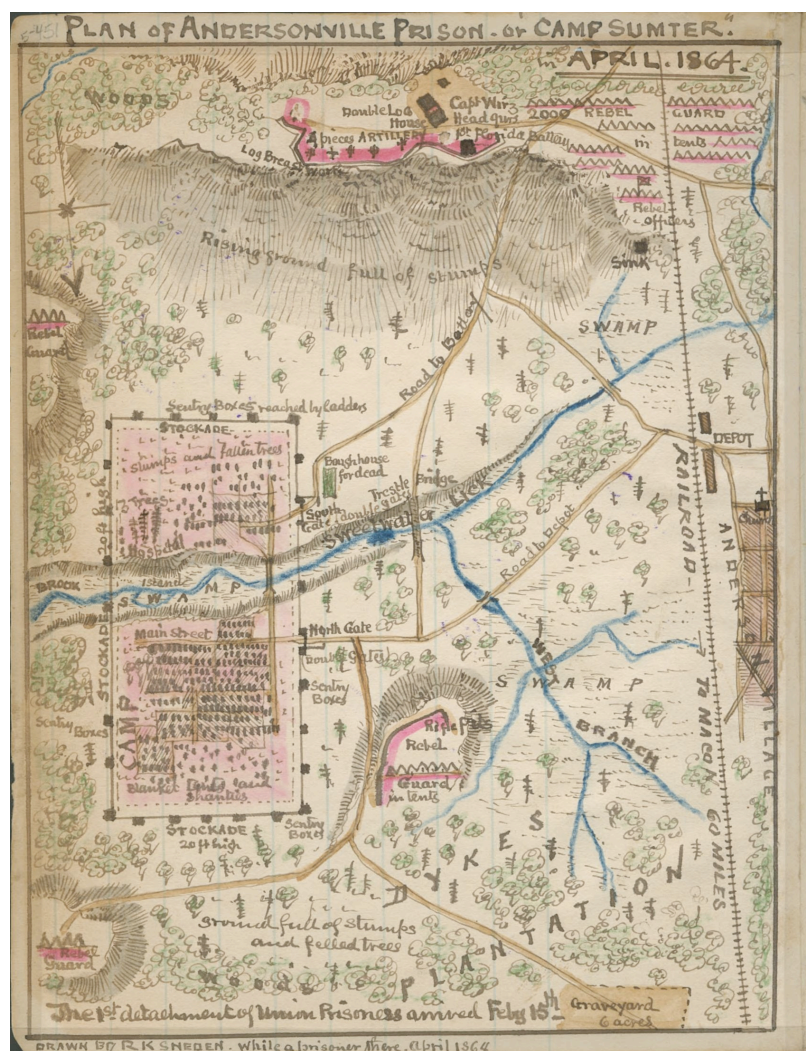
[7] Sneden 1994

Figure 8: Map of Auschwitz Concentration Camp[8]

HET CONCENTRATIE- EN VERNIETIGINGSKAMP AUSCHWITZ II (BIRKENAU)
SITUATIE AUGUSTUS 1944

a - Gaskamer/Crematorium 2
b - Gaskamer/Crematorium 3
c - Gaskamer/Crematorium 4
d - Gaskamer/Crematorium 5
e - Douche/ontluizingsinrichting
f - Opslag voor buit gemaakte spullen "Kanada"
g - 1e provisorische gaskamer
h - 2e provisorische gaskamer
i - Zuiveringsinstallatie
j - Kennel voor diensthonden
k - Keukenbarak
l - Waterbedrijf
m- Grindgroeve
n - Aardappelopslag
o - Ziekenbarak voor mannelijke gevangenen
p - Ziekenbarak voor vrouwelijke gevangenen
q - Ontluizingsinrichting
r - Station Auschwitz
s - Uitstapplaats
t - Kampcommando/SS-kazerne
u - Hospitaal
v - Onderofficierskamer
w- Hoofdwacht/Poort

- Prikkeldraad (gedeeltelijk onder spanning)
- Brandstapel
- Massagraf
- Afwateringskanalen

Overzicht van de kampblokken

B I - Sovjet-krijgsgevangen/mannenkamp tot augustus 1942, daarna tot januari 1945 vrouwenkamp

B II - Wisselend bezet tot januari 1945 door: zigeuners, Gevangenen vanuit Theresienstadt, mannen, mannen onder quarantaine, Hongaarse Joden (met name vrouwen)

B III - Tot oktober 1944 kamp voor joodse gevangenen (in het bijzonder vrouwen uit Hongarije)

B III "Mexiko"
B II B IIa – B IIf
B I B Ia – B Ib

N

0 100 200 300 400 500 1000 m

Figure 9: Föhrenwald Displaced Persons Camp[9]
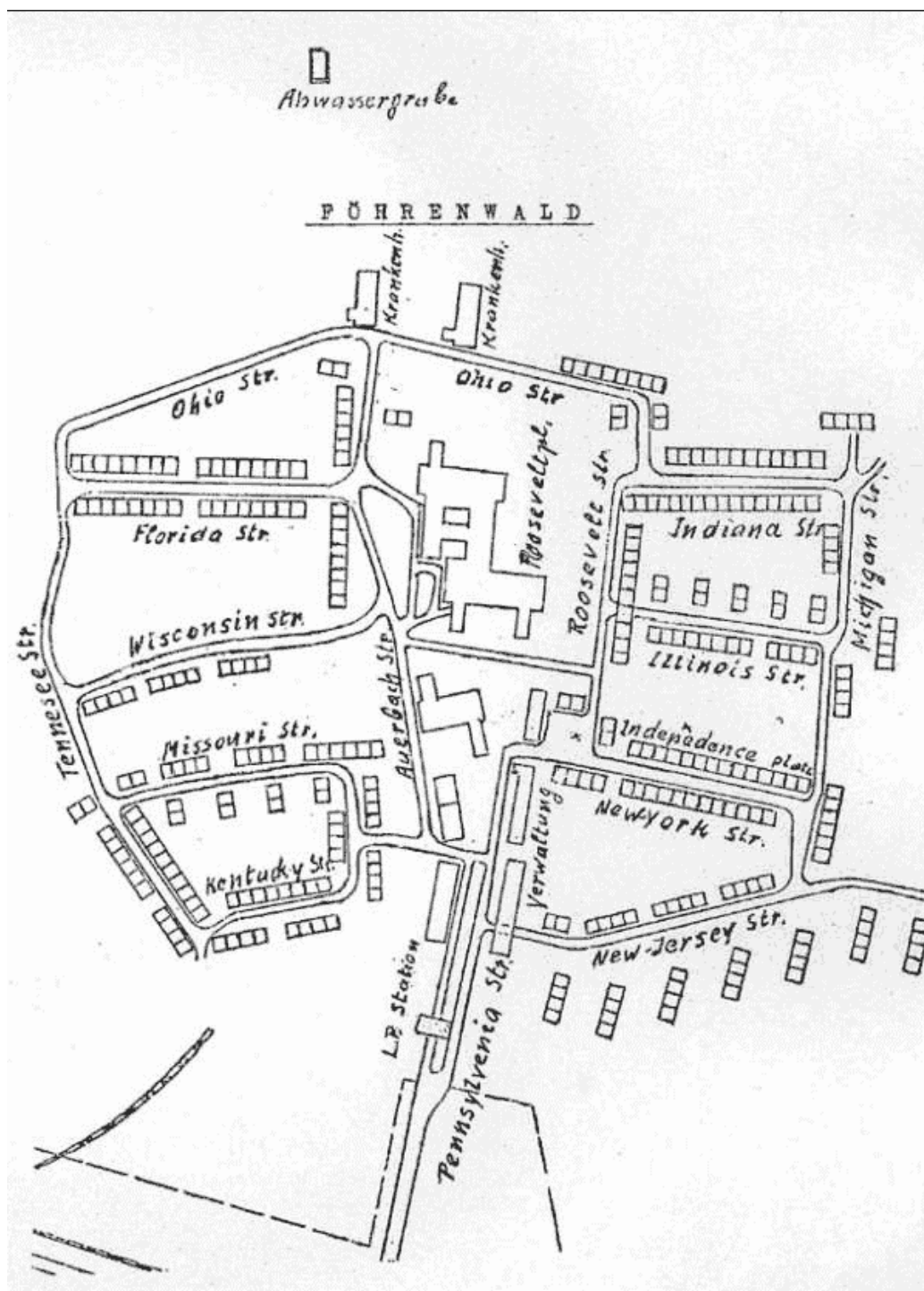
The modern refugee camp emerged to address a very specific problem. Only in the last three decades has the truly protracted refugee situation emerged as a unique challenge to humanitarian relief and to security models. In spite of this recent phenomenon, however, camp administrators have drawn upon a long human history of purpose-built camp construction. From the Romans, camp administrators drew the idea of the geometric grid. From conflict camps in the United States and South Africa, among others, camp planners drew the large-scale supply chain, capable of maintaining hundreds of thousands of internees for years at end. Finally, from the industrial camps of Nazi Germany, camp administrators segued directly from housing the Jewish displaced persons of Europe in 1945 to housing the refugees of Palestine in 1948.

The purpose-built camp has evolved as its purpose has evolved. From roots of conflict and occupation, the purpose-built camp has evolved such that, today, it is known more instinctively by the pale blue tents of the United Nations.

Chapter 3 Actors with Influence on the Camp

A government can be expected to meet certain responsibilities and duties, in particular providing order and protection, offering public services and securing economic stability. Rarely are these refugee needs met by a government. Rather, the needs of refugees under the United Nations mandate are met by a variety of political actors, "individuals who aspire, through organizational and institutional means, to influence the decision-making process" (McNair 2011). Within the space of the refugee camp, a range of actors exert their interests, representing interests ranging from the external to the internal, the international to the local, the secular to the religious, and the political to the technical. Taken in combination, the political ecosystem of the refugee camp is constantly in flux, met not by a single government but by a raft of actors who function as an ersatz government.

United Nations Refugee Agencies

The core governing function of the United Nations refugee camp is met by one of the two organizations commissioned by the United Nations to oversee refugee operations. The first agency, the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), serves a limited mandate established in December 1949, focused solely upon the refugees of Palestine. By contrast, the second, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was established a year later in December 1950 to serve a worldwide mandate as the permanent United Nations body for refugee situations. These agencies serve the clearest function of power and governance in the camps, providing such state-like functions as registration of arrivals, births and deaths, and the provision of welfare and services (Ramadan 2013, 69).

In contrast with UNHCR, the UNRWA was established with a mission geographically specific to the refugees of Palestine (see Figure 10). The UNRWA was founded after three decades of upheaval in Palestine. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the territory of Palestine fell under British mandate and governance. Through the Holocaust, increasing numbers of Jewish Europeans emigrated to Israel, in contravention of British orders, in a process termed *Aliyah Bet* (Immigration B). On November 29th, 1947, the United Nations approved Resolution 181, establishing a partitioned state between Israel and Palestine; the British withdrawal was complete by May 14th, 1948, when the first Israeli Prime Minster David Ben-Gurion declared Israeli independence. In the region's tumultuous history from foundation to 1950, the United Nations estimates that 711,000 Arabs fled their homes and became refugees (United Nations 1950).

The UNRWA was mandated by the United Nations General Assembly with providing humanitarian relief and assistance, such as shelter, food rations, health services and education, to refugees from Palestine (Tabar 2012). The UNRWA employs over 24,000 people, 99% of whom are locally recruited Palestinian refugees across the region surrounding Palestine (see Figure 10) (Ramadan 2013,71). Taken together with UNRWA's budget of $541.8 million (2008), the agency is the UN's largest, at times matching the budget of its host nation. Notably, UNRWA does not have a mandate to serve as an advocate, to protect refugees' rights (Tabar). Rather, the agency is simply tasked with keeping the dismembered Palestinian nation alive (Ramadan 2013, 71). The UNHCR, by contrast, was mandated to protect and support all refugees not-originating from Palestine, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

Figure 10: Scope of UNRWA Operations[10]
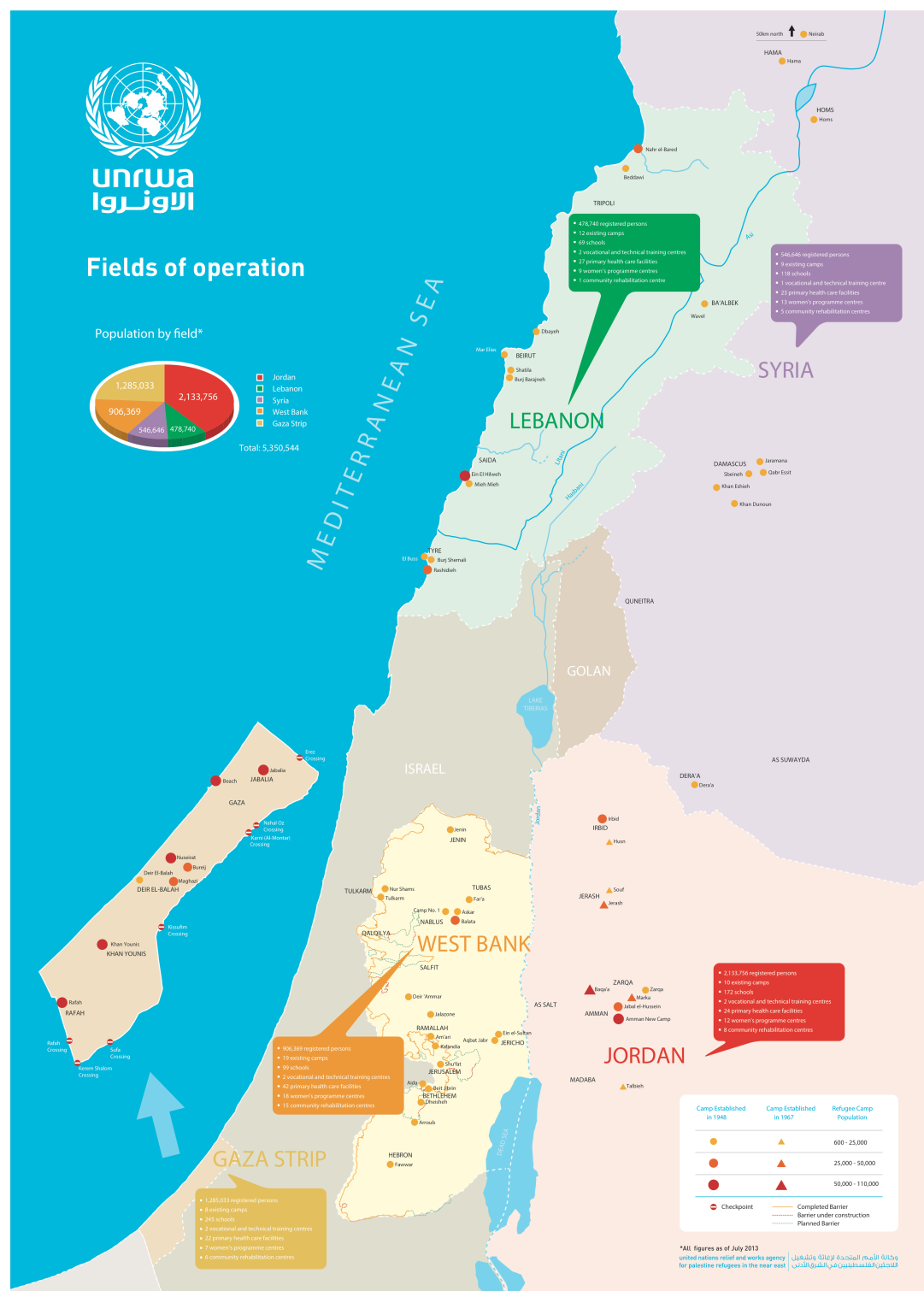
[10] UNRWA

It is important to note that not all Palestinian refugees are found in refugee camps and therefore under the mandate of the United Nations system – nor even a majority in the refugee camps of many host states (Rueff and Viaro 2009). In Lebanon, the divide is about even with just 51% of refugees living in camps. In Jordan (79%), Syria (67%), the West Bank (67%) and Gaza (58%), the majority of refugees live outside camps.

UNHCR has come under fire for its perceived ability and inability to fulfill its mandate. As critic Jacob Stevens argues, "If it was originally a guarantor of refugee rights, UNHCR has since mutated into a patron of these prisons of the stateless: a network of huge camps that can never meet any plausible "humanitarian" standard, and yet somehow justify international funding for the agency" (Stevens 2006, 53). As Stevens points out, UNHCR receives its funding and its delegated sovereignty from states, compromising its ability to politically pressure those same states (Napier-Moore 2005, 6). This has, in turn, forced UNHCR to abandon half of its mission for protection in favor of simple aid and humanitarianism.

The original post-World War II international refugee scheme was based upon the refugees of Eastern Europe and, while host states such as Germany and the Soviet Union were weakened, they still had considerable resources to handle the refugees (Loescher *et al* 2008,125). As host states cropped up in post-colonial states such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international regime was forced to accommodate hosts without the sovereign resources required to manage refugees. This legacy can still be seen in the uneven distribution of funding between European refugees, as seen in the per capita allocation for the median Balkans refugee vis-à-vis the median African refugee.

The agency has assumed responsibility for the long-term care and maintenance of refugees (Loescher *et al*. 2008, 125). Host countries have abrogated their own responsibilities, such that they generally limit their role to 1) the admission and recognition of refugees on their territory 2) respect for the principle of non-refoulement and 3) provision of security to refugees

and humanitarian personnel. Thus, Stevens argues that UNHCR has weakened the notion of state responsibility.

Moving forward, UNHCR faces several challenges (Loescher *et al*. 2008, 145). It must first promote interaction between refugees and the local host population. The agency must support the role and sovereignty of the state. It must communicate its own capabilities and limitations. It must work with other actors and, finally, it must redress the suitability of UNHCR in a world dominated by security departments and bilateral agreements outside the United Nations context.

Other Non-State Actors

The authority of the UN agencies is not total, however. Palestinian political factions provide political leadership and security, while other influential actors include Islamist organizations, committees of notable people, religious leaders, states, and local and international non-governmental organizations. This situation was exemplified by a December 2013 strike by UNRWA garbage workers (Hass 2014). The popular committee of the Jalazun refugee camp organized a general protest in support of the strike, lining up across from the UNRWA administration and the Palestinian police. The government (Palestinian Authority) stepped in the middle to mediate but as of January 2014, has been unable to reach a resolution. Lost in the political stalemate are the mountains of garbage in the streets, and the 42 medical clinics and 98 schools closed by the strike. In the ecosystem of the camps, no one organization is sovereign; all share power and compete through force of arms and ideas, or the provision of supplies.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exercise a significant fraction of influence (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 95). This is a broad and diverse category, spanning volunteer organizations in church basements to international organizations with annual budgets of $2

billion, twice that of UNHCR. Major players include Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Refugees International, the US Committee on Refugees, Save the Children, Oxfam, the Jesuit Refugee Service, Médecins sans Frontières, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Recent trends in NGO operation have pushed these organizations toward models of rights-based ethics and greater accountability to their funding sources.

Finally, states themselves exercise their interests upon the camp. The first state actor to wield influence is the government of origin. By the nature of a refugee crisis, there is not always a solvent government in place to advocate for or against the best interests of its refugees. The second type of state to wield influence is the government of refuge. Governments of refuge can provide as little as the land upon which the camp sits and as much as the infrastructure and supply logistics to the camp. In addition, camps may have third-party state involvement. This is typified by the "five-star" United Arab Emirates-sponsored Emirates Jordanian Camp for 3,400 Syrian refugees (Rasmi 2013). It is important to note that not all refugee situations include state actors. In Palestine, there is no traditional government of origin. In the West Bank and Gaza, the government of refuge was formed of and by the refugees themselves.

Like any state, the refugee camp has a political ecosystem. Unlike most modern states, the political ecosystem of the camp is not comprised of a bicameral legislature, a judiciary and an executive, with external interest groups. Rather, the camp is a wide-open environment in which the various actors who can prevail by force or by resources emerge with the greatest influence. Any changes in the physical space of the camp are implemented through the prism of this political environment.

Chapter 4 Refugee Trends

To the present, engagement with refugees has largely focused on mass influx and emergencies; on large-scale repatriation, humanitarian assistance and war-affected populations; and on high-profile regions (Loescher *et al.* 2008). An increasingly significant concern, however, are protracted refugee situations.

Protracted Refugee Situations

Defined by UNHCR, protracted refugee situations are those, "in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance" (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 21). The UNHCR puts the threshold at refugee populations of 25,000 persons who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries. From 1993-2003, the average duration of a refugee situation increased from nine years to seventeen, and the share of protracted situations increased from 45% to 90% (Napier-Moore 2005, 1). As of the 10th of June, 2004, UNHCR identified 38 protracted refugee situations and 6.2 million refugees under its mandate, as seen in Table 1 (United Nations 2004). Note the 410,000 refugees from the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" who fall under UNHCR mandate rather than UNRWA mandate. Similarly, note that only 73% of identified refugees under UNHCR mandate are also under assistance. Refugee assistance is as much a matter of definition and politics as it is a matter of resources and supplies.

Table 1. Protracted Refugee Populations

Region /Country of asylum	Origin	UNHCR assistance status		Total	Percentage Assisted
		Assisted	Not assisted		
Burundi	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	13,000	27,000	41,000	32%
Central African Rep.	Sudan	36,000	-	36,000	100%
Chad	Sudan	55,000	55,000	110,000	50%
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Angola	43,000	81,000	120,000	36%
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Sudan	11,000	34,000	45,000	24%
Rwanda	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	35,000	-	35,000	100%
United Rep. of Tanzania	Burundi	320,000	170,000	490,000	65%
United Rep. of Tanzania	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	150,000	-	150,000	100%
Central Africa and Great Lakes		**670,000**	**370,000**	**1,000,000**	**67%**
Djibouti	Somalia	25,000	-	25,000	100%
Ethiopia	Sudan	95,000	-	95,000	100%
Kenya	Somalia	150,000	-	150,000	100%
Kenya	Sudan	63,000	-	63,000	100%
Sudan	Eritrea	73,000	35,000	110,000	66%
Uganda	Sudan	180,000	20,000	200,000	90%
East and Horn of Africa		**620,000**	**55,000**	**670,000**	**93%**
Zambia	Angola	72,000	87,000	160,000	45%
Zambia	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	54,000	4,000	58,000	93%
Southern Africa		**130,000**	**91,000**	**220,000**	**59%**
Cameroon	Chad	-	39,000	39,000	0%
Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia	74,000	-	74,000	100%
Ghana	Liberia	42,000	-	42,000	100%
Guinea	Liberia	89,000	60,000	150,000	59%
Guinea	Sierra Leone	15,000	10,000	25,000	60%
West Africa		**220,000**	**110,000**	**330,000**	**67%**
AFRICA		**1,600,000**	**620,000**	**2,300,000**	**70%**
Algeria	Western Sahara	160,000	10,000	170,000	94%
Egypt	Occupied Palestinian Territory	-	70,000	70,000	0%
Iraq	Occupied Palestinian Territory	-	100,000	100,000	0%
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Afghanistan[2]	830,000	-	830,000	100%
Islamic Rep. of Iran	Iraq	150,000	-	150,000	100%
Pakistan	Afghanistan[3]	1,120,000	-	1,120,000	100%
Saudi Arabia	Occupied Palestinian Territory	-	240,000	240,000	0%
Yemen	Somalia	59,000	-	59,000	100%
CASWANAME		**2,300,000**	**420,000**	**2,700,000**	**85%**
China	Viet Nam	11,000	290,000	300,000	4%
India	China	-	92,000	92,000	0%
India	Sri Lanka	-	61,000	61,000	0%
Nepal	Bhutan	100,000	-	100,000	100%
Thailand	Myanmar	120,000	-	120,000	100%
Asia and the Pacific		**230,000**	**440,000**	**670,000**	**34%**
Armenia	Azerbaijan	50,000	190,000	240,000	21%
Serbia and Montenegro	Bosnia and Herzegovina	100,000	-	100,000	100%
Serbia and Montenegro	Croatia	190,000	-	190,000	100%
Europe		**340,000**	**190,000**	**530,000**	**64%**
TOTAL		**4,500,000**	**1,700,000**	**6,200,000**	**73%**

[1] Refugee situations numbering 25,000 or more persons by the end of 2003 which have been in existence for 5 or more years. Industrialized countries are not included. Source: 2003 UNHCR Annual Statistical Report. Numbers rounded to two significant figures. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

[2] UNHCR estimate. This figure is currently being reviewed by UNHCR and is expected to be revised upwards in 2004.

[3] UNHCR estimate. This figure does not include Afghans in urban areas and is currently being reviewed by UNHCR.

There are two important limits to this definition of protracted refugee situations, however, based upon how UNHCR interprets its mandate. First, refugees are directed by a politicized dynamic, under which host governments may limit the number of refugees permitted to enter their camps, thereby limiting the fraction of the total refugee population directly under UNHCR mandate (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 22). Thus, undocumented refugees often found in urban areas are uncounted by UNHCR (23). Second, the choice of a 25,000-person threshold distorts the refugee count. A refugee population may number over 25,000 in total but, because it is dispersed among many host countries, be underrepresented (25). Similarly, a waning refugee population that began over 25,000 may be considered a 'mission success' once the population drops under 25,000, even if that smaller number persists.

The definition can be improved. A more accurate definition of protracted refugee situations would take into account the political and strategic dimensions of protracted refugee situations, and the role played by broader political, strategic and economic actors (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 25). It would acknowledge that protracted refugee situations include chronic, unresolved and recurring refugee problems, not just static refugee populations. A more accurate definition would recognize that both countries of origin and host are implicated. Finally, a more accurate definition would recognize that a common characteristic of protracted refugee situations is frequent neglect, by international and regional actors, global media and non-humanitarian actors.

Two distinct trends can be identified in the recent history of protracted refugee situations. From the mid-twentieth century until the early 1990s, protracted refugee situations were driven by Cold War-era conflicts (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 25). The proxy battlegrounds – and refugee situations – were found primarily southern Africa, Indo-China and Central America. With the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in the early 1990s, new conflicts and new refugee hotbeds emerged in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Iraq, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Great Lakes region of Africa. Even as the total number of refugees declined globally from 16.3 million in

1993 to 9.2 million in 2004, the proportion in protracted refugee situations mushroomed from 48% to 67%.

The causes of protracted refugee situations are intrinsically tied to political and economic crisis. The bulk of refugees come from countries where conflict and persecution have persisted for years, closely associating refugees with the phenomenon of 'failed and fragile states' (Loescher *et al.* 2008). Tied into protracted refugee situations are political action and inaction in both the country of origin and asylum. Situations then persist because of ongoing problems in the country of origin and stagnate and become protracted because of host and origin country reactions to refugee inflows, through restrictions on movement, employment possibilities and confinement to camps. Thus, humanitarian agencies pick up where the dialogue between origin and host fell apart, compelling political solutions, not simply humanitarian ones.

Refugee Trends in the Industrialized World

Refugee trends are not limited to the developing world. Concepts of asylum and immigration are inextricably linked, more and more so recently, as the distinction has become blurred and complicated by security concerns (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 44).

Through the Cold War, the acceptance of immigrants and refugees from an opposing superpower bloc was seen as a publicity coup, as an affirmation of the host's values. The United States was and is, for example, very accepting of Cuban immigrants relative to other immigrants from the Caribbean (Thomas 1967). This trend was replicated in other situations, as with Chinese refugees to Hong Kong, Vietnamese refugees to the United States and Asian Ugandans to the United Kingdom (Mark 2007). Complementing this diplomacy lens, a security lens prevailed in other Cold War situations, such as in French Algeria and with ethnically Greek Turks (Goodwin-

Gill 2008). As the Cold War receded in the 1980s, however, the wartime paradigms of diplomacy and security also receded.

At the same time, the perception of an immigration flood caused public backlash against open immigration policies. From 1970 to 1980, the number of refugees under UNHCR mandate mushroomed from 2 million to 10 million (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 44). In the following decade, that figure climbed again to 15 million refugees. The 1990s bookended the well-publicized failure of states outside the traditional Eastern European sources, including Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti and Rwanda. Coincidentally, declining costs of air travel, declining demand for immigrant labor, and a slackening economy through the 1980s drove a public backlash against open immigration policies.

Governments responded with alacrity. A group of European Union immigration ministers convened in London in 1992 to institute new immigration controls. These "London Resolutions" expanded visa requirements, expedited the handling of rejected asylum applications, instituted carrier sanctions against airlines carrying undocumented individuals and implemented interception programs at sea and air, such as Canada's "Operation Shortstop." The Treaty of Maastricht later that year moved the European Union toward a unified asylum policy and established an EU immigration rule-making body (Judge 2004).

This global move to restrict legal means of immigration pushed immigrants to smugglers and traffickers. In turn, this damaged public confidence in the integrity of refugees and the asylum system. In a vicious cycle, the debate became increasingly polarized, as notably seen in France with Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine Le Pen and the Front National (García 2006).

This nexus of immigration, asylum and security concerns has been driven by high-profile terrorism, including the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, the Madrid bombings in 2003 and the London attacks in July 2005, that link immigration to terrorism in the public eye (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 53). Fallout can be seen in the United States in the Patriot Act, the

Sensenbrenner Bill, the Minutemen militia groups and the public debate over the relative merits of multiculturalism and integration (60). Similar ripples can be seen in Europe to a lesser extent.

Problematically for the resolution of refugee concerns is the gap between the refugee field and the security field. The current international refugee regime is based on a separation of the humanitarian and political views of refugees. The governing UNHCR statute specifies that, "The work of the High Commissioner shall be of an entirely non-political character; it shall be humanitarian and social and shall relate, as a rule, to groups and categories of refugees" (69). The 1967 UN General Assembly Declaration on Territorial Asylum further specifies that granting of asylum "is a peaceful and humanitarian act and that, as such, it cannot be regarded as unfriendly by any other State" (69). As much as the refugee community would like otherwise, though, it deals with an inherently political problem. It deals with the fallout of a political tension between host and origin.

Host governments see refugees as both direct and indirect threats. Directly, hosts worry that refugees and "refugee warriors" will import a "spill-over" of the origin country conflict. Such a spill-over could regionalize what was once a domestic conflict, as seen from 1994-96 in East Africa's Great Lakes region encompassing Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda (34). In this context, refugee camps serve as screens and recruitment pools for guerilla, insurgent and terrorist activity. Humanitarian assistance serves as logistical support for armed elements. Indirectly, hosts worry that refugee populations will heighten tensions among existing social groups as they compete for resources, jobs and social services. Unless the local community perceives the refugees as "one of them" through a shared ethnic, linguistic or group identity, the refugees could threaten the host state's balance of power (36).

This securitization of accepting refugees can be seen in Kenya. Primed by terrorist attacks in 1998 and 2002, the Kenyan government is fearful of a threat perceived by Somali

refugees. The government in Nairobi now views Somali refugees almost exclusively through a security prism (Landau 2006).

Refugee Warehousing

The defining trend of asylum for large-influx refugee situations has been "refugee warehousing," the practice of requiring that refugees live in camps and restricting travel outside the camp for employment and/or education (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 30).

The warehousing trend carries worrying implications. First, the practice abrogates the 1951 Convention's guaranteed freedom of movement and right to seek wage-earning employment (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 31). On the ground, various international NGOs have noted that high-density refugee warehousing is correlated with sexual and physical violence. UNHCR itself has noted that, "Most refugees in such situations live in camps where idleness, despair and, in a few cases, even violence prevails. Women and children, who form the majority of the refugee community, are often the most vulnerable, falling victim to exploitation and abuse" (30). Female refugees face an increase in sexual violence and a breakdown in family structure. Children face recruitment as child soldiers, uncertain funding for education and highly restrictive content of that education that is provided; is curriculum determined by the country of origin or host? Medically vulnerable refugees are often passed over for donor assistance.

The practice of refugee warehousing also renders certain refugee populations invisible. The camps themselves are often sited in 'invisible' rural areas of the country with poor agricultural land (Napier-Moore 2005, 6). Urban refugees are often forced to go without legal documentation as they work for low wages outside the camps, without international protection or assistance (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 30). Once repatriation has begun, the residual caseload of

remaining refugees is often forgotten because "the problem has been solved." Operating on their own, these residual caseloads feel unable to return due to fear of persecution.

Refugee camps do carry development implications. As UNHCR studies have noted, the presence of large refugee populations directly cause environmental degradation and promote competition over socioeconomic benefits (Loescher *et al.* 2008). To avoid tension in core regions, refugee camps are often relegated to rural areas. This, in turn, forces the host state to expand their effective presence into rural areas, achieving state-building objectives and extending benefits beyond the immediate refugee camp impact. This form of development inherently loops the World Bank and its Post-Conflict Fund into refugee situations (Bello 2006).

Protracted refugee situations (PRS) have only recently been explored in academia, and many questions remain. When, for example, can a PRS be deemed 'resolved'? Refugees are often repatriated only to then become internally displaced persons, continuing the original crisis. Can protracted refugee situations be studied comparatively, or should they be treated as individually unique?

Several lessons can be gleaned, however (Betts 2004). First, a protracted refugee situation must be approached comprehensively, drawing upon the entire range of durable solutions in terms of peace and security, development, and humanitarianism. Second, a solution must be cooperative, based upon inter-state burden sharing. Countries cannot solve protracted refugee situations on their own; there must be engagement by both regional actors and the international community. Third, a solution must be collaborative, involving a broad range of UN agencies and NGOs. Humanitarian agencies and UNHCR/UNRWA alone cannot find a solution. The spectrum of security and development actors must play a sustained role in the project.

Human Rights

There are three bodies of international law broadly applicable to refugee situations:

international human rights law, refugee law, and international humanitarian law.

Ten international treaties form the scope of refugee camp-pertinent human rights law:

Table 2. Relevant Human Rights Treaties

Treaty	Date Signed
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	10 December 1948
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	10 December 1984
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons	28 September 1954
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	30 August 1961
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide	9 December 1948
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	16 December 1966
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	16 December 1966
International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	4 January 1969
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	18 December 1979
Convention on the Rights of the Child	20 November 1989

The basic treaty governing refugee treatment is the 1951 Convention relating to the

Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol revision (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 86). Taken together, the

Convention and Protocol guarantee for refugees: freedom from forcible return, access to courts of

law, education, public relief and assistance, social security, freedom of movement and identity

papers. To summarize, the 1967 Protocol called for refugees to receive, "the most favourable

treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country … as regards the right to engage in wage-

earning employment" (87). In practice, the Protocol has served as more of an aspiration than a de jure standard.

The complementary international standards for refugee camps under international humanitarian law are found in Articles 44 and 73 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Loescher *et al.* 2008, 88). Article 44 requires that, "the detaining power shall not treat as enemy aliens exclusively on the basis of their nationality … of an enemy state, refugees who do not, in fact, enjoy the protection of any government." Article 73 further clarifies that, "persons who, before the beginning of hostilities, were considered as stateless persons or refugees … shall be protected persons … in all circumstances and without any adverse distinction." Both articles are most applicable to refugee situations arising from state-level conflict. Again, as with the 1967 Protocol, international humanitarian law has often served as more of an aspiration for states, when they are simultaneously faced with the realpolitik questions that accompany a substantial refugee population.

Chapter 5 Camp Architecture

Refugee camps emerge as a compromise, the best of several terrible options (Napier-Moore 2005, 18). UNHCR wants camps as a means to prevent a quick refugee *refoulement*, or expulsion from their host state. States are unwilling to assist with either large-scale repatriation or integration. The international community insists on camps as the preferred form of aid distribution and accountability. Camps are perpetuated because no other viable solutions arise.

Refugee camps are assemblages of many characteristics and actors: people, institutions, organizations and the built environment. They are generally defined by their constrained temporality, the notion of a temporary assemblage with an undefined but anticipated end (Ramadan 2013, 70). The very idea of assemblage evokes the piecemeal and gradual assembling of the camp itself, as refugees replaced tents with corrugated iron, then brick and concrete. It evokes the assemblage of experiences and memories, births and deaths, buildings and capital. The camp is an assemblage in which legal statuses and identity documents, relations, institutions, technologies, infrastructure and the built environment combine to create a space in which the occupants' values, identities and practices are produced and reproduced. The process is always ongoing and never complete (72).

The camp is bound in a constrained sense of *liminality* and enduring temporariness that takes two forms (Ramadan 73). The first is found in the external juridical-political order of states, international agencies and international law. The camp is a geopolitical feature awaiting resolution and tradeoffs within the camp are based upon this tension. For example, Lebanese policies aimed at preventing *tawteen* (settlement), the permanent resettlement of Palestinians in their host state, present one form of external push. Government attempts to restrict building, infrastructure and development constitute another, controversial form of external push, as permanent infrastructure appears to signal an acceptance and normalization of the status quo.

Thus, external conflicts tend to focus on the tradeoff between the political need to prevent the permanent implantation of Palestinians in Lebanon and the everyday needs of ordinary people for development, sanitation and a healthy environment. The second form of constrained *liminality* is found in the internal cultural, social and political order of the camp society. The internal order is found at the intersection of several, wider currents, including the Palestinian Diaspora, the UNRWA, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Camp Architecture of the United Nations System

The current system is most broadly described from a 30,000-foot view in the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (*Handbook for Emergencies*). The handbook is intended as a guide for every eventuality, and covers every part of crisis response from staffing structure to the use of aerial photography for estimating refugee population size. The relevant section, though, is found in Chapter 12, and addresses criteria for site selection, site planning and shelter. Each iteration of the purpose-built camp has been adapted and tailored from the morphology of the last iteration to fit a new purpose until, eventually, we are left with the modern refugee camp.

Camp Architecture of Palestine

The first Palestinian refugee camps were built on land donated by the Christian Church, by private landowners, and by the government (Sanyal 2011). The source of the land understandably constrained the growths of the camps. Camps built on formerly Church-owned land developed with Christian-majority populations. The private land, former barracks and refugee camps repurposed from the Armenian Genocide of 1915 were donated by the government and developed with Muslim-majority populations.

The first camps were built with a slapdash speed reflecting the uncertainty and

suddenness of the political crisis from which they were born (see figure 11) (Sanyal 2011, 881).

While organized with regimentation, the camps were overcrowded and uncomfortable. The tents

offered little protection during the rainy Levantine winter. Lanes between the tents would turn

muddy and, even within tents, the ground would be churned into a muddy stew. The first fixes

were ad hoc and secretive. Refugees placed heavy objects on the tents to hold them down and cut

channels in the ground to evacuate water buildups.

Figure 11. Nahr el Bared, 1951[11]

Long-term growth was slow, however, as the Lebanese government forbade construction

and the Palestinian authorities supported a permanent temporariness (Sanyal 2011). The only

construction materials allowed were those allocated to build tents for new family members. This

led to squatting new tents next to old tents, encroaching on lanes and breaking down the

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[11] *UNRWA*

regimented camp rows. This trickle of change became a flood as refugees appropriated ersatz

building materials from stones and adobe bricks to cut, beaten, and shaped food tins. Hidden from

authorities by an exterior tent and by commonplace bribery, permanent structures arose within the

camps. Photographic documentation is understandably nonexistent, but it is easy to imagine

rudimentary structures arising from within the original canvas tents (see Figure 12), before the

camp authorities eventually capitulated and built structures systematically (see Figure 13).

Figure 12: Ein Elhilweh Refugee Camp[12]

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[12] *UNRWA*

Figure 13: Baqa'a Refugee Camp[13]

This strategy became a point of cultural pride, with refugees pointing to the shared meaning of the word *chador,* as both 'tent' and the woman's head covering. Both form a veil and had been used to resist colonial oversight. In the veil's case, Palestinian men would use avoid colonial checkpoints under the veil's covering. In the tent's case, the Palestinian refugees used its covering to build better, safer lives. This period of covert construction lasted from 1948 until the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) established a camp presence in the 1950s.

With PLO leverage, the refugees were able to secure upgrades. The process began with UNRWA distributing zinc roofs and prefabricated shelters (Sanyal 2011). This can be seen in figures 15 and 16, pictures of Khan Younis camp shortly after the construction of more permanent, concrete-block shelters. Through the 1950s, each family of four to five people was

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[13] *Ibid.*

given 80 - 100m^2 and a core unit with a 12m^2 room and sanitary service (Rueff and Viaro 2009).

Moving on from tents, the new structures were constructed from brick and cement with an

asbestos roof. Families of more than six received an additional room. This additional construction

trespassed into common land, producing a spider network of alleys, dead ends and irregularly

shaped houses (see Figure 14). The crush of population and a constrained camp footprint forced

extra floors to be built, even while they remained formally forbidden by the authorities.

Figure 14: Jenin Refugee Camp[14]

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[14] *Israeli Defense Force*

Figure 15. Khan Younis, 1955[15]

Figure 16. Khan Younis, 1955[16]

The Lebanese Civil War interrupted this "Golden Era of the PLO" in 1975. The next twenty years were spent in an endless cycle of building, occupation and servicing the camps in a build-rebuild cycle of the urban slum (Sanyal 2011, 885). The active role that refugees played in the construction of their space belies a pure characterization as *Homo sacer* without independent agency.

Refugee camp construction has been noted as inverting the usual building process (Sanyal 2011, 886). The usual process is described as a PSBO process – in an order of planning, serving, building and occupation. The refugee camp process inverts it into an OBSP process – occupation, building, servicing and planning. Camps are planned initially but, critically, paralyze the shelter in that condition of initial planning.

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[16] *UNRWA*

Some of the most important year-to-year data has been provided by the Norwegian organization "Fafo," which has produced refugee surveys since the early 1990s (Rueff and Viaro 2011, 342). Each survey focuses on five broad criteria: demography, labor markets, health, education, and the situation of women and children. Within those broad criteria, the housing survey analyzes habitat types, building materials, occupation patterns, crowding within households, access to sanitation, water networks, nuisance from outdoor environment, garbage collection, sewerage, electricity connection and the availability of amenities.

A 2005 survey conducted by the Institut universitaire d'études du développement de Genève and University College London took a 10,000-person sample of 4,125,000 refugees registered with UNRWA (Rueff and Viaro 2011, 349). It included 119 housing-related variables: safety and health, comfort, public spaces, and mobility. The results identified seven key issues: crowding in houses; population density; structural defects; neighborhood public spaces, green spaces, recreation; access, mobility, paved streets, transportation networks; respiratory problems; and substandard housing (351).

The longstanding conflict for UNRWA planning has been that between 'apolitical' urban design and political motivations on the ground (Tabar 2012, 47). It has aimed to overcome this conflict through the Camp Improvement Program unveiled in 2006. The project started from the premise that, "UNRWA's vision is for every Palestine refugee to enjoy the best standards of human development" and is aimed at "improving living conditions in houses and camps through a more systematic and participatory approach" (47).

Figure 17: Menik Farm Refugee Camp[17]
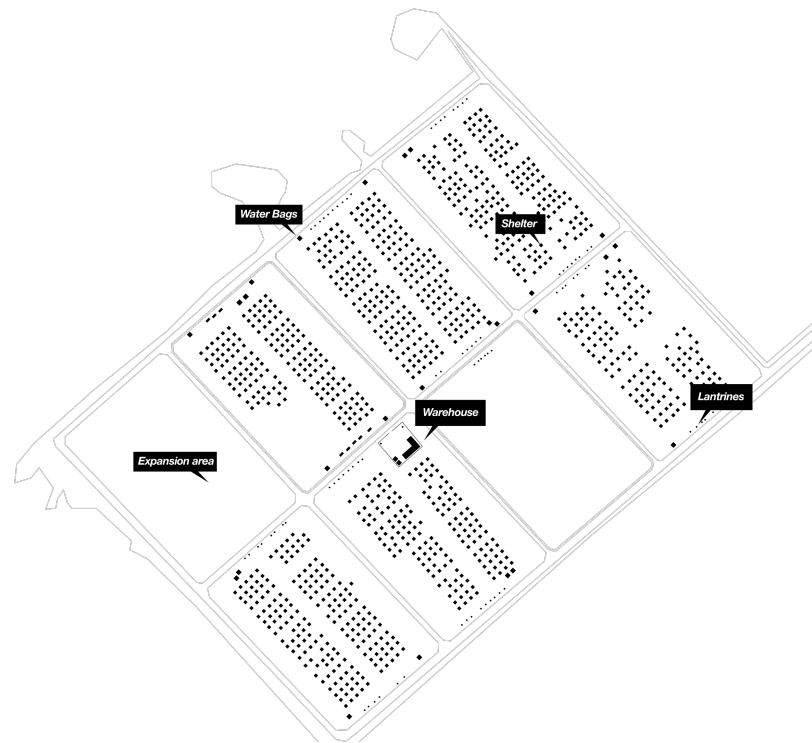
Thus, the Camp Improvement Program has sought to redress three phases of conflict between organic growth and institutional planning. In the early years, the Palestinian camps were ad hoc living sites, consisting of tents and improved tents. This was phased out in the 1970s, when both institutional actors and the refugees themselves moved to construct more permanent structures, drawing in stone the streets and alleys of their makeshift cities. The final phase has occurred since the 1990s, as institutional actors have once again attempted to assert control over the organic buildings, streets and systems of the camp, replacing them with a more rigid design such as that seen in Figure 17. In a potentially nascent fourth stage, the Camp Improvement Program attempts to reconcile culturally specific norms of living with international standards of construction and planning.

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[17] Sundlin and Nyqvist

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The buildings of the camp constitute the first level of research. In the case of the Palestinian camps, the buildings reflect the enforced temporality of the refugee camp. The materials of the buildings – canvas and pre-fabricated shelter – embody the principle that their inhabitants be permitted to return as soon as possible to their original homes. The temporariness of the buildings does not simply reflect a technical problem, but the material manifestation of a political problem.

The street plan of the camp constitutes the second level of research. In the case of the Palestinian camps, the street plan reflects the privacy and security valued by Arab culture (Miller, Petruccioloi and Bertagnin 2001). As the camp evolves, families tend to expand and build extensions from their original house. These new rooms extrude into the neat grid of the camp, rendering wide boulevards into narrow bypasses and narrow bypasses into dead ends. Eventually, the once neatly rectangular grid is splintered into an irregular and unpredictable spider web of streets. This street plan replicates similar layouts across the Arab world, layouts usually interpreted as offering privacy in the back streets and in the home. The camp carries this concept of privacy a step further, using the irregular street plans as an organic defense against occupation.

The overall system of the camp constitutes the third and final level of research. In the case of the Palestinian camps, the system reflects the influence and centrality of particular actors within the space. The presence of headquarters for United Nations agencies, Islamist organizations, local committees, religious leaders and non-governmental organizations each indicates a node of power and influence for those organizations, and their importance to refugees in the density of a crowded refugee camp. The gaps in official communication between these actors are replicated by the gaps in physical distance between their power centers.

Recommendations

To date, the Palestinian refugee camps have underscored their "right to return" through temporary building materials. They have lived an argument that, so long as their canvas tents, bare concrete shelters and inadequate physical infrastructure are built with a planned obsolescence in mind, they create a political cliff. On the other side of that cliff, the human suffering caused by the camps' squalid poverty will force a political solution to a humanitarian crisis.

As evidenced by the past sixty years, this strategy is inadequate at best and actively harmful at its worst. Politically, the Palestinian camps have degraded for the past sixty years; their condition has not precipitated a political solution. This is not incomprehensible, when agency in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict rests with international states and actors, far from the camps of Gaza and the West Bank. There is little reason to think the strategy will grow more effective with time. While awaiting a political resolution, the strategy actively harms millions of Palestinians through a deliberate choice for inadequate living conditions. In effect, the strategy of temporariness expressed through building materials constitutes the nation-state equivalent to cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

Nonetheless, the architectural expression of right to return is ingrained in the five million refugees of UNRWA. The population of the refugee camps popularly supports the right to return as both a human right and as a pre-condition to any lasting political resolution. The population further conflates the temporariness of the camp as the physical expression of this right to return. The technocrats of the United Nations can devise objectively cheap, strong pre-fabricated shelters and they can sketch beautiful, pastel design plans at the High Commissioner for Refugees' office in Geneva, Switzerland. They can address the technical problems of the refugee camp – the means of economic freedom, means of transportation, mode of governance and population

density. So long as the political reality goes unaddressed, however, the technical reality will also go unaddressed.

Therefore, the best alternative is to effect a shift in the manifestation of temporariness – from one of temporary materials to one of temporary design. Rather than expressing the temporariness of the camp through canvas and particleboard, it must be expressed through an architecture of exile. Such an approach has been advocated and implemented on a limited scale by the Palestinian educational program Campus in Camps and most clearly implemented in their design of a girls' school in Shu'fat refugee camp ("Shu'fat School").

A similar on-the ground reality must be addressed in terms of the street plan of the camp. Traditionally, the United Nations favors a rectangular grid. From 30,000 feet, this is not a bad approach. The rectangular grid imposes a sense of order into a scenario that, by definition, is disorganized. It permits for a predictable supply network and easy access for United Nations vehicles. It permits for a measure of security by permitting peacekeepers unfettered access through the camp. It permits for an efficient, quickly deployed layout. What the rectangular grid achieves in efficiency, however, it loses in local specificity and this carries particular implications for the Palestinian camps.

The United Nations has been pushing a rectangular grid since 1948. Inexorably since that time, the camps have matured from rectangular grids into the organic warren of streets familiar to Arab city-dwellers. The plan is dominated by narrow side streets, alleys, dead-ends and doglegs. As discussed above, this plan achieves privacy and security for a population that experiences very little of either. Rather than fighting this natural trajectory, the United Nations should lean into the curve by matching its buildings and its infrastructure to an organic street plan.

Finally, the current camps have organically grown to include spaces for the major actors that shape the camp space. Where feasible, it is in the United Nations interests to provide spaces that, at least geographically, encourage the development of these organizations as partners rather

than as adversaries. Thus, instead of segregating the various United Nations agencies, Islamist organizations, local committees, religious leaders and non-governmental organizations in discrete offices around the camp, they should rather be grouped in shared buildings, around shared commons space or in shared neighborhoods to promote the possibility of cooperation.

This thesis suggests two avenues for future research. One original goal of this thesis that went unexplored was a direct cartographical comparison of the Palestinian camp in the 1950s and in the present day. As a result of scant cartography from the camps' early days and the difficulties of access to United Nations archives, this proved unfeasible. With more time and better connections, future research would be well served to focus upon this aspect of comparison. A second avenue relates to the choice of case study. While the Palestinian refugee situation presents a uniquely apt case study as the most protracted refugee situation today, its uniqueness can also be a weakness. Further research should be done to determine whether the Palestinian case is typical of growth in other refugee camps.

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