From Crises to Ordinary Precarity: Palestinian Youth as New Practitioners of Humanitarian Governance in Amman, Jordan

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Abstract

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Displaced in both 1948 and 1967, Palestinian refugees in the Middle East now number over 5 million and have lived in exile for decades with no sign of a permanent solution. Despite the duration of their displacement, Palestinian refugees remain marginal to prevailing literature on long-term displacement. Deemed exceptional within much of the relevant discourse on refugees, their placement under UNRWA has exacerbated their status as a "unique" case of protracted refugeeism. However, given that protracted refugee situations have become normative globally, the Palestinians are paradigmatic. As a community of refugees living in exile for decades, Palestinians have been forced to adapt to the diminishing availability of aid, to shifts in humanitarian governance, and to conditions of precarity in urbanized camps which are increasingly incorporating new refugees.

This dissertation examines localized humanitarian practices in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan and focuses particularly upon a repertoire of care known locally as *ʿamal fityani* (boys' work). It traces the history of this repertoire, analyzes the contested memories of its origins, examines its intercamp and gendered youth networks, and investigates how its notions of care are negotiated on the ground and have then been re-negotiated in the context of the Syrian

refugee response and localization agendas. Drawing on mixed qualitative methodologies such as archival research, participant observation, interviews over two-and-a-half years in multiple associations across the refugee camps of Jordan, it argues that young refugees strive to overcome their precarity and find the tools for this in the community and in relation to one another, defying the governing structures of INGOs that treat them as market-oriented humanitarian objects. Relatedly, it demonstrates the complexities facing camp-based aid organizations, such as navigating social, economic, and religious norms and factors of their camps, and shows how taxonomies of religion and secularity do not account for the complexity of these negotiations. By considering intersectional factors like overlapping displacement, histories of care, and an evolving and gendered camp identity, my findings contribute to many fields including Refugee Studies, studies on humanitarianism in the Global South, and the anthropology of youth in the Middle East and North Africa.

To my mother Birgül Serçe, whose love and support know no bounds.

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Introduction

Zaynab,[1] Layla and I were sitting impatiently in the crowded concert area of the Hussein Center in Amman on a hot summer day in 2018. These young women were volunteers in an association in the al-Naṣr refugee camp (a small Palestinian refugee camp in the east of Amman), and they wanted me to listen to a Palestinian singer they liked, Sena Musa. I didn't realize that this concert was connected to a special event until after the playing of the Jordanian Royal Anthem, when one young man stood up and prompted hundreds of children at the back of the concert hall with the phrase: "*Wahid, wahid, ithnayn*! (One, one, two!)" At that moment, the whole concert hall was filled with the voices of children chanting:

> Good evening sweetheart,
> Good evening, who are you?
> I am the land that blooms
> I am thyme
> I am Gaza.

I knew these words from Rita's association (from here on called al-Ḥayāh) where I had heard children repeating them many times before. Scanning the section of the concert hall where the children and teenagers were seated, I recognized some young volunteers from the al-Naṣr, Muḥaṭṭah, Baqāʾ, Weḥdāt, and Ḥusayn camps whom I had met during my initial eight months. I approached Wesam, a volunteer from the Baqāʾ camp who was sitting amid dozens of children, and asked him what he was doing here. He told me that the concert was the opening activity of the 45th annual summer camp organized by an association in Baqāʾ refugee camp and that the hall was filled with volunteers from different Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan. At that moment, I realized that all the seemingly disconnected volunteer practices of care that young

[1] To protect my interlocutors' identity, I use pseudonyms throughout this dissertation.

people from different Palestinian refugee camps had mentioned to me had a particular historicity and repertoire.

My interlocutors called this repertoire '*amal fityanī* and told me that it had been practiced in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan since the aftermath of the 1967 war. This repertoire relies on the work of young volunteers and provides care for children: both humanitarian care, by virtue of being camp refugees, and cultural care by teaching them about their homeland by virtue of their being Palestinian. Today, across these refugee camps, practitioners of '*amal fityanī* claim that it creates a safe and dignified space for refugee children who are growing up in increasingly impoverished camp conditions. It includes educational activities to provide extra support for schoolwork, recreational programs, and skill training sessions which sometimes center around cultural components like Arab and Palestinian folk songs and traditional dances and at other times focus on skills like workshops on critical thinking, storytelling, and scenario writing. In addition to these programs and activities, *'amal fityanī* volunteers also organize trips to cultural sites in Jordan and make children attend cultural events, like this concert, as a way to give refugee children an opportunity to experience spaces outside of the camp.

Seeing the importance of this concert across the Palestinian refugee camps was the moment when my research questions became clear: I was going to take this intergenerational and intercamp repertoire of care seriously and understand how Palestinian youth lived with this voluntary care practice.

A. Context and Concerns

In 2006, the UNHCR reported that refugees spend an average of 17 years in displacement (The State of the World's Refugees 2006, 109). Although refugees are typically treated in terms of emergency and crises, these data underscore the fact that many refugees spend much, if not

most, of their lives in a state of "permanent temporariness" (Hilal and Nasser Abourahme 2019). Perhaps no other refugee community better represents the problem of protracted exile than the Palestinians. Displaced both in 1948 and 1967, Palestinian refugees in the Middle East now number over 5 million and have lived in exile for decades with no sign of a permanent solution. Despite the duration of their displacement and their growing population, Palestinian refugees remain marginal to prevailing literature on long-term displacement. Deemed exceptional within much of the relevant discourse on refugees, their placement under UNRWA has exacerbated their status as a "unique" case of protracted refugeeism (Feldman 2007). However, given that protracted refugee situations have become normative globally, with a growing number of protracted refugees around the world (Robinson 2013; Gabiam 2016; Jansen 2016), the Palestinians are paradigmatic. As a community of refugees living in exile for decades, Palestinians have been forced to adapt to the diminishing availability of aid, to shifts in humanitarian governance that prioritize self-improvement and empowerment (Barnett 2013), and to conditions of increased socioeconomic marginalization in urbanized camps which are increasingly incorporating new refugees whose situation have also already taken a protracted nature.

Young people constitute a large portion among these refugee populations and the participation of young individuals within the context of humanitarian responses is frequently mentioned in development policy, but not commonly implemented (Apollo and Mbah 2022). In recent years, and particularly with new refugees in the aftermath of the Syrian war, new trends in refugee care put greater emphasis on involving youth in humanitarian activities (Apollo and Mbah 2022, 7). New UN resolutions—such as UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security—underline the important role that youth play in conflict prevention and

maintaining peace (United Nations 2015).[2] International agreements often pair refugee and host community youths as objects and subjects of humanitarian action—such as the 2020 Global Compact for Young People and Humanitarian Action[3]—for which the Ministry of Youth in Jordan collaborated with the UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, and Norwegian Refugee Council.[4]

Palestinian refugee youths in the refugee camps of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are uniquely situated as long-term providers of care to their own communities as well as, since 2011, to "urban" Syrian refugees who took residence in and around Palestinian refugee camps. Thus, these camps provide an exceptional context to investigate what it means for these youths to care for their camps, for their fellow refugees, and for their new neighbors and how these meanings compete with trends in the humanitarian governance.

Palestinians and the Jordanian State

Having the longest border with the Occupied West Bank and Israel, Jordan shelters the largest number of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and in the world. While the real population numbers to this day remain unknown,[5] almost more than half of Jordan's population is composed of Palestinians.[6] Most of Jordan's Palestinians live outside of the camps and,

[2] "Youth4Peace," https://youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction.

[3] "History in the Making at World Humanitarian Summit: New Compact for Young People," https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2016/05/history-making-world-humanitarian-summit-new-compact-for-young-people/.

[4] "Unpacking the Guidelines of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action A Pilot Workshop for Humanitarian Workers in Jordan," https://jordan.unfpa.org/en/news/unpacking-guidelines-compact-young-people-humanitarian-action-pilot-workshop-humanitarian.

[5] The Palestinian population's proportion in Jordan is a contentious and disputable topic within Jordan due to the absence of official publication of figures delineating ethnic affiliations. For further inquiry on the demographic debate, see: Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24 (1995), 47.

[6] According to Minority Group International, there are approximately 3 million Palestinians in Jordan.

notwithstanding the acquisition of Jordanian citizenship, maintain their right of return and refugee status. Consequently, it is only natural that the Jordanian state's relationship with Palestinian refugees has transformed over time, influenced by the events in the regional, national, and international political arena. In this section, I dwell on some of these events to situate Palestinian refugees' relationship with the Jordanian state politically and socially.

Initially, the kingdom welcomed Palestinians fleeing the catastrophic 1948 war. King Abdullah I annexed the historic cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, and Ramallah and made this territory the West Bank of Jordan (Massad 2001). Unlike other Arab states where Palestinians took refuge, he granted citizenship rights to Palestinian refugees and their descendants who were "habitually residents in February 1954" in Jordan (Massad 2001, 39).[7] The refugee wave in the aftermath of the catastrophic 1948 war, together with the population in the West Bank transformed the demographics of the Kingdom, where the Transjordanian population came to constitute a minority (Massad 2001).[8]

In the face of this large exodus from Palestine, United Nations General Assembly established the UNRWA in December 1949 as a temporary agency to implement direct relief and aid programs for Palestinians refugees, and since then it has renewed its mandate because there is still no solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. The UNRWA was initially given two duties: "to carry out, in collaboration with local governments, the direct relief and works programmes as

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Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Jordan: Palestinians*, 2008, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749cfcc.html [accessed 2 April 2023].

[7] With the exception of approximately 120,000 refugees who originate from the Gaza Strip, which was under the administration of Egypt until 1967, all Palestine refugees residing in Jordan hold complete Jordanian citizenship. Those 120,000 refugees are eligible for temporary Jordanian passports, which do not grant them complete citizenship rights, including the right to vote and government employment. See http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/jordan.html for further information.

[8] In scholarly literature, the term "Transjordanian" has been utilized to refer to the group of people who attained citizenship in the State of Transjordan and subsequently became citizens of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in accordance with the nationality laws of 1928 of the Emirate of Jordan, see Massad 2001.

recommended by the Economic Survey Mission and to consult with interested Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken in preparation for the cessation of international assistance for relief and works projects" (Bocco 2009, 231). The initial refugee camps in the Kingdom were established during this period.

After the 1967 Arab Israeli war where Egypt, Syria, and Jordan were defeated by the state of Israel, the Kingdom received another big wave of Palestinian displacement. As a result of this war, the Israeli state occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, causing the population in these areas to flee neighboring states, including to Jordan. The 1967 defeat resulted in another demographic change in the East Bank of Jordan. It also resulted in strengthened support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) among Palestinians in Jordan (Fruchter-Ronen 2008), putting new dents in the nature of the relationship between the Jordanian state and Palestinian refugee population. Relations were already strained, with Palestinians dissatisfied with the government's emphasis on developing the East Bank and disgruntled about what they saw as the Kingdom's favoritism towards Transjordanians (Massad 2001, 258-265). The PLO provided "an alternative attachment" for many Palestinians who still felt little allegiance to the Jordanian state (Brand 1995; El-Abed 2021, 118). During this period, three more Palestinian camps were established in Jordan, and some of these camps gained importance as centers of political and guerilla activity. This period also saw the PLO's relationship with the Hashemite regime deteriorated progressively (Abu-Odeh 1999), which ended in 1970 with the events of Black September—a period of armed clashes between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the

Jordanian army.[9] As a result of this war, the PLO presence, especially its military apparatus, disappeared from Jordan (Cobban 1984; Sayigh 1997).

The years after the Black September were characterized by what scholars call a de-Palestinianization of Jordan (Abu-Odeh 1999). During this period, Transjordanians dominated the public sector and Palestinians were pushed to the private sector by virtue of being seen as the "sons of the country" (Baylouny 2010, 51). While the source of this discrimination after the 1970 civil war is still debated, the discrimination itself is still observable in the unofficial quota system in universities' employment of Transjordanian professors and in the fact that the Jordanian security apparatus is controlled by Transjordanians (Massad 2001, 258).[10] The sustained political marginalization of Palestinians is also reflected in the low representation of Palestinians in the political institutions of the Kingdom.[11] While Jordan kept its ties with the West Bank until 1988, the Jordanian state severed all legal and administrative ties after the first Intifada (El-Abed 2021), which resulted in those Palestinians who remained in the West Bank losing their Jordanian citizenship.

In addition to their political marginalization in the kingdom, national and international events caused Palestinian presence in Jordanian civil society and the welfare sector to shrink. Initially, with the demographic tumult after the arrival of so many Palestinians, the Kingdom saw a significant increase in organized charitable activities among Jordanians leading first to the

[9] To this date, Black September is a taboo subject in Jordan. For an in-depth account of the Palestinian guerrilla's role in the battle, see Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and The Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

[10] Salibi, for example, argues that there was no policy of state discrimination but a feature of "peculiar structure of Jordanian society (1993, 247), Abu-Odeh (1999) and Massad (2001) demonstrate that discrimination was a state policy after 1970 with Trans Jordanians constituting most of the Jordanian army and public sector.

[11] Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Jordan: Palestinians*, 2008: https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749cfcc.html.

establishment of the Ministry of Health for voluntary societies in 1949 and later the Ministry of Social Affairs (Harmsen 2008; Brumfield 2017) to accommodate the needs of the influx of Palestinians in the aftermath of the Nakba. By 1959, the General Union of Voluntary Associations (GUVS) was founded to oversee and regulate the activities of this sector. This relatively liberal era came to an end by 1957 because of a (some argue staged) coup attempt against King Hussein and the imposition of martial law until 1989.

Jordan's civil society law during these times, Law No. 33 of 1966, granted ministries the powers to reject applications for any reason they see appropriate and forbid the rejected applicants from any appeal, despite the fact that most civil society organizations in Jordan are welfare organizations which are forbidden from "fulfilling any political objectives" (Sparre and Peterson 2007). During the 1960s, in the context of the regime's conflict with the leftist Jordanian nationalist movement and the PLO, Jordan saw the rise of Islamic social service providers in general, and the Muslim Brotherhood, in particular (Harmsen 2008; Brumfield 2017). During martial law, in addition to strengthening the charity wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Center Charity Society, there was also a shift from traditional charity to social development, a process which is also reflected by the change in the name of the governmental body from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Social Development in 1979 (Harmsen 2008, 156).

The royal family also played an active part in becoming a service provider in the years following Black September by opening royal NGOs like the Queen Alia Fund in 1977 (later renamed the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, JOHUD) and advertising their activities as a form of sustainable development (Brumfield 2017). Because of their dominance in the field of international aid, eclipsing other NGOs, Wiktorowicz refers to this and similar NGOs

like Noor al-Hussein Foundation and Jordan River Foundation as Government Organizations rather than Non-Government Organizations (2002). These Royal NGOs would quickly become the primary means to distribute foreign aid in Jordan (Sato 2020, 6).

Since 1989, with the adoption of the IMF-led economic liberalization program, there has been a decrease in government services, subsidies, and taxes, and by 2009, the number of NGOs had doubled from their level in the 80s. Despite the fact that this period also saw a growth in political liberalization, restrictions on freedom of association also increased (Jarrah 2009). Until the law on associations was amended in 2008, all NGOs were seen as charity organizations by the state, and they are still pressured to limit their activities to poverty relief (AlNasser 2016).

The Syrian refugee crisis transformed some of the rules regulating local NGO's access to foreign funds. While historically these NGOs were excluded from international funding sources with the Syrian refugee crisis and the programs related to the Jordan Response Platform to the Syria Crisis, in May 2015 a mechanism was established to receive permission from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to receive foreign donations (ibid).

Palestinian Refugees and Humanitarian Aid

Since the General Assembly never provided a definition of who was a Palestinian refugee, the main agency responsible for Palestinian refugees, the UNRWA, developed its own working definition. In 1952, a Palestinian refugee was defined officially as: "A person whose normal residence had been Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the 1948 conflict and who, as a result, had lost both his home and his means of livelihood" (Schiff 1995, 24), a definition that created problems in case a person lost one and not the other. Moreover, while this definition provided parameters for being registered as a refugee, this definition was "limited only to needy persons" (Akram 2002). Schiff (1995) extensively details how this created problems,

even leading to Palestinians rioting in Jordan whenever UNRWA administrators imposed a ceiling on the number of people eligible to receive rations (Schiff 1995, 22). Today, UNRWA's definition of a Palestinian refugee includes all "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict" (Rempel 2006, 6).

The UNRWA was initially established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1949 as a temporary agency to implement direct relief and aid programs for Palestinians refugees, and since then it has renewed its mandate because of the lack of a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. The UNRWA initially had two duties: "to carry out, in collaboration with local governments, the direct relief and works programmes as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission and to consult with interested Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken in preparation for the cessation of international assistance for relief and works projects" (Bocco 2009, 231).

In its initial years, it provided relief services and designed large development schemes to resettle the refugees in their host countries (al-Husseini 2010). During these early decades, Palestinians opposed to these large-scale UNRWA projects whenever they thought these projects aimed to resettle Palestinians in host countries permanently (Schiff 1995), while host countries did the same under the pretense of preserving the refugees' right of return. As early as the 1950s, the agency created social programs in the refugee camps like sports events, public lectures, and sewing and embroidery classes in the youth, and women's activity centers in the camps (al-Husseini 2010). By the 1960s, the agency collaborated with the World Alliance of YMCAs to establish youth centers (Howard 1964; Herman 2017).

Since the 1970s, the influence of UNRWA in the camps has gone into decline. Multiple factors have contributed to the diminishing control of the agency over camp-related issues. The primary factor appears to be a significant lack of financial resources, which has gradually compelled the UNRWA to curtail its services and reduce expenditures across its facilities, including schools and health centers (Schiff 1995). As a result, the UNRWA's authority has diminished, accompanied by an increased involvement of the Jordanian authorities in camp management. Since 1975, the government has assumed responsibility for various tasks that were previously handled by the UNRWA, such as enforcing regulations pertaining to spatial constraints, as well as maintaining and rehabilitating shelters and camp infrastructure (Husseini 2010).

After Jordan disengaged from the West Bank in 1988, the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) was established by the Jordanian government as a subdivision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs While the government exerts influence over the camps directly through the DPA, it also utilizes "camp services committees" as quasi-governmental bodies. These committees consist of 7-13 members, who are not necessarily camp residents. They operate under the economic and operational control of the DPA and are responsible for implementing community projects and representing the concerns of the refugees. The DPA also exercises indirect control through the oversight of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) like Women's Program Centers and Community Rehabilitation Centers for the Disabled, as well as *zakāt* committees providing medical, relief, and social services within the camps.

Upon the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the Occupied Territories, there was a notable shift in the international community's aid and political focus towards the state-

building requirements of the Palestinian Authority. While the overall financial support for the UNRWA did not decrease, the Oslo Accords resulted in a redirection of attention and resources towards supporting the Palestinian Authority's governance and institution-building efforts (Bowker 2003, 140-141). During this time, the UNRWA also shifted from its emphasis on relief programs toward sustainable developmental approaches in host counties, instituting microfinance programs and projects to improve the infrastructure of the camps (Hanafi, Hilal, and Takkenberg 2014).

In 2006, the UNRWA incorporated the UN's Human Development paradigm to include activities that targeted gender equality and the promotion of democracy (Barnett and Weiss 2008), sustainable livelihoods (Gabiam 2016), and community participation (Rempel 2009). This new trajectory aims to mobilize efforts towards building individual ability (Feldman 2015), and youth and women emerged as the main recipients due to their categorization as vulnerable populations whose "resilience" should be fostered (Bocco 2009, 229–52; Feldman 2015). Thus, although UNRWA provides housing, basic education and health services in the camps, Palestinian refugees are expected to be increasingly self-sustaining. Today, the UNRWA operates with constant budget cuts and amongst a diversified and dynamic network of institutions with the expansion of the humanitarian sector in Jordan.

Even though the case of the UNRWA and Palestinian refugees within the international humanitarian regime indicates that a political problem like displacement cannot be solved through humanitarianism, these efforts show that the UNRWA's approach recognizes the interconnectedness of relief and development. This combination of short-term assistance and long-term development strategies has led to several intended and unintended consequences in the lives of the Palestinian refugees both intentional and otherwise. First, it did provide humanitarian

aid without which Palestinians in their various countries, mostly without rights to citizenship, would have suffered even more. Secondly, when the large development projects were proven to be not possible for various reasons I have mentioned before, the UNRWA put more emphasis and investment on social services, health, and education, which put second and third generation refugees at an educational advantage among their peers in the Arab world. This shift facilitated mass employment in the labor markets of the region, particularly in the countries of the Gulf (Rosenfeld 2002). Thirdly, the UNRWA is unique in that its employees are composed largely of Palestinian staff where local staff hold a paradoxical position: "as Palestinians who share with their beneficiaries a collective history" and "as UNRWA employees who exercise less power and authority compared to International staff" (Farah 2009). This provided employment opportunities to refugees, and, for example, facilitated the teachers to go outside the boundaries of the host state's school curriculum in talking about "Palestine" (Farah 2009). Moreover, being protected by UNRWA immunities, the agency's staff unions were among the few realms which Palestinians could be politically active, though under the disguise of "employment issues" (Schiff 1995, 64).

Regardless of these positive developments, humanitarian aid remains limited and Palestinian refugees live, as Feldman argues, in a state of undercare, existing under a system of care while the care they receive is systematically inadequate (2018, 161). Designed to be ameliorative rather than transformative, long-term humanitarianism has its limits. While Feldman demonstrates these limitations through her attention to care for the aging and dying in Burj al Barajneh camp in Lebanon (Feldman 2018), my research also made me realize the ways my interlocutors responded to the recognition that the care they received from the UNRWA was diminishing. Among the volunteers and beneficiaries of *'amal fityanī* as well as other Palestinian

refugees I encountered in Jordan's refugee camps, there was a profound nostalgia for UNRWA services that were available to previous generations. Palestinian refugees not only interpreted the cutbacks of services as a sign of the international community's betraying its responsibilities, but also complained about the more material and tangible negative effects of this decline in their daily lives, especially, at the area of education and health. Young volunteers in the associations, who had grown up hearing about the high quality of education in UNRWA schools where teachers with national "consciousness and conscience" worked hard in previous generations, often lamented this decrease in quality and national fervor and tried to ameliorate it with extracurricular classes and teaching Palestinian history in their institutions. It was a similar story with healthcare; the health centers in the refugee camps now provided only primary health services, leaving the old and very sick and to their own devices.

Despite lamenting this humanitarian abandonment, Palestinians still value the UNRWA as a witness to their predicament and consider its existence as a form of international recognition and protection. For example, to this day, Palestinians use the agency's facilities and resources to support one important activity: the annual summer camp. According to my interlocutors, after the annual summer camp activities were suspended in 2003, volunteers from Baqa'a camp reached out to the UNRWA for its cooperation. The UNRWA's Jordan Field has been instrumental both in the resuscitation of the summer camp in 2006, and in its expansion to participants from the West Bank, Syria, and Lebanon. When the Syrian civil war of 2011 threatened to prevent Syrians from participating, the UNRWA, again, played an important role by facilitating participation of Palestinian refugees from Syria; as a result, there is a new group of children, unofficially called "*abna al-wekala*" (children of UNRWA), residing in and around Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. The UNRWA's contribution was not limited to

coordination either; volunteers told me that until 2014, it had provided monetary aid, camp space, and the buses for events outside the summer camp, yet in 2014 the monetary aid was cut and in 2016 so were the buses for transportation.

Today, the UNRWA operates amongst a diversified and dynamic network of institutions including international NGOs responding the Syrian refugee crisis, Charity Societies, government-initiated NGOs and smaller voluntary associations which greatly increased in number since 1989. Moreover, the inclusion of Syrian nationals in the aftermath of 2011 have overwhelmingly changed the demographics of the region, making up 88.5% of the refugee population. It is within this context that Palestinian refugees find themselves entangled in an increasingly complex humanitarian field with divergent approaches to govern the refugees. Despite their lamentations about UNRWA's diminishing services, when young Palestinians critique the international humanitarian regime, they also derive the bulk of their critique not from their experiences with UNRWA, but from their perceptions of and experiences with the INGOs which govern the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan.

Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan

Jordan is the only state where the majority of Palestinian refugees have both citizenship and refugee status (Palestinians displaced from the Gaza Strip in the 1967 war are an exception to this). Although any Palestinian refugee registered with the UNRWA can benefit from the UNRWA's services, today the UNRWA's presence is most felt across the refugee camps Jordan instituted in the aftermath of 1948 and 1967 wars. According to UNRWA, almost 18% of over 2.3 million refugees live in the ten official refugee camps - the unofficial camps of Prince Hassan, Madaba, and Sukhneh are not covered by UNRWA statistics.[12] UNRWA-registered

[12] https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan

refugees living in the ten official refugee camps are estimated to represent almost half of the UNRWA statistics (Tiltnes and Zhang 2013, 24). Five of these camps were established on the East Bank following the 1948 war and the remaining eight camps were built after the events of 1967. Most of the camps where I conducted my research, particularly the Ḥusayn and Nasr camps, are situated in or near the capital city, Amman. Thus, when one considers the precarity that Palestinian camp youth experience, the social disparities in the capital city which are mapped onto the physical divisions between East and West Amman should also be taken into account.

#	Name of Camp	Area in dunum	Population	Date of establishment	No. of UNRWA school buildings	No. of UNRWA schools (two-shift (system	No. of public schools	No. of households	Poverty (2017) rate	Population from Gaza	No. of health centers	No. of housing units
1	Baqa'a	1496.626	128586	1968	8	16	4	28114	32%	1731		11500
2	Hussein	445.019	33057	1952	2	4		7793	28%	1381	1	2610
3	Wehdat	486.00	60287	1955	7	0		13390	34%	2067	2	2820
4	Prince Hasan	96.156	9408	1967	2	4		1600	28%	242	1	700
5	Madaba	111.526	10500	1956	2	4		1200	32%	105	1	316
6	Talbiyyeh	132.655	10345	1968	2	4	1	2054	28%	216	1	810
7	Martyr Azmi Mufti	762.533	27918	1968	4	2	2	6348	23%	247	1	2314
8	Irbid	244.00	29890	1951	2	4		6975	31%	275	2	1660
9	Jerash / Gaza	750.00	33679	1968	2	4	1	7327	54%	25627	1	2850
10	Souf	550.00	21263	1968	2	4	2	4842	23%	245	1	3000
11	Hitteen	917.00	59597	1968	5	10	2	12961	31%	8202	2	5000
12	Zarqa	190.00	20855	1949	4	0		4875	19%	261	2	1200
13	Sukhneh	68.650	7350	1969	1	2		800	27%	94	1	750
Total			**452735**		**43**	**58**	**12**	**98279**	**30%**	**40693**	**18**	**35530**

Figure 3: Statistical summary of the camps in Jordan (Department of Palestinian Affairs 2019)[13]

The demographic information in refugee camps demonstrates that although the conditions of camp life are getting better across certain indicators, such as school environment, education attainment and crowded living conditions, the disparities between camp residents and other Palestinian refugees continue to increase (al Husseini, 7). Those who live in the camps have lower income levels, larger household sizes, inadequate housing conditions, lower levels of

[13] The population of refugee camps in this table refer to those originally registered with UNRWA.

education, perceived poorer health, and a greater dependence on UNRWA and other relief services (Tiltnes and Zhang 2013).

Income groups 2011, 2012	Outside camps 2012	Inside camps 2011	Income groups 1996, 1999	Outside camps 1996	Inside camps 1999
<1,901	10	25	<901	9	22
1,901-2,450	12	20	901-1,450	16	20
2,451-2,800	3	5	1,451-1,800	16	14
2,801-3,900	24	26	1,801-2,900	26	23
3,901-4,600	10	6	2,901-3,600	14	9
4,601-5,300	9	6	3,601-4,300	6	4
5,301-6,300	10	5	4,301-5,300	5	4
6,301-7,600	5	3	5,301-6,300	4	3
7,601-10,600	10	3	6,601-9,600	2	2
>10,600	8	1	>9,600	1	1
Total	100	100	Total	100	100
n	3,472	39,245		1,362	2,535

Figure 4: Annual household income outside and inside refugee camps.
Percentage of refugee households by grouped income (in JD) and time period (Tiltnes and Zhang 2013, 290)

Additionally, unemployment rates are notably higher among the inhabitants of the camps compared to those living outside and these rates are exceptionally high among Palestinian refugee youth (ibid, 225). Moreover, for those who are employed, camp women less often have white-collar jobs (ibid, 189) and the hourly wage for both men and women in the camps are significantly lower than those who live outside (ibid, 201). Overall, employed camp refugees report a feeling of lower job security (ibid, 2010). Another subjective indicator, a sense of safety, is also lower among camp residents: they have a stronger belief that crime, violence, and substance abuse are more prevalent in their area compared to those living outside the camp (ibid, 75).

It is also important to note that although refugee men who live in the camps located in the administrative districts of the Amman governorate – Weḥdāt, al-Naṣr, and Ḥusayn camps – have a higher rate of employment than those in the camps of other governorates, they do not escape the consequences of the social disparities of the divide between East and West Amman. The majority of Amman's poor live in East Amman, either in Palestinian refugee camps or in nearby

informal settlements which are referred to by a specific term, *sakan 'ashwai* (Ababsa 2011). Ababsa notes that even after three decades of urban renewal, the city is marked by a contrast between impoverished, densely populated areas with high unemployment rates and neighborhoods primarily situated in the western, northwestern, and southwestern regions (ibid). She demonstrates that ongoing property developments in the city leaves large, densely populated areas without adequate infrastructure, social housing, and employment centers in East Amman (covering Amman's historical center and more than half of the city with its north and south expansions) where these developments are most needed (ibid). Ababsa also argues that the informal settlements in East Amman that arise from rural depopulation of Transjordanian tribes receive special attention from municipal services and the Land Registry Department, as opposed to Palestinian informal areas (ibid.). Today, East Amman is characterized by informal, self-built housing, while West Amman boasts villas and office blocks amidst family-owned buildings. Moreover, it is a city with ongoing polarization, with growing inequalities of income, wealth, and access to economic opportunity (Hourani 2016).

With no possibility in sight for returning to their homelands, receding international humanitarian aid, and increasing socio-economic marginalization, Palestinian refugee camp youth today live in a renewed context of precarity together with new migrant and refugee populations moving in and around their refugee camps. They not only deal with impoverished camp surroundings, but they also live under an ongoing politically induced condition which makes them more exposed "to injury and violence" under the uneven impacts of global capitalism (Butler 2009, 25; Butler 2006). Moreover, despite most of them holding Jordanian citizenship, they face severe restrictions when it comes to political engagement and representation, and as a result have little space to raise their problems and aspirations. Political

parties and factions remain dominated by older men who do not offer much representation or mobilization to young people (Albanese and al-Husseini 2020, 6), especially those from refugee camps. Moreover, they argue that this situation is further compounded by the patriarchal social system prevalent in the camps that restricts youth participation in decision-making bodies. As a result, volunteerism has become an alternative path for involvement in community life (ibid).

B. Theoretical Underpinnings and contributions

By focusing on the lives and refugee-care practices of Palestinian refugee camp youth in various Palestinian refugee camps of Amman, Jordan, this project makes scholarly interventions within the fields of 1. Humanitarianism as care, 2. Anthropology of the youth in the Middle East, and 3. Anthropology of refugee camps. Underlying these interventions is a contribution to Middle East Studies by emphasizing the centrality of the concept of youth to conceptions and practices of humanitarian care and agency.

Humanitarianism as Care

Although humanitarianism is not easily defined, it is often understood as distinct from projects like development or human rights (Bronstein and Redfield 2011, 3-30). While the boundaries of these projects are often renegotiated on the ground, the defining aspects of humanitarianism are a temporality that is preoccupied with the present (Ticktin 2014) and an aspiration to make the world a better place (Barnett 2013). Often, the objects of humanitarianism are people who are suffering (Fassin 2001) and who are trapped in emergency situations in distant places (Boltanski 1999). At the core of humanitarianism resides another contention, which is the idea of humanity (Feldman and Ticktin 2010). Although humanitarianism upholds the sacredness of life as an ideal and values of humanity (Barnett 2013), humanitarian action is

imbued with inequalities and contradictions and creates hierarchies, saving some while risking others (Fassin 2007).

Scholars have noted that humanitarianism not only purports both a politics of solidarity and a politics of inequality (Fassin 2012, 1-17), but is also connected to broader governance structures like sovereign states, international laws, and related discourses (Feldman and Ticktin 2020). Inspired by Foucault's ideas on governmentality, others have theorized that populations are governed not only by states, but by humanitarian NGOs taking over the functions of the state as the states relinquish its duties concerning the welfare of the populations in question (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault and Didier Fassin, Barnett has coined the term "humanitarian governance" to describe the contemporary humanitarian system (Barnett 2013). By expanding the study of humanitarian governance as the project to ensure the welfare of populations, Barnett's formulation makes it possible to consider practices as diverse as emergency aid, development, peacebuilding, population control, medical assistance to be parts of this governance (Barnett 2013, 381-382). Barnett situates power at the core of humanitarian action, making it possible to think of humanitarian governance potentially leading to both domination and emancipation (ibid). Although some of its actors are more influential than others, these actors can be as diverse as Médecins Sans Frontières, corporations, non-profit companies, and Islamic welfare societies (ibid, 387). By managing the refugees that they aim to help through naming, labeling, registering, counting, other forms of visibility (Hyndman 2000, 117-150; Calhoun 2008, 73-97), these organizations also join in their governance.

In my usage of the term humanitarian governance, I am inspired by Barnett's intervention for multiple reasons. First, by expanding its area of practice to diverse forms, his formulation helps overcome the oft-invoked, clear-cut distinction between humanitarianism, human rights,

and development, projects that in practice stand on slippery ground. In line with this inquiry, anthropologists have examined situations in which a relief agency like the UNRWA, shifting its emphasis from relief to development (Gabiam 2012), or an activist organization like Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa involved in both promoting refugee rights and delivering humanitarian aid (Robins 2009) as examples where the lines between the three categories are blurred. Barnett makes it possible to think about the ways in which different projects converge on the idea of enhancing welfare and reducing suffering; thus, long-term refugee situations can also be included as objects of humanitarian governance.

Second, thinking of humanitarianism not in terms of its core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Ferris 2011), but in terms of a relationship of governance make it possible to pay attention to the processes and events that challenge these principles on the ground and bring other sensibilities connected to humanitarian action to the fore. For example, anthropologists show that the people who are involved in humanitarian action (both those who provide relief and those who receive it) challenge and transform its key principles: American doctors of Syrian origin question the neutrality principle when the Syrian government sees them as "not neutral" (Sweis 2019, 588), Finnish ICRC workers become humanitarians not necessarily to help others but to help themselves (Malkki 2015), Palestinian refugees redress humanitarian objects with political meanings (Feldman 2015) despite aid organizations' insistence on humanitarianism being apolitical.

Third, Barnett's intervention helps us consider the governance of the actors that are traditionally not seen as part of this project such as charitable organizations or refugee-led organizations as part of this project and to overcome the often-invoked distinction between secular and religious humanitarianism. Most genealogies of humanitarianism point to its

Christian origins and consider contemporary humanitarianism to be a secularized and universalized form (Fassin 2011, 1-18). Barnett argues that with its claim of defending the world's most marginalized, humanitarianism is situated "in the realm of the sacred," and both religious and secular humanitarianisms are, in fact, faith-based (Barnett 2013, 384).

My project contributes to studies of humanitarianism in three interrelated ways. First, it reorients the focus from refugees as objects to agents of humanitarianism in a context of protracted refugeehood and overlapping displacement. Refugees as objects of humanitarian intervention have long been the subject of anthropologists' attention, with works emphasizing that humanitarian practice silences refugees and dehistoricizes refugee conditions (Malkki 1996) and that medical humanitarianism delineates the suffering body as a legitimate source for recognition of refugees in different contexts (Allen 2009; Ticktin 2006). Scholarly work also demonstrated that even as objects of humanitarian action, refugees have resisted de-politicization and transformed humanitarian practices into sites of political visibility (Feldman 2008) and formed historical narratives about themselves in the face of de-historization (Malkki 1996). In the context of long-term displacement, scholars have showed how humanitarianism has become something refugees live within, but that it addresses refugees' long-term needs with increasing insufficiency (Feldman 2018, 161-191). Recent scholarship has also investigated refugees as practitioners of aid and relief in contexts of overlapping displacement and/or through diaspora organizations. Emphasizing the importance of investigating South-South humanitarian action, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh have written on diverse instances in which refugees became providers of care during the Covid-19 pandemic (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2020), as well as refugee-refugee humanitarian action in the contexts of overlapping displacement (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013). Their scholarship problematizes studying refugee cases

in isolation or only in relation to host communities and demonstrates the religiously-inspired private practices in which refugees engage in providing care for other refugees (ibid.).

Second, by writing against the secular-religious distinction, my work contributes to ethnographic works on humanitarianism by elucidating a distinct repertoire of care that has emerged through intergenerational transmission and inter-camp sociality, as well as in relation and (or) in opposition to the competing forms of care refugees encounter around them. Scholars have long demonstrated that Islam is one of the significant organizing forces of civil society in the Middle East (Harmsen 2008; Sparre, Jung and Juul 2014; Sato 2020; Wiktorowicz 2000, 2001). It is undoubtedly a welcome development that scholars like Basit Iqbal (2009), Mostowlansky (2019, 2020) have started to include humanitarian practices that are, one way or another, related to Islam but are excluded by the genealogies of humanitarianism that emphasize its Christian roots. In this context, scholars have also shown that it is becoming increasingly difficult to assert this binary between faith and secular action. For example, research shows that Iraqi refugees, which are often seen as a faith community, may engage with faith-based organizations in addition to (or instead of) international organizations in Syria (Zaman 2012), or in the case of the Syrian diaspora organizations in Lebanon; faith, identity and humanitarian action are so fluid in dealing with structural demands of refugees' lives that this fluidity defies a clear-cut binary between faith and secular approaches (Capri and Qasmiyeh 2020). Scholarship also showed the increasing convergence of neoliberal, market-oriented approaches and the practices of Muslim humanitarians (Atia 2013; Clarke 2008; Mittermaier 2021).

While these works show us the significance of constructs like faith, Islam, religion, and secularity in humanitarian action, they also demonstrate their incredible fluidity. This, I believe, forces us to reconsider these constructs in intersectional terms like identity, space, gender, and

even the historicity of a particular location and moment, rather than to assume humanitarianism undertaken by Muslims is first or foremost faith-based. The differences between so called secular and faith-based humanitarianisms are, at times, less significant than the differences among faith-based humanitarianisms, making generalizations about them difficult (Ferris 2011). Thus, paying attention to a religious-secular binary often obfuscates other processes and moral rubrics that may hold a more prominent meaning in different contexts.

In my work, drawing inspiration from Charles Tilly, I approach my interlocutors' care practices as a repertoire. Tilly coins the term "repertoire" during his investigation of social movements in France in the context of state-making and the development of capitalism since the seventeenth century. He defines a repertoire as "the whole set of means [a group] has for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups" (Tilly 1986, 4). Repertoires both enable and constrain people's actions because they provide them with familiar routines to be used and only to be innovated from within (Tilly 1986). Thinking of these practices in terms of repertoires directs our attention to the identity of the groups who are engaging in them, the goals of their actions while accepting structural limitations, and opens the possibility for us to detect their historicity.

In this context, my work contributes to scholarly work on humanitarianism by elucidating the kinds of claims refugees are making through this repertoire on each other, on their "beneficiaries," and on their camps. My interlocutors, who identify as Muslims, do not view religion as the primary force guiding their practices in the Palestinian refugee camps. While they have moral aspirations, these aspirations are not to create a pious modernity (Deeb 2006, 3-41), mobilize "the faithful in support of the poor" (Clarke 2008, 25), or fulfill a religious duty to God through volunteer work (Mittermeier 2014). Rather their project aims to create ethical subjects

who will institute a new norm for the camp and its social life, which is inextricably intertwined with political ideas about the future of Palestinian refugees.

Finally, my work contributes to scholarly work on humanitarianism by investigating the agentive ways in which Palestinian refugees respond to the changes in the humanitarian governance as it takes new forms with new refugee crises. Scholars have shown the myriad ways in which Palestinian refugees have transformed the meanings attached to humanitarianism by claiming that aid is proof of their identities as refugees (humanitarianism as pretext, Gabiam 2012), by transforming humanitarian objects into objects of political claim-making (Feldman 2015), and by using the UNRWA as a witness to their political cause (Farah 2009). Although localization has become an important agenda for humanitarian INGOs since the 1990s, the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis and its regional toll on neighboring countries has caused the UN to mobilize humanitarian and development programming which emphasizes social cohesion and integration for refugees in host communities.[14] A new compromise has been established between the host countries to Syrian refugees and the states in the Global North, according to which host countries in the South demanded increased support not only through the UNHCR, but also that aid be directly given to their states, while those in the North have reduced the number of refugees that entered their territories (Arar 2017). This shift has not only transformed Jordan's place in the system of global refugee management, but also redressed the small local NGOs throughout the kingdom, including those in and around Palestinian refugee camps as organizations which have ties to both urban Syrian refugees and Jordanian citizens (including those who are also Palestinian refugees). In this context, UN resolutions underline the importance of youth in conflict prevention and maintaining peace (United Nations 2015) and

[14] "2017-2018 Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis (12 December 2016)" http://www.unhcr.org/partners/donors/589497237/2017-2018-regional-refugee-resilience-plan-response-syria-crisis-12-december.html.

other international agreements, like the Jordan Compact of 2016, posit both refugee and host community youths as objects of humanitarian concern.

While scholars have criticized how the trend of resilience-emphasizing "empowerment" programming in international development as promoting the "responsibilization" of individuals and serving the status quo (Dean 2010; Reid 2012; Welsch 2014), my project also illuminates how Palestinian youth adapt the knowledge acquired in these institutions for their own conceptions of care, obligations, and reciprocities, albeit with tensions. As opposed to the increasing hegemony of neoliberal humanitarianism that prioritizes individual resilience building and self-reliance (Atia 2013; Clarke 2008), my interlocutors prioritize building a sense of community over individualistic approaches.

Anthropology of Youth, Precarity and Gender in MENA

This dissertation contributes to scholarly works about youth in the Middle East, particularly those who live precarious lives, by showing that through engaging in care practices in their refugee camps, young Palestinians both strive to overcome their precarity and to achieve "youthfulness," albeit in gendered ways. I argue that youth also have a claim for tying the new generation to the Palestinian nation and its history as well as to help them flourish in their lives in Jordan, in a way that defies both the INGO's aims to constitute them as particular humanitarian objects and the humanitarian conceptions of Islamic charities. Moreover, by establishing associations with governing bodies composed only of youth – in this case young men – they also try to transform *'amal fityanī* into a practice in which youth are both decision-makers and practitioners.

By invoking precarity, I derive inspiration from Butler who described the concept of precarity as the "politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing

social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (Butler 2009, 25). Scholars have emphasized renewed conditions of vulnerability and precarity as a result of the uneven impacts of global capitalism (Butler 2006) and theorized the significance of human suffering in non-catastrophic circumstances (Povinelli 2011), which they have cast as either structural violence (Farmer 2003), or social suffering (Das, Kleinman and Lock 1997; Bourdieu 2000; Das 2015).

Some scholars argue that youth, in the contemporary world, is a class that can be defined as the new precariat by virtue of laboring in contexts of extreme insecurity and because they have systemically been losing rights that are built up for citizens (Standing 2011). Scholars who approach international development in critical ways demonstrated that with the beginning of the 21st century, for the first time, international development organizations saw youth as their primary concern (Sukeriah and Tannock 2008). Starting in the 1980s, this led to a youth development paradigm, through which these organizations increasingly began to describe youth as assets rather than problems – both terms driven by neoliberal ideology (Sukarieh and Tannock 2011).

Arab youth, in addition to suffering from the consequences of this global economic impoverishment, also became matters of containment and security in the aftermath of 9/11, and the measures against them were only momentarily suspended with the initial excitement of the Arab revolutions in 2011 (Herrera 2017). The discourses of international development on youth in the Arab world, Sukeriah detects, delineate two kinds of youth belonging to different classes: first, the "Young Global Arabs," who are composed of the youth of the local and global elites, and "Arab Youth," who need to be prepared for the global economy through discipline, work ethic, time management, and leadership (Sukeriah 2012, 431). It is also the second category of

young people who have suffered from the consequences of this global economic impoverishment and who have become matters of containment and security in the aftermath of 9/11 (Herrera 2017).

International NGOs construct youth as a humanitarian object in Jordan in line with these discourses. For example, through her ethnographic work in Mafraq, Jordan, Wagner demonstrates that Syrian youth are constituted by the INGOs to be apolitical and entrepreneurial, yet lack real opportunities for employment; as a result, the INGO's youth engagement becomes a sort of way to pass the time, legitimizing nothing more than the continuing presence for international aid (Wagner 2017).[15] It is perhaps because of this cycle that INGOs have become one of the biggest employers for young locals in the case of Jordan (Wagner 2017).

While international development organizations propagate increasingly neoliberal ideologies in their treatment of refugee youth, they have yet to fully agree on of who qualifies as a "youth." Turner, for example, demonstrates that different organizations working in the Syrian refugee response in Jordan used different aged-base criteria, following restrictive or wider definitions (Turner, 2018). Anthropologists and scholars of youth, however, approach this category as a social and cultural construct. Some like Bourdieu (1993) even think that youth is "nothing but a word," because of the diversity of social classes that young people may belong to. Still others contend that since mass schooling became a widespread phenomenon, "youthfulness" has spread on a global scale – despite important differences. According to Bayat, as a primarily urban and modern phenomenon that has spread globally, youth carry a particular habitus, a kind

[15] For an analysis on Syrian refugees and employment and on the fraught relationship between the notions of gender humanitarian governance proposes and those among the Syrian refugees, see: Challenging Refugee Men: Humanitarianism and Masculinities in Za'tari Refugee Camp.

of youthfulness, that is, a particular social location between childhood and adulthood, connoting relative autonomy and a greater tendency for experimentation, fun, adventurism, and mobility (Bayat 2013, 107-109).

While the idea of youthfulness à la Bayat suggests a particular habitus and consciousness to youth, there is also another dimension to youth which scholars believe carries significance. As opposed to biological definitions, in a famous essay, Karl Mannheim argues that people who grow up in the same socio-historical era share certain distinguishing characteristics that allow them to form a generational awareness if their group encounters significant historical changes (Mannheim 1970). When this occurs, a particular age group is transformed into a generation that possesses a unique identity and, even if subgroups within the generation hold differing opinions, is connected by a shared ethical framework that is associated with the historical era in which they matured (ibid). According to Mannheim, each generation makes fresh contact with its accumulated cultural heritage but also carries within itself the potential for social change. Similarly, drawing on Mannheim's formulations, anthropologists Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham propose the concept of "regeneration" to emphasize the interdependent relationship between intergenerational connections and broader historical and societal developments (Cole and Durham 2017). They highlight the importance of generations as a crucial space for understanding processes of social change (ibid.)

First, my approach to youth in terms of the concept of youthfulness takes its inspiration from Bayat's arguments. This conceptualization of youthfulness, as a kind of habitus connoting relative autonomy, a greater tendency for experimentation, fun, adventurism, and mobility is significant in understanding youth politics; described essentially as claiming or reclaiming youthfulness. However, this conceptualization only helps us insofar as young people overtly

demonstrate these youthful behaviors. Following Biehl and Locke (2010), my research also considers the unfinished nature of life and focuses on my interlocutors' youthful aspirations as well as the potential to go beyond dominant epistemologies (like nationalism, globalization, piety, and modernity) or rationalities and interventions (humanitarianism and international development). My research contributes to this debate by examining the gendered conditions of possibility that *'amal fityanī* opens for youthfulness as well as its limitations.

Second, I am also inspired by the concept of vital conjuncture which Johnson-Hanks posits against life-stages. Accordingly, vital conjuncture refers to "the zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation in a life or lives" (Johnson-Hanks 2002, 866). Instead of conceptualizing a life-course composed of linear events and/or life stages—which is already rarely the case for most young people in the global South—the term "vital conjuncture" helps us to understand moments in life that are contingent on institutions, life biographies, geographical location, and opportunities that emerge in one's life. Based on her ethnography among people in Cameroon, Johnson-Hanks coins this term as a critique of the dominant anthropological life cycle model, which is based on the premise that these stages are universal and that every individual within a society will experience them. It also assumes that every society will have these stages as an inherent part of their cultural and societal development (Johnson-Hanks 2002, 866). According to Johnson-Hanks, major events in one's life "can be construed" as a vital conjuncture as long as they become "a nexus of potential social futures" (871); thus, while events are self-contained outcomes, conjunctures have multiple and varied outcomes that occur over different time periods. Johnson-Hanks' formulation opens the possibility to ask questions about how specific events are navigated in relation to hoped-for futures. I contribute to this debate by arguing that the same practice, '*amal fityani*, while

amounting to a vital conjuncture, necessitates different processes of rethinking of future horizons for young men and women.

Finally, I am inspired by those who have approached youth though the concept of generation. Scholarship on Palestinians has provided further significance on the concept of generation in the context of settler colonialism and Palestinian refugeehood. Palestinians imbue the concept of generation with national significance while living with settler-colonialism. By investigating the memories of the Intifada generation, Collins shows the significance of the first Intifada of 1987 for this generation (2004). Sunaina's ethnography on the Palestinian youth movement that started in 2011 in Palestine demonstrates how Jil Oslo – the generation that was born right before the Oslo Peace Process – both "settles and recreates national cultural imaginaries" through Palestinian rap (Sunaina 2017, 14). Generation also operates as a basis of differentiation among Palestinian refugees in the diaspora. Importantly, each generation takes its name through regional political events like "generation of Nakba," or "generation of the revolution" (Allan 2014). I contribute to this debate by demonstrating that, through a repertoire of care, the Palestinian refugee youth in the camps aim to raise a new generation of refugees for whom Palestinian refugee camps are at primary importance for self-realization as well as for the investment of their energies. I argue that, in this way, refugee youth also situate themselves in the larger Palestinian nation and its history and against the competing INGO and Islamist paradigms.

Anthropology of Refugee Camps

Finally, my research contributes to scholarly discussions on refugee camps. I am particularly inspired by scholarly works on refugee camps that question the insights developed from Agamben's discussion (1998) on sovereign power and bare life in terms of rights and

rightlessness (Robinson 2013; Malkki 1995; Agier 2011; Achilli 2015; Sanyal 2014) or conceptions of the camp as the spatial expression of the sovereign exception. Hannah Arendt is one of the first thinkers to have pointed out the peculiar space that refugees inhabit in a world dominated by nation-states (Arendt 1973). Thus, in Arendt's vision, refugeeness and statelessness are inextricably linked. Drawing on the insights of Hannah Arendt, Agamben argues that exception was the fundamental principle of the sovereign rule, and that refugees, by being excluded from national citizenship were reduced to this space of exception, to "bare life," and are completely excluded from politics and only inhabit the realm of humanitarianism in the spaces of refugee camps (Agamben 1998). Thus, Arendt and Agamben, looking at the body of the refugee, make a radical critique of the nation-state order and articulate the ethical and political limits of humanitarian aid.

Ethnographically generated scholarly works, on the other hand, by showing that refugee camps are complex social and political spaces have led scholars to rethink some of the insights Agamben had provided. Based on his fieldwork in refugee camps in Zambia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea between 2000-2007, Agier (2011) conceptualizes the refugee camps as places that are devoted to the management of displaced undesirables. By tracing the history of the UNHCR, which was founded to "protect" the stateless, he shows how the refugee camps were not just spaces of "bare life" but also spaces of politics, since "every policy of assistance is simultaneously an instrument of control" (Agier 2011, 12). Born as a local or national "solution," each camp is also a part of a global mechanism (Agier 2011, 65) and an 'extra-territorial' space where the emergency situation becomes long term. However, despite their extraterritoriality, in time the initially desocialized refugees become resocialized, making camps into sites of possible local identification (Agier 2011, 70). Other ethnographically generated scholarly works also

show that refugee camps generate refugees' identities and historical consciousness. As a notable ethnography, Malkki's work explicates how the 1972 Hutu refugees who live in the camps of Tanzania saw refugeeness as a matter of becoming engaged in the construction of their identities and histories as a nation in exile (1995).

In the case of Palestinian refugees, scholars showed the camps operate as spaces of both sociality and politics. While Palestinian political actors often perceive the camps as crucial reminders of their right of return (Feldman 2015), the camps became spaces through which Palestinians remained together in the politics of everyday life (Gren 2015; Allan 2014), participated in national resistance (Sayigh 1994; Peteet 1991), and lived under occupation (Rosenfeld 2004). Moreover, they also made transmission of memories of the homeland possible (Davis 2011; Slyomovics 1998) and even today provide a particular marker of social difference for their residents (Perez 2021). My dissertation contributes to this scholarship by demonstrating that *'amal fityanī* is one of the historicizing processes through which Palestinian refugees in the camps of Jordan participate in the larger Palestine nation.

Scholars have also revealed important insights at the intersection of refugee youth, gender, and place. In a comparative study among Palestinian, Sahrawi, and Afghan refugee youth, Dawn Chatty provided an important insight in studying refugee youth identities in protracted displacement contexts by demonstrating that these refugee youths had contested identification with places and spaces (Chatty 2007). Refugee camps also emerged as an area of interest for understanding Palestinian refugee youth, yet scholars who focused on the intersection of these issues, mostly focused on the lives of young men. Qutami demonstrated that Palestinian refugee youths who fled the war in Syria and took voyages to Greece consider refugee camps to be the signifiers of their national identity (Qutami 2020). In the context of Jordan, Achilli wrote

on the relationship among masculinity, camp identity, and nationalism (Achille 2015c) and Hart investigated how young men, through a performance of masculinity, reproduced the camp as an authentic location for Palestinian national community (Hart 2008). My work contributes to these studies by demonstrating how refugee youth renegotiate the imagined boundaries of their refugee camp and include those who are outsiders. I argue that the terms of this inclusion vary for young women and men, and while abiding by the modesty norms is required for the former, class and masculinity traits become more important for the latter.

As protracted refugee situations have become widespread and camps began to overlap with urban spaces, anthropologists have responded by examining the commonalities and differences of experience of marginalization among refugees and other impoverished groups in the cities (Sanyal 2012; Sanyal 2014), noting that while legally and socioeconomically conceived as at the margins, refugee camps may become dwellings for the urban poor and acquire a feature what Agier calls the centrality of margins: "urban configurations that are both poor and cosmopolitan" (Agier 2016, 465). Many Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan today have blurred boundaries both geographically and demographically; as the population of these camps expanded over the years, camp residents moved to areas surrounding these camps and these camps became spaces where non-Palestinians also lived, as marginalized groups like Egyptian and Bangladeshi immigrant workers and Syrian refugees took residence.

In time, these camps also came to reflect what Fiddian-Qasmiyeh aptly detects as a widespread feature characterizing contemporary displacement in the Global South – namely, processes of "overlapping displacement" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2020, 403). By this, she refers to two dynamics, one in which people often experience displacement multiple times and, relatedly, new refugees share living spaces with other displacement (2020). During my research, I met

Palestinian refugees displaced from the West Bank to Gaza and then to Jordan, as well as those who became refugees in Syria first and later, after the war of 2011 in Syria, took refuge in Jordan. In addition to those who were originally displaced from Palestine, Syrian refugees took residence in the Palestinian refugee camps or in their vicinities. It is not that non-camp Syrian refugees exclusively took residence in the urbanized Palestinian refugee camps; but that these Palestinian refugee camps became attractive to those who wanted to remain in proximity to major cities while paying lower rents.

My dissertation demonstrates that Palestinian refugee camp youth, despite the heterogeneity of their camps in the context of overlapping displacement, still perceive their camps as Palestinian refugee camps. That is, they still see these camps as exceptional spaces through which an authentic Palestinian identity resides in conditions of prolonged exile. Moreover, through life story interviews with refugees across these urbanized camps, I demonstrate that these camps are not only connected to the city, but also to other refugee camps through this intergenerational network of care since the late 1960s.

C. Methodology

My first visit to the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan was in 2015, when I first traveled to Jordan as an assistant to a course on the Anthropology of the Middle East. During that time, I frequently visited the Weḥdāt and Baqāʾ camps with my colleague Michael Perez and volunteered in Weḥdāt as an English teacher in an UNRWA-affiliated Women's Programme Center. It was during the summers of 2015 and 2016 that I became acquainted with the process of authorization and security clearance to visit the refugee camps from the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA), the main agency responsible for the administration of the Kingdom's refugee camps.

Upon returning to Jordan in October 2017, I revisited the DPA and sought authorization. During this time, I also revisited Weḥdāt camp and some of my previous acquaintances in the camp and resumed volunteering as an English teacher in the UNRWA-affiliated Women Programme Center. Even though this provided with me an opportunity to meet with young women who resided in around the Weḥdāt camp, I soon realized that the older women who worked at the center approached the center not so much as a social space for young women, but as a space that only remained open from the morning to the afternoon and where they taught certain courses. In the meantime, I met a young Palestinian woman who volunteered at an association, hereafter al-Ḥayāh, in the al-Naṣr camp.

Al-Naṣr Camp, officially named the Prince Hassan Neighborhood, is an unofficial refugee camp located in east Amman. It hosts over 20000 Palestinian refugees, most of whom were displaced in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab Israeli war. Today, in addition to Palestinian refugees, one can find other groups in the camp as well: Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, and Egyptian immigrant workers and, lately, Syrian refugees also took residence in this already populated camp. Throughout my fieldwork, the al-Naṣr camp and the al-Ḥayāh association remained my primary research site. Through volunteers in al-Naṣr , however, I also gained the opportunity to conduct research in two other associations, one located in the Baqāʾ camp and the other in the Ḥusayn camp. I paid regular visits to each for five months.

As the largest and most populated refugee camp in the kingdom, Baqāʾ was also initially established as an emergency camp in the aftermath of the 1967 war. Unlike al-Naṣr, however, Baqāʾ is much further from the city, despite being connected to Amman through public transportation. I initially went there with a volunteer from al-Naṣr who used to volunteer in the youth club of that camp but who quit after each youth group left the club and opened their own

associations. Both my interlocutors in al-Naṣr and Ḥusayn perceived Baqāʾ camp as a more socially closed and religiously conservative camp and attributed this both to its residents originally being from the villages in Palestine as well as its greater distance from Amman.

I spent the last five months of my fieldwork in Ḥusayn Camp until the Covid-19 pandemic started. One of my key interlocutors, Wassim, was volunteering in both the Baqāʾ and Ḥusayn camps, and was teaching children *dabke* dance and music. Unlike Baqāʾ and al-Naṣr camps, Ḥusayn was established after 1948 following the Nakba. It is one of the ten official UNRWA camps and is located in Jabal al-Ḥusayn, a lively commercial center at the heart of Amman. It was also through Wasim and Saber that I joined the 46th international summer camp for orphans that was held in the summer of 2018. For forty days, in addition to teaching Turkish, I slept in the girls' dormitory with children who came from the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, and the occupied West Bank.

Through my friendship with volunteers in the al-Naṣr, Baqāʾ and Ḥusayn camps, I also got to know others from the Muḥaṭṭah, Jerash, Weḥdāt, and Zarqa camps and paid occasional visits to these camps and the houses of some of the volunteers. Thus, instead of focusing on one or two refugee camps, my field sites became wherever *ʿamal fityanī* activities took place and wherever its volunteers spent time in Amman.

Participant Observation

My main field method was participant observation and activist research. Al-Ḥayāh remained the main association where I volunteered and spent most of my time. I went there various days of the week, even when I spent Fridays in other associations – a day in the week that is busy even in associations which did not have active programs during the other days.

When I started visiting al-Ḥayāh in the beginning of 2018, the association had approximately sixty volunteers, all of whom were young men and women ranging from the ages of fifteen to thirty, and around three hundred beneficiaries: boys and girls from around al-Naṣr. In the first five months of my research, I mostly shadowed Zaynab and a relatively small number of female volunteers in al-Ḥayāh while at the same time teaching Turkish to a group of teenagers.

Since I was also interested in the social lives of the volunteers, my world started to revolve around the spaces young volunteers frequented: al-Ḥayāh, volunteers' houses and cafes in downtown Amman where they hung out, Yusuf's old Mercedes whenever he was working as a salesperson (before Covid19, he dealt in chocolate and chips, and after the start of the pandemic masks and hygienic products), my house whenever I hosted them and others, and finally, when our relationships got stronger, the stairs connecting downtown to Webdeih, where some of us came together and drank the araq we bought from liquor stores. Moving in and out of the camps with my interlocutors provided me insight into the ways in which camps operated as spaces where one needs to watch his/her conduct more closely so as not to upset communal norms around gender.

Participating in these young people's social lives helped me to explore the relationship among social networks, gender, and space in youth's lives (Deeb and Harb 2003), but also because this made me realize something very important about the nature of their voluntary work: even in their free time, volunteers often talked about their camps, the children in their association, the activities in association, their plans for enhancing their programs. Thus, although initially I thought confining myself to the institutional space of these associations was how I could best understand how their humanitarianism was practiced, in time I realized that by virtue

of being a genuinely chosen activity, *'amal fityanī* and everything around it was what my interlocutors chiefly concerned themselves with, and they brought it up frequently wherever they went.

Interviews

I conducted formal interviews with my interlocutors only after months of spending time with them. Knowing that I was going to spend at least one year in Jordan, after my initial introduction to my research topic, I first engaged in participant observation. This period helped me to get to know my interlocutors and prepare myself for the oral interviews. Thus, despite sharing common questions, each interview was barely structured. Interested in their conceptions of the refugee camp, their lives, and care practices, these interviews showed me how my interlocutors' personal experiences and family histories reflected these issues. Oral histories are also seen by scholars as providing opportunities for people to create continuity and reflect on disjunctures between past, present and future (Ochs and Capps 1996). Moreover, narrative activity reflects the desires, imagination, and symbolism (Portelli 1991) of the teller, opens up ruminations for alternative possibilities and provides an opportunity for exploring the ways desires take gendered forms (Sayigh 1998). I specifically focused on what Johnson-Hanks calls 'vital conjunctures' (Johnson-Hanks 2002), the crucial periods like school, work, and volunteering in my interlocutors' lives that are contingently shaped by larger structures.

It was also during my time in al-Ḥayāh that I realized that I needed to talk to spend more time with people in institutions who engage in humanitarian work, but who do not define their work as *'amal fityanī*. One aspect of this came naturally; al-Ḥayāh volunteers already had connections with some INGOs, which directed me to interview the case workers of these institutions. To this end, I conducted interviews with volunteers and workers of World Vision,

Jordan River Foundation, Action Against Hunger, Questscope, NRC, and I-Dare. Moreover, I interviewed two officers in the Ministry of Social Development, one in the department of Local Associations and the other in the department of Foreign Associations, to explore the kingdom's vision of social development, how the ministry perceived its role in the governance of the welfare system in Jordan and how it saw the collaborations between INGOs and local associations.

Although I had permission to work in the camps and conversed with many UNRWA staff (retired and current), my request for official interviews and for archival work at the UNRWA offices was rejected with no explanation by the UNRWA headquarters in Amman.

Document Research

I analyzed the DPA and UN reports on refugees, World Bank data on Jordan, and reports of humanitarian agencies on Palestinian refugees (e.g., Fafo, Badil and UNRWA) to better understand the socioeconomic context of my research site. While I also benefited from reports produced by INGOs on the Syrian refugee response to understand the rationalities of these institutions, when it comes to *'amal fityanī* institutions, there is not much written material.

One exception to this was the associations' Facebook pages and the way they represented the programs and activities that took place in the association, which gave me an important understanding as to how the youth wanted to communicate their voluntary work to the outside world. Another exception was the YMCA digital archives which I accessed through the Minnesota University Libraries.

Positionalities and Challenges in the Field

My positionality as a Turkish international student in the US impacted my experiences with refugees, and even after funding was granted, my residency in Jordan. The picture gets even

more complicated, when one considers that I am 1) from a lower-middle class family in a Muslim majority country in the Global South, 2) doing a PhD in the Global North, married to a white American man with no children, 3) and a Muslim who doesn't wear a hijab. Thus, my positionality became a mixture of foreign and familiar. My socioeconomic class background, being from Turkey, and being Muslim provided a general cultural proximity, while my life and career choices and dress-style were received differently by different people, each time helping me learn new aspects of my interlocutors' lives.

For example, being from Turkey paved the way for various discussions through which I was perceived at a cultural proximity. For some, Turkey still represented the Ottoman Empire where everybody lived in peace with each other until the Turkish Republic, or conversely, where Arabs were discriminated against as part of colonial policies. For others, Turkey was somewhere they wanted to travel. Even for those who experienced financial difficulties, by virtue of the strength of Jordanian dinar in relation to Turkish lira, it was a place they could potentially visit someday. Moreover, Turkish language shares a lot of Arabic words, and I have almost never met someone who did not know at least a handful of Turkish words. Many of my female interlocutors closely followed Turkish TV dramas, and young men were obsessed with historical dramas about the Ottoman Empire. In the associations where I volunteered – al-Naṣr, Ḥusayn and Baqāʾ – children and youth would always opt for a Turkish language class, even though I would also offer an English one.

Image 1: The author teaching Turkish in al-Naṣr camp

When it came to being a Muslim woman who does not wear the hijab and who is married to an American man who only visited occasionally, I experienced multiple reactions. At times, I wondered whether some of the mothers saw me as a bad role model for their daughters, although as time went by and as people also met Michael (my husband) who also speaks Arabic and is a kind and respectful person, those interlocutors with whom I established close relationships seemed to have trusted me. Some of the mothers of the female volunteers even saw me as a chaperone and let their teenage daughters to come to the cafes in downtown Amman with me, a rare treat for some of them. One interesting issue born from of our shared religious identity was that young men and women designated me as part of a "we" whenever they complained to me about "our" fellow Muslims, something that would be probably not possible if I was a complete

cultural outsider. This aspect of my identity also facilitated conversations about what humanity, charity, and giving means and should mean in our mainly Muslim majority countries, particularly Jordan, Palestine, and Turkey.

Still, as many have commented I was a Muslim *sukker hafif*; a person who is a Muslim but who is not very observant; something many attributed to my growing up in "*almani*" (secular) Turkey. In addition to this, my playful disposition and youthful mannerisms augmented by still not having children led youth see me as somewhat of a peer. Especially salient to my research, this helped young women to open up to me about their desires for autonomy and complain about how patriarchal norms in the name of Islam constrained them. Perceiving me this way, many men and women also opened up to me about youthful transgressions around dating and drinking alcohol.

D. Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1, "Contentious Repertoires of Care and the Origins of 'Boys Work'," shows how Palestinian refugee volunteers delineate *'amal fityanī* as a particular form of care that has been sustained in Palestinian refugee camps over four decades. In this chapter, through an examination of oral history interviews with volunteers and archival documents of the YMCA in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab Israeli war, I argue that there is a contestation of memory on the emergence of boys' work as either a YMCA or Palestinian Liberation Organization affiliated project in the aftermath of 1967 Arab Israeli war. I also argue that these narratives demonstrate the limits of possibility of remembering pre-civil war period (1970-1971) of Palestinian national mobilization outside the framework of armed struggle, even though my archival analysis indicates that both the PLO and YMCA at the time mobilized their efforts in developing of Palestinian refugee camp youth culturally, and socially.

Chapter 2, "'*amal fityanī* as a Vital Conjuncture and Gendered Boundaries of the Refugee Camps" examines the process of becoming an *'amal fityanī* volunteer through the narratives of young refugee men and women, and argues that this process serves as a vital conjuncture that leads young male refugees to rethink their aspirations for the future. Through volunteering, young refugee men find avenues for meaningful self-realization that may not necessarily align with socially expected patterns of employment or marriage, sometimes resulting in a form of cruel optimism, an overattachment to volunteer work that may lead them to forego other potential futures and opportunities. On the one hand, young women in Palestinian refugee camps find themselves navigating both the fear-inducing and hopeful aspects of *'amal fityani'*, because of the moral norms of their camps where gender mixing is often discouraged. While volunteering is also seen as a significant process of self-realization for young women, it rarely turns into a lifelong commitment or impacts other areas of their lives, such as friendships and occupational opportunities. In many cases, female volunteers, even in associations with gender-mixed programs, tend to discontinue their involvement once they reach adolescence, and those who persist often do not attain positions of leadership within the associations.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that the concept of "being of the camp" serves as a significant indicator of social difference, and this identity can be renegotiated through *'amal fityanī*. It is not limited to Palestinian refugees or individuals born in refugee camps, but also includes young men and women who are children of new refugees from Syria, migrants from Egypt and Bangladesh, or Palestinian refugees who did not grow up in camps but share similar class backgrounds and aspirations for Palestinian refugee camps. Consequently, issues of camp identity versus non-camp identity are intertwined with the practice of *'amal fityanī* and the urban landscape of Amman, which is marked by notable socioeconomic disparities between East and

West Amman. This chapter argues that in urbanized Palestinian refugee camps where new refugee and migrant groups also reside, for young men, exclusions from care and friendship networks primarily occur at the intersection of class, urban space, and competing masculinities, rather than solely based on national identity. For young women, the extent of their inclusion in this identity is dependent on their adherence to norms of modesty within the camp context. Gender-specific expectations and norms of modesty play a role in shaping the experiences and opportunities of female volunteers and may influence their acceptance or rejection within the camp community. This underscores the significance of gender as a determining factor in the dynamics of volunteering and the negotiation of social identity in the context of the camp.

Chapter 3, "We want to raise a generation": Between Development and Charity," delves into the everyday practices of care in these associations and investigates the meanings of development and charity through these practices. By foregrounding development of their beneficiaries' skills, self-esteem, livelihood opportunities, volunteers strive for the creation of a particular Palestinian camp refugee subjectivity, a kind of personhood whose present and future are not governed by the immediacy of precarity. Their efforts in development or engaging in charity places hope not in God, but a future generation of leaders who will give back to their communities – not because of a sense of reciprocity, but because they were raised as leaders. Volunteers emphasize the importance of embedded knowledge and belonging to the community over professional expertise and neutral distance; they perceive their activities as a long-term commitment rather than as a response to a crisis and blur the lines between providers and beneficiaries by designating beneficiary children as the volunteer leaders of tomorrow. Thus, my research shows that while their approach to care is influenced by Islamic sensibilities and that

Islam remains one of the many moral rubrics, i.e., in considering orphans an especially important part of their beneficiaries, religion is not the primary motivation in this care work.

Chapter 4, "Becoming Entangled with the Humanitarian Governance of the Syrian Refugee Crisis," analyzes the discordant discourses on the partnerships between INGOs managing the Syrian refugee crisis and al-Ḥayāh, as an association in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. I demonstrate that both the Ministry of Social Development workers as well as the INGO workers I interviewed interpreted the Syrian refugee crisis as a development opportunity for Jordan and perceived the partnerships between INGOs and local associations one which benefited both Jordan and Syrian refugees.

In contrast, al-Ḥayāh volunteers have their own interpretations and concerns about their relationships with INGOs. As a youth association at odds with the general *'amal fityanī* circles and as one that depends on individual donations, they interpreted their own entanglement with this sector as a natural result of their relationship building efforts. As opposed to the Ministry and the INGOs which sees them as part of local associations in need for capacity building and professionalization, al-Ḥayāh volunteers claim an authentic expertise by virtue of their long-term engagement in the refugee camps and see the INGOs as needing this expertise. While INGO workers and authorities in the Ministry of Social Development largely questioned the local associations' capacities of addressing the needs of the communities; referring to their perceived lack of professionalism, my interlocutors in the associations of *'amal fityanī* were cynical of the core structure of foreign aid driven projects.

Finally, despite the erasure of the "Palestinian refugee camp" in the conceptualizations of the Ministry and the INGOs which are working with al-Ḥayāh, I demonstrate that the camp, as a Palestinian space of displacement and as the nucleus of young volunteers' efforts, carries a sense

of transgressing the discourse of "local associations." As volunteers' strategies for keeping the spirit of their association alive demonstrate, the refugee camp remains a significant space of aspiration for this generation of Palestinian refugee youth.

Chapter 1: Contentious Repertoires of Refugee Care and the Origins of 'Boys Work' ('*amal fityani*')

> Every period of '*amal fityanī* is connected to the politics of the time. Its tools may change a little as the political atmosphere changes. The aim is always the same: To create a cultured and conscious generation of Palestinian refugees in the camps.

The words above belong to Omar, a 30-year-old volunteer from Irbid camp, whom I met on the third day of the Covid-19 restrictions in a youth gathering to dispel our boredom over Zoom in Jordan. Except for Omar, I knew every other young man from the summer camp. In that conversation, I learned that it was the first summer that Omer had not participated over the last eight years because of his work. When he heard about my research, he and I spent hours talking about many issues, including the early summer camps, his volunteer work, his childhood in the Irbid camp, different Palestinian volunteers he had met over time, his understanding of the Palestinian cause etc. I shared the sentences above since I believe they carry two significant observations about *'amal fityanī*: its connection to politics of the time and its somewhat flexible tools. The former situates this repertoire of care in a complex relationship with the political events in Jordan and the region at large, and the latter suggests that there are somewhat stable tools at the core of this voluntary engagement.

I argue that the practices of care provided by volunteers in Palestinian refugee camps constitute a repertoire, a framework of engagement, in offering both possibilities and constraints for young refugees. By using the term repertoire, I mean Charles Tilly's conceptualization pertaining to social movements in France referenced above (1986). As Omar suggests, because of the agendas of *'amal fityanī*'s participants and the structural constraints they face, this repertoire also carries in itself the potential for innovation, negotiation, and reinterpretation.

Volunteers today describe *'amal fityanī* as a form of voluntary developmental care towards children of the refugee camps, even though what development means remain ambiguous

and dependent upon what different volunteer groups emphasize in the activities they organize in their own camp institutions. During my fieldwork, I detected two broad trends in the interpretation of this understanding of development, each discursively or/and practically prioritizing either humanitarian or nationalistic logics. Some volunteers prioritize activities to increase children's self-esteem and teach them social and/or marketable skills, arguing that by virtue of being refugees, these children are entitled to opportunities to develop themselves and improve their life-conditions in the refugee camps. Others put more emphasis on nationalist educational activities, like teaching the stories of Palestinian martyrs and events related to Palestinian displacement, with the belief in the value of creating a Palestinian refugee generation that is knowledgeable about the Palestinian cause, which I call a nationalist-developmental logic. As I discuss in Chapter 4, regardless of this prioritization, providing children with sociocultural education, values of community service, and a sense of dignity remain important aspects of this work.

As volunteers, these young men and, to a lesser extent, women, claim ownership of this repertoire of care and perceive it as a specific refugee-led response to Palestinian displacement that are present in the Palestinian refugee camps. While doing this they openly take inspiration of the methods and practices they learned from earlier generations of volunteers and place themselves within a broader history of refugee-led responses to Palestinian displacement. Despite this claim of ownership, however, most young refugees lack any detailed information on exactly when and how *'amal fityanī* emerged as a form of voluntary care. Some situate its beginnings prior to the 1970 Black September events, others locate them afterwards. The period between the late 1960s and early 1970s, which my interlocutors believe gave birth to *'amal fityanī*, was a particularly tumultuous one, in which major events in the history of the region and

Palestinians took place: A new wave of Palestinian refugees came to Jordan after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Jordanian army fought together with the Palestinian Liberation movement against IDF soldiers in the Karameh war in 1968, and a political nationalist movement under the leadership of the PLO started in Jordan and ended in 1970 with the events of Black September. Black September refers to the period of armed clashes between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Jordanian army that ended with the PLO's military apparatus' expulsion from Jordan (see Cobban 1984' Sayigh 1997).

During this time, refugee camps became important sites for PLO's mass mobilization and camps like Baqāʾ, Ḥusayn and Weḥdāt became spaces of heightened political activity (Randa 1999; Hart 2008; Achilli 2015). In my interviews and everyday conversations, the refugee volunteer youth generally claimed that their elders refused to talk about this period and argued that Black September, even today, is a politically taboo topic. Despite lacking a detailed knowledge on the emergence of *'amal fityanī*, however, my interlocutors provided two forceful and exclusionary narratives on its origins, some arguing that the first summer camp for children was undertaken by YMCA, and the others claiming that it was the PLO who came up with the idea of organizing Palestinian refugee children.

The dominant narrative attributes *'amal fityanī*'s origins to a cooperative YMCA and UNRWA summer camp event in the early 1970s and argues that from its inception, boys' work was a humanitarian endeavor that was based on the volunteer labor of Palestinian refugees themselves. In addition to this mainstream version of the narrative, there were a few of those who argued that it was actually the PLO who came up with the idea of a summer camp for Palestinian refugee camp children, and that it did so years before the YMCA. According to these interlocutors, the reasons for the widespread acceptance of the mainstream narrative were either

related to fear from state persecution or the ideological positions of the volunteer leaders who today feel affinity to Palestinian factions besides the PLO. It was these interlocutors' narratives that led me to investigate the archives concerning the PLO's program for children called "Lion Cubs and Flowers" and the YMCA's summer camp program.

In the upcoming sections, I demonstrate the ways in which Palestinian refugee volunteers remember the origins of this repertoire and frame it within their current context of long-term displacement and receding international humanitarian aid. I demonstrate that those volunteers who emphasize the YMCA narrative look at these origins through a cynical lens through which they evaluate current foreign-funded humanitarian projects of the INGOs operating in the kingdom (see Ch. 5). They portray the YMCA as a humanitarian organization which had a politically disinterested, top-down, and short-term agenda for Palestinian refugees. My analysis of the correspondences among the YMCA staff, on the other hand, shows that, despite having their own goals in different time periods (pre 1948 war, between 1948-1967, after 1967), YMCA's conceptions of the summer camp project was neither short-term nor top-down. Moreover, these correspondences reflect that some of the YMCA officers were quite supportive of Palestinian refugees' right of return.

Among those interlocutors who remembered the PLO's mobilization of Palestinian refugee children during the Lion cubs and Flowers movement, however, only a few draw connections between today's voluntary practices and those early gatherings. They argue that Lion Cubs and Flowers was very similar to what volunteers call *'amal fityanī* today, with one key difference being that the Lion Cubs were given armed training, and they think that the credit for this repertoire of care should partially be given to the PLO, instead of an external humanitarian organization like the YMCA who only came later. For most others, however, Lion

Cubs and Flowers were either completely forgotten or remembered purely as a militaristic movement. Secondary literature on the history of the Palestinian movement in Jordan, distinct from these memories, demonstrate that in addition to armed training, PLO was quite engaged in social provision, aid, and social participation. According to al-Husseini (2015), social participation in the refugee camps in Jordan was boosted through PLO's discourse of self-determination and was indigenously enhanced through voluntary committees during this time (2015). In his comprehensive history of the Palestinian national movement, Sayigh (1997) situates the Lion Cubs and Flowers within the context of the statist approach of the PLO to social provision, along with permanent clinics, social work centers and emergency service in Jordan and emphasizes the social provision programs of the Fatah leadership in addition to its political programs at the time. For my young interlocutors, however, who grew up with a wall of silence on this period of political mass mobilization, the PLO's general social and humanitarian endeavors as well as those in connection to Lion Cubs and Flowers seemed to largely have fallen out of memory.

In this chapter, I first analyze the rituals connected to *'amal fityanī* that volunteers attribute to the early summer camps. Then, through an analysis of the YMCA archives, I demonstrate how in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab Israeli war, a political organization (the PLO) and a Christian humanitarian association (the YMCA) envisioned development in quite similar ways, mobilized similar repertoires of engagement towards the Palestinian refugee children and youth in the camps of Jordan, and were aware of each other's activities. Additionally, I provide an incomplete, yet important study of the historical memory of ' *'amal fityanī* in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan by juxtaposing its ritualized performances, young refugees' narratives, and YMCA archival documents. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a discussion on what these

ways of remembering that make it so impossible to imagine the YMCA and the PLO engaging in similar repertoires may tell us about how young refugees position themselves in their histories of displacement, their relationship to the past, and conceptions of foreign aid today.

1. From the Past to the Present: Rituals of *'amal fityanī*

This section investigates the summer camp rituals of *'amal fityanī* that are practiced across the institutions of Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan. Volunteers believe that these rituals came from the first summer camp and were transmitted from one generation to another. Even though the origins of this repertoire remain contested, it is driven by the values and logic of community service, self-discipline, bodily health, and sociocultural education.

In the summer of 2019, I participated in the annual summer camp that took place at the UNRWA Nour College of Amman as a supervisor of Turkish Language Club for twenty-three days. The camp was organized by a Charity Association in the Baqāʾ camp in cooperation with the UNRWA, and it hosted 350 children and 105 volunteers from Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan, Lebanon, and Gaza, in addition to Palestinian refugee orphans, who had been displaced during the recent war in Syria and brought by the social workers in the UNRWA Jordan Field. Until my participation, I conducted my fieldwork mainly in and around the social network of a Charity and Development Association in al-Naṣr camp, which is where I first heard the term *'amal fityanī*, and spent time observing and participating its activities. An interlocutor from this social network, a young man in his early 30s, Saber, advised me to participate in the summer camp since he, like many others, believed that this volunteer work came from the practices that take place in this annual event.

While the summer camp has a wider participation encompassing children and volunteers from other Palestinian diaspora communities, as opposed to the individual associations which

mainly serve their own camp communities; having had volunteered in al-Naṣr camp for almost a year, I immediately felt that I was in a familiar place: during the morning and evening ritual gatherings, I had the bodily knowledge of where to stand, what to do, and when during the rituals at the beginning and end of each day; I knew the most popular chants and applauses by heart; I was familiar with some of the songs that were played in the evening parties; and I knew the roles of different volunteers – helpers, guides and supervisors. The various clubs offered by individual volunteers notwithstanding; the ritualistic framework within which the activities took place were almost the same as the Friday programs of the associations I had visited in Ḥusayn, Muḥaṭṭah, al-Naṣr and Baqāʾ camps.

Summer camp starts and ends each day with volunteers gathering in the *seria*, a large circle that the children and volunteers created in an allocated open-space area of the Amman Training Center. To compose the circle, each group of children walks around the area and follows his or her guide. Depending on the "name of the day," the leader of the day (a female or male guide; *Murshid* or *Murshida*), invites children from his/her group to share a poem or words of wisdom about this theme. During the *seria*, children and volunteers are expected to demonstrate discipline and follow the cues of the leader of the day. After the morning *seria*, each group creates a small project related to the name of the day with the help of their guides and a committee from the camp management visits these groups to evaluate the presentations the children created. These themes are picked by the leader of the day and are either abstract ideas like justice, freedom, happiness, or themes with a resonance with Palestine like "Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine." During the *seria*, the children are prompted by the leader of the day to utter chants accompanied by rhythmic applauses called "return" and "dignity."

Like me, the volunteers and children knew most of these chants and the rhythms of the applauses by heart since they had been performing them in their own associations in the refugee camps. Two of the most repeated chants were “The son (or child) of the camp” and “Silence is shame.” While the first chant’s origins are unknown, the second one draws on a poem by the Yemeni poet Abdul Aziz Al-Maqaleh:

I am the son of the camp, I am the son of the revolution and the public, Tomorrow when I grow up I will liberate Palestine	Silence is shame, Fear is shame, Who are we? Lovers of the day, We live, We love, We quarrel with the ghosts, We live in waiting.

Through the everyday repetition of the rituals in *seria* throughout the summer camp, children who come from different diaspora spaces (Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, West Bank, and Syria) come together in a unified Palestinian refugee camp identity. Children who grow and become volunteers in their own camp institutions sustain the continuity of these rituals and pass on the chants and applauses they learned from their volunteer leaders.

Image 2: *Seria* ground prepared by summer camp volunteers

Despite their often nationalist and space-driven (the refugee camp) content, by virtue of being part of a broader repertoire, the meanings attached to rituals remain subject to negotiation and reinterpretation by their participants. This, however, does not mean that these negotiations and reinterpretations happen in an array of infinite possibilities, but rather that the participants attach meanings to them in accordance with the values of the repertoire. For many volunteers I interviewed throughout my fieldwork, their first time being the leader of the day, for example, is a significant moment of self-esteem and developing character in their personal lives. Other volunteers perceive the performances in the *seria* as ice-breaking tools through which many children find the space to release their energies in a somewhat disciplined way, so that they can focus on the programs that follow the *seria* and learn photography, theater, languages, music, or other skills. For still others, the *seria* is simply seen as a tradition, an available practice framing voluntary engagement with the children in the Palestinian refugee camps, a ritual they enjoyed when they were children and decided to continue. And finally, for those who mobilize the most nationalist interpretations, these rituals are tools to resist the colonization of memory, reminding the children who were born in the diaspora of their Palestinianness, claims to land, right of return, and the importance of not forgetting about the Palestinian cause.

These interpretations like self-esteem and character building, discipline, tradition, or resisting the colonization of memory also take their meanings in relation to the trainings provided by the management of the summer camp. As volunteers of the summer camp, in the beginning, we went through a four-day training period which the volunteers believed to be fundamental to create a successful and joyful camp experience for children that would make them become cultured, conscious, and high in self-esteem. These trainings utilized two discourses simultaneously to mobilize the volunteers in their practices. While one discourse

claimed that volunteers were to provide a humanitarian care for a universal refugee child who was entitled to this care by virtue of being a refugee; the other depicted the children as the orphans of the homeland who should be cared for by patriotic volunteers.

To provide this humanitarian care, we received trainings on first aid; prevention of verbal, physical and emotional of violence; sexual harassment; time management; small and educational games for unplanned time slots; how to behave towards children with behavioral difficulties identified by social workers; how to welcome the children to the summer camp to reduce their initial anxieties about leaving their families; and the specific duties of supervisors and guides. The programs included, among other things, foreign language education (English, French, Spanish and Turkish), music, theater and poetry trainings, national history, horse riding, and computer training. In addition to these educational activities, the summer camp also organized fun and educational trips to cultural sites in Jordan such as the Children's Museum and evening events with music, theater, and poetry performances. Volunteers also perceived these trips and evening events as offering the refugee child an opportunity to experience spaces outside of his or her impoverished surroundings in the refugee camp.

The very same trainings that designated a universal refugee child as an object of humanitarian care also discursively designated these children as the orphans of the homeland under the care of patriotic volunteers. This was also a strategy to differentiate this form of voluntary care from the others that are available in the kingdom. Many young people in Jordan volunteer in various spheres; in their universities, during religious occasions, in charitable associations perceived as Islamic, as well as in the INGO sector. Thus, the organizers of the summer camp strive to provide an alternative understanding of camp volunteering compared to

its competitors. One of the volunteers in the management of the camp finalized his presentation on the rules of conduct with the following words:

> Loving children, religious conviction, having a desire to do *khayr* (charity) are important but not enough. These are the children of our country. We need to aim for success. The child should leave the summer camp with self-confidence and gaining new skills. This is a humanitarian and national undertaking!

In addition to this active cultivation of patriotic sensibility through these trainings, the summer camp's evening festivities are also infused with an affect of celebrating Palestinian and Arab cultural and artistic traditions. The campsite, the Nour College of UNRWA, is already a campus filled with Palestinian symbolism with graffiti and drawings on its walls. Additionally, the themes of many of the evening events, whether theater plays, musical performances, poetry readings, or quiz shows, are related to Palestinian culture and heritage. It is within this highly affective Palestinian space that the participants of the summer camp, both children and volunteers, establish friendships across refugee camps in Jordan and elsewhere.

2. The Mainstream Narrative: *'amal fityanī* originating from the YMCA

The mainstream narrative on the history of the summer camp states that YMCA and UNRWA initiated a summer camp for the orphan refugee children in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan in 1973. This is also the narrative propagated by the association in the Baqāʾ refugee camp, which has been organizing the summer camp in cooperation with the UNRWA since 2006, three years after YMCA pulled out from the project. Most volunteers I met during the summer camp I participated in 2019 and in various associations in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan see YMCA and UNRWA as the originators of the annual summer camp and thus *'amal fityanī* in Jordan.

When asked, most young volunteers' knowledge of and interest in the discussions on the origins of the *'amal fityanī* were limited. Many of them had learned this repertoire of care in their

own childhood when they were visiting the associations in their respective refugee camps and grew up to be volunteers themselves. Growing up at a time when UNRWA services for Palestinian refugees had already diminished and most INGOs focused on other refugees fleeing conflict in Iraq and Syria, they believed that they were no longer on the radar of the international humanitarian regime. In my own opinion, UNRWA's diminishing economic support to Palestinian refugees in general and the annual summer camp in particular was proof of the humanitarian neglect they were facing.

Most youth volunteers seem to have only heard about the YMCA through the summer camp project. They interpreted the YMCA's eventual disengagement from this project as a manifestation of a general trend they observed in the INGOs that flourished in the aftermath of the Syrian crisis. Among *'amal fityanī* volunteers, there were also youth who had reluctantly gotten entangled with the INGOs, which gave them an even more cynical perspective on the humanitarian care international organizations provided (see Chapter 5). They argued that by conducting short-term, top-down projects all over the world, by running from one refugee crisis to the other, and by trying to fulfill the requirements of a numbers game to receive funds, INGOs only perpetuated their own existence instead of creating real qualitative change in the lives of their beneficiaries. Thus, interpreting the past from their present circumstances of international humanitarian neglect, and perceiving YMCA as just one more INGO working in Jordan today, they did not find the YMCA's initial involvement in the summer camp project nor its eventual disengagement as out of the ordinary. As one volunteer from al-Naṣr camp once put it: "International actors come and go, but we refugees stay and work for the camps."

Despite their general grim view on international humanitarianism, what they heard from their volunteer leaders about the YMCA summer camps seemed to have fostered a positive

image of these early summer camps. They usually narrated the early YMCA-UNRWA cooperation as a nostalgic golden age in terms of two issues. They had heard that with the financial support of the YMCA and a stronger UNRWA, the camp conditions were better overall. They recounted how the UNRWA used to provide some monetary aid, camp space, and the buses for outside events for the summer camp in the past, yet in 2014, the monetary aid was cut, and in 2016, so were the buses. Moreover, they believed that the volunteer leadership of *'amal fityanī* had been more united at that time. First, the institutional sphere of *'amal fityanī* was limited to the Youth Club of each refugee camp, and all the volunteer groups from all the Youth Clubs would participate with the children in the YMCA summer camp. Second, the YMCA's institutional sphere expanded to charity associations, and at the same time, the clubs got fragmented. Some associations and Youth Clubs in the camps no longer participate in the annual summer camp, which is seen as the continuation of the YMCA's program, and organize their own summer camps instead.

During this time, different youth groups organized and/or participated in different summer camp events depending on many factors, including ideological differences emerging from Palestinian political factionalism, personality clashes, or different understandings of best practices. For example, two of my interlocutors, both young men in their early thirties, told me that ideological rifts took place during the First Intifada (1987-1993), and later during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The previous one, purportedly, was a result of Yasser Arafat's decision on recognizing Israel' right to exist. One of these interlocutors argued that this rift was reflected in the popular chants of the period, and gave me two exemplary chants, which were no longer uttered in the summer camp, but still used in some of the institutions of the Palestinian refugee

camps. During the First intifada, some youth groups sided with Arafat's decision, while the others stood against it and this rift was exemplified in the following chants:

In one hand an olive branch, In the other Kalashnikov, Revolutionaries until the end	The blood of the martyrs is asking my blood Why did you accept the peaceful solution? We don't want speeches and poems

These chants are known as "Olive Branch" and "The Blood of the Martyrs," respectively. The first chant refers to Arafat's UN speech of 1974, which he joined holding an olive branch in one hand and a rifle on the other, signifying that extending an olive branch, universally regarded as a symbol of peace, did not cancel the revolutionary fervor of the Palestinian movement. The second chant, on the other hand, was a response to the peace process and directly criticized Arafat. This interlocutor also noted that the UNRWA silenced the recitation of both these chants in the last decade, arguing that they did not fit its neutrality principle.

The second rift, which took place in the 1990s and 2000s, developed from *Salafis* organizing their own summer camps and with individuals affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, who dominated the management of many of the Youth Clubs, boycotting the summer camp because of its gender-mixed participation. Even those volunteers who were uninterested in the roots of these rifts lamented the loss of unity in the *'amal fityanī* circles.

For me, the question remained: How did practices of care of a yearly summer camp event become the basis for a repertoire of yearlong engagement with children in the institutions of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan until today? When I participated in the summer camp as a Turkish language supervisor, a young volunteer from Talbiyah camp who was a theater supervisor in the summer camp introduced me to a man in his late 70s, Abu Ahmad, calling him "the founder of *'amal fityanī*. Abu Ahmad's account on how the boys' committees got established in the Youth Clubs of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan demonstrates how as a

Palestinian refugee himself and as a worker in UNRWA, he and his colleagues mobilized their individual efforts to transform a twenty-odd days summer camp to a yearlong effort through which older generations could teach new generations practices to engage with the children in the Palestinian refugee camps.

Originally from Jaffa and himself a refugee, most of Abu Ahmed's life is closely connected to the UNRWA. He had been an UNRWA student counselor throughout his career, first in the Nour (Amman Training Center) and then at Wadi Seer College–both vocational schools of UNRWA still operating in Amman. He met his wife, who was also an UNRWA worker, during these years, and together with their three children they had lived in the teacher housing of these colleges until retirement. Abu Ahmed told me that in 1973, a volunteer named Paczkowski[16] from YMCA Jerusalem came to Nour College and shared with him YMCA's intentions for organizing a yearly summer camp for the Palestinian refugee orphans in Jordan in cooperation with UNRWA. A Palestinian YMCA member from Haifa and an expert from Lebanon, who had some experience in organizing summer camps for children in Gaza and West Bank, later joined this person. By virtue of his position as a student councilor in the Nour College, Abu Ahmed became the contact person for this project. After a couple of pilot camps between 1973 and 1976 in a camping area in Ajloun, a clear division of labor was established between the YMCA and the UNRWA. The YMCA was training the volunteer leaders and supporting the summer camp economically, while the UNRWA was providing the camp space (the Nour College) and buses for the transportation of children and volunteers.

[16] Harry Brunger dedicates Sarah Graham Brown's "The Palestinian Situation" (1989) to the same Tadeusz Packowski. Here, we learn that Packowski himself was a Polish refugee who was part of the Polish resistance against the Nazi occupation while he was involved in the youth Department of the Polish YMCA. He was captured by the German Army and put in a labor battalion in the coalmines of Alsace-Lorraine.

Abu Ahmed told me that together with this team, they decided to choose orphans who lost their fathers but were still living with their mothers; something they thought would give time for the mother of the child to visit her relatives in West Bank while the child participated in the summer camp for over twenty days. However, soon they realized that the duration of the summer camp was insufficient for the humanitarian goals that they had in mind. Abu Ahmed told me that they wanted to make sure that the refugee children were provided with necessary nutrition, learned habits of cleanliness, and had a space to improve their talents through theater, science, music and sports programs. Moreover, according to him, since each child was a Palestinian refugee, he or she should learn his heritage and history, so a "*baramij watani,*" a national program was a must. Thus, at least according to Abu Ahmed, almost from its inception, *'amal fityanī* was a humanitarian project that aimed to respond both to urgent and expanding social needs of the orphan children in the Palestinian refugee camps.

Abu Ahmed narrated that creating committees in the ten official and three unofficial refugee camps in Jordan took place in different stages, with a lot of interpersonal negotiations and turning points:

> We first took our students from Nour who studied arts, sports, and English to help the children in the camps in their school and make activities with them on Fridays. We gave them trainings on leadership and child psychology. I used to go to the Youth Clubs of Weḥdāt and Baqāʾ, for example. The clubs were very poor, we used to help them, we would bring them a little bit of sports equipment from YMCA, and I swear sometimes we would give them money from the college itself. So that in return, we could make the Clubs let the orphans come on Fridays. In the beginning, UNRWA's social services bring the orphans from the official refugee camps for the summer camp. Then, over the years, once boys' committees got established in the Youth Clubs, they started to have their own volunteers who used to be orphans in the summer camp. This was a moment of realization for me. We noticed that those children who used to be participants of the summer camp became volunteers in the Youth Clubs of their camps and they still wanted to come to the summer camp despite being over sixteen. They knew the sufferings of the refugee camps; the pain of being an orphan and they loved the summer camp. Then, we said, why are we not making the volunteers of the summer camp out of these people who used to be children!

Abu Ahmed's narrative demonstrates the negotiation process through which boys' committees were introduced in the Youth Clubs, and how an endeavor initiated by humanitarian

workers with certain kinds of expertise, in time, passed to the refugees who had once been beneficiaries themselves.

This narrative also clarifies how young refugee volunteers in different Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan claim ownership of what they define as *'amal fityanī*. Today's volunteers have no personal connection to the early years of the summer camp or the initial efforts to create the boys' committees in their refugee camps. They only know their own volunteer leaders who are Palestinian refugees most of whom grew up in refugee camps rather than workers from the UNRWA or YMCA. These men, and to a certain extent women, became volunteers in these camps and continue to take the framework of the YMCA initiated-summer camp as a repertoire. They thus perpetuate the narrative that *'amal fityanī* is first and foremost a humanitarian endeavor that was carried out by Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

Counter-Narrative: The Legacy of the Summer Camp comes from the PLO

This section describes the counter narrative that designates the summer camp project in its inception as first and foremost a political project for national liberation. According to this narrative, it was not the humanitarian actors like UNRWA or YMCA which came up with the idea of instituting a summer camp for children; rather, it was the PLO who explicitly designed the summer camp as part of their program for national mobilization.

After the summer camp of 2019, a volunteer in one of the associations in the Baqāʾ camp directed my attention to an article in an electronic journal named *Metras* (Shukayri 2019), which presented a history of the summer camp since 1973 based on interviews with certain volunteer leaders who were active in the orphan committees during the 1980s and 1990s. Among other details, this article emphasized the early role of the YMCA and UNRWA in starting the summer camp and argued that the 1993 Oslo Accords was the watershed event in its history because of

two subsequent developments. First, the YMCA administration started to dissociate from the summer camp over political disagreements, as the leaders of the orphan committees in the camps emphasized mobilizing and raising awareness on national issues. Second, while this disassociation was taking place, another actor, the PLO, took an interest in the summer camp and prepared an alternative summer camp in 1994 that was going to take place during the same time as the original summer camp. According to this narrative, even though the PLO was able to attract some of the volunteers in the original summer camp by paying them for their work, this initiative failed after two summers.

After translating this article, I met one of my closest interlocutors, Firas, in a café in downtown Amman. Firas has lived all his life in a neighborhood at the vicinity of the al-Naṣr camp and was a former volunteer in its Youth Club between 2011 and 2014. His two sisters were also volunteering with me in an association in the same refugee camp. I shared the article with him and asked him whether he had heard anything about YMCA's disassociation being related to political disagreements during the Oslo Accords. He did not have an answer to my question, but he smiled meaningfully and contested the core premise of the article, and therefore, what I knew so far on the origins of *'amal fityanī*:

> So, this person claims that YMCA and UNRWA created the summer camp in 1973. What about the camps before 1973? Why doesn't he mention those? Burcu can you really believe that the PLO has nothing to do with the summer camp in the beginning and they just try to come and steal "the work" in 1994?

Firas went on to explain that it was actually the PLO who started the summer camps for Palestinian children in late 1960s, and that he heard that Arafat himself was a guest at one of them. According to this story, the summer camps were part of the training of the [Arabic*: ashbal u zahrat*] "Lion Cubs and Flowers movement" of Fatah long before YMCA started to do any kind of activity or camps for children in the refugee camps and came to an end with the Black September of 1970.

In my interviews with most of my interlocutors in different camps, young volunteers often complained that the older generations refrained from talking about the Black September because of its politically sensitive nature. That is why Firas claimed to be sympathetic to the journalist's decision to silence this taboo period, but he thought it was unfair of him to suggest that the PLO tried to steal the summer camp project in 1994, since it was the PLO who created the summer camps in the first place. Perusing the names of the volunteer leaders who the journalist interviewed one more time, he told me that the political views of all these people were in conflict with Fatah, which he interpreted to mean that the journalist was probably misled by them.

With Firas' help, I met three volunteer leaders in their mid-60s, all of them sympathetic to Fatah, two in the Youth Club of Baqāʾ camp and one in Ḥusayn camp. They all told me that the earliest summer camps were organized by the PLO to mobilize an armed struggle for liberating Palestine. Another volunteer in his late 30s, Omar, who had spent his childhood in the Youth Club of Irbid camp, also argued that it was the PLO who had initiated the early summer camps long before the YMCA and UNRWA. Despite describing himself as a pan-Arabist and emphasizing that he had no sympathies for an "Oslo-signing Arafat," he argued that it would still be unfair to deny Arafat's historical role in instituting a love for volunteering for children and give the whole credit to an "external YMCA or a humanitarian organization like UNRWA." According to this, the first summer camp was held in 1969 in Beirut, Lebanon; the second in 1970 in Ajloun, Jordan, and the third in 1971 back in Beirut because of the "September events" in Jordan, and initially it had nothing to do with orphans. Only after the defeat of the Black September, with the PLO no longer funding the summer camp, did a PLO-sympathizer suggest the idea to the YMCA to make the summer camp in Jordan. According to Omar, with Jordanian

state growing increasingly suspicious of Palestinian refugee activities, they introduced the terminology of "orphans" so that "the intelligence doesn't intervene with these summer camps."

Both Firas and Omar, despite having different ideological positions, directed my attention to what they saw as similarities between the YMCA summer camp and what they had heard about the PLO's Lion Cubs and Flowers. Omar even suggested that both the YMCA summer camps and Lion Cubs and Flowers had the same goals, with one difference:

> A humanitarian and developmental goal: the creation of a generation of Palestinians that is conscious and cultured. And a nationalist goal: Ben Gurion said: "The old will die and the young will forget." It is not about giving them bread, tomatoes, cheese… The old had died, but we make sure the young won't forget. The only difference was the previous one also had military training. They just changed the name *ashbal* (lion cubs) to *fityan* (boys), and even kept the name of the girls as *zahrat* (flowers).

The reason that Omar mentions "bread, tomatoes, and cheese" above is to distinguish *'amal fityanī*'s goals from Islamic charity work, which he believes brought an end to YMCA summer camps. He believed that the reason that YMCA stopped funding the summer camps in 2002 was neither the political disagreements among the Palestinian volunteers in Jordan and the American YMCA staff as the journalist had suggested, nor the increasing budgetary concerns as Abu Ahmed suggested to me. According to him, it was because once the Muslim Brotherhood gained dominance in many of the Youth Clubs in the 2000s and the *Salafis* movements had established their own institutions in the refugee camps, these institutions stopped sending children to the YMCA summer camps.

Unlike Firas and Omar, however, most of my interlocutors either had no memory of "Lion Cubs and Flowers" or drew no connections between *'amal fityanī* and Lion Cubs and Flowers. Whenever I introduced the word *ashbal* (cubs) in my interviews, most of my young interlocutors told me they hadn't heard of this term at all. Some of those who had heard the term argued that it was only a military organization of the PLO at the time of political mobilization and was thus completely different from the summer camps for children as well as from their

work in the refugee camp institutions. Still, some volunteer leaders I met throughout my fieldwork expressed discomfort when I asked them about "Lion Cubs and Flowers," and a few even called me a troublemaker for opening a politically taboo subject.

4. '*Amal fityanī* in the YMCA Archives and in a PLO Magazine

In this section, I briefly present the process through which the YMCA started its summer camp for Palestinian refugees in Amman in three phases. Wars, changing authorities and geographic boundaries, have influenced YMCA's presence and activities in the region. The first phase starts briefly in the late 19th century during the end of Ottoman rule with the 1948 war and the division of the political landscape of the city of Jerusalem, during which the YMCA in Jerusalem worked with the three faiths in the region. In the second phase, starting with the 1948 war, the YMCA staff showed an interest in instituting what they call "boys' work" in the East Bank of Jordan with the aim of bolstering the Palestinian refugees' self-dependency, and commitment to "a democratic group life" in the face of a threat from communism during the 1950s. And in the final phase, after the 1967 war, the YMCA started to show an interest in instituting boys' work in Amman.

The correspondence of this last period shows that, despite what my interlocutors remembered, YMCA did start its activities in the refugee camps of the East Bank of Jordan years before Black September. They also indicate that during the politically tumultuous time of Black September, both the YMCA and the PLO were interested in cultivating volunteer work among young men in the refugee camps, and not only were they well aware of each other's activities, but also their programs for refugee children had important similarities.

A*) Before the 1948 war: YMCA Building in Jerusalem serving three faiths*

The YMCA's efforts in Amman were precipitated by earlier activities in Palestine in the 19th century during the Ottoman Empire. Like other Christian organizations, YMCAs of the United States, Canada, and the Great Britain attached religious significance to the city of Jerusalem (Graham-Brown 1989). World War I caused the YMCA to suspend its activities in Palestine, which only resumed with the British occupation in 1917.[17] Graham-Brown argues that in the 1930s, YMCA's Archibald Clinton Harte firmly believed in working with the people of three faiths in Jerusalem, even though this approach faced suspicion from "several quarters," even rejection "by sections of the Palestinian Arab community, particularly by Muslims, as being both Christian and, more importantly, foreign-controlled and financed" (1989, 96). Additionally, during this period, Young Men's Muslim Associations; scouts' groups and other youth organizations by Muslim and Jewish youths were established in reaction to the YMCAs (ibid.). Despite these developments, YMCA continued to work with all groups during this period, and by 1944, two thirds of its members were Christian, one sixth Jewish, and one-sixth Muslims.

B) The 1948 war and the division of Jerusalem

With the 1948 war and its accompanying divisions in the political landscape of Jerusalem, the YMCA building remained on the Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem. To continue to work both with "the Christian and Muslim communities" in the Jordanian Jerusalem area, the YMCA began building an additional facility.

A project proposal from 1953 written to facilitate funding for this new building in Jordan-sector of Jerusalem illuminates how much boys were seen as primary beneficiaries of this new building. This proposal portrays a program for boys as a "desperate need," and explains the

[17] Records of YMCA International Work in Palestine and Israel. Kautz Family YMCA Archives. University of Minnesota. https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/7/resources/929 Accessed June 29, 2020.

reasons for this need in detail.[18] According to the proposal, many of these boys' families were refugees from other parts of Palestine and their hopes for the future were "rudely shattered by war." They were living in "crowded home conditions without play space" and "with limited opportunities of cultural growth." Their families were living with "marginal incomes" forcing many boys to seek early employment. YMCA believes that "methods of Association work which have proved successful in other countries can contribute to the development of a more abundant life for the boys of Jordan Jerusalem" and provide them with "the democratic group life essential for the development of resourcefulness and democratic practices." The proposal also includes an appendix that describes this YMCA program for boys in twelve bullet points. In addition to "create a sense of belonging to a world community," this program aims "to lead boys to accept appropriate responsibility within the community and learn how to take leadership in democratic society" and "to develop sound attitudes, fundamental skills, and habits of mental and physical health."

During this period, other correspondences among YMCA staff members indicate how much these ideals around "democratic society" were formulated in opposition to communism. Typical of the time is an extensive fourteen-page letter, written by a certain A D. F. McCelland and detailing the important role that YMCA should play in the Palestinian landscape after the division of Jerusalem.[19] Starting his letter by stating that the displacement of 850,000 Arab refugees is the "overwhelming problem of the Mideast," McCelland quotes the position of Count Bernadotte, the assassinated UN Security Council mediator:

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[18] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 19)*. 1952 - 1967. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives., pp 82-84 umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:40427 Accessed 04 Jun 2020.

[19] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 18)*. 1952 - 1966. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:60877 Accessed 22 Sep 2021.

> "It would be an offense against the principles of elementary Justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes, while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine."[20]

In addition to strongly arguing for the refugees' return, McClelland also shares his belief in the delicate yet important position of the YMCA having the opportunity of "program of service from a people to a people in the creation of understanding and good will." Finally, he concludes his letter by commenting on the demographic and political situation in Nazareth and draws connections between "the sense of injustice" Palestinians have experienced and the appeal of communism among them:

> In the area the land of Arab refugees had been confiscated and assigned to Jewish immigrants. Many landholders still in Israel cannot use their land as the Government custodian of Arab property took over and much of the land is being used to establish villages for immigrants. Some of the Arab have been declared closed to Arabs as 'security zones.' Jewish immigrants have been given the use of former Arab houses at very nominal rents. These facts explain further the bitterness, the sense of injustice mentioned in the early section of this letter and also the reason why an increasing number of Arabs such as George Kawar - would be happy to emigrate to some other country… <…> The problems due to hasty and ill-conceived partition will be with us for a long time to come. What will be the judgment of God on our country for our inglorious part in this sorry business? Is it any wonder that Communism is said to be making considerable headway in the area?

Later, in 1959, in a proposal penned by Paul B. Anderson to build a permanent YMCA in Jordanian Jerusalem, in addition to an emphasis on the "defeatist, depressed and demoralized spirit of the Palestinian Arab youth" that should be attended by the YMCA in "Christian spirit," the threat of communism still looms at large.[21] Emphasizing that "donating money to a YMCA would recognize the very great importance the Palestine Arabs place on the humanitarian need for bringing up their youth," he finishes his proposal by listing the dangers of failing to build this building:

> "A YMCA will stand as continual reminder of the Christian way of life which does not proselytize, a symbol of Western civilization and more important a center where the youth of the city may gather daily in

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[20] Ibid.

[21] East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 20). 1952 - 1968. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:55746 Accessed 22 Sep 2021.

> healthful activities. Youth will not stay leaderless or inactive and some fanatic Arab leader or the communists will absorb and direct their energies if we do not."

This anti-communist sentiment should be understood within the broader context of the Cold War era. In the context of Lebanon, Peteet (2005) argues that during this period, "the fear of Communism was part and parcel of the impetus to replace direct relief with rehabilitation" (2005, 67), and recounts how the American Middle East Relief as well as the Religious Society of Friends were all planning projects for the refugees' rehabilitation. In addition to these groups, Peteet writes that "news articles, briefing papers, government projects, and relief workers came to the ominous conclusion that the refugees were 'demoralized,' 'desperate,' or 'apathetic,' echoing the refugee as 'pathological'" (Peteet 2005, 68). The above correspondences demonstrate that YMCA was also one of those groups, which took upon itself the work of reinscribing Palestinian refugees with ideals that were perceived as more in line with "democratic" "Western civilization."

c) After 1967: New Refugees and Initiation of Boys' Work in Amman

After Israel captured East Jerusalem in the 1967 Arab Israeli war, YMCA started considering Amman as a possible area of operation. In the correspondence of this period, much like the discussions about a new building for East Jerusalem, boys are also imagined to be the most important future beneficiaries of YMCA activities. In a letter penned by Walter Jacoby to Paul Moritz, International Committee of YMCA's in April 1968, under the banner of National Alliance of Lebanese YMCA's, Jacoby mentioned a group of people "interested in forming a YMCA in Amman Jordan," and a group that is "cut off from the service of National Movement of that country—Jordan—because of the inability of nations to agree on boundaries etc, after the

June 1967 Middle East War."[22] He was of the opinion that "there is a real need for a program for children as well as adults among all classes of people." Jacoby argued that at that point, sending a fraternal secretary would be impractical, both because of the volatile political situation in the region and of concerns over the possibility of being perceived as a missionary organization. Thus, to overcome these concerns as well as to "decrease the dependency problems," he suggested that fraternal secretaries currently assigned to Lebanon only make periodic visits to Amman. In this way, they could "help indigenous leadership recognize their responsibilities for the training and development of indigenous staff."

After a visit in July 1968, we see that Jacoby's concerns expand from a care for the refugees and their camps to concerns over the instability and uncertainty regarding political situation in Jordan.[23] He argues that with commando forces everywhere "carrying their weapons in the open. . . Jordan seems to be a different country than it was three months ago." He oscillates between expressing frustration over Arab and anti-Zionist propaganda that "made an indelible mark on even the educated people" to concern and sadness over the refugees' situation. He finds that "even those who are most educated and rational on most things are completely irrational as far as the conflict is concerned" and they "have been convinced that only armed warfare will win back their home." Yet, he laments that "good looking, strong, young men with no jobs" appear "pathetic as they visit the Refugee Program office" and expresses his concerns for the refugee camps, commenting, "No one has yet begun to do anything to prepare for next

[22] *East Jerusalem YMCA. Amman, 1954-1976. (Box 27, Folder 2, p 9-10)*. 1954 - 1976. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives., umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:60974. Accessed 04 Jun 2020.

[23] *East Jerusalem YMCA. Amman, 1954-1976. (Box 27, Folder 2)*. 1954 - 1976. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, p 32-33.

winter." This letter also indicates that at the time "all involved in the YMCA program" were Palestinians.[24]

Almost a year later, the fraternal secretary Harry Brunger of YMCA Lebanon visited Amman. In a report he prepares for the International Committee of YMCAs, Brunger states that one of the main goals of his visit as "to become more up to date on the Jordan (and general M.E) refugee situation with particular reference to the YMCA Youth Activities program of the World Alliance Service to Refugees.[25]" This report, unlike from previous correspondences or reports, includes reference to the statistics on refugees from UNRWA figures and the YMCA/UNRWA Youth Activities Program under the direction of the Field Director in Amman. According to this, 36 work projects were to be undertaken by camp supervisors in six refugee camps during May and June 1969, including "erection of barracks for Youth Activities Centres. . . organizing libraries and setting up records for Centre activities," and "laying out and supervising activities for boys and youth in activity centres."[26]

In the same report, there are indications of the YMCA's intentions to develop its work in Amman. However, Brunger describes the atmosphere in Amman as still one of uncertainty, referring to Jacoby's letter from a year earlier. He argues that his "friends in Amman seem to be of the opinion that it is not wise to put any proposals for developing a YMCA at this time." Still, he notes what he regards to be encouraging developments for the YMCA/UNRWA Youth

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[24] *East Jerusalem YMCA. Amman, 1954-1976. (Box 27, Folder 2)*. 1954 - 1976. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 32-33.

[25] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 26)*. 1952 - 1974. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 90-94, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:61463 Accessed 04 Jun 2020.

[26] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 26)*. 1952 - 1974. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 90-94, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:61463. Accessed 04 Jun 2020.

Activities Program and reports that King Hussein, members of the Royal Family and government authorities have inspected the Youth Activity centers and made donations. However, he finalizes his report with observations that suggest an expectation for an uncertain future:

> It has been suggested by those wise in watching refugee matters that it is the training that young men have received in helping each other and in doing service projects for their camp communities that has assisted fostering the ability of representing the Palestine nation through commando activity. For better or worse there are some visible results of all this effort. Young men are present for a few days of YMCA-UNRWA Youth activities program and then they disappear for a few days. While they are away it is assumed that they are busy with the quiet training that goes on in the desert's far places or that they are on "missions." While the atmosphere is calm there is still an ominous silence about it. It is an unpredictable calm that says the future will perhaps be filled with more excitement.[27]

Brunger's words not only give us clues about the political activities of Palestinian refugees in the camps during 1969, but also indicate that the same young men who were participating in the YMCA-UNRWA Youth Activities Program were the ones who were undergoing a "quiet training that goes on in the desert's far places." Moreover, in this letter, Brunger seems to be in agreement with those who argued that YMCA trainings fostered paramilitary activity.

Another letter written by Brunger to an unidentifiable recipient dated from December 1968 suggests Yasser Arafat himself was in agreement about YMCA's indirect helpfulness for the commando movement.[28] In this letter, Brunger recounts his encounter with a senior member of the Propeller Club of the Port of Beirut, Frank Harris, who told Brunger about his task of finding "the mythical leader of al Fateh" who was "at work training his volunteer army in many locations." Once he finally found him, Brunger reports, Arafat told him, "Al Fateh should thank the groups that made their work easier." Reportedly, Arafat told Harris "There are many groups like YMCA that have helped them very much in our task. These groups have directed the

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[27] Ibid.

[28] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 26)*. 1952 - 1974. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 8, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:61463 Accessed 04 Jun 2020.

thinking of those young men towards helping other people in their camps, carrying out activities that benefitted each other." Brunger gives another example in conformity with Arafat's alleged words, and argues that before the June war of 1967, it was discovered that "the body building facilities and weight-lifting apparatus of YMCA Centre in South Lebanon had been very popular because many of the young men wished to be in shape physically to volunteer for PLO army services." He claims that "nation-building by the young is not a new subject for YMCAs," and finalizes his letter by arguing that "Arafat, the wirey chieftain of the al Fateh, knows how important these basic YMCA infusions and experiences can be."

There are no archival records for YMCA activities in 1970, when Black September happened. Yet, in a letter written by Walt Jacoby in December 1971, who arrived in Amman for a YMCA conference, only four days after the assassination of Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi Tal by the Black September group in Egypt, Amman is described as heavily securitized, where "one could not go more than two blocks in any direction in the area of Jebel Amman without running into a check point with the beduin soldiers armed to the teeth."[29] Jacoby writes, "YMCA-UNRWA recreation programs are increasing in value to the people in the camps as they move away from the old concept of armed resistance and commando influence." Yet, this increase in value comes with a decreased number of young men in the camps. Quoting the program director, he comments "now there are approximately 30 % fewer young men between the ages of 15 to 35 than there were a year ago last fall residing in the camps."

D) The YMCA's Summer Camp and PLO's Lion Cubs and Flowers

[29] *East Jerusalem YMCA. General Files: Correspondence and reports, 1952-1981. (Box 24, Folder 28)*. 1952 – 1974. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 115-117.

These archival records I have discussed so far indicate that the YMCA's activities in Jordan's refugee camps started long before 1973. However, a report written in 1987 does mention 1973 as the first year that the YMCA held a summer camp for orphan refugee children in Jordan.[30] Thus, instead of one preceding the other, or one stealing the other's project, it seems like the PLO and YMCA almost simultaneously took a common interest in Palestinian refugee youth and children in the refugee camps of Jordan after the 1967 war. The documents I discussed above also show that some of the YMCA staff perceived YMCA activities as fostering paramilitary activity since they facilitated refugees helping each other and their camp communities.

Although I found no documents regarding the first program of YMCA summer camp for Palestinian refugee orphans in Jordan and that of PLO's Lion Cubs and Flowers movement in detail, some evidence remains. A report from 1987 written by YMCA's Michael Bussey, the vice president of St. Paul Area and an essay written by Naji Allush, the head of Fatah's civilian organization of Amman in 1970 (Sayigh 1997, 275) provide some clues as to what these programs entailed. Surprisingly, the activities of both the PLO and YMCA show a lot of similarities.

Bussey starts his report by expressing his "very sincere respect and appreciation for the Jordan YMCA program and staff" and introducing its "very impressive" leaders who are all Palestinians. He shares his evaluation of the camp program by focusing on each activity and commenting on how children responded to them and how the volunteers (divided into counselors, instructors, and assistant counselors) fulfilled their roles. These activities include

[30] *East Jerusalem YMCA. Jordan, 1987-1988. (Box 27, Folder 1)*. 1987 - 1988. University of Minnesota Libraries, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, umedia.lib.umn.edu/item/p16022coll224:49702 Accessed 14 Nov 2021.

crafts and drawing, music, scouting, sports, health, and nutrition. The report indicates that at the time there was also a girls' camp that used the same facility, Nour College, at the same time, but unlike the boys' camp, it did not have a sponsoring agency. Bussey argued that the YMCA board should seriously consider sponsoring this program.

While written for a different purpose, urging mass mobilization for national liberation against colonialism, Naji Allush provides his own program for the Lion Cubs and Flowers.[31] This essay indicates that while many of my interlocutors suggested that Lion Cubs and Flowers was mostly intended for armed training, it also dedicated itself to developing Palestinian children physically, socially, culturally. Allush argues that Lion Cubs and Flowers was one of the three most important institutions that had "witnessed a rush" of enthusiasm in the years following the June war of 1967 and Karameh war of 1968. Even though it was short-lived; started after the June war and "shaken" after September 1970; "it was a rich experience and had the furthest effect on the psyche of the Palestinian boy and Palestinian flower." This program was comprised of ten items, some of which included nationalistic goals like educating children about Palestinian and Arab nationalism and the struggles of other people against colonialism as well as providing them with military training. Despite these differences, however, Allush's writing suggests that the remaining six items of the program do show striking similarities to that of the YMCA. These include health education intended to educate the children on healthy habits, diseases, and their cures; social education aiming to create a cooperative spirit and good morals; physical education aiming a healthy body and mind; scout education aiming to instill the spirit of scientific research; art education aiming to develop children's artistic taste and reviving Palestinian folk art; and professional education aiming to help the youth decide their profession of their choice.

[31] Naji Allush, 'The Palestinian National Liberation Movement and Mass Action' (Arab), Shu'un Filastiniyya, No. 17, January 1973.

Thus, from Naji Allush's essay, we understand that the Lion Cubs and Flowers' program designed by the PLO shared similar social, cultural, and physical components with the YMCA program. Moreover, they both targeted children of the refugee camps and both relied on volunteer labor.

Concluding Remarks: A Developmental Humanitarianism of a Palestinian Kind?

As the preceding sections of this chapter make it clear, despite my interlocutors' insistence regarding the origins of this repertoire being either a YMCA or PLO initiated activity, the archival documents of the YMCA that I analyzed indicates a more complex process: that the YMCA and the PLO almost simultaneously became invested in the children in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan for their own separate goals. Moreover, these documents also show that they were cognizant of both each other's activities with refugee children and perceived a commonality between each other's approaches, a commonality which also shows itself in my analysis of an early YMCA summer camp program and an essay written by a PLO representative, Naji Allush, in the aftermath of Black September. These documents also suggest that it was only after the PLO's expulsion from Jordan that YMCA activities became more popular among Palestinian refugees.

Given this obvious overlap, why does it, then, seem to be so inconceivable for my interlocutors to think of the YMCA and the PLO as actors simultaneously addressing Palestinian refugees in the camps before Black September? What is at stake for those who take their inspiration from the YMCA summer camps and from the Lion Cubs and Flowers? What do the ways of remembering and forgetting the first summer camps tell us about Palestinian refugee volunteers' sociopolitical milieu in which they live in?

First, contentions over the summer camp are important because this debate reflects a dichotomy between *'amal fityanī* as originally a political project through the efforts of the leaders of the national mobilization together with Palestinian refugees or as a humanitarian project initiated and implemented by an outside actor, the YMCA. For those who think of *'amal fityanī* as originally a PLO initiative, the full credit of this form of care goes to Palestinian political agency. In the humanitarian origins narrative, on the other hand, despite the portrayal Palestinian volunteer leaders in the refugee camps as actors that made *'amal fityanī* a long-term and inter-generational project, a good amount of the credit still goes to the institutions of the humanitarian regime that designated refugee camp orphans as their objects of care. The competing PLO narrative resists the portrayal of Palestinian refugees as objects of care and with little agency.

Second, this debate is important because it reflects the discursive limits of what is imaginable regarding the pre-Black September period, excluding any possibility of the simultaneity of YMCA activities and that of the PLO and any interpretation, which allows moments of convergence between the two. One of the reasons why it is inconceivable to think of the YMCA and the PLO simultaneously working in the refugee camps may be related to the traumatic nature of the Black September events that led to a, by and large, silencing of this period. Another reason may be related to my interlocutors' general cynical view towards international humanitarian actors today. These archival records indicate that YMCA had an understanding of development that is very much community oriented; by depending on Palestinian staff, building the infrastructure of the Youth Clubs, and supervising community activities in the refugee camps. My interlocutors, on the other hand, grew up observing the foreign funding-initiated INGO projects which were mainly short-term and targeting

individualized notions of development. Looking from today, it may be hard to imagine that the YMCA propagated activities that could be useful for nation-building in exile during a period of political mobilization.

My analysis of the archival material is not meant to dismiss my interlocutors' contestations on the origins of boys' work or to investigate their current understandings of international humanitarianism, so much as to demonstrate how different young refugees position themselves in history and in relation to their volunteer work, and what these historical renderings mean in the context of today. In doing this, I take inspiration from Susana Kaiser (2005) who shows that how memory matters regardless of what took place in the context of dictatorship among young Argentineans:

> For memory is more about what we believe happened than about what actually took place. Indeed, the value of actual facts is relative if they are not perceived as truth. Hence, memories of the dictatorship may be subject to distortion but, ultimately, they constitute Argentineans' perceptions of the past terror and reveal what this historical period meant for them.... What these young Argentineans believed happened, their post memories, may prove more important that what actually happened. For what we think took place in the past informs and shapes our way of thinking and acting in the present, or how we insert ourselves within a historical process (Kaiser 2005, 44).

Thus, I argue that while engaging in similar practices in their different refugee camps, my interlocutors positioned themselves differently in the history of Palestinian displacement in Jordan. For those who perceive *'amal fityanī'*s origins in the collaboration between the YMCA and UNRWA, *'amal fityanī* remains as a first and foremost humanitarian endeavor, while those emphasizing the PLO narrative connected this endeavor to a tradition of political mass mobilization. However, regardless of what they believed to be its "real" origins, proponents of both narratives perceive boys' work as a refugee-led and intergenerational response to Palestinian refugees' displacement.

Chapter 2: "Amal fityani" as a Vital Conjuncture and Gendered Boundaries of the Refugee Camps

When Waseem came to our table to greet us, I was playing cards with some volunteer friends from al-Naṣr camp in a café in downtown Amman. Upon hearing that I was interested in learning more about *'amal fityanī*, Waseem told me with pride that he had been involved in volunteer work since 2005. When he went back to his own table where his friends were waiting for him, one of my friends who volunteers in al-Naṣr camp, Faruq, told me that Waseem was from the Baqāʾ camp, and he was his *fata* (boy) in a summer camp many years ago. "Waseem was a clever kid," he added.

I was going to see a lot more of Waseem during my fieldwork: in his voluntary association in Baqāʾ on Fridays; with his *dabke* group teaching traditional Palestinian dances to children in another voluntary association in Ḥusayn camp on Saturdays; performing a theater play on Nakba using the ruins of a collapsed house as a stage in Baqāʾ; volunteering in the management of the summer camp in 2018; and, when we both started to frequent Ministry of Culture's instrument classes, studying the oud (me) and the violin (him). He started these artistic endeavors with *'amal fityanī* and he later told me that it was through becoming a volunteer that he found himself and elevated his life "from point zero."

While having his own particular interests and aspirations, Waseem's life does share similarities to a majority of other volunteers I met in the institutions of *'amal fityanī*; he was a Palestinian refugee with Jordanian citizenship who grew up in a refugee camp in Jordan, frequented the institutions in his camp as a child, and met and established friendships with volunteers from other refugee camps through joint activities like the summer camp. Moreover, like many others, he considered his introduction to *'amal fityanī* to be a turning point in his life

and derives a sense of pride from his long-term involvement. Since *'amal fityanī* remains predominantly a camp-centric and gendered form of volunteer work through which older male youth engage with younger male children in refugee camps, it was the young men like Waseem for whom volunteering remained a significant commitment throughout their lives and the means by which they forge long-lasting friendships.

While the previous chapter examined the origins and contested memories about *'amal fityanī* through documents and oral history interviews, this chapter derives its insights from life-story interviews and interactions with young volunteer men and women in various camp associations. It examines the meanings that Palestinians attach to their work with children in the refugee camps and demonstrates that *'amal fityanī*, in addition to being a form of care, is also implicated in youth's pursuit of a meaningful life.[32] Young Palestinian volunteers' narratives reveal that even in a situation characterized by precarious conditions, people still strive to achieve meaningful lives, transcending the limits of what one would assume is possible.

First, this chapter argues that becoming an *'amal fityanī* volunteer is a "vital conjuncture" for the young men and women who grew up in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan. I use the concept of vital conjuncture to refer to "the zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation in a life or lives" (Johnson-Hanks 2002, 866). Through an examination of my interlocutors' narratives on becoming a volunteer, I demonstrate that this process is a vital conjuncture that leads young refugees to rethink their aspirations for hopeful future horizons. I argue that through volunteering, young refugee men find ways for meaningful self-realization, which is to a certain extent independent of socially expected patterns of gaining employment or marriage, and at times, it turns into a form of cruel optimism. Cultural theorist

[32] Note that the theme of "care" is explored in greater depth in Chapter 4.

Laurent Berlant describes cruel optimism as a phenomenon in which an individual or group becomes overly attached to a particular belief, object, or relationship, leading to negative consequences despite continued investment in it (2011). The narratives of some of the young men below show forms of attachments to volunteer work that led them to lose other possible futures and opportunities.

For young women, on the one hand, *'amal fityanī* offers both fear-inducing and hopeful horizons, which young women have to navigate along the moral norms of their camps where gender mixing is usually frowned upon. Thus, even though volunteering figures as a vital conjuncture in the narratives of young women across the Palestinian refugee camps as a process of self-realization, it also sometimes turns into a lifelong endeavor or a practice that colors other aspects of their lives, like forming friendships or opening occupational possibilities, in the long term. Female children, *flowers*, usually discontinue the programs once they hit adolescence even in associations where there are gender mixed programs for boys and girls, but even those who persist in volunteering do not reach positions in the management of the associations.

Second, this chapter argues that issues of camp and non-camp identity are deeply implicated in the practice of *'amal fityanī* and in the deep socioeconomic divisions between East and West Amman. I argue that in these urbanized Palestinian refugee camps where new refugee and migrant groups also reside, the exclusions from these care and friendship networks mostly happen at the intersection of class, urban space, and competing masculinities rather than national identity. Although "being of the camp" is a negotiated marker of identity whose boundaries include certain non-camp refugee and non-Palestinian men, class-based norms of masculinity remain a source of tension for those from outside. For young women, however, the inclusion to

this identity depends on whether or not a female volunteer abides by norms of modesty in the camp.

Sons of the Camp: From Meeting Childhood Needs to Aspiring to Become a Volunteer

Before I highlight the narratives of various Palestinian camp resident men who have spent years as beneficiaries and/or volunteers in *'amal fityanī*, I want to point out the gendered nature of the label "son of the camp," for which there is no counterpart for young women. Similarly, the discourse on youth mostly signifies male youth. This doesn't mean that there is no word for describing young women, but it is a word that is not commonly used – *fatayat* – and it does not represent the same attributes of what Bayat calls "youthfulness" that "*shabab*" (youth) connotes. My male interlocutors both consider themselves *shabab* and were seen by their communities as youths even if they were married. A married refugee man can continue his youthful habits and friendships with other men, while for a young woman, youth often ends at marriage. Moreover, since the cost of marriage often falls on the young men, most of my male interlocutors do not consider marrying until they get stable jobs and quit juggling their existence in the informal economy. Some scholars sometimes refer to this state as 'waithood,' a prolonged period of adolescence experienced by unemployed or underemployed youth in the MENA which is characterized by helplessness, dependency, and boredom (Dhillon Yousef 2009). My interlocutors' narratives defy this conceptualization by showing that even in the face of increasing socioeconomic challenges, young refugees are not passively waiting, but forming meaningful lives and aspiring to a form of the good life in the service of their fellow camp residents.

In this section, I demonstrate how becoming an *'amal fityanī* volunteer is a "vital conjuncture" for young refugees who started going to these institutions in their childhood. These

men narrate that that while their early connection to *'amal fityanī* emanates from a desire to respond to their economic, cultural, and social needs, in time being a volunteer becomes one of the most important practices for their self-realization, social lives and support systems. While sharing these narratives, I situate each volunteer in relation to one another and to the different institutions they attended to elucidate the intra and inter-camp social networks around practices of care.

Yaman is one of the founders of al-Ḥayāh (Life) in the al-Naṣr camp, which was established in 2015 by youth volunteers from al-Naṣr, Zarqa, and Muḥaṭṭah camps who were studying in the same university. He grew up in Zarqa camp and lived there until he was 10 years old. He told me that he spent all his time in the camp playing in the streets and attending the UNRWA school even after they moved to an adjacent neighborhood. Like many other volunteers, he believed that his awareness on his Palestinian and refugee identity initially came from the camp environment where he lived: going to the UNRWA school made him understand that he was a refugee, as did seeing nationalist graffiti on the walls, listening to Palestinian radio-channels with his grandmother, and joining protests whenever an event took place in Palestine. He lost his father when he was twelve and this event led him to register to the boys' committee of the Youth Club of the Zarqa camp; an institution his cousin already frequented after the death of his own father:

> The Youth Club was serving the orphan children in and around the camp. Our economic situation was really bad and this Club was giving aid, or money every month, "funds" … Our presence in this place was so that we get this money… I am not embarrassed about this at all. But, after growing up we understood what kind of nice things this Youth Club contributed to our lives. It was through these institutions we saw the people that we loved a lot. They were our power (they have our back). I mean in Zarqa, for example, we used to see a lot of troublemakers… thugs. They drink in the streets, create fights… but in the summer camps and in the Youth Clubs we would see people who are very good and who would direct us towards good things like: study, love your family, learn about Palestine… this is a very nice thing. Now all my friends are from '*amal fityani*'. It becomes so that these people are the people you love. It's in your heart. We would enjoy the summer camp a lot also because we would see our friends from other camps. Now, I am an adult, all the people I know, I know most of them from '*amal fityani*'. Let's say one day I go to Madaba, for example, something happens to my car. I don't call Hasan or Yusuf in Amman. I talk to the guys in the Madaba camp. They know me, I know them.

Yaman is one of the many people who started to go to the Youth Club of his camp to receive economic aid. Losing his father was what opened the possibility for him to learn *'amal fityanī*, but the process of frequenting the Youth Club became a vital conjuncture in that it inculcated in him an aspiration for being a volunteer in the refugee camps, which he continues to this day even after becoming an auto-mechanic and getting married.[33] To this day, his closest friends are from this network of camp refugees who grew up with him frequenting similar institutions.

Another volunteer I met through Yaman's association in the al-Naṣr camp, al-Ḥayāh, is Firas. He is also the older brother of two female volunteers, Layla and Zaynab, and like Yaman, Firas lost his father early in life. A couple of years after losing his father, his paternal uncle married his mother. His relationship with his uncle was ridden with conflict, so he started to spend all his free time in the al-Naṣr camp which was in the adjacent neighborhood. Firas explained to me that since his early childhood the camp had been the most important place for him; he liked listening to the elders in the camp talk about Palestine, helped them in their daily chores like carrying their groceries or accompanying them to the UNRWA, and formed friendships with the other children in the camp. The camp was also where he took his first job; he filled fake perfumes and sold them there to feel a sense of economic independence and help support his mother and seven siblings.

One day, when one of his customers in the camp refused to pay him, he got involved in a fight, which, serendipitously, paved a way for him to start going to the Youth Club:

> The fight took place in front of the Youth Club, and those who stood by me were from the Youth Club. They, later took me in, and I saw the table tennis. I was seven years old, I really loved it, but I had never

[33] See Chapter 4 for a deeper discussion of his and his voluntary work in al-Naṣr camp.

> seen it in real life. I started playing tennis with them after the fight. They saw me that I am *mahroom* (neglected), and they told me that I could come to their programs if I wanted. And, of course, I did!

While he was initially attracted to the Youth Club because of the table tennis, he told me that the reason he felt that he became attached to the Club was its cultural activities.[34] Once he became a volunteer, he directed all his efforts to these kinds of activities that he saw as lacking in children's lives in al-Naṣr camp by virtue of having parents who were too busy to provide for them economically:

> The boys' work in the Youth Club was a very good thing; at that time it helped to people who didn't have medicine with medicine, without education with education. It let the ignorant think. In the cultural committee, they used to do classes, bring poets, and do discussions on books. But sometimes they used to bring books that weren't that good. I used to read a lot! So, I started suggesting books. We would bring people from Ramallah; poets used to come; we even brought Ibrahim al-Naṣrallah and Semih al-Qasem. The Youth Club of al-Naṣr used to be very good in those times. Not like today; most Clubs became mainly about sports. Now, some people try doing this kind of work in the associations, combining different aspects of cultural, sports and social committees through '*amal fityani*'.

Firas spent most of his free time at the Youth Club until he started going to college, and even during the first couple of years in college he continued volunteering and became the head of its boys' committee. However, when balancing school, work, student activism and the Youth Club became too much, he slowed down his involvement in the Youth Club for a couple of years. He would have resumed, he told me, if different youth groups had not left the Youth Club and opened their own associations during that time. He did not want to pick one group over the other and sour his good relationships with all of them who were once his "boys." Despite no longer actively volunteering in a Youth Club or association, various volunteers from al-Naṣr constantly picked his brains about possible programs or inter-camp activities and met with him to share gossip about the camp. Moreover, throughout my fieldwork, I heard him responding to phone calls, especially during religious holidays, from families in different camps asking whether there were donation boxes they could receive.

[34] I discuss the cultural activities connected to the *'amal fityanī* in Chapter 3.

When I met a young Syrian widow with two children who was the neighbor of a volunteer in an association in Ḥusayn camp, I asked Firas to help her, and he called his friends in different associations to find monthly aid for her and her children. Although he did try and help connect donors to the associations and individuals in the camp, like many other volunteers, what he really valued was associations or Youth Clubs with active boys' committees whose efforts were not centered around distributing aid but engaging with the children in a systematic and educational fashion.[35]

Because of his long years of engagement, most of the youth volunteers in different associations of al-Naṣr camp knew Firas very well, and it was apparently through him that Yusuf, one of my main interlocutors, became a volunteer in the Youth Club several years ago. Raised in a Palestinian refugee family from a village in Hebron, Yusuf is now 29 years old. Starting in seventh grade, he worked a variety of jobs: in the camp's bazaar, in the small coffee shops in and around the camp, and in construction work. According to Yusuf, it was primarily this necessity of providing for his family that put him in environments where he had to learn how to act tough. His behavior must have troubled his family, since one of his uncles allegedly called Firas, a Youth Club volunteer six years Yusuf's senior, and asked him to entice Yusuf into becoming a volunteer there with the hopes that he would calm down and "stay out of fights a little bit."

Yusuf told me that he immediately liked volunteering since he felt like he could change the things he didn't like about life in the camp by working on the upcoming generation. From the time he started working in the streets, he told me, he kept diaries on camp life: which family was from where in Palestine, who married whom, who organized large iftars during Ramadans,

[35] This is indicative of a general tension between development and charity in *'amal fityanī* that I explore in detail in Chapter 3.

which youth initiative did what, who joined protests, who worked in whose parliamentary election campaigns:

> Even when I was a child Burcu… You know the drug dealers would use the *bastat* (street vendor stands) in the bazaar of the camp to sell the drugs at night. Someone would stick the money on a stand, and the other would come and put the drugs. I used to scream from the top of my lungs: police, police. Of course, there was no police. The police didn't use to enter the camp often at those times. But, I was just a child and I was trying to stop the drug trade in my own way.

Yusuf and his friends (including Yaman) established al-Ḥayāh in al-Naṣr in 2015. In 2019, he started to work in a high-end café in downtown Amman, but he ended up quitting this job to find one that provided him more flexible hours, which was selling chips to small stores around Amman. His rationale in quitting the café job may sound surprising: "I ended up spending all my salary to make sure we hold our meetings," he told me, referring to his volunteer friends who kept coming to the café.

The narratives of Yaman, Firas, and Yusuf demonstrate that the Youth Clubs in the refugee camps offered them a space to rethink their life trajectories and potential futures. Thus, for each young man, these spaces became places where volunteering turned into a vital conjuncture that suspended their readily imaginable futures. Yaman told me that without this space, he would probably have become a good-for-nothing; Firas believed that he would never have gotten interested in university politics on Palestine and would have ended up self-absorbed, someone who would just focus on saving his own skin and creating a career for himself; and Yusuf believed that he would have ended up a troublemaker who constantly got into fights and perhaps would never have considered going to university.

'amal fityanī ***as Addiction: A Vital Conjuncture and/or Cruel Optimism***

While becoming a volunteer may not be a critical conjuncture for everyone, there are also many young refugee men who talked about their volunteer practices as a form of "addiction,"

signifying the joy and value they derived even if it cost them opportunities to improve their lives in more conventional ways, such as sustaining gainful employment.

Perhaps nobody's attachment to '*amal fityanī* demonstrates more of a form of cruel optimism than that of Saber's. Another resident of the al-Naṣr camp, Saber is a friend of Yusuf and Yaman, although when I met him, he was volunteering in an association in Muḥaṭṭah camp; an unofficial camp, a gathering, in the eyes of both the state and the UNRWA. When I interviewed him, I learned that he was initially a volunteer at the Youth Club of the al-Naṣr camp. However, like Firas, once different youth groups opened their own associations, instead of choosing one association over another, he only participated in inter-camp activities. After six months or so, he told me, he felt the desire to return to volunteering, and seeing the Weḥdāt camp as a neutral ground, he went to its Youth Club. Realizing that the Club in Weḥdāt was not very active in its "boys committee," he looked for an association in the same camp, but the only association that was doing *'amal fityanī* at the time was one in which there were only boys, and the head of the volunteers was a Sheikh. As a young man who liked singing and dancing, the Sheikh's dislike for these kinds of activities did not agree with him. Thus, he found himself in an association in Muḥaṭṭah camp where he already had volunteer friends.

It was also Saber who insisted that I participate in the summer camp of 2019, since he considered that as the most important joint activity among different boys' committees. One day, in the middle of the summer camp, I ran out of clean clothes and decided to sleep at my house in Jabal al Ḥusayn for one night, and Saber and I decided to hang out on my balcony. That night, he told me how, when time when he was working in Saudi Arabia, he quit his job to participate in the summer camp. Seeing my surprise, he explained:

> Burcu I found myself, I was lost. Because the environment is bad, even Resulalleyisalem says: change outside of the house is good for you. Why, because you get to know new people and new rules. In the Youth Club and in summer camps, you get the chance to learn about yourself. Everyone has their own

> goals, my goal is to take children from the situation they are living in; corruption, drugs, betrayals, inside and outside the house etc. Even sexual harassment in the streets... In my case, my family didn't ask me what my dream was. Not because they hate us. But there is ignorance. They were giving us advice, but not in a correct way. "If you do this, I will beat you up" a child doesn't understand this. But, my volunteers asked me. They discovered that I have a good singing voice. I even sang in music events in West Bank thanks to them.

For Saber, *'amal fityanī* became a practice through which he could feel safe, find himself and discover his skills, so much so that he described it as "an addiction." Over the two years I have known him, I have seen Saber in his association in the Muḥaṭṭah camp, volunteering in the summer camp, and working other joint events organized by associations like cultural competitions and Ramadan iftars. During this time, he has not had stable employment, and at times he told me that he questioned his choice of prioritizing volunteering over a job.

While most volunteers talked about "their addiction" to *'amal fityanī* in somewhat humorous ways, Ameen, a 32-year-old man who has been "in the work" for over fourteen years, was one of those who appeared truly angry with himself. Ameen started as beneficiary in the Youth Club of the Ḥusayn camp after losing his father, but he left the Club after the Muslim Brotherhood took over the management. Since there was no other institution engaging in *'amal fityanī* in the Ḥusayn camp, he and his volunteer friends temporarily continued volunteering in an association in the Muḥaṭṭah camp until they opened an association in Ḥusayn. Now a newly married man with a son, he is heading the orphan committee of the association and working as a salesperson for a company. Getting married and having a child make him second-guess his decision to not take up the job opportunities in Saudi and Kuwait. When I asked him why he decided to stay, he explained:

> I am a son of the camp. Maybe the issue is about feelings. Among the youth in the camps who participated in volunteer work, maybe there are those who think this is work for Palestine, there are people who entered thinking that God will reward them, some thinking that they will see girls... For me, I found a value to myself. I live among 6 brothers. Maybe this place was the only one, which was comfortable to me. Then, I found a value to myself without me thinking that I will enter this job so that I get value, but that value happened afterwards. Maybe because it is a safe space, you can get creative in it… There are no troublemakers…I remember when I was an orphan, you find me bringing pictures of Palestine from the newspaper every Friday. I always felt the need to be distinguished. There were magazines that we would

> put on the wall of the Club, every month I made one. From my pocket money, I would bring cardboards, you know there was no Internet, and there was the calendar which has information written for each day. You find me searching for cultural information; I used to put them together in a narrative. My mom was creative, and she would guide me.

Ameen's reasons for remaining a volunteer were like many other young men I talked to; volunteering, for him, provided a safe space for self-realization in a difficult environment and planted in him an aspiration to serve others even after he got married. I have shared Ameen's narrative last because of the other reasons he provided for his co-volunteers' motivations and the gendered way he referred to his co-volunteers. Volunteering, he argued, may mean doing something for Palestine by serving refugee camps, engaging in charitable activities due to religious sensibilities or to fulfill a sense of religious duty, but it also offers an opportunity to meet young women in a community where gender-segregation pervades social and educational life. In that way, he shows what possible future horizons can be reached through the process of volunteering. Moreover, Ameen and many others' narratives contain glaring assumptions about the gendered and spatial nature of "boys' work:" They see it as not only a voluntary form of work but one that is mainly carried out by men, particularly men from the Palestinian refugee camps.

Girls of the Camp Entering Volunteer Work and Limits of Fictive Kinship

Before I go into young women's *'amal fityanī* experiences and the meanings they attach to it, I want to note that youth as a general category may not carry the same meanings for young men and women. Even though young women increasingly go to universities where gender-mixing is the norm, most young women whom I met in the camps did not openly socialize with young men, especially in the camp. In contrast, I have met several young men who would socialize with young women. Of course, friendships and even platonic relationships do take place, but these are kept hidden, especially if the other person is part of the same camp. Forming

friendships or relationships with men disproportionately influences young women's reputation and families try to protect their daughters from gossip. Fatma, who is a Syrian refugee and a volunteer in the Ḥusayn camp told me that this situation leads to a paradoxical and humorous result:

> *Shabab* in the camp want to go out with girls, nobody shames them! And when it comes to marriage, they want someone who never talked a to guy or marry someone that their mothers choose. And they do go out with girls, and still think that it is possible to find a girl who never talked to a guy. What they don't know is that everybody ends up marrying someone else's girlfriend! Anyway, marriage changes things for girls significantly! Suddenly that girl becomes a woman. Her youth is gone, but the guy still enjoys life and hangs out with his friends!

So, as Fatma suggests, young men's romantic relationships are seen as part of their youthful habitus, but not so for young women. Still, even among my male interlocutors, I have never met a young person who publicly admitted that they have a girlfriend or boyfriend, even though in one-on-one conversations, people sometimes opened up and told me that they were seeing someone. Another issue Fatma brings up is that marriage brings an end to the youthfulness in a girl's life, while men, despite carrying familial responsibilities, are free to continue their youthful friendships with other men. As we see below, although *'amal fityanī* becomes a vital conjuncture for some young refugee women, they navigate different challenges than men.

I met Salma in the UNRWA-affiliated Women Program Center of the Weḥdāt camp. She was attending a cosmetics training session, and seeing that I was teaching English, she started to come to my classes as well. Salma told me that her sister, Sarah, was very active in organizing volunteer campaigns in the camp. I met Sarah in their small two-floor family house in Weḥdāt camp where the two sisters lived with their mother and father. A few years ago, their mother beat breast cancer, and this experience led Sarah to decide to study nursing and made her aware of voluntary forms of work. When their mother was hospitalized, a group of young women came to the hospital and gave patients small gifts and fruit baskets. Seeing how happy her mother felt for

this act of kindness, she decided to create an initiative with her friends from the camp. “I always wanted to give,” she told me, “But I didn’t know to whom and how.”

Sarah and dozens of her other volunteer friends, all of whom were either health practitioners or their sisters, paid visits to the hospitals and organize iftars for the children of the poor families in the Weḥdāt camp. However, before this initiative, she unsuccessfully tried to find an institutional space for her volunteer work in the camp but could not: the Youth Club was mainly for young men who wanted to engage in sports activities, and the other association that worked with children only had male volunteers – the same association where another volunteer who I mentioned before, Saber, did not want to go. Moreover, although she and her family were not morally or religiously opposed to her volunteering in a gender-mixed environment, a couple of her friends with whom she started the initiative did not want to mix with young men because of religious reasons. These reasons led her to start a girls-only initiative. She told me that, in the beginning, they ran into a lot of problems because people didn’t take “a bunch of girls” seriously. However, in time, their reputation grew, and people started to make donations to their Ramadan campaigns.

The *iftar* I joined hosted 70 children from the camp. When we arrived at the building where the event was going to take place, we saw that the music, the games, and the clowns were all ready. However, we also encountered a surprise: another youth group, a couple of whom I recognized through joint *‘amal fityanī* events, was organizing their own iftar, and they rented the other half of the large room. They were the volunteers from the only boys’ association in the Weḥdāt camp. It was obvious that nobody was happy about sharing the same space: some of the girls complained that they could not act comfortably, and later, when I talked to the two young men I already knew, they told me the same thing happened for them. The evening continued with

both boys and girls breaking their fast separately and playing in their own areas with the children they had brought.

I shared Sarah's story to demonstrate several issues: first, it is a reminder that for some young men and young women, gender-mixing in volunteer work may not be desirable. As I explained above, although Sarah and her family did not see gender-mixing as a problem, some of her female friends did because of religious concerns. To this, one should add another concern young girls often have, that is, to keep their reputation untarnished in the eyes of their community. Secondly, I shared it to emphasize that young women in the camps feel like they encounter more barriers when they want to organize volunteer work; they either think the donors will not take them seriously or they find that the existing institutions in the camps exclusively have male volunteers. In some cases, the male-dominated management, like the sheikh in the Weḥdāt camp, may be against gender-mixing from a religious point of view or may be hesitant to include girls in this volunteer work in an attempt to avoid tarnishing the association's reputation in the eyes of the camp community or/and potential donors. Thus, the presence of young women often disturbs social norms around gender mixing, if not religious sensibilities both for them and for the institutions in which they are present.

For example, a young volunteer I met from Talbiyah camp, Ashraf, told me that the reason they did not do gender-mixed programs for girls and boys was because no other local institution in his camp were open to both boys and girls. According to Ashraf, only GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) had gender-mixed programs, and in the eyes of some families, gender-mixing was a Western imposition. Furthermore, he posited that members of the Muslim Brotherhood within the camp would circulate rumors about romantic entanglements among the volunteers in the event of gender mixing. Nonetheless, as he himself

wanted to offer equal opportunities for boys and girls in the camp, he clandestinely provided theater training to his sister and her female companions outside of the regular program schedule.

Offering a shared space for young men and women is still uncommon for these camp institutions. During my participation in the summer camp, I observed that the majority of female volunteers belonged to two distinct groups: those who were new volunteers attracted by the camp's activities on Facebook, and those who were the sisters of male volunteers and only volunteered during the summer camps. The only two associations which had a large and active female volunteer cadre were in the al-Naṣr and Ḥusayn camps. The founders of these associations shared stories about the numerous challenges they faced in their efforts to include female volunteers within their organizations. In Ḥusayn camp, Ameen told me that despite being personally convinced of the need to provide equal opportunities to young men and women, he initially found it personally challenging to work in a gender-mixed environment. Despite this, once he and his friends founded their association, they included female volunteers. This decision was also supported by one of the biggest donors of the association, a Palestinian businessman, and his support shielded from compromising on the gender-mixed volunteer environment. Nevertheless, he also mentioned that they had to decline donations from several Gulf donors who criticized the association for being a mixed-gender space for young men and women.

The al-Ḥayāh association in the al-Naṣr camp stands out as another association with a significant and dynamic female volunteer workforce. Notably, it is a newer association founded in 2015, and its management was unique in that it is entirely comprised of young men, mostly in their mid and late twenties, which, volunteers told me, was somewhat of an uncommon occurrence in the circles of *ʿamal fityanī* where usually middle aged or older men would handle management.

As a group of young and unmarried men, I was informed that most of the other boys' committees and families in the camp initially believed that they were not capable of effectively managing an association. Once the families in the camp warmed up to them in 2016, they slowly started to contact their own sisters and relatives, the female siblings of the male volunteers and friends from their universities. Yaman explains:

> We knew that families would not let their daughters come. After a while, after people got to see our work, we brought our own little sisters. We said that we are a big family. Now you see, these girls and others who joined later grew up and we have girls from all ages.

Despite this effort of invoking a sense of fictive kinship, the presence of young women in the association remained fraught with multiple difficulties. First, for many girls, the association never became a place for their socializing outside the program hours. While male youth hang out in the association almost every day, female volunteers usually went back home after the programs are over, each time dragging their feet. Second, parents usually made their daughters quit the association once they hit puberty because of gender-mixing while the same issue rarely led to parents making their sons quit. Third, even those who continued volunteering never reached management positions, or left their institutions to establish their own associations; the way Yusuf and his friends or Ameen and his friends could do. Thus, while male volunteers felt that they had possibilities for upward mobility in the organizational structure of *'amal fityanī* and a sense of belonging, young women could make the association their own only to a certain extent. This also meant that for the young men, these association were also spaces where they assert themselves to the camp society; while for young women, though they took pride in volunteering, this practice usually was limited to being an opportunity for socializing away from parental authority or school.

For many female volunteers of al-Ḥayāh, the association was a place outside of the forms of authority they usually encountered in their lives. Nour and Alaa live in a building on a parallel

street with al-Ḥayāh, and one of their neighbors, Abdallah, is its founding member. Their father, seeing that his son was benefiting from the programs, agreed to send his daughters when Abdallah came to ask the girls if they wanted to volunteer. Their mother was happy about their volunteering, although she often criticized the girls by saying that they were paying too much attention to how they looked when they went to al-Ḥayāh. Only much later did I learn that she actually had conflicting feelings about their daughters' volunteering; she thought that their presence in the company of young men was not appropriate religiously even though she was happy to see their schoolwork improving and their personalities getting stronger. There was another element that was not discussed openly, which is the fact that the family also benefited from al-Ḥayāh's charitable practices even though they did not take place often.

Both girls were truly happy volunteering. I spent many Thursday evenings with them while they were preparing for conversation topics to discuss with their "flowers," accompanied them in their studies for exams al-Ḥayāh was making to detect their weaknesses in school and saw them volunteering almost every day for the month of Ramadan for iftar events. The first time they saw the sea was thanks to a summer camp the association undertook in Aqaba, and they told me it was one of their happiest memories. For Nour, it was the association was one of the first places she felt respected:

> I was shy to speak in front of the people; volunteering gave me confidence. Also, it is a different environment. Sometimes, I feel like it is one of the few places where I can take a breath. I like spending time at home, too, but there is always housework, always relatives and neighbors coming and going. And so many little children, and they don't listen to you because they are your relatives. In the association, it is different, I am Miss Nour, they respect me.

Outside of the school and association, both girls' social life was limited to gatherings of female relatives and friends in each other's houses in the camp. As Nour's words above also suggest, they shared a large part of the housework with their mother and took care of their younger baby

sister and other younger children in the family. Thus, volunteering was one of the few areas in their lives where they felt a sense of autonomy.

However, in contrast to their male counterparts, the female volunteers had to navigate various challenges and make numerous compromises in order to sustain their volunteer work in a gender mixed environment. Instead of engaging in outright defiance, many gave into patriarchal bargains. In a seminal work on gender relations in the Middle East, Kandiyoti (1988) elucidates this concept to describe a situation in which women, in exchange for physical protection, economic security, and social respectability, acquiesce to their subordinate status. She labels this transaction the "patriarchal bargain" and argues that it perpetuates male dominance. However, Kandiyoti also notes that this traditional system is undergoing changes as women in regions governed by classic patriarchy are increasingly compelled by economic necessity to engage in paid employment outside their homes. They help their mother more in the domestic labor of the household, take care of their baby sister more than they used to do, and hope that the family would continue letting them volunteer.

After one English class on a Wednesday, I found Alaa solemnly telling Yusuf that she and her sister will no longer be able to continue volunteering because of an "incident" that took place in the university graduation ceremony of another female volunteer, Farah. Farah was one of the new volunteers who lived in an upper-class neighborhood in Amman, and she invited the volunteers in al-Ḥayāh to her graduation ceremony. Al-Ḥayāh rented the bus of Nour's uncle as a gesture to Nour, who mentioned that he was struggling financially. This act of goodwill did not end well for the sisters. Instead of just driving us and waiting, the uncle decided to watch the celebration, which made the sisters very self-conscious. The celebration included music and young men and women were dancing and celebrating together, which was a little too much for

their uncle. Alaa told me that when they returned home, the uncle chastised her parents about letting their daughters going to an association where men and women behaved in such a "shameful" manner, which led the parents to request that the girls stop volunteering. While Nour and Alaa's parents allowed them to volunteer in a space where young men were present, the different behavioral norms of Farah and her university friends, who are from parts of Amman where mixed-gender socializing are more acceptable, created a problem.

However, this did not mean that the girls stopped volunteering once and for all. They mobilized several tactics to return to the association. Utilizing tactics, especially bending gendered norms, to meet their short-term goals was a common strategy among the *flowers* as well. For example, even at the days their brothers skipped coming to the association, they would tell their parents that the boys were there with them all day, or they would request them to walk to and from al-Ḥayāh so that the parents would feel that they were being protected. In the case of Alaa and Nour, the girls started to share the domestic labor of the household even more to prove their good manners to their mother and father.

Moreover, two other female volunteers, Yasmin and Reem, started a secret campaign to ensure the sisters' return. Versed in the hegemonic gender norms of their camp, the girls slowly ingratiated themselves to Nour and Alaa's mother, visited the family on every occasion and made sure that they mentioned how much the girls were great role models for the younger girls in al-Ḥayāh with their intelligence and respectability. In a final effort, Nour even banked on her approaching birthday, and told her parents that she didn't want any gift except resuming volunteering. In a couple of months, both girls were back to volunteering. However, once Nour got engaged to a young Egyptian man in the coming months, she again paused volunteering,

thinking that it was not appropriate for an engaged girl to spend time in the presence of young men. I asked her how she came to this conclusion, she said:

> It is not right for me to continue. Nobody asked me to stop, but I know how people here think. Moreover, now I want to focus on this period until marriage, I want to think about the wedding, get to know my mother-in-law. I should focus on my family now.

Thus, for Nour, her prospects in marriage and concerns about her reputation led to her quitting volunteering and, one may say, her sustained commitment to the "patriarchal bargain." Yasmin and Reem were not surprised about her decision, since they believed that Nour only saw volunteering as a practice that led her to "breathe," and not one she wanted to pursue on the long term. Yasmin and Reem did, however. They were a couple of years older than Nour and Alaa, and Reem was a university student when she started volunteering al-Ḥayāh. Also unlike the other two sisters, both were already civically engaged: Yasmin was in the student parliament of her high-school and had received several trainings from many INGOs on youth leadership and skills training and Reem was already organizing volunteer campaigns in her university. Reem in particular was a very inquisitive young woman who loved reading and talking about law and politics, and I spent many days in their house discussing current events in Palestine, Jordan, and in the world. When their dwelling in the camp burned down due to an electrical accident stemming from substandard infrastructure, Reem was devastated. She not only lost her cherished Palestine necklace in the fire but also saw her work-in-progress novel, which depicted the story of a Palestinian girl studying in Algeria, reduced to ashes.

Despite having many interests and spaces for civic engagement Reem liked volunteering in the association in particular:

> It's different in the association because it is my community. It is my camp and, moreover, it is a Palestinian refugee camp. That's where I want to leave a mark the most. I want young girls to know their history and make good decisions for their lives and futures.

However, after the fire, both girls had to stop volunteering full time, even though they still joined during Ramadans and special occasions like high-school graduation celebrations. Their father was very old, and his health no longer allowed him to continue working as a cab driver, and since they did not have an older brother, both Reem and Yasmin had to pick up jobs to redo the interior of their house, support their family, and pay their university fees. In addition to their precarious economic situation, the sisters also experienced social pressures from their peers. Some of their friends in the camp teased them repeatedly, implying that the only reason they were putting on makeup and going to al-Ḥayāh was to spend time with young men, and for this reason the girls dressed less colorfully than they usually did when they went to al-Ḥayāh. Unlike Nour, Reem and Yasmin relinquished volunteering not to hold on to their reputation or because of expectations on young women around marriage, but because of the economic pressures their family experienced.

Only much later, thanks to one of Zaynab's righteous outbursts, I learned that they faced similar pressures from the young men within al-Ḥayāh in addition to their peers in the camp. Living in the adjacent neighborhood, Zaynab and Layla started coming to al-Ḥayāh around the same time with Yasmin and Reem. However, were already acquainted with *'amal fityanī* thanks to their brother Firas who would let them tag along with him to participate in activities in the youth club. When Yusuf and Faruq invited them to al-Ḥayāh, they were already trying to find a place for them to volunteer in the camp. Zaynab was already studying French language in the university of Jordan, and Layla was going to go to the same university to study law in a couple of years. Zaynab believed that her whole life changed after entering *'amal fityanī*:

> I study in the university. But I don't see things on the ground. In the camp I see the reality. I learned a lot. There are many issues that I see on the ground and then investigate: I get books, I watch videos so that I can give classes in al-Ḥayāh. I lived all my life next to the camp, and my father is very restrictive, but my older brother always stood by me and protected me, so I didn't actually know life until I started coming to al-Ḥayāh. I learned many things, especially how to deal with people in different settings. I couldn't

> imagine, for example, I would avoid talking to guys so that I don't create problems. There are a lot of restrictions girls are facing. The kind of poverty some people experience, I didn't know about! However, there are good things too. Do you know people in the camp are much more conscious about the Palestinian issue than outside? University students are very silly. Even the activities they do for Palestine, they are no longer good. People started to think of that work as "prestige" also: see, I am working. They don't understand what they are doing. In *amal fityani*, I found people who think about these issues. Now, I can't think of my life without *amal fityani*.

Thus, participating in *'amal fityanī* made Zaynab rethink a lot of issues about her own life and about society and gave her new aspirations. Probably because they shared similar interests in law, politics and society, as well as an interest in women's issues in society, Zaynab and her sister immediately became close friends with Reem and Yasmin.

One day, I was hanging out at Reem's place and a furious Zaynab entered the house to smoke *'argile* with us. Apparently, the management had warned her about the way she wore her headscarf: "Either wear it properly or take it off," the boys had said. Although they reassured her that they did not personally have any issues with the matter, they informed her that some families had raised complaints after noticing younger girls imitating Zaynab's style. Moreover, Yusuf had heard that Zaynab was being catcalled in the streets of the camp and suggested that some volunteers should accompany her in and out of the camp when she came to al-Ḥayāh. Zaynab curtly told him that she did not need protection.

Once Zaynab shared her frustration, Reem followed suit. Apparently, when Reem started volunteering, the management had told her that she should pay attention to their public image: they should be careful about what she wore and take down any social media posts that included photographs in male company. Moreover, through gossip, Reem heard that when she had started volunteering, some of the volunteer boys did not want her to volunteer because she chose not to wear a headscarf. Reem also believed that the management made her a guide for a group of boys rather than girls so that the girls would not take her as a role model. Suddenly, the girls started to

talk about several small, gendered exclusions and interventions they experienced in al-Ḥayāh and connected them to other spheres of their lives.

Since Zaynab, Yusuf, and I spent a lot of time together, these issues became common topics of discussion and even sources of heated debates. This was an unusual friendship for Yusuf, he had three young sisters as well as occasional short-term romantic endeavors, but he told me that we became his first female friends – friends to spend evenings together drinking with, talking, driving around, running to help each other out. Although this friendship made them understand each other's perspectives better, tensions remained. Yusuf came to realize to a certain extent why Zaynab was so unyielding about her insistence of wearing the headscarf the way she wanted. She had spent all her life maneuvering around her authoritative father who dictated the TV programs she watched, the clothes and make-up she wore, even what she should study at university. Zaynab and her sister saw their older brother Firas as an ally because whenever they wanted to spend time at their friends' house, or were late joining events the association organized, he covered up for them, pretending that the girls were out with him. Now that she was an adult, she didn't want to maneuver anymore. Zaynab and I also came to realize that some of Yusuf's concerns were somewhat legitimate for the societal approval for al-Ḥayāh as a space that are safe for their daughters: the camp, indeed, the community paid greater attention to young women's social behaviors than they did to boys'. He thought that if Zaynab continued to get catcalled in the camp by walking unaccompanied, the youth in the streets might take it as permission to act poorly towards the other female volunteers, which in turn would alarm the families in the camp and make them stop their daughters from volunteering. As an example, when I went to a football game between Weḥdāt and Faisali with Saber, I noticed that many volunteers in the association were aware of this in almost no time. Even Nour, who spent most of

her time at home or in the association and who had never met Saber in person, called and told me that she had heard about me hanging out with Saber and that I should be careful because Saber's reputation in the camp was not good because his older brother openly drank alcohol.

Despite this mutual understanding, Yusuf thought that, for the sake of the greater good, that in continuing her volunteer work, Zaynab should put aside "secondary issues" like how she wanted to wear her headscarf; after all, he told us that he also had to hide aspects of his personal life to continue his public work, like drinking alcohol. He thought that it was a small sacrifice to pay for the greater good, and interpreted Zaynab's insistence as immaturity and her being unable to imagine the larger consequences of her actions. My presence in the association created an unnecessary complication. Yusuf expected the same acquiescence from Zaynab that I gave. As an outsider, even though I did not wear a headscarf, I thought that I should respect the social norms of the camp and dressed more modestly than I usually do, and Yusuf wanted Zaynab to do the same. The problem was that Zaynab did not see herself as an outsider and tried to convince Yusuf that having grown up next to the camp, she came from a similar conservative social environment. Yusuf's argument about Zaynab's outsider status also loses its strength once we consider that "the girls from the camp" like Yasmin who wanted to step out of social norms also faced similar pressures from al-Ḥayāh 's management.

Zaynab and her sister's life circumstances altered, and they stopped volunteering in al-Ḥayāh as much as before: Zaynab became a teacher in a private French high-school and Sakinah became more involved with her university education. Moreover, they moved to a faraway neighborhood. Despite not frequenting al-Ḥayāh as often as they used to, volunteering for the camps still remained a significant aspiration which they combined with prioritizing volunteering for young girls and women. Zaynab became a member of the Jordanian Women's Union and

diverted the union's activities to an education project in Jerash refugee camp led only by women. Layla joined a project GIZ started on youth leadership, and as part of this project she started an English study club for young women in the al-Naṣr camp, utilizing the space of the Youth Club in the camp. She had initially planned it to be a gender-mixed program, but then considering how many people might not send their daughters, she decided to make it into a girls' program only. She told me that there was another reason for changing her mind: she wanted the girls to forge strong friendships like what she observed among the young men in the association and was afraid that the presence of young men would prevent this from happening:

> You know how girls stop talking or enjoying when boys come in a room. They are afraid that they will be judged… I didn't want this to happen, because this would prevent them to get closer to each other. I want them to look after for each other. Like the guys in the association, I want them to be friends with each other; enjoy together and be like a "gang" looking after each other for life. We will see how it goes…

Layla continued this program for four months, but it didn't lead to a long-term, self-sustaining endeavor, partly because once the GIZ project ended, the volunteers she brought with her (her friends from the university) did not want to pay the transportation costs from their pockets, and partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the social distancing measures.

Defining inside and outside: Who Counts as a Son of the Camp?

Although Zaynab insisted that her positionality in relation to the camp was that of an insider, her sister disagreed with her and agreed with Yusuf in his argument that she was an outsider:

> We are the first girls from outside the camp volunteering in al-Ḥayāh. The boys were only used to girls like Nour and Alaa, all from the camp. Even if girls came, maybe they came for a day for fundraising, or for an hour. And they didn't mix with people. Not like us, every Friday. We are suggesting programs, talking to everyone, mixing with people… They are not used to it. Ok, we live right next to the camp but even things differ here from one street to another. The camp, in my mind, was associated with Palestine and people with national feelings, but I didn't know the details. Your house might be right next to the camp, but the inside of the camp is different. Very different. You become actually *inside* the people. There is too much gossip, and everybody interferes in the life of the other. Especially, in the life of girls.

Layla's words demonstrate the gendered complexities about the camp's imagined inside and outside. While being an *'amal fityanī* volunteer was a vital conjuncture for young women, it poses different kinds of challenges than young men encounter. As their experiences suggest, many of these challenges are related to dominant norms around female modesty and gender mixing. A discourse of fictive kinship makes it possible to overcome these challenges as long as female volunteers hold on to the patriarchal bargain and behave in a way to save their reputation (and hence the reputation of the association), but for those who choose not to uphold this bargain, like Yasmin, Zaynab and Layla, these challenges become barriers. Thus, more than being an insider or outsider to the camp, their inclusion hinges on their commitment to the bargain.

What about who counts as "a son of the camp"? Like female volunteers, male volunteers also encounter hindrances in *'amal fityanī*, and issues of insider/outsider status become relevant for them too; however, in their case, what matters is what young men perceive as the dominant masculinities in the camp and the intersection of socioeconomic status and urban space. I use the term dominant on purpose to differentiate it from Connell's important concept of "hegemonic masculinity" (1995), which represents the idealized and normative model of masculinity that is often reinforced and upheld by social norms and institutions. The reason for this differentiation is because some of the traits that are associated with hegemonic masculinity in the context of "the youth of the camps" are not necessarily idealized or desired but my interlocutors strongly believed that they should be confirmed. These traits are over-toughness and assertiveness which Hart also observed as a dominant model of masculinity in Ḥusayn camp, Jordan (2008), and as Achilli also argues in his ethnography in Weḥdāt camp, both the troublemakers and *shuyukh* (men of piety) carry these traits (2015c). In fact, my interlocutors often recounted humorous

stories about former troublemakers turning to religion, and later turning back to becoming troublemakers. For a young man to be considered as a "son of the camp," he had to embody the traits of over-toughness and assertiveness, even though he should only act upon these traits when necessary.

However, to understand the division of inside/outside as pertaining to men, one needs to go beyond a debate on masculinity and consider factors at the intersection of urban space and class. These factors are particularly important once one considers the camp as a space of overlapping displacement of Palestinian refugees, new refugees (e.g., Syrians), and migrant groups (e.g., Egyptians). Additionally, none of the refugees are confined to the camp, meaning that all these groups interact with a socioeconomically divided city.

The changes that the urban fabric of Amman has gone through in the last decades has led scholars to elaborate on the increasing social disparities between East and West Amman (Ababsa 2011). Schwedler (2009), who wrote on Amman's emerging spaces of cosmopolitanism, described the city as being two cities: cosmopolitan West Amman, and East Amman, where the majority of the city's disenfranchised live. West Amman has changed mainly because of government's efforts in attracting foreign capital (Schwedler 2009) through privatization, development projects, free trade zones and skyscrapers (Parker 2009), while most parts of East Amman, where the majority of city's poor live, including its immigrants and refugees, remained mostly the same. Moreover, the labor power for the expanding service industry comes from the areas of East Amman where al-Naṣr camp is also located, and it is the young men who often provide this labor. In addition to providing this labor by moving in and out of the camp to areas in West Amman, young men also encounter people from West Amman as workers of INGOs

who interacted with *'amal fityanī* volunteers to reach urban Syrian refugees.[36] The boundaries of "being a son of the camp" have been renegotiated by these divisions in the urban fabric of Amman over the last two decades.

Both Ameen's association in Ḥusayn camp and al-Ḥayāh in al-Naṣr camp had volunteers and beneficiaries who are refugees from Syria (Syrians displaced by recent war as well as Palestinian Syrians) and children of immigrant workers from Egypt, in addition to the Palestinian refugees who grew up residing in and around these refugee camps. These children's and volunteers' non-Palestinianness was never a reason for their exclusion from volunteer work or from being seen as "sons of the camp." The main contention guiding the exclusions around this identity, i.e., being a son of the camp, did not derive from national identity but from considerations at the intersections of class and urban space. This contention demonstrated itself most powerfully whenever young people from INGOs visited al-Ḥayāh for establishing partnerships with INGOs they worked/volunteered in. For my interlocutors in the camp, West Amman was represented by these people whom they called *"abna monazzamat"* (sons of INGOs). My interlocutors showed disdain towards these youth, whom they saw as coming from money, leading cushioned lives in West Amman, and working in INGOs as a career choice rather than humane sentiments. Accordingly, they stereotyped these young men as people who had lived a sheltered life from the troubles of the world, and, hence, less of a man. My Palestinian youth interlocutors in the camps perceived their Syrian or Egyptian peers who grew up with them in the camp as being more akin than those Palestinians who grew up in West Amman.

Thus, even when Yusuf and others tried to include those who were not from the refugee camps in their work (like volunteers who had experience in INGOs) by arguing that "whoever

[36] For more information, see Chapter 5.

works for the good of the camp is a son of a camp," those who did not share similar class backgrounds rarely stuck around or were excluded from the friendship networks of the male volunteers in the camp. For example, the youth in the association kept referring to a visitor from an INGO as "George" since he used English words in every sentence, something that the youth labeled as a silly way of showing off that one went to a private school. The incompatibility they perceived between themselves and the youth from West Amman was so profound that they were quite dismissive of an upcoming summer camp project led by BDS Youth Jordan. Despite valuing BDS' political role in boycotting Israeli products, some of the young volunteers still ridiculed the comfortable camping conditions of this event and commented how it was because the rich boys from West Amman were too soft to endure real camping conditions.

This othering was not only their doing, however. Throughout my research, I have been repeatedly warned by middle- and upper-class Jordanians (including those of Palestinian origin) about my visits to the Palestinian refugee camps. For example, I was told that I was going to be sexually harassed, or robbed, or find myself in the middle of a fight. Moreover, many commented that they were surprised that people in the camps were talking to me since I was not wearing the headscarf. Many people really believed that people in Palestinian refugee camps could only be troublemakers or religious extremists.

Between the Camp and the City: Becoming a "a son of the camp"

In this section, I want to talk about instances in which a perceived outsider became an insider for my male interlocutors. The stories of Faruq, Nadeem, and Hasan show how factors at the intersection of class and masculinity made this somewhat possible. Faruq is a volunteer who was raised in a middle-class neighborhood, Tabarbour, rather than a refugee camp. He comes from modest means, and his mother, who was a UNRWA teacher at time, introduced him to

'amal fityanī when he was fourteen. Faruq strongly believed that his father used to be a *fedai* when he was younger; one time Faruq found his old passport filled with stamps from different Arab countries. Despite admiring his intellect and political commitment to the Palestinian cause, Faruq suffered from his father's overly authoritative attitude. Moreover, even though his father loved reading and talking about Palestinian politics at home, he forbade him from opening his mouth about these issues outside of the house. He interpreted this ban as his father's still living in the "September days," referring to Black September. According to Faruq, his mother realized that her son needed an outlet outside of the house and sent him to the summer camp. He told me that he immediately fell in love with the atmosphere:

> Then I saw the children coming, chanting about independence, about Palestinian camps, I became so happy! The most important thing to me that I used to think nobody knows about Palestine but people in my house. There are people like me. Everybody loves Palestine like me. Moreover, my father was not there!

His father's stories of heroic resistance in the camps of Palestine and Lebanon, the readings he made from an early age, and the sense of discipline he acquired at home paid off in the summer camp. Two associations allegedly competed to recruit him as a volunteer; one from Baqa'a and the other in Muḥaṭṭah camp, and Faruq founded himself in Muḥaṭṭah camp, which was closer to the school he attended at the time. At the age of fourteen, he started to volunteer and continued right until college, and returned to *'amal fityanī* before graduating after he and Yusuf became good friends.

While Faruq saw himself as an experienced volunteer of *'amal fityanī*, from very early on, his father instructed him about how to act among his peers in the camp:

> My dad always told me: Don't differentiate yourself from "the son of the camp." Eat the way they eat, drink the way they drink, sit the way they sit! I was very smart, I used to work a lot, but nobody at home told me "thank you." I found it strange. I understood later that my family wanted it to be that way. So that I don't get spoiled but be like the sons of the camp. And that's nice.

While Faruq thought that he acted the part, Yusuf and the others saw him still as a man of books who lacked the toughness that was required to survive the fights in the camp, and decided

to take additional steps to make sure he was included. To make Faruq "a son of a camp," Yusuf took him along to every funeral or social event in the camp. When Faruq graduated from the university, to publicly emphasize that Faruq was a son of the camp, the association even threw a graduation party for him in the main street of the camp and hung up a banner congratulating this "son of the camp" for his success, as it is customary to do. Thus, since Faruq was not able perform the required toughness, they mobilized other tactics.

Two other refugee men were not from al-Naṣr camp: Hasan and Nadeem. I met Hasan in the early days of my fieldwork, during a workshop on scenario writing that he gave in al-Ḥayāh. At the time, he already had his own non-profit film production company in Zarqa; he was an independent trainer for theater and got occasional gigs in the INGOs in the kingdom. With his shoulder length hair and button-down flannel shirts augmented with necklaces and beanies, he looked more like the young men from West Amman than the refugee men in the camp. Normally, his style would connote an upper-class background and a softer masculinity, but he was the one who had brought Nadeem into the association in the beginning, and in the years I knew Nadeem, he was the head of the social media department in the association. In addition to coming to al-Ḥayāh, he was working in an INGO project at the Azraq camp, a Syrian refugee camp located in the northeast of Jordan.

Because of their experience in the INGOs, volunteers sometimes teasingly called them *abna monazzamat* (sons of the INGOs), although when directed at Nadeem and Hasan this labeling was not meant to ridicule or criticize. It was only after interviewing both men that I understood why the youth did not see them as outsiders. Both men had actually grown up with meager means in neighborhoods next to two different refugee camps, Muḥaṭṭah and Zarqa, even though they became involved in the INGO sector afterwards. As a child, Hasan worked as a

vegetable vendor in the bazaar of the camp and, it was during this time he also frequented its Youth Club to learn judo to defend himself. After dropping out of school for some tumultuous years to provide for the family, he started his university education, and it was there that he encountered theater through an INGO. Nadeem spent his childhood in an UNRWA school in Zarqa camp and played a Hamas fedai in his first school play. While his sympathies for Hamas disappeared after growing up, his love for theater made him to pursue theater training wherever it was provided. Since INGOs had mushroomed in an "abnormal" way after the "events" in Syria, he got most of these trainings from these INGOs, which also led him to find jobs in this sector.

Both Hasan and Nadeem saw the association as their real volunteer work, even though they continued to take training, volunteer opportunities, and jobs in the INGO sector. Hasan was initially directed to the Youth Club of the camp through a friend of his, who told him that he could give theater lessons there. His experience in the Youth Club was disappointing. First, he thought that children were not ready to train for theater skills since they were not even disciplined enough to endure an ice breaker session or a simple training like communication skills. Second, even though they were not actually going to pray, the volunteers in the Youth Club walked to the mosque with him just to give the children the impression that they would:

> I really got mad. If you don't pray, don't pray, that's ok but why pretend? In the mosque, I felt like crying… why is there no one in this place? Where are the "NGOs"? We work in Azraq, Zarqa, Zaateri etc etc…So much money. This place is a Palestinian refugee camp, it is poor, and there is no one, no support… I started to think to myself: why don't I work here?

Frustrated and sad, he ran into one of his previous teachers from the UNRWA school who advised him to go to Yusuf's association. His first impressions, he told me, made him feel like this is a place that he can work. Running into a sweaty and tired Yusuf cleaning the floors of the association, he told me, he immediately felt that he came to the right place:

> I know many INGOs, I am used to not seeing the manager. You don't see him! I was impressed that he was cleaning the floors by himself. Yusuf and I started talking…. He told me about the program. I liked it. I asked where does the money come from? He said: from us and our friends. I was surprised. I told him that I

> could come and train… Who can I train? He told me, there are volunteers. I asked: Can I do ToT so that we raise the level of the people. He said: What do you want? We can't pay money. I said: I only want a room, board and pens. But can I take 5 dinars for transportation daily? He said: ok. We started talking. They are afraid… Who is this? What does he want? I went for a second day; Yusuf and I sat for four hours. I told him that the training takes 75 hours. 15 days. He said: Difficult. Here it doesn't work, people can't come, this is the camp, everybody is working, they are never on time etc. I said: I am from Muḥaṭṭah camp, I am not "son of INGOs," I am one of you. It will work. If it doesn't work, it doesn't, we can say that we tried it!

This interaction demonstrates two main issues: First, as a Palestinian refugee himself, Hasan wanted to bring the knowledge, tools and, later possibly, funding from the INGOs that are working in Jordan to the Palestinian refugee camp which, as a humanitarian space, he perceived as completely neglected by the international community. Second, he was also aware of the suspicion and mistrust that Yusuf and his friends felt towards outsiders; hence he emphasized his roots in Muḥaṭṭah camp. Nadeem also shared with me that from the beginning he had the intention to bring the new tools he learned in the INGOs to the Palestinian refugee camps:

> All of these INGOs are new. UNRWA is old, but only UNRWA is old, everything else is new. Even if there was something old, we didn't hear of it. Who knew that there is something called "fund" or "proposal" before the Syrian crisis? Palestinians are an old story; they believe that because we have citizenship, there is no longer a Palestinian cause for refugees in Jordan. Yes, Syrians are in a bad situation. But people in the Palestinian refugee camps are also dying… Only slowly dying. That's why we bring the tools we learned elsewhere to the association. That's why it's important for me to give theater trainings in the association. That's why we are on the ground all the time.

While Faruq was embraced for his cultural and political knowledge on Palestine, Hasan and Nadeem became insiders by virtue of fitting the dominant masculinity traits of the young men in the camp. As those who knew the work of INGOs, they became the contact people whenever INGOs visited the association, all the while, in social gatherings, Yusuf and other volunteers from the camp referred to the fights Nadeem and Hasan had got into outside the camp and praised their street-smarts. It was these two men who made the partnerships possible for al-Ḥayāh that I will describe further in the fifth chapter.

Conclusion: Rethinking Camp and the City and Youthfulness

In this chapter, first, by highlighting the narratives of Palestinian refugee youth, in the camps I demonstrated that volunteering becomes a vital conjuncture for young men and women who started going to the institutions of *'amal fityanī* since their childhood. While young men believe that they need to achieve new horizons in terms of their self-realization, social lives and support, young women often enter these networks as fictive kin and have to consider the terms of the patriarchal bargain they engage in. Second, I argued that in this context of overlapping displacement and an urban space that is socioeconomically polarized, the terms of who counts as an insider gets renegotiated and being a Palestinian refugee no longer suffices. To be considered as an insider of the camp, young women are required to perform normative modes of female modesty, while for men, insider status is at the intersection of class and contesting masculinities.

Ultimately, it is the young women's narratives that show us the complexities of Palestinian identity in the camps where working for something considered for the benefit of Palestinians is highly gendered and meditated by cultural norms. Their struggles for occupying space in the associations demonstrate that instead of a concept of gender segregation, one should talk about the domination of public spaces by men. Moreover, their narratives show us how our conceptions of youthfulness à la Bayat may not be as relevant for young woman, whose adventurousness or experimentation do not fit social norms.

Finally, this chapter contributes to the scholarly efforts investigating the refugee camps by demonstrating that, in the context of long-term displacement, being a camp refugee remains a key marker for social difference and operates as a point of inclusion and exclusion in the intercamp and intra-camp volunteer networks. Recent scholarship has questioned the shortcomings of Agamben's (1998) discussion of camps in terms of sovereign power and bare life (Robinson 2013; Malkki 1995; Sanyal 2014) and ethnographically generated theories

provided important insights demonstrating that camps are complex social spaces in their capacity that can generate new identities (Agier 2002; Malkki 1995; Perez 2011) and new forms of social solidarity for nationalist aspirations (Sayigh 1994; Peteet 1991, 2005).[37] My observations in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan support Perez's argument that being a camp refugee operates as a key marker of social difference (2021), and extended this argument further by examining how the social work of volunteering transforms what it means to be "of the camp." In short, I argue that volunteering makes even those who are neither Palestinian refugees nor born in the camps part of "being of the camp."

[37] See Introduction, pgs. 27-31 for a complete discussion of this issue.

Chapter 3: "We want to raise a generation": Between Development and Charity

Almost a month before Ramadan of 2018, the atmosphere in the association in al-Naṣr refugee camp where I had been volunteering and conducting my fieldwork started to change: the phones started to ring more often, and a sense of tension started to set in. One day, we were all crammed in the largest room of the association, the room named *Palestine*, and I was feeling doozy after hanging out with some forty volunteers and 350 children for six hours. We had been running from room to room, session to session accompanying children and volunteers participating in small educative games, learning the names of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, listening to a presentation on the biography of Baibars, and singing classical Arab and Palestinian songs. Everyone took turns for evaluations, first giving numeric scores for the performance of "the leader of the day" during the *seria*—the ritual that I described in Chapter 2—and then for the sessions that took place throughout the day. Then came volunteers' more elaborate comments on what went right and what went wrong: whether the leader of the day was successful in creating a disciplined yet joyous environment; whether the guides thought the way the supervisors taught their programs in an efficient way; or whether the day's breakfast was nutritious and delicious.

This Friday afternoon, I also heard an issue brought up for the first time when a volunteer from the management level declared to the others that the management decided to suspend the registration of new children until after Ramadan. To my surprise, this announcement did not encounter any reactions or follow-up questions. This response seemed unusual, because I was used to seeing volunteers, youths in their late teens or early twenties, asking lots of questions following such announcements made by leaders without their input. After the meeting, I went to Zaynab's house, in the neighborhood next to the camp. In our conversation, Zaynab alluded to a

prominent tension between the association's development goals and the camp residents' perception of the association as a charity provider:

> There are people who only send their children to the association right before Ramadan only to receive boxes. Those children would quit coming right after Ramadan. Our work is development, not charity, so why would we take them if they won't commit? Also, there are already so many children in the association who are in need of going to iftars and receiving boxes in Ramadan.

In my first months in the association, whenever I would prompt the volunteers to tell me more about the work they are doing in the association, many would join in discussing all the programs which they believed to be contributing to their development work. Only on a few occasions, might a volunteer mention that they also do "a little bit of charity work (*shogol khayri*)" during Ramadan and in case of emergencies: sudden material needs of the families in the camp that the volunteers would never discuss with the others openly. They conceived charity only in relation to cash and in-kind aid provision and belittled the institutions which prioritized charity work.

In my conversations with volunteers, they often argued that cash and in-kind aid provision responded to no real need in the lives of the children in the camps and was only a tool to make those who engage in it feel better about themselves or for creating loyalties towards those who provided it. In fact, calling their own work development or charity was exactly what they positioned their work in opposition to. This was curious given the fact that these *'amal fityanī* associations were nominally registered as charity associations with the Ministry of Social Development of Jordan.[38] Zaynab's elaboration on the reasons for pausing the registrations, which marked my sixth month in al-Ḥayāh (Life) association of the al-Naṣr camp was the first instance in which I realized that the usually underplayed practices in aid distribution played a contentious role in daily decision-making.

[38] See the introduction for a discussion about civil society, Palestinians, and the state.

In this chapter, by drawing on my observations, conversations, and interviews with young Palestinian volunteers in different associations, I argue that even though volunteers view their ultimate goal as contributing to the development of a new generation of Palestinians through "cultural and social care" (*alriaye thakafiya u alriaye ictimaiye*), the precarious conditions of the camp life, not a belief in the importance of charity work or a sense of religious duty, often led them to engage in charity.[39] They engaged in charity in the form of cash and in-kind aid provision, despite seeing it at odds with their project of creating a self-sufficient community of refugees who were equipped to overcome their present constraints in the camp, in Jordan and, once the right of return was realized, in Palestine.

In developing this argument across three sections in this chapter, I first explore how volunteers imagine their association as a safe and dignified space for children where they can realize their development goals and argue that they attach their own locally negotiated meanings to what safety and dignity mean. Then, I focus on some exemplary programs that volunteers provide for children in al-Ḥayāh and argue that regardless of the content of individual programs or activities, al-Ḥayāh volunteers mobilize whatever skills they have accumulated to help children to be self-reliant and feel a sense of belonging to and responsibility towards their camp and its residents. I demonstrate that as a form of care that depends on the labor of young volunteers, most of whom are themselves residents of the camps and former charity recipients, these programs and the smaller activities they create depend on youths' degrees of commitment, their availability, as well as the skill sets that they bring to the association.[40] This also means that by virtue of having volunteers experienced in both *'amal fityanī* and the newly boosted INGO

[39] For a discussion of the genealogy of the development debate in *'amal fityanī*, see Chapter 1.

[40] This ad hoc, improvisational approach is found in some solidarity volunteerism. See Sandri: Aid in the Jungle Refugee Camp.

sector of Jordan, the social and cultural care that al-Ḥayāh volunteers provide bring multiple and at times incommensurate approaches together: a more humanitarian approach that conceives the children as human beings and a more nationalist one that designates them as Palestinian refugees with a past and potential future in Palestine, but currently living in exile in Jordan. Despite its hybrid nature, however, youths' voluntary practices in *'amal fityanī* reflect an understanding of development that aims to help the upcoming generation survive both as Palestinian camp refugees and citizens of Jordan. Thus, the care the associations provide is implicated in a collective form of endurance that demands a kind of ethical subjectivity that is willing and ready to invest energies in one's camp community.

In the last section, I return to the opening scene of this chapter to demonstrate how the various tensions volunteers try to keep at bay come to the surface during the fasting month of Ramadan. I argue that the heightened expectations of multiple stakeholders (children, volunteers, families, prospective election candidates, individual philanthropists) and the frustrations of volunteers during Ramadan demonstrate to us the limits of volunteers' capabilities. Their understandings of development cannot be solved by humanitarian solutions, even by those provided by the refugees themselves, in the context of an ordinary precarity.

I finalize the chapter with a discussion on the ways in which this chapter contributes to studies on humanitarianism. I argue that through negotiating the need for aid and aspiration for development, they strive for creating a sense of community among the children they serve and aim to cultivate a particular ethical subjectivity that can neither be understood by primarily religious or neoliberal approaches to aid.

Creating a Safe Space

Considering *'amal fityanī* to be a safe space was a common trope that I heard across the Palestinian refugee camps. "The camp is not a safe space for children," Faruq told me in a conversation about the al-Naṣr camp. Yusuf jumped in and joked: "If someone really cares for their children, they will move out of the camp." The generalized conditions of precarity - socioeconomic marginalization, the prevalence of drug abuse, poor infrastructure, and low quality of education were believed to lead children to grow up in an unsafe atmosphere, regardless of the differences among the children in terms of their places of origin (from Palestine, Syria, or Egypt) or their family situation (children of divorced parents, orphans, or those who live in conditions of extreme poverty). By centering the camp instead of other factors and arguing that "the environment governs" (*al-bia buhkum*), al-Ḥayāh volunteers believed that the precarity of the camp life ultimately affected every child.

The discourse of safe space has been prevalent in the humanitarian sector since 1970s, and it assumes of the possibility of separating children from their environment and the adult world (Hart 2012). Given the prevalence of this discourse, it is not surprising that many volunteers utilized this term to describe part of the work that they do: these institutions are where children can come together and spend time in a monitored environment, and volunteers communicated with children's families and schools with the hopes of supporting them better. However, in this section, I investigate what safety means and how creating a safe space is negotiated on the ground to argue that it goes beyond this kind of monitoring and strengthening support systems. Safety, in this context, means providing a kind of vigilance and support that expands to other areas of camp life, including managing relationships in socially accepted ways and taking into consideration the power dynamics that govern the life in the camp.

In al-Ḥayāh and the other associations where I spent time, the volunteers replicated the volunteer system of *'amal fityanī* in which the Guides (*Murshid or Murshida*) took on the responsibility of paying attention to children's problems at home, street, and school and reapplied it to their association. Every Friday, before the programs started, each Guide would have an hour or so to converse with the children in his/her group, ask about their week, and try to understand the challenges in their lives. Moreover, they would pay occasional visits to the schools and talk to the teachers about children's schoolwork and attendance. Young volunteers, who had grown up hearing about the high quality of education in UNRWA schools where teachers with national fervor worked hard for the previous generations, often lamented this decrease in quality. While holding onto UNRWA as a symbol and witness to their predicament, camp residents across generations often referred to Palestinian refugees' humanitarian abandonment, signifying the disregard of the international community towards their camps.

"The street" was mainly a concern regarding the boy children who would spend time playing outside their homes, and by virtue of this behavior, they would be seen as prone to forms of violence (including sexual harassment) and exposure to drugs. Because of this gendered division of spaces of play, the male guides would also be advised to pay attention to their groups of boys in the street. It is only after many months that I came to realize that some of the volunteers had their own individual histories that contain childhood experiences of sexual abuse and harassment, early exposure to soft and hard drugs, and street violence. Qasim, an 18-year-old refugee man with whom I became friends through our visits to BDS Youth Jordan, told me that as a child he was sexually harassed by an older man in one of the *zokaks* (dead-end streets) of the camp. For him, this formative experience became one of the most significant reasons for

volunteering and he set his primary goal as preventing young boys from experiencing similar forms of violence.

Since the main cadre of the association is predominantly composed of volunteers from the refugee camps of Jordan, they perceived themselves as part of the precarious world children lived in. This shared experience was the foundation of their claim to a sense of expertise and the foundation of the sensitive, flexible, and pragmatic ways in which they interacted with families, teachers, and other forces that they believed to hold significant influence over the lives of the children in their care. For example, when one of the boys dropped out of the first year of high school and started work at a shop which was owned by a man with a reputation of being a drug dealer, the volunteers did not try to engage in a conversation with the boy's parents about the problems of child labor, even though many were in principle against it. Faruq told me that as young people who neither had spouses nor children, it would not be acceptable for them to engage with the families in such confrontational manners. Moreover, they knew the socioeconomic conditions of the family well, so they were aware that they depended on their son's labor. Instead, they quietly found alternative employment for the boy and put him at work by someone who they trusted and negotiated with this man that the boy's new job would not interfere with his school hours.

Although more shielded from the dangers of the street than boys were, female children faced the problem of early marriage. Zaynab, who was a *Murshide* to a group of 14-year-old girls, believed that a direct and confrontational approach would bring only negative results:

> They may marry you off at an early age. They may not let you study in university. Even when they do, they may limit what you can study: be a teacher so that you can work in an all female school. You may get a very high score from your university exam, but if your brother wants to go to university, they may give priority to him. There is already so little money… Or you may not find the time or place to study because of housework or taking care of your siblings. You are lucky if your brother starts working at an early age and luckier if your brother stands by you against your father. But you have to be clever, and know when you should be confrontational, when to take things slowly, when you should say ok until you have the power to say no. This is not an easy thing.

Such an instance of early marriage arose during my fieldwork, when Zaynab noticed that the family of one of her fourteen-year-old flowers (girls) decided to marry her off. Zaynab started to pay visits to the girl's mother and Yusuf to her father to convince them slowly and indirectly not to do so. One of the things Yusuf told the father was that if the girl would finish her education, she would be able to make a more profitable marriage, which in the long run would be better for the family.

This kind of approach that prioritized pragmatics instead of moral convictions in guiding relations with families infiltrated other aspects of volunteers' work. Instead of directly challenging social norms, they tried to bend them by working through their constraints. Their conception of the association as a safe space required navigating relations with people who exerted influence over the lives of individual children as well as the social life of the camp community. As volunteers of an association with no connections to international funding resources and which depended on the economic support of individual donors as well as the camp community, they were bounded by social norms and expectations.

For example, upon noticing that someone had stolen the bazaar stand in front of the door of al-Ḥayāh, Yusuf and his friends chose not to get another one to replace it and instead decided that Yusuf should go and track those who stole it. Volunteer boys used to staff this stand to sell various products whenever they needed to raise money for their families. The next day, the stand was back in its rightful place, recovered by Yusuf after a fistfight. Yusuf told me that the fight was not so much about recovering the stand as to show the troublemakers in the camp that they should not mess with the association or try to sell them drugs, beat them up, or approach for sexual advances. In this conversation, he also told me that even though he no longer wanted to get involved in physical fights like he used to when he was younger, these fights were necessary

to stop drug traders from approaching the boys in the association. Since he already had a reputation of being a troublemaker, he would apparently instigate a couple of fights a year with some of these men to show that he wasn't afraid to flex his muscles. According to him, this behavior was purely '*tamtheel'* (performance) since he saw that "fear is the only language some people understand" and he was abiding by the expectations of masculinity that were already in place.[41]

In dealing with people other than drug dealers, though, Yusuf used to tell me there was a need to employ more subtle tactics. One day, after almost a year of my fieldwork, a volunteer told us in a meeting that he had invited a certain sheikh Ḥusayn to volunteer as a Quran teacher in the association, an informal announcement that made some present volunteers giggle. Since I knew that the association didn't use to have such a program, I asked Yusuf whether they wanted to develop a religion program, a question that ended up with him softly ridiculing me. "No," he said with a huge laughter, "Even if we wanted, we wouldn't do it with this guy! He just pretends to know Islam but the only thing he does is to spread slander about the association because there are girls and boys in the same space." Apparently, the only reason that they invited him was to stop him from slandering the association and they did it with the full knowledge that this man would never give "a day of his life" to benefit others.

Thus, in the case of the al-Ḥayāh volunteers, the designation of the association as a safe space for children meant conceiving the association as a space of vigilance to protect children from the generalized precarity of the camp life and responding to the problems that children experience in accordance with the social norms and power dynamics of the camp. Despite utilizing a discourse of safe space that can be easily communicated to the international humanitarian organizations, how safety is negotiated on the ground derives from the volunteers'

[41] See Chapter 3 for a discussion on masculinity and the camp.

embedded positionalities with respect to their camp communities and their willingness to navigate relationships. The sense of agency at work here is one that does not confront or openly resist the power dynamics of the camp (like gender, family, and age hierarchies) that structure volunteers' lives and forms of care, but to instead tweak them for their own agendas. However, as the next section will clarify, one of the main concerns of children's safety is particularly related to the conditions of poverty and volunteers' approach to economic aid aimed to protect children from indignity of receiving economic assistance.

Creating a Space for Dignity: Emphasizing Fun

Volunteers often emphasized the importance of what they called, creating a "*jaw*" in the association for al-Ḥayāh to truly become a safe space. Literally translated as an atmosphere, air, or ambience, what this word refers to is volunteers' conscious effort in making al-Ḥayāh a place of attraction; a place where you would know something nice, fun, or interesting is happening at any time. This practice of fun and playfulness filtered into daily conversations as well as programs. Even during *seria*, which was supposedly a time when children were to demonstrate the most discipline, the dominant affect was almost always a sense of joy boosted by jokes and playfulness.

Image 3: The winning group of a competition celebrating in al-Ḥayāh association

In addition to the chants that were prevalent in other associations of *ʻamal fityanī* that are related to Palestine, al-Ḥayāh had its own chant reflecting the association's vision:

> To love and life, there is happiness in the association.
> Boys and girls are the leaders of the future
> The leaders and the management are the meaning of sovereignty
> Towards a person who masters happiness

The relationship between setting a joyful tone and having a safe space was only superficially apparent to me in the beginning, which I interpreted as an attempt to create a space of relief and comfort for children. However, for most volunteers, this emphasis on joy and happiness was also a means to protect children from the feelings of indignity that might emerge from relationships of aid. Any gesture that resembled charity or economic assistance took place silently and discreetly and whenever a new volunteer joined the association, trainings

emphasized the importance of making children not feel that they were "in need." In one such training, for example, Yaman warned newcomers in the following way:

> Some of the children may not have food at home, your job is to understand this and come to the management. We deal with it without making the child feel it. Don't talk about this among each other. Also, never take pictures while children are eating. Even during Ramadan. The child shouldn't feel like the association is feeding him, he should come if he is happy here, if he feels that the association benefits him with its programs.

During my fieldwork, I came to witness practices of private aid only after I developed a strong sense of rapport with some of the families and volunteers in al-Ḥayāh. For example, thanks to my visits to Nisreen, the mother of a thirteen-year-old boy living one street away from the association, I realized how much the family received in both in-kind and cash assistance from the association. While volunteers were reticent about these forms of aid the association provided, moments of crisis and long friendly conversations with Yusuf made me aware of some of the other instances. In another instance, it was only because of a sudden death in November 2019 that I realized the multitude of discreet forms of care a young boy and his family had received from the association over the previous years. Apparently, this boy was a Syrian refugee from Dara'a whose parents Yusuf and others could not convince not to return to Syria. Yusuf used to call this child Baibars, because like the historical Baibars, one of his eyes had a cataract and Yusuf didn't want him to see this as a defect but a point of commonality between him and a great historical figure.[42] He had problems with his heart and the association had funded his heart operation. The day before the family returned to Syria, they prepared a birthday party for his sister; the same sister they had rescued before when the first house they resided in in the camp burned down. Baibars died a tragic death after returning to Syria by stepping on a landmine while playing with his friends.

[42] Baibars is a popular Muslim ruler known for defeating the crusaders and the Mongols.

Based on her fieldwork in Lebanon's Baddawi refugee camp where Palestinian camp residents welcomed new coming refugees from Syria, Qasmiyeh (2019) conceptualizes similar ways of private acts of kindness and solidarity as "poetics of undisclosed care" and argues that these practices of care is "strongly grounded in religious belief."[43] But when al-Ḥayāh volunteers talked about the privacy of aid, the value they emphasized was that of human dignity rather than religion, which at times bordered into a sense of Palestinian dignity that has been part of Palestinian discourses from the period of nationalist mobilization in 1960s (Sayigh 1997) to later periods of protests in Palestine in 2010s (Sunaina 2017).

As institutions where self-identified Muslim Palestinian men and women volunteers, the programs of *'amal fityanī* associations, including al-Ḥayāh, did have some religious components, like an occasional reading of an *ayat* from the Quran on Fridays during the *seria,* making some of figures in the history of Islam a topic of conversation in biography sessions, or celebrating the Islamic Holidays, especially the month of Ramadan, with celebratory activities. Yet none of them identified faith or religion as a primary motivation in their engagement with the children in the Palestinian refugee camps nor did they express a desire for cultivating Muslim subjectivities. As one of the veteran volunteers, Faruq, responded to a 15-year-old volunteer's question as to whether the Guides should make children memorize the Quran in a meeting, their job was "not to increase people's religiosity."

Economic assistance underemphasized through volunteer's practices of discreet aid provision, as well as through the discursive frame that designates the children in the association as the future volunteer leaders instead of beneficiaries. In this framework, the refugee child is not an object of compassion or pity, but a volunteer leader in the making. Thus, when the children grow up to be volunteers themselves, they would not be returning a favor, but would be fulfilling

[43] "The Poetics of Undisclosed Care," https://refugeehosts.org/2019/05/21/the-poetics-of-undisclosed-care/.

their leadership potential by working for the development of new generations and betterment of their camp community. Thus, reciprocity was supposed to be internalized in a way that to compel children to ensure the future of the practice.

In fact, as I clarify in the upcoming section, they actively tried to avoid being mistaken for actors who prioritized religion and economic aid provision in their engagements with children. Their distant stance against "charity work" and actors identified with engaging primarily in charity work also came from concerns related to how they perceived their competitors who prioritized faith.

"We are Muslims, They Are Brothers to Muslims"

On a warm autumn Friday, I was on the rooftop of the association with Zaynab and her group of girls for breakfast. While I was eating my falafel sandwich, one of the "flowers" pulled a chair behind me, untied my bun, and started to braid my hair. I was one of the few women who did not wear a headscarf and since I had long hair, girls often experimented with it. Zaynab snapped a picture of us, me trying to eat my sandwich and giggling and Fatma pulling and braiding my hair. Yusuf was also on the rooftop with his group of boys and saw this scene. He came to us and politely reminded Zaynab not to post the picture on Facebook. Zaynab teased him and told him that she would never post the picture like that anyways and said: "Are we the Brotherhood?"

By then, I already knew what the problem was. It had nothing to do with me or Fatma, or with the fact that she was braiding my hair, and instead had everything to do with the sandwich I was holding in my hands. As I discussed in the previous section, volunteers usually demonstrated an ethics of discretion when it came to economic aid provision as a measure against children's possibility of feeling a kind of indignation. However, as Zaynab's response to Yusuf indicates,

there is also another aspect of this ethics of discretion, which is the way volunteers of *'amal fityanī* perceived the competing institutions that engaged in aid work in and around Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan.

In Chapter 3, through the life trajectories of volunteers in the Ḥusayn, al-Naṣr and Talbiyah camps, I argued that *'amal fityanī* has traditionally been a male-dominated kind of volunteer work and demonstrated how young volunteer men and women usually perceived religiously-inspired engagement with children as creating barriers for the inclusion of girls in the camp institutions. However, most volunteers' dislike towards those who prioritized faith in their engagements towards children was not limited to issues of gender inclusivity. In fact, their negative position stemmed from a combination of factors. First, since many of them, at some points in their lives, used to be beneficiaries of predominantly religious institutions, and they had their own personal histories of injury stemming from these encounters and interactions. Second, operating in the same refugee camps, many believed that these institutions were not only stronger rivals with better access to funding networks, but also morally inferior in their usage of charity to harness political support. In al-Ḥayāh, especially in reference to Muslim Brotherhood affiliated institutions, Yusuf and others would sometimes jokingly say "We are Muslims, and they are brothers to Muslims," connoting this sense of moral inferiority.

Yaman is one of the founders of al-Ḥayāh, and in Chapter 3, I shared the story of how he started frequenting the Youth Club of his camp. Before becoming a volunteer in the Youth Club, however, Yaman also frequented a Muslim Brotherhood center for a year, but he decided to quit going there:

> What happened between me and them (Brotherhood) was that they used to give us cards and they used to say: Go to the mosque and get the signature of the Imam that shows that you went and prayed. I looked at them and said: I don't pray to you, I pray to God, take this card and I don't want it. Where is my dignity? They would make you memorize the Quran by force. It is not fardh (obligatory) in Islam… I don't want to, I am free, I want to memorize songs, but it's forbidden there. But when I was on the 8th grade, I memorized

> parts of the Quran and I went to Umrah with them. So that I could travel! My uncle was already living in Saudi and I wanted to see him. For me, I don't hate them but I don't like them and I don't like their work. They make you do things not for God or for your community, but for them to give you things. See even I did that!

As Yaman's narrative suggests, despite benefiting from the Muslim Brotherhood center's reward system himself, he disliked this kind of approach towards faith. Yaman's story is not the only one that I heard in which volunteers admitted that as children they had utilized the opportunities of the institutions for their own purposes, all the while developing a dislike towards the institution. Firas is another young man who told me with mischief and pride that he went to Umrah with the Brotherhood seven times, every time thinking of each visit as an opportunity for adventure, rather than religious duty:

> I went to the Umrah five times with them; every time for adventure! Anyway, I was nine. Many problems happened. They said: don't wear that necklace, it is haram! I had a necklace on the shape of the map of Palestine. Also, one time I was praying so that I could win the competition and travel- you know how children are- but I was praying towards Palestine. The first qibla was in Palestine; I don't know whether you know this? They got mad at me. However, the important issue was that I used to discuss with them a lot, about details that they consider red lines. They were mad at me. I was already happy in the Youth Club, so I left their center in the end.

Some volunteers did not frequent Muslim Brotherhood institutions when they were children, but they shared the same institutions once Muslim Brotherhood won the majority in the Youth Club elections. Now a young man in his mid-30s, Omar was one of those who had to leave the Youth Club of the Irbid camp (*Nadi Karmel*) after such an election, and years later, he resumed his voluntary work in the Baqāʾ camp with another group:

> I left Nadi Karmel in 2001. They got rid of me because I am not a *sheikh*, not one of them, because I am not Islamic. I didn't use to pray, I used to wear the Che Guevara hat, on which there is a star, and I would go to the Youth Club. The head of the Club told me: you are wearing the hat of someone who is *Kafir*, and I told him: I love Che Guevara, he is a revolutionary man in the world! He slapped me and sent me away. Before, I stayed some to see their program: there were no chants of '*amal fityani*'; only "God is Great." He told me that they only have projects in which there is Islam; *fikih, sherii* stories, going to Umra and Haj. No music, no theater, nothing! Anyway, he beat me and sent me away... I remained in the camp without a committee. There was one other (institution) who were Jihadists, and another only doing charity.

Another such volunteer was Faruq who used to be a volunteer in the Youth Club of the Muḥaṭṭah camp, until the Brotherhood gained the majority. Faruq told me that he and his volunteer leaders tried to work with them for a while, but ended up opening their own association:

> We tried to work with them a couple of months, but it didn't work. Their system is very bad. They focus on charity, and everything is forbidden! Even singing Palestinian songs are forbidden. They only want Islamic songs, that didn't work for us. So, we opened our own association.

During that time one of Faruq's volunteer leaders was Mohsin, and when I interviewed Mohsin in the association in the Muḥaṭṭah camp, a friend of his, an older man in his 60s, told me that they were "thrown out" of the Youth Club, and now the orphan committee of the Youth Club was very inactive after "the beards" invested all the money coming for the orphans in the football team. Mohsin partially objected, saying that it was them who left the Youth Club, and not the other way around. In our interview, Mohsin suggested that they still see the Brotherhood as a powerful and competing actor influencing their engagements with the children and families in the camp:

> Some mothers think the boys should work, but we tell them God will give their share. It is time for them to focus on their studies, plus they go and work as electricians or with gas, very difficult and dangerous works. Some send their children to centers like Islamic center… you see children going there for aid, families waiting outside but… In this work, we should deal with people as humans. I cannot collect them on the door. I was one of them! Whenever we have distributions, you cannot find one person waiting on the door. Everybody comes inside, sits on the chair. The volunteers go to the houses of the elderly to distribute the aid. You should approach people with dignity. But they even try to take volunteers from here, they make them sit down, drink coffee, talk about money, and they have a lot of money and then they say: come here but don't go to Hasan. They can't though because we are established in the right way.

Finally, another volunteer who went to Mohsin's association for a while after the Brotherhood took over their Youth Club in the Ḥusayn camp was Ameen, which I only learned when I asked him why he and his friends left the Youth Club upon hearing how much he liked being there:

> The Brotherhood made us leave. They won in the elections, and I swear we tried to work with them so that our children won't stay without an institution, but we couldn't. You know if you leave many children in your group may also leave because they love you. We really tried, I was a supervisor at the time, but I would go and do public service in the streets like "helpers" so that I don't have to deal with them. I don't know, maybe, it is because of our convictions. For example, when they have meetings, they need to get dinner. They don't pay for it; it is from the children's money. They don't get hummus and falafel, they want to get special food for themselves. It's orphans' money, how can you bring mansaf for yourself? Children are eating hummus and falafel! In their own centers, they get salaries, and this is also not okay for

> me. Then, I went to the Youth Club in Muḥaṭṭah camp for volunteering with Hasan until we opened this association.

As I was listening to these stories, I used to ask Yusuf whether his experience in the Youth Club was similar, but every time he would tell me that the Brotherhood never became successful in the Youth Club of the al-Naṣr camp. For a while they used to have a center across the Youth Club, but it was closed in early 2010s. Towards the end of my fieldwork, however, Yusuf complained to me about a current problem al-Ḥayāh was experiencing: He heard that the zakat committee adjacent to the camp was telling the families not to send their children to al-Ḥayāh because of its gender-mixing and threatening them to cut them from their zakat. Yusuf told me that while in theory, Yusuf and his friends could file an official complaint about the zakat committee with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, they chose to not do so, believing that the families would lose their zakat during the process of investigation, which was a cost the association could not manage to cover.

Within the networks of *'amal fityanī* institutions across the camp, volunteers often discussed the Muslim Brotherhood as a powerful yet morally inferior competition. In fact, Firas, who used to be in the management of the *fityan* committee of the Youth Club of al-Naṣr camp during 2010-2012 told me that to be able to revive this committee during this time, they had to engage in the same "tactics" that the Brotherhood Center was using:

> One of their tactics is giving kefala to everyone and their brothers and, for example, there is Zaid in the Youth Club, they tell him come here (to our center) we will give you 50 dinar per month and to your brother Abdallah. Some people accepted, because they are poor, some didn't accept. There were some children who would frequent the Youth Club, while their brothers would go to the brotherhood center. In the end what did we do? We started to give more kefala than the Brotherhood was giving. We didn't want to tie them with aid, but we had to. Then, for example, we bought play station for the Youth Club. We brought a lot of things, and you know children are jealous of each other. Moreover, the Brotherhood is very rigid towards children, I told you how they beat me. However, children would have fun in the Youth Club and learn lots of things: there was theater, Chorus, painting, reading groups for older children. There were a lot of things that would make the child feel happy in the Youth Club.

Firas and others' words remind one of Bayat's discussions about the conflictual relationship that doctrinal authorities (both secularists or Islamists) have with practices of fun because "as a

source of instantaneous fulfillment, it represents a powerful rival archetype, one that stands against discipline, rigid structures, single discourse, and monopoly of truth" (Bayat 2007, 457). Thus, in addition to the fact that *'amal fityanī* volunteers perceived the Brotherhood institutions as a powerful yet morally inferior competition, Firas' and others' comments also show how they see the framework the Brotherhood provides for children as lacking playfulness and fun.

The Aim of 'amal fityanī: Raising a Generation

Not only in al-Ḥayāh, but in other associations across I visited across the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, volunteers of ' *'amal fityanī* expressed their belief that by volunteering they could contribute to the development of a conscious and cultured generation of Palestinian camp refugees, even when their beneficiaries included children of Syrian refugees and Egyptian migrant workers. Alluding to Ben-Gurion's alleged words of "the old will die and the young will forget," they situated their efforts to teach the history of Palestinian displacement and to make sure "the young" would not forget this history. My interlocutors often talked about their own generation as the last one that would remember the large protests in their camps during the war in Gaza in 2014 and showed concern for the upcoming generation's consciousness as Palestinians. To this end, they included cultural programs in their associations' activities on Arab and Palestinian folk songs and traditional Palestinian dances, and they taught biographies of personalities from Palestine and the Arab world.

Despite the decolonizing framework that they shared with other institutions of *'amal fityanī*, al-Ḥayāh volunteers' understanding of development and the programs they created also aimed at futures that are not in Palestine, reflecting larger considerations of facilitating a form of good life for the children both as refugees from Palestine and citizens of Jordan. Among the many recreational program sessions that I observed in al-Ḥayāh on Fridays, I witnessed chess

classes, table tennis, football, wrestling, basketball and drawing. Skills training sessions at times include cultural components like learning and singing Arab and Palestinian folk songs and traditional Palestinian dances, at other times were directed to skills that do not necessarily have cultural relevance like workshops on critical thinking, storytelling, scenario writing, singing, learning a musical instrument, social media usage, computer skills, foreign language acquisition, theater, and photography. For those children who demonstrate a special interest in and propensity towards certain programs, available volunteers would later create "Clubs" during the week so that they could get further training.

Since these programs and trainings depended on the availability and commitment of young people who had different obligations towards their families, schools and employment, however, a central aspect of the association's work remained initiative taking and improvisation. Even though the founders of the association would strive to create a long-term and planned schedule based on children's preferences in the beginning of each school year; it was not rare for people to fill in for each other to create activities on the spot. As a result, the "development work" of the association ended up dominated by those who were committed, flexible, creative, and willing to take initiative. This tension between planning and improvisation created a mixture of programs which were supervised by volunteers with different skillsets, approaches, sensibilities, and knowledge.

These multiple and, at times, seemingly incommensurate logics make al-Ḥayāh a place where children talk about "the right of return" as a definite future that will one day be realized, while at the same time they receive care that is geared to improve their lives in Jordan. Which of these logics becomes dominant depends on the commitment of volunteers with different aspirations, and finally what take place on the ground is a kind of approach to development that

is daily negotiated and innovated, but one that continually inculcates a sense of community and belonging to the camp.

In al-Ḥayāh, in addition to keeping some of the central tenets of *'amal fityanī* intact – including the division of volunteers into guides, supervisors, and helpers as well as the titles of the children as boys and flowers (girls) and the ritual of forming the *seria* in the beginning and end of Friday programs – volunteers tried to incorporate the knowledge they gained from their friends who were in the booming INGO sector of Jordan, volunteering or working as case managers in projects that aimed to manage the Syrian refugee crisis. Yusuf told me about the reasons behind this in the following ways:

> We noticed that we gave the child something cultural but there is something bad psychologically or socially. He starts to understand culture, music, Palestine, plays chess, his schoolwork becomes better… But the psychosocial problems remain, like he or she keeps beating other children, or remains scared and silent. We decided to stop and ask people. If you want to make a revolution, you should look at other revolutions in the world, but also you can't just imitate them, right? We talked to our professors in the university. Also, Khaled was working at CARE International with Syrian refugees, we talked to him. But we didn't work in the same way; we understood the idea and adapted it to our own program. For example, they had an activity for the little boys and girls something like "healing through singing," we immediately understood that this won't work in the camp because the boys see themselves already as men. However, you can use theater for social development here, too. It makes sense. Or you can't treat a volunteer like a paid employee; a volunteer is here because he or she wants to give from his heart not because he will be compensated.

As Yusuf's words indicate, the volunteers benefited from the knowledge of their friends in the INGO sector, and later they incorporated some Palestinian camp volunteers who were simultaneously working with the INGO's for the management of the Syrian crisis, but it should be noted that many were quite critical of foreign-funded humanitarian actors and despite seeing some merits in their projects, as I explain in Chapter 5, many of them considered their ethics as being not really that humanitarian.

Here, I want to focus on three socio-cultural programs which turned into long-lasting clubs. The reason I focus on these three is because they show the variety of approaches and understandings that emerge in the space of the association in the name of development. The first

club I would like to explore is Nadeem's statistics club which lasted about four months. As someone who is both knowledgeable about INGO approaches and *'amal fityanī* in Palestinian refugee camps, Nadeem told me that he created this program both to teach children the importance of teamwork and to cultivate a sense of responsibility in them about their refugee camp, its residents, and their needs. Throughout these four months, twenty children were divided into small groups, and they devised and conducted small surveys with the inhabitants of the camp. Before children started visiting families, Nadeem taught them the principle of scientific neutrality and how to collect face to face data and invited his volunteer friend Hasan to give them a training he learned from an INGO for the improvement of communication skills. Both Nadeem and Hasan ran other clubs in which children acquired theater skills, learned effective usage of social media and acquainted themselves with the principles of scenario writing.

In addition to these kinds of INGO inspired clubs, there were also those which were closer to formal education. For example, as a university student studying French, Zaynab recruited her friends from the language departments of University of Jordan to give foreign language classes to children. In fact, she told me that she imagined these language classes as gateways for children to broaden their horizons and learn about other cultures, and that's why I was instructed by her to cook a traditional Turkish dish for my Turkish students once. Her sister Layla was as active a volunteer as Zaynab and came to the association multiple days a week and gave support classes for the *tawjihi* students who were preparing for the upcoming notorious university exam. In addition to Zaynab and Layla, an Arabic teacher at a nearby government school organized weekly Arabic classes and Faruq, whose math skills were known to be good, helped groups of children before their exams.

Finally, Faruq was also the supervisor of one the most longstanding programs in the association: the *watani* (nationalist/patriotic) program. He was one of the volunteers who the children took as a role model; charismatic, engaging, knowledgeable and serious yet humorous. During my time in Jordan, I witnessed Faruq devise and implement this program first on his own, and then in cooperation with two other volunteers. In this program, children learned the fundamental events in the history of Palestinian displacement and resistance, read short stories written by Palestinian authors, learned the history of Palestinian nationalist music and life stories of these composers, and talked about the current living conditions of other refugee camps in Jordan and elsewhere. The program involved sessions on what right of return meant according to international agreements, how Palestine was divided with the British mandate, the 1948 war and refugees, the initial mobilization of Palestinians during 1960s with the establishment of the PLO, the legal conditions of Palestinian refugees in different Arab countries, and how different camps in Jordan came to be established after the *Nakba* and *Naksa*. The past in this formulation doesn't figure as a fixed moral condition but includes histories of generations of refugees born in exile. What the patriotic program excluded was any conversation about current Palestinian factionalisms, an exclusion Faruq and others thought to be necessary given the young age of their "boys and flowers" and in order to keep the program patriotic and not political.

As an INGO trained actor who has also volunteered in multiple *'amal fityanī* associations until al-Ḥayāh, Faruq frequently used techniques of role-play and expected an engaged discussion on topics he conveyed all the while paying attention to the feedback he received from his audience. In one of the sessions, for example, he and a couple of children represented the parties of the Balfour Declaration and engaged in role play to debate the declaration, also inviting the children in the audience to provide counterarguments to the terms of the declaration.

By using theater as a tool, the session made children acquainted with the Balfour declaration, a significant event in Palestinian history, but also aimed to teach skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, and the language and logic of issues like international law. In another session, when he realized that a predominantly female group of children were not very interested in talking about Israeli settlements and checkpoints restricting the mobility of Palestinians living under the Palestinian authority, he quickly changed gears and responded to the children's questions about details of social life in Palestine: how people visited their relatives in different cities, what kind of food they cooked in their houses, etc.

Faruq told me that he perceived this program primarily as a tool for improving children's critical thinking skills, which he regarded to be closely connected to children's empowerment. According to him, both as Palestinians and refugees, children had a right to learn about their history and internationally enshrined refugee rights. Moreover, his interactions with children reflected an oscillation from a conception of child empowerment addressing a universal child, to one that conceived empowerment as a tool of Palestinian resistance. His insistence on thinking critically, for example, was at times intimately tied to a conception of Palestinian resistance. In a session, when he talked about the emergence of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, he warned the children in the following way:

> It is not the time of guns; it is time to resist with books and pens! You should work on yourselves and build your future. When Palestine is liberated, it will need a community in which there are doctors, engineers, artists and teachers. People who know how to think critically.

Two issues are particularly important in relation to Faruq's admonition. The first one concerns what form of resistance as Palestinians many youths believed to be within the realms of possibility as refugees living in Jordan and what today's Palestinian refugee and tomorrow's citizen of Palestine should look like. Contrary to Achilli, who conducted his research in the Weḥdāt Palestinian refugee camp, among the youth volunteers of *'amal fityanī*, what I have

observed was not a refrain from politics to achieve an ordinary life (2015), but a tacit acknowledgement of the impossibility of political action in their current circumstances despite yearning for it in their lives.

Refugee youth often talked with each other nostalgically about the large demonstrations in their camps that took place during both intifadas as well as the war in Gaza. During my fieldwork, I witnessed what my interlocutors thought of as "small" demonstrations in the aftermath of the US eliminating the funding for UNRWA and when the US embassy moved to Jerusalem in 2018 in al-Naṣr and other camps. Many attributed the low participation in these protests to depoliticization stemming from issues like people's precarious condition that made them preoccupied with earning a living, the fear of the Jordanian state as well as a general disenchantment about Palestinian politics because of a distrust towards political leaders. When it comes to the state, volunteers like Faruq and Yusuf were always worried about being perceived as doing political work, which the Ministry of Social Development forbids charity associations to engage in. From personal conversations, I knew that some of the volunteers were repeatedly questioned by Jordanian intelligence about their activities in the association.

When it comes to politics in Palestine, the volunteers shared their peers' distrust towards the existing political factions and political leaders in Palestine, the generation which Sunaina refers as Jil-Oslo (2017). It is important tone of the most repeated sessions on Friday programs was an exercise in which children were supposed to debate the difference between a leader and a boss, the former being someone who leads people by intimately understanding their conditions and struggles, and the letter being someone who presses his own agendas that are disconnected from the realities of the people. However, the limits of engaging in politics, whether from a concern about the state or a distrust towards political factions, did not lead them to apathy or a

search for an ordinary life, but instead increased their conviction that resistance meant the cultivation of a new generation who knows "how to think critically."

Second, the framing of Palestinian children as a community of future citizens of Palestine should also be noted. Contrary to international and UNRWA's individualized notions of refugeehood as passed from a patrilineal line, this discourse designates the children in al-Ḥayāh, some of whom are not even Palestinian refugees, a community of future citizens of a liberated Palestine. Moreover, by educating the children on Palestinian history, al-Ḥayāh volunteers imagine Palestinian children as refugees with a history as opposed to dehistoricized subjects.

As the skills training programs and supplementary formal education demonstrate, youths' voluntary practices in *'amal fityanī* reflect the complex ways in which they try to help the upcoming Palestinian generation survive both as Palestinian refugees and Jordanian citizens. Sharing with the children similar lifeworlds as inhabitants of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, volunteers interact with them in this dual capacity as refugee/citizen and teach them the tools for navigating both present and future.

The sadness of "The Father of Salt:" Ramadan and its Discontents

I believe this is a proper place to go back to the opening anecdote of this chapter, in which I described Zaynab's justification for the association's announcement regarding to suspending registration of children right before the Ramadan: "Our work is development; if they won't stick around, why would we register them?" Until experiencing the month of Ramadan in the camp and witnessing the ways volunteers framed even this holy month in the context of development, I had not understood the incongruity of al-Ḥayāh volunteers' aspirations and the realities on the ground. At the core of this incongruity resides the precarity of life in the camp. As both protracted refugees who were no longer targets of international aid and Jordanian

citizens dealing with socioeconomic marginalization, many camp residents often saw associations like al-Ḥayāh operating in their refugee camps as institutions from which they could receive economic aid.

Ramadan was when I discovered that Yusuf and his friends' discretion around economic aid and emergency driven interventions hides a major tension between al-Ḥayāh's development goals for children and how camp residents generally perceive the association's purpose. Ramadan brought this tension to the fore by heightening the expectations of different stakeholders: children wanted to go to as many iftar events as possible, and whenever I stepped into the camp, I was surrounded by many asking whether it was their turn to go at that day. I also joined some of these iftar events with the association; the most memorable were a trip to a mall where there was a small amusement park, and a trip to a forest for a joint iftar with an environmental association in Amman where we joined activities like climbing and walking on a rope. Families, who were normally only in contact with the association to talk about their children, kept inquiring about donation boxes. Volunteers even received phone calls from families in different Palestinian refugee camps who were asking for donations and created lists to make sure that each child went to the same number of iftar events throughout the month, trying to squeeze last-minute invitations into the schedules they created. Despite these precautions, however, towards the middle of the Ramadan, complaints and rumors started to circulate from disgruntled families who made Facebook posts or held private discussions in their houses about how *their* children only went to one iftar or received only one food box, while others' children enjoyed multiple iftar events.

On a larger scale, the refugee camp transformed into a space within which new actors engaged in organizing competing iftars. A middle-aged man who was both a poultry breeder and

a known graffiti artist of the camp mediated iftar gatherings for children who, he believed, were from the "real" poor families of the camp but were neglected by the associations and Youth Club since they did not have large and connected families whose support would matter during the time of Jordanian national elections. The boys committee' of the Youth Club, which many criticized as being dormant throughout the year, emerged as a central place for donations and iftar events. For the first time, I started to hear the names of parliament members or potential candidates, each organizing their own iftars with the help of some youths in the camp.

Regular programs in the association were paused during Ramadan, and volunteers invested all their energies in planning iftar outings and the central iftar they organized annually. The central iftar brings together families, children, and potential donors in a festive iftar atmosphere of fundraising. Before breaking their fast, children play the many games that volunteers prepared for them, and afterwards they performed traditional Palestinian dances, recited poetry, sang songs, and displayed theater plays, demonstrating the many skills they acquired in the association. While for a viewer from outside, this event looks purely festive, for volunteers it was fraught with financial anxieties: This event was one of the largest sources of funding for al-Ḥayāh which otherwise ran through members' own monthly contributions and sporadic donations, and volunteers aimed to use it to cover as many months of rent as possible.

Yusuf was constantly on the phone to organize Ramadan outings, and I thought donor interest for organizing iftars would make him happy. However, contrary to my expectations, I felt resentment building up in him. I naively asked him: "Isn't this a good thing, Yusuf? They want to do something good, no?" In his famously mischievous manner, he told me the story of the nickname he received when he was a volunteer in the Youth Club. Apparently, the Club used to accept any iftar invitation, regardless of what kind of meals it entailed or the activities before

or after the breaking of fast. Yusuf was young and didn't have decision-making power, but he would still carry salt and pepper in his pockets to give the donors the message that "feeding people" is not enough, so they began calling him the father of salt (*Abū al-milḥ*). He told me that in this Ramadan too, most donor interest focused on providing meals without any planned activities for children to attend before or after breaking their fasts. Volunteers, on the other hand, wanted Ramadan to be an opportunity for camp children to engage in activities they would not usually be able to enjoy in the camp; like playing in an amusement park, spending time in nature, or watching a play.

Image 4: al-Ḥayāh's Ramadan celebration: children playing before iftar

Yusuf shared with me the story behind his nickname during the Ramadan of 2018, but by the end of 2019 he came to me with what he perceived as a very tragic realization: many families were having difficulties for putting food on their table. As a university student, he spent years waking up before the dawn to go to the vegetable market to bring goods to be sold in the camp, and he would always know what people would be cooking that day: the cheaper the product, the more easily it was sold and cooked, and the dominant scent would be whatever vegetable it was:

> You know for me, as a child, I would know that I am in the camp through these smells. Because the houses are so close to each other, when it is dinnertime, you would sense lots of different smells. That's how I noticed how horrible people's situation right now is. I swear there are no scents coming from the houses. Nobody is cooking. You know I am training the children for wrestling now, I used to tell them, eat proteins. Now, I tell them: eat whatever you find in your house. It is very upsetting.

Moved and frustrated by the severity of the situation, he told me, they may need to accept any iftar offer for the upcoming Ramadan. "Every year the situation gets worse," he said sadly. The same week, during a meeting with other volunteers, he shared his observations with them and asked the guides to pay special attention to the nutrition needs of the children at home and proposed that they focus on charity work for the next Ramadan more than before.

The next Ramadan coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, during which time many of my interlocutors who used to be at least able to find sporadic employment became unemployed for long periods and those in the universities suspended their enrollment since they were unable to pay their fees. In the beginning of the pandemic when people were not sure how widespread the virus was going to get; volunteers even prepared an internal social media event in which children sent well wishes to the people in China by reading poems, singing songs, and drawing paintings. Al-Naṣr camp became the first Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan to be quarantined, and some of the volunteers not only contracted the virus but also got in trouble with the police breaking the quarantine either to distribute aid or out of boredom. Supervisors still carried some of their programs to Zoom sessions and made additional programs to inform children and families about how to protect themselves from the virus. When Ramadan arrived, al-Ḥayāh volunteers came together wearing masks, prepared meals, carried these meals to the families in the camps, and organized a central iftar through Zoom.

Conclusion: Reconciling the Need for Aid with Aspirations for Long-term Development

I opened and closed this chapter with anecdotes from Ramadan because I believe the

contentions around Ramadan shows how for these young refugees who are at the margins of international aid and whose voluntary work remains dependent on individual donations, caring for one's fellow refugees remains an endeavor within which aspirations for the future and realities on the ground can hardly be reconciled. I believe that these young refugees' efforts in reconciling these two daily should be seen as an invitation for a rethinking about our a priori utilization of the concepts like safe spaces, humanitarianism, development, and charity in aid work.

My interlocutors' work critiques humanitarian imaginaries governed by the logic of emergency and centered around saving lives. They engage in daily, intimate, and long-term forms of care at the margins of the international humanitarian regime, revealing the shortcomings of imaginaries that create apolitical, short-term, and top-down responses to refugee needs and aspirations. Their work reminds us of the importance of knowledge grounded in experience. They navigate relationships, limitations, and future aspirations instead of holding onto fixed moral principles that prioritize outside expertise, humanitarian conventions, or religious convictions. My interlocutors' engagement in *'amal fityanī,* showing how refugees negotiate the meanings of these concepts intersubjectively as well as in relation to surrounding competing institutions of care and the structural limitations they face.

This chapter makes a significant contribution to the field of humanitarianism in three interconnected ways. First, it shifts the focus from viewing refugees solely as passive recipients of aid to recognizing them as active agents of humanitarian action within the context of prolonged refugeehood and overlapping displacement. Recent scholarly work has also explored how refugees themselves engage in providing aid relief, either through diaspora organizations or in contexts of overlapping displacement. The authors, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh,

highlight the importance of studying South-South humanitarian action, as evidenced by their research on refugees taking on caregiving roles during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020) and engaging in humanitarian action among fellow refugees in overlapping displacement (2013). Their work challenges the tendency to view refugee cases in isolation or solely in relation to host communities and underscores the role of religiously inspired private practices among refugees in providing care for other refugees (ibid).

Furthermore, my research challenges the distinction between secular and religious humanitarianism, contributing to the ethnographic understanding of humanitarian practices by elucidating a distinct repertoire of care that emerges through intergenerational transmission, inter-camp sociality, and in relation to competing forms of care encountered by refugees. While previous scholarly works have acknowledged the significance of Islam in organizing civil society in the Middle East, and the inclusion of Islamic-related humanitarian practices in the genealogies of humanitarianism, these constructs such as faith, Islam, religion, and secularity are shown to be fluid and intersectional (Capri and Qasmiyeh 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to consider them in terms of their contextual historicity, rather than assuming that humanitarianism undertaken by Muslims is solely faith-based. The differences between secular and faith-based humanitarianisms are often less pronounced than the differences among various faith-based humanitarianisms, generalizing challenging. The religious-secular binary can obfuscate other processes and moral frameworks that may hold more prominence in different contexts. My interlocutors, who identify as Muslims, do not view religion as the primary driving force behind their practices in the Palestinian refugee camps. In this regard, as opposed to projects that aim to inculcate piety, my interlocutors emphasize the fun they had in their engagements with each other and children they care for. And their moral aspirations are tied to a political idea about the future of Palestinian

refugees, aiming to create ethical subjects who will institute a new ordinary for the camp and its social life, rather than pious Muslims. (Deeb 2006, 3-41; Clarke 2008, 25; Mittermeier 2014).

Finally, this chapter also highlights how Palestinian refugee youth of *'amal fityanī* resist neoliberal humanitarianism's emphasis on individual achievement, individual resilience building and self-reliance, as identified by scholars such as Atia (2013) and Clarke (2008). Despite referring to their work as development, these youth do not adopt a neoliberal logic that promotes market-based solutions for individual wealth or an otherworldly aspiration of a "house in heaven," as observed in Atia's fieldwork in Egypt (2013). Instead, they aim to foster a sense of community among the children they serve by invoking the language of refugeeness and camp identity and seek to cultivate a specific ethical subjectivity. I argue that my interlocutors call on their beneficiaries they care for as children of the Palestinian refugee camps who are to work on their selves by taking up the skills they are provided in order to be ready for being the volunteer leaders of tomorrow wherever their futures may be.

In this way, their project partially connects with the Palestinian iterations of generation as a basis of differentiation among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (Allan 2014) and as being imbued with national significance in Palestine (Collins 2004; Sunaina 2017). Despite not living under colonialism and warfare like those in Palestine, their practices of care with children of their refugee camps should also be considered within the broader Palestinian collective resistance against colonialism and practices of "steadfastness" that have long been part of the Palestinian everyday politics.

CHAPTER 4: Becoming Entangled with the Humanitarian Governance of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

When I arrived in Weḥdāt Camp early in the morning for my weekly English classes at the Women Programme Center in February, I didn't expect to meet representatives of an INGO running a pilot session for an employment project aiming to address the Syrian refugee crisis. Established by UNRWA's Relief and Social Services in 1980s, this center is one of many in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan which aim to enable women to acquire skills to earn a living and advising them on social and legal matters. During my fieldwork, the most popular program was cosmetics training, which attracted not only Palestinian refugee women in the camp, but any woman who happened to be interested in it.

Knowing that I was interested in learning about the humanitarian aid and development projects that were available for the Palestinian refugees in the camp, the manager of the center came by during the English class and told me that two women from a Dutch NGO were in the center. After my class, I met these women, who told me that they had a micro-credit project for women running in Rwanda and Angola. Now they wanted to implement it in Jordan as a way of alleviating the Syrian refugee crisis.

When the Dutch woman told me that she was surprised to see so many Palestinian refugee women in the pilot session, I was quite baffled. After all, they were in a Palestinian refugee camp! I kept my judgment to myself and only asked whether they intended to visit other refugee camps. Her reaction puzzled me even more since she told me that they never visit any refugee camps; their project was only to address the situation of "*urban refugees.*" This time, I could tell from the face of the manager, whose desk featured a carved wooden map of Palestine, that she was also surprised. I murmured: "But you came to Weḥdāt…" It was the Dutch

woman's turn to be surprised, and she explained how she did not consider Weḥdāt to be a refugee camp, but a *host community area*. When the two women left, apparently feeling the need to clarify things, the manager told me that Weḥdāt is a refugee camp and added with resentment: "It's just because they don't care about us anymore; we are old news. We are locals now."

This was the first time I realized that although my interlocutors in the camps often envisioned their refugee camps as spaces of Palestinian displacement, these camps had taken another meaning in the eyes of the international humanitarian organizations and the Jordanian state, now preoccupied with the management of another protracted refugee crisis. By virtue of hosting Syrian refugees, these camps became "host community spaces" through which humanitarian and development aid would reach both urban Syrian refugees and *local* communities. Additionally, the associations which are present in these Palestinian refugee camps are seen as *local* associations under the new humanitarian focus on the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Although part of humanitarian practice since the 1970s, the localization of aid agenda has been pushed once again following the Syrian refugee crisis, based on the idea that transferring resources and power from international actors to local actors would better respond to humanitarian crises at the local level (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020). In line with this, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit emphasized that local faith actors, communities, civil society organizations, and local governments should serve a central role in the decision-making processes of refugee response.

Scholars argued that this agenda went hand in hand with an emphasis on resilience, though which the divide between humanitarian and development aid was to be bridged, primarily, by the national governments which receives the funds from the EU (Anholt and Sinatti

2019). One of the ways Jordan aimed to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development work was through a quota system in Jordan Response, requiring the aid organizations to target both refugees and local communities (ibid.).

The localization of aid agenda has been critiqued by various scholars as instrumentalizing local institutions within the international system (Qasmiyeh 2018), reinforcing of already established global power inequalities among different countries (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020) and providing different mobilities to "expats," "locals," and "refugees" (Farah 2020). Moreover, the debates on localization of aid, by assuming a clear-cut difference between displaced and host, often disregard contexts of protracted overlapping displacement which blurs these categories (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016).

Similarly, the resilience paradigm has mobilized critiques to argue that humanitarianism has become a new form of neoliberal governance that shifts responsibility from the state to the coping capacities of its citizens (Chandler and Reid 2016, 53). Resiliency approaches to refugee governance put the sole burden on individuals for matters that were originally under domestic sovereignty (Andre 2023). Looking at resiliency from a policy perspective, other have argued that by putting the responsibility for generating resilience on crisis-affected countries, the European Union has shifted towards resilience as a strategy for refugee containment (Achilli 2015b). These policies put the responsibility on the crisis-affected countries in the global South, this shift also helps host countries to leverage their position to secure international aid that can directly contribute to their own development, potentially at the expense of refugees (Arar 2017).

This chapter discusses the humanitarian-development nexus and the new localization of aid agenda since 2016, but it provides a view from the margins by centering al-Ḥayāh, a *local* association in a Palestinian refugee camp, as the primary actor of interest. Debates on

localization usually categorize institutions like al-Ḥayāh as faith organizations or faith-influenced organizations even though this typology includes diverse actors like international faith-based organizations, national-faith influenced organizations, zakat committees and faith leaders (El-Nakib and Ager 2015). Reports on the relationship between international humanitarian organizations and these local organizations often prioritize the concerns of donors and other international actors, which see local faith actors as lacking knowledge and capacity of humanitarian standards and favor their co-religionists instead.[44]

Although scholars argue that humanitarian principles may shape assistance in a way that is disconnected from the beliefs and practices of local faith communities (Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Ager 2015; Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020), these beliefs and practices remain understudied, and few studies investigate what good practices mean according to local faith actors or open ways to reconsider the role of local actors to create alternative ways to challenge Northern-led responses to refugees. These studies show that local faith actors mobilize spiritual and psychological support that is dependent on dedicated efforts instead of funding schemes or external interventions (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020), use religious discourse and resources effectively when it comes to challenging humanitarian issues like violence against women at the local level (El-Nakib and Ager 2015), may have social assets like the capacity to rapidly mobilize human and financial resources from displaced, local, or host communities (Ager, Ager and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015).

This chapter chooses not to prioritize a secular/religious distinction in the debates of localization for two main reasons. The typology of faith organizations often lumps together diverse actors and institutions who may not even agree on each other's principles or practices.

[44] https://jliflc.com/wpcontent/uploads/2019/10/TripleNexus_SouthSudan_ReviewOfLiterature.pdf.

Second, by primarily categorizing these organizations as faith-based or faith-influenced, this typology obscures other forms of motivations and concerns, for example, in the case of my interlocutors, camp identity.

By taking al-Ḥayāh, a so-called local association as the primary stakeholder of the localization of aid agenda in terms of INGO partnerships, I argue that al-Ḥayāh's volunteers have concerns and considerations that cannot be understood by focusing on issues related to faith. I first demonstrate that each stakeholder in these partnerships – al-Ḥayāh, INGOs, and related ministries – considers their own role in the Syrian refugee response essential while minimizing that of the others. I then argue that these relationships remain those of misrecognition, with each party perceiving the other's aims and goals as different than what they profess. Second, I demonstrate that even while engaging in these partnerships, al-Ḥayāh volunteers remain cynical about international humanitarianism, continuing to question this sector's humaneness or efficacy. I argue that they engage in a power struggle within these partnerships to assert their own understanding of good practices on how to approach aid, volunteering development, and community engagement. As residents of a Palestinian refugee camp in which the meanings of host and displaced are blurred, al-Ḥayāh volunteers' values around these issues remain at odds with the approaches of the INGOs.

Al-Ḥayāh volunteers: INGO Partnerships as Unintended Consequences of Relation-Building Efforts

It was serendipitous for me that the first association that I encountered in my fieldwork, al-Ḥayāh, was one of the few associations which later got entangled with this newly boosted INGO sector. From the first day I stepped into al-Ḥayāh in 2017, almost 10 percent of the children who frequented the association were refugees from Syria. In addition to this, there were

children who were from Egyptian and a few Bangladeshi families. In fact, long before INGO partnerships, the association made some changes which volunteers believed would help accommodate these children from diverse places. For example, volunteers changed some the names of some of its rooms from the names of Palestinian cities to the names of cities in Syria. Moreover, Yusuf told me that noticing that some of the children from Syria were showing PTSD symptoms, they no longer showed documentaries about Palestinian displacement or Intifada.

By saying this, my aim is not to draw a rosy picture about the relationship between new refugees and Palestinians. Some associations did not want Syrian children among their beneficiaries since they were believed to have other sources of aid. In fact, not only in al-Naṣr but also in other camps, Palestinians often complained about the fact that emergency aid was being funneled to Syrian refugees and that neither the UNRWA nor INGOs were providing such aid for Palestinians. On the other hand, many also expressed their sadness when Syrian refugees were treated badly by others and expressed solidarity about their displacement. Nour's mother, for example, told me that she used to watch the news about the Syrian war and would cry and pray that they would not share the fate of Palestinians. Her closest friend in the camp was a Syrian refugee from Dar'aa who lived one flat below and whose children were frequenting al-Ḥayāh.

As I mentioned in the second chapter, the volunteers of al-Ḥayāh were no stranger to Syrian refugees. Some al-Ḥayāh volunteers were already working or volunteering with Syrian refugees through INGOs projects, both in the Syrian refugee camps and later with urban Syrian refugees. These people had been bringing the tools they learned in the INGOs to al-Ḥayāh for a long time. However, towards the end of 2018, there was a palpable increase in the conversations about some of the INGOs in the kingdom among the volunteers about "quotas," meaning the

proportion of targeted Syrian refugees and local communities that the INGOs envisioned for local associations.

In 2019, Questscope contacted the association to collaborate on a project called Mentorship (*Sadeeq,* meaning Friend in Arabic). Nadeem told me that he was already expecting this call since he and Hasan knew the project's current manager from different projects in the Zaateri camp:

> I knew that he was going to call us. Why? Because we worked together, and he knows and trusts my and Hasan's work. He is my Facebook friend, and as you know, we post about al-Ḥayāh's work. I knew that he would be interested to know what al-Ḥayāh does.

Later, Questscope visited al-Ḥayāh, put up its banners in the Palestine room, and gave a two-day training on the *Sadeeq* program to a group of young people who were from the al-Ḥayāh association as well as volunteers' friends from the al-Naṣr camp and other places in Amman. Some came because they liked working with children, others to build their networks, others to receive the certificate Questscope was going to provide with the hopes of working in the humanitarian sector.

At the beginning of the training, one of the case workers from Zaateri camp talked about Questscope's history in Jordan, then moved on to her experiences in Amman. Then she wrote on a white board in English, "Basic Mentor Training," and started talking about the program in more detail. At the end of those two days, Nadeem and Sena – a young Jordanian woman who has been working at INGOs – became case workers. Some children from the al-Naṣr camp and from the Juvenile Prison became the beneficiaries of their mentors for a period of six months. For the children from al-Naṣr camp, Nadeem told me, a 10 per cent quota was put in place for Syrian refugee children. Among the conversations that took place between the trainer and volunteers, one was particularly notable. Questscope represented its mission as ensuring that children can live their childhood – which one trainer said was a human right – and approached

the children "as if they don't have will power." For the volunteers in al-Ḥayāh, most of whom had worked since their childhood, this seemed like an unrealistic approach.

Talking about the partnerships that came after Questscope, Nadeem told me that more than their expertise, what mattered was the fact that Questscope vetted them:

> There is an expertise on children that took place here, and they saw that. But more importantly, it is like prayer beads; when the first bead falls all of them come down. And you become known and accepted in this other world, the world of INGOs. What happened to us is first Questscope entered this place.

Nadeem's words reflect the inequality in the relationship between al-Ḥayāh and Questscope; the burden of proving their worth always falls upon the local association. In the coming months, in addition to Questscope, al-Ḥayāh became a partner for an employment project of World Vision International and an information, counseling, and legal assistance project of the Norwegian Refugee Council. One of the interesting observations of Nadeem was about the employment project of World Vision, which required 70 per cent of the beneficiaries to be Syrian refugees:

> I got surprised because, most of the Syrians in the project, what the organizations call employment project they were actually working! The project trains that in a craft for 3 months and then the organization refer them to jobs. their percentage of unemployment is low, is this really effective? The funny thing is the Jordanians were more unemployed. Why? Because Syrians work with or without authorization- they must work even with low wages. Especially the university student Jordanians have a really high rate of unemployment. I was surprised. Also, because unlike the Syrian refugees, the university students don't work any jobs.

As these partnerships were developing, I heard criticisms made against al-Ḥayāh from some of the other *'amal fityanī* associations. Older volunteer leaders were especially opposed to these and similar partnerships, claiming that these partnerships diverted young people's commitment from *'amal fityanī* and transformed its voluntary nature. One of the previous volunteers from an association in Irbid camp, a man in his mid 40s, for example, complained that these INGO partnerships negatively impacted the voluntary nature of their work:

> In Irbid camp, for example, there is an association which plays with millions (money). The idea was homeland, it was humanitarian, it was about orphans. Then it became investment, people started to steal, they built houses, and they started exploiting public work… Our criticism is that some associations

> transformed *'amal fityanī* into a profession. *Murshid* or *mushrif* comes, they pay them. Also, many who were working in associations for free became salaried employees in INGOs working with Syrian refugees. They took all their experiences they gained in *'amal fityanī* and put those experiences somewhere else.

My friends at al-Ḥayāh were aware of these criticisms and told me and each other that this entanglement in the INGO sector was not something they planned on, but a consequence of their general strategy of relationship building as a youth association. As volunteers of an association where even the management was composed of youth in their twenties, relationship-building was key for overcoming the difficulties they experienced. Initially, I was told, neither the families in the camp nor older leaders of *'amal fityanī* believed that al-Ḥayāh would survive for more than a year or two. Since associations are mainly run by the donations raised through their members efforts, al-Ḥayāh volunteers were seen as lacking both the economic and social capital to sustain the association. In 2019, four years after the association was established, Faruq remembers this period in the following way:

> First two years, the association was always in debt. On the 3rd year, we slowly covered the debts. But, of course, we did a lot so that we bring donations, we did walk the streets of Amman a lot! Of course, before gaining our fiscal independence we were not thinking of getting from the INGOs. We made coupons for 5 JD, at that time we were 72 volunteers, most in universities and the beginning of their youth lives... You know a lot of people in this time. Your friend from the university still didn't forget you, your family still feels responsible of you, and you are new in your work or constantly changing your employment. So, your relationships are your wealth. That's how we started to cover our debts and finally bought furniture in the association, after renting them for two years. We raised an idiom: It is not the money makes the work, but work brings the money. We started to think that as much as our work becomes distinguished and known more, then ordinary people would support us more.

If I had limited my research to the everyday life of the association, I would have probably missed the importance of Faruq's comments. However, stepping into spaces where volunteer work is seemingly absent; like universities, schools, people's homes, cafes in downtown Amman and near their universities, INGO conferences, events organized by other associations, the small shops in and around the refugee camps made me see that volunteers mobilized their social lives to create and sustain the financial and human capital for their work.

Many volunteers, especially male volunteers, had vibrant social lives. Their friends from other Palestinian refugee camps and/or university and/or different INGOs constantly visited them in the association or met them in the cafes in downtown Amman, and I had not seen one conversation which eventually did not lead to a conversation about the association's work. Through these interactions, new volunteers with different experiences joined the association; joint activities with other Palestinian refugee camps got organized, they shared knowledge about the programs of different associations of *'amal fityanī* and projects of INGOs that had a focus on youth and children. On the level of the camp, male volunteers went to every wedding or funeral in the camp to keep their relations with the camp strong. Whenever there was a public event for fundraising, volunteers sold the tickets to their families, relatives, friends, volunteers in other associations, as well as to the previous volunteers of *'amal fityanī* who no longer work with youth and children on the ground but still support young volunteers through directing donations.

Even though this relationship-building was mainly carried out by male volunteers, female volunteers also mobilized their relationships in the universities and INGOs for attracting donations and people as well as for bringing new knowledge to the association. As a researcher, I also joined in their efforts and invited the limited number of people I knew outside of *'amal fityanī* circles to the events the association organized, intentionally or unintentionally talked about the association and its work to the expats I knew who worked or volunteered in INGOs and accompanied the volunteers from the association to a Turkish governmental NGO with the hopes that my presence as a cultural broker would facilitate some kind of a partnership.

Moreover, in addition to seeing the interest of INGOs in their association as a result of their general relationship building efforts, my interlocutors also believed that it was the INGOs which needed local associations like al-Ḥayāh and not vice versa. According to Nadeem, the

reasons that INGOs needed to establish partnerships with local organizations were connected to issues of societal acceptance and cost-efficiency:

> These INGOs are no longer just in camps (the Syrian refugee camps), and they cannot enter in areas without the local organizations. Not because its forbidden or dangerous. But if NRC opens an office here, it will not bring "numbers." Why? The families won't send their children if there are no "aid" (*musaadet*) without al-Ḥayāh Also, if you open an office and put workers, the cost is really high, you will have to bring furniture, give salaries to workers etc.

Thus, according to volunteers, it was these relationship-building efforts as well as the presence of urban Syrian refugees that brought INGOs to their association. However, this did neither mean that they wholeheartedly embraced INGO partnerships. As the next sections demonstrate, both before and after these partnerships, most al-Ḥayāh volunteers remained reluctant participants in the world of the INGOs.

INGOs Vision of Partnerships: To Reach Urban Refugees and Empower Local Associations

I met various INGO workers during my stay in Amman. Some of these people were friends and family members of volunteers of *'amal fityanī*; some were friends of my two American roommates with whom I lived for part of my stay, and the others were expatriates whom I met while taking my fieldnotes in a argile cafés downtown or in chic cafes in Weibdeh whenever the weather was too hot to work without an AC. It would not be incorrect to say that one cannot walk around without bumping into one of these young people in these neighborhoods. When al-Ḥayāh became a partner with some INGOs, some of these people helped me to connect with upper-level workers in these institutions, although few organizations responded to my emails.

While for most of my expat friends volunteering/working in INGOs was a time of adventure and gaining life experience, for my local friends it meant both opportunity and frustration. Since I got to know her in late 2017, Zaynab's older sister Maryam had worked in various INGOs. She was first in Zaateri and Azraq camps, then in a "host community" project in Irbid implemented

by Action Against Hunger (AAH), for which she moved from her family house in Amman to reside in a flat with other young women who were working at AAH.

I met Maryam's friend, Ayan, when I visited them in Irbid. At the time, Ayan worked in the employment branch of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Her trajectory reflected those of her colleges working at INGOs; in time her space of work shifted from the Syrian refugee camps to host community spaces; from projects which addressed emergency needs to development needs in host communities:

> In the beginning, they (INGOs) started in the camps. Then host community. Shelter was the most important thing. half of the workers left now. Most projects started to work "development planning." Why? Depending on the need. People are here since 2012, will you still give them food? Enough. Now all the projects became about developing the country.

Ayan argued that it was this shift that let INGOs to look for local associations in proximity to "host communities," urban spaces where Syrian refugees took residence. According to her, finding "good" associations was a challenging task for INGOs since there was a mismatch in the languages that INGOs and local associations used:

> There is something we must understand. The language the associations speak is like the language the INGOs speak but there are still differences. For example, when an INGO comes to an association, what do they look for? They look for people "*fehmenin*" understanding. So, the volunteers should understand what the INGO asks and needs. Of course, the NGO doesn't ask: are you someone understanding?! Instead, they ask do you have people who are educated. Why? Because the INGO wants people with skills. So, what matters is whether there are skilled people or not.

Knowing the al-Ḥayāh association through Maryam, Ayan argued that having "understanding" people was what made al-Ḥayāh attractive for INGOs:

> In terms associations, al-Ḥayāh made a difference in attracting the INGOs. In many other associations, there is nobody who has experience in INGOs. They just think that INGOs will give them money. Only. No work, no target, no papers, no numbers, no reports, no correspondence, no communication. And when the INGOs came to al-Ḥayāh and saw that they are understanding that they know what email is, that they know what communication is, what focal is, what a goal is they kept coming.

Ayan's words are significant in that it shows that, like Nadeem, she believes that from the perspectives of the INGOs, the burden of overcoming this mismatch fell on the local institutions, and not vice versa.

Upon interviewing the project managers of Questscope and World Vision International, and reading their reports, I understood that al-Ḥayāh was picked by Questscope and World Vision international under one unified project called Youth Resolve (Resilience, Education, Social Cohesion, Opportunities for Livelihoods and Reduced Violence in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq). It was funded by the Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, which is locally known as MADAD fund[45] and includes three other organizations.[46] Its aims are "to strengthen youth resilience and empower youth as leading actors in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation," to empower youth "to utilise knowledge and opportunities to confidently participate in economic and social life," and to reduce "tensions between refugee and host community youth and families" (*World Vision Project Fact Sheet*).

In the case of Questscope, the Sadeeq project was being implemented in different places in Jordan since 1998 and the project manager explained to me the rationale in choosing local partners as:

> The first thing is "need." So, I need 4 spaces, I visit 10 of them. The space where there is the most need, both in children and in youth, I choose. Second, they have *qudret hashid*: they can bring children, and a very important point: they believe in children. if they don't believe in children, it wouldn't work. after these, everything would work. These are main things in our choosing.

For World Vision International, I was told, the assessment of a local association was based on the number of beneficiaries the association can provide, the number of Syrians and Jordanians, the number of programs they were doing, and their power in accessing the community.

One of the questions that I had in mind was whether this context of overlapping displacement factored in the projects INGOs devised or in the consideration of donors. The

[45] https://www.wvi.org/world-vision-european-union/video/youth-resolve.

[46] See: "EU-funded Youth RESOLVE project celebrates providing hundreds of youths with employment skills and placements," https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/eu-funded-youth-resolve-project-celebrates-providing-hundreds-youths-employment-skills.

project managers of the Sadeeq of Questscope and that of World Vision both emphasized that the fact that they established partnerships with al-Ḥayāh had nothing to do with it being a Palestinian refugee camp. al-Ḥayāh's location for them carried importance by virtue of its being in East Amman (an area they described as a disadvantaged area) and by virtue of having access to the community through which they could access urban Syrian refugees and local community.

Ministry of Social Development: Local Associations as Objects of Development

Since policy and scholarly literature put an emphasis on the role the Jordanian State played in the Syrian refugee response, I kept asking my friends how the state was in the picture in the establishment of these partnerships. Most of my volunteer friends believed that the state has no role in mediating the partnerships they engaged in, while arguing that for other associations the story was different. Yusuf, who was the contact person to visit the *Mudiriye* of the Ministry of Social Development in Marka saw the ministry as hindering their work by creating extra paperwork, which, he believed, would only be put in motion through small briberies; like providing small gifts and giving every officer he talks to packs of cigarettes. However, when it comes to some other local associations, for example, they blamed the state for engaging in favoritism. When al-Ḥayāh volunteers wrote a proposal for the rehabilitation of their building through MADAD fund, Nadeem told me that they wrote forty pages to describe the situation in camp, while another association received this fund without even applying.

While my interlocutors in al-Ḥayāh did not believe the ministry played any positive role, the two officers I interviewed in the Ministry of Social Development, Rama in the department of Local Associations and Rania in the Department of Foreign Associations both emphasized the extent to which the Ministry encourages *tashbeek* (partnership) among local and international organizations which they perceived to be contributing to the development goals of the Kingdom.

These relationships, Rama thought, had the potential of professionalizing the local associations, whose numbers increased in an unprecedented way since the reform of the law of societies in 2008 which made it easier to open associations. She argued that this increase was both a positive and negative development: positive since it demonstrated ordinary citizens' commitment to the values of *insaniya* (humanity), negative because she believed that some of these associations (which she referred as *jamaiyyat alshanta,* bag associations) were self-serving. She argued that while most of the associations in the kingdom were composed of ordinary citizens who targeted the needs of the local communities around them, with Syrian refugees taking residence among the local communities, some also devised programs to address the needs of refugee communities. Accordingly, these local associations could give aid to Syrian refugees in so far as they fulfilled the conditions of the ministry:

> There are associations who are specialized on Syrian refugees. It is true that they are refugees, but we also have Jordanian who is in need, we put a small condition, any aid to Syrian refugees, it becomes 50 percent to the refugees and 50 percent to Jordanians. You can't just say to Syrians, and that's it. Because the Syrian is on the land of Jordan. He benefits from Jordanian services. Ok, they (Syrian refugees) start from zero, they have nothing. But there are also Jordanians who are *tabaniin (sick, poor)*. So, we tell them any aid that will be distributed, somebody from the ministry should be present and there should be Jordanian beneficiaries.

Similarly, Rania argued that since the Syrian refugee crisis had turned into a development crisis, the projects that depended on the partnerships between *Monaddamat ajnabiya* (Foreign NGOs) and local associations should be targeting both Jordanian nationals and Syrian refugees. According to her, the Ministry played a crucial role in this process not only in setting the aforementioned quotas but also in connecting the INGOs with the active local associations in the areas where they want to implement their projects. According to this, the Ministry was the primary actor who provided the names of the active local associations to the inquiring INGOs, which later visited these local associations to see whether the partnership is possible. Rania considered these relationships to be mutually beneficial; with these relationships INGOs could

reach their target communities, learn the needs of the communities from local volunteers and use the spaces of local associations to implement their projects, while local volunteers in return would be *trained and improved* by them. Moreover, she told me that she perceived that *tashbeek* was also important because "local associations will stay here, while INGO projects will end," emphasizing how much she saw these partnerships as an opportunity for local associations to benefit from the expertise of the INGOs.

Thus, both Wesam and Rama attributed a central place to the Ministry of Social Development in mediating the relationships between local associations and INGOs, and in making sure the projects the INGOs engage would benefit both Syrian refugees and Jordanian citizens. According to them, these partnerships were not only seen as important for the development goals of Jordan, but also for the local associations to acquire skills and expertise from the INGOs which were connected to them; a perspective that situated local associations on the receiving end of these relationships. Finally, like what the INGOs envisioned, Palestinian refugee camps emerged as any other disadvantaged areas in Jordan in their discourses, with no regard to their Palestinian character.

While the Ministry of Social Development situates itself in an authoritative position of managing and mediating the partnerships among International and local institutions, for al-Ḥayāh volunteers, the Ministry mainly functions as a corrupt bureaucratic machine; and they attribute the INGO partnerships they establish to their own skills in proving their association's success, as well their relation-building efforts.

The next sections demonstrate that both in starting these partnerships and in continuing them, al-Ḥayāh volunteers also make their own evaluations of INGOs and try to center their own meanings of aid, development, and volunteering.

Are INGOs Humane and How to Select among Them?

On Land Day in 2019, I was waiting in the management room of al-Ḥayāh with other volunteers. It was the end of March, and the association ran out of gas and had not replaced the canister in hopes that spring would bring a little bit of warmth, so the room was freezing, and everyone was a little bit jumpy to warm themselves. We were supposed to leave at 3.00 pm for a joint theater play run by the association and the Youth Club in Zarqa camp, but the bus they had rented for transporting children was late, as usual, and even Ashraf who was going to be the photographer of the event came later. Yet, before arriving at the Youth Club and before the children taking their places in the stage decorated with the pictures of King Hussein and his two sons, I witnessed a humorous conversation on INGO practices in Jordan that revealed a lot about local attitudes towards them.

Yusuf, Hasan and I were finally on our way to Zarqa after much waiting, traveling with windows occasionally put down to air out the smoke coming from our cigarettes. On our way, we picked up a young woman, Hasan's fiancée, who was waiting in front of one of the branches of Jordan River Foundation.[47] Hasan and his fiancée, Mona, had originally met in one of the INGOs where they were previously volunteering. Recently, Hasan had started working in an INGO project in Azraq camp using theater as a tool for discussing the concept of early marriage with Syrian refugee women, and Mona had started working as a psychological counselor for women and children who frequented the JRF in Marka, an area that also encompasses the al-Naṣr camp where the association resides.

Mona told us that among the JRF's beneficiaries, there were some children from the al-Naṣr camp. Hasan teased Mona and told us how he had been telling her to give up the names of

[47] An organization that was founded by Queen Nour al-Hussein.

those children who were residing in the camp, albeit with no avail, since the JRF considered this to be confidential information. Mona laughed and told him to stop bringing up this issue, which led Hasan to burst into laughter and tease her even more:

> Ya Mona, tell us the names of the children and we tell you the history of their whole family; from their villages in Palestine to today. You only have two months with these children; let us help you so that you can actually help them a little bit. We can tell you how many respectable ones there in their families are, how many trouble-makers how many drug dealers, we can tell you how they are doing in the school and how the families treat their children!

This playful interaction reflected some of the most often invoked criticisms that volunteers had against the INGO's approaches in working with refugees. According to the volunteers of *'amal fityanī,* most of the employees and volunteers in the INGOs and RONGOs were people who lacked an intimate knowledge of the children's lives in the Palestinian refugee camps or in other disadvantaged areas struggling with socioeconomical marginalization. To have an intimate knowledge on this social world, volunteers assumed, one should be either be from this social world or should spend extensive time to understand this world from within.

According to Hasan and Yusuf, while Mona herself was a Palestinian refugee-citizen residing in the Zarqa area with a middle-class family background, she was not from the Palestinian refugee camp her beneficiaries were residing in. As a matter of fact, she was not from any Palestinian refugee camp, and thus lacked a fundamental skill in understanding the particularities of the intimate relationships that took place in the refugee camps. Thus, they both explicitly, yet humorously, challenged Mona's credentials of expertise.

In fact, when we arrived in Zarqa camp, Mona told me that this was her first time entering this camp because her parents did not think that it was a proper space for a young woman to spend time in, and told me that if it was not for Hasan, her fiancée, she probably would not have been able to convince her parents to let her volunteer in the camp where the association is located. My reason for stating this confession does not stem from a shared

skepticism or disregard of her expertise with my other interlocutors. In fact, throughout our drive to Zarqa, Mona told me how during her university years she went from one training to another and chased every volunteering opportunity with children and youth in addition to having studied Psychological Counseling in the university. She told me that when she graduated, she immediately found jobs in two different INGOs because of the incessant work on her CV, since she has proved her credentials through these volunteer gigs. However, Hasan and Yusuf were right in so far as they imagined the Palestinian refugee camps as exceptional social spaces and Mona also agreed that this space was foreign to her. It is not that they thought all the projects INGOs lacked any merit. However, they had many reservations.

As I implied above, one of their critiques was bound up with diverging rationales behind what constitutes expertise. The second was the ways INGO project goals and criteria for measuring a project's effectiveness were bound up with number of beneficiaries. For volunteers at al-Ḥayāh, this approach went against their own principles. Nadeem explains this in the following way:

> What are the criteria for evaluation? Mostly "target" (numbers), the number of beneficiaries. That's what they care. I am against this because people are not numbers. For them, they want to see number of children. I work in terms of quality not quantity.

In addition to this, many complained about the time-limited nature of foreign funded projects. Run according to external funding cycles, INGO projects do have a beginning and an end; they have certain numeric targets in terms of number of recipients and/or sessions. In fact, in a couple of INGO project meetings I have attended in Jordan, the question of "exit" was a heatedly debated subject even before the project started to be implemented. As put by one of the volunteers in an association Ḥusayn camp: "They work when there is funding, and they stop when there is none. They care about quantity, but not quality."

Since most volunteers of *'amal fityanī* were already cynical towards the INGO sector, when the INGOs started to "storm" to the association "like prayer-beads," to borrow the terms Nadeem used, volunteers engaged in heated debates on whether they should consider each partnership. Two questions were pertinent in these debates: Does the funding come from an acceptable source? Is the project useful for the community?

On the issue of sources of funding, for example, both Yusuf and Faruq told me that when they established al-Ḥayāh , USAID directly approached them to provide funding through a project aimed at capacity building for local NGOs. They told me that even though they were in dire need at those times, they rejected this proposal on the grounds that the source was the American government, a government that also directly supports Israel. For many associations in the camps, USAID was a red line, while funding from Turkey looked more acceptable. When we visited the Turkish governmental organization together, Zaynab talked about this offer to the representatives to indicate that they had certain principles for receiving funding and establishing partnerships. I should note that the issue of funding was not limited to INGOs or international funds, however. In many conversations, Yusuf told me that how certain parliament members would approach al-Ḥayāh right before national elections for donation offers, in return for expecting al-Ḥayāh volunteers to campaign for the candidate. The association has never taken up these offers, he told me.

The projects' perceived usefulness was the other significant topic. For example, when the possibility of a partnership with Questscope arose, one of the things volunteers liked about the project was that it was close to their own work with its focus on children and it necessitated a relatively long-term relationship (six months) through which the mentor and the child met at least twice a week. Moreover, since some of the volunteers and beneficiaries of this project were

already children from al-Ḥayāh, they believed that they could continue this project in their own way even after it officially ends.

In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, al-Ḥayāh association indirectly benefited from Youth Resolve's resiliency project. Even though they didn't receive funds for these projects, by renting the rooms of the association, INGOs covered the rent of the association for several months. Moreover, when al-Ḥayāh expanded its partnerships to World Vision and Norwegian Refugee Council, the building was rehabilitated through the Madad fund; the walls got painted, new chairs were brought, the toilets were replaced, and some of the rooms got air-conditioners. Faruq told me that there was also an unforeseen benefit of these partnerships, however. Since the INGOs invited different local organizations to meetings, they were able to establish relationships with associations which are outside of *'amal fityanī* circles.

The Unforeseen Anxieties that Localization Brings

Having close contact with these INGOs, however, eventually paved way for new criticisms and anxieties. As al-Ḥayāh volunteers participated in trainings in fancy conference rooms in Amman or in luxurious five-star hotels in Aqaba, many questioned the humaneness of this sector, which professed care for the refugees and the poor while engaging in what volunteers perceived as meaningless spending. They thought these trainings so exuberant that Yusuf told me that one time, when they saw the open buffet that was ready for a three-day training, he jokingly banned his volunteer friends from eating bread and rice, arguing that they can eat those things in the camp every day. After one such training, one of the young volunteers was struck by how much money was spent on these occasions and commented on what he perceived to be an irony:

> "They (INGOs) say that they do development and that they shouldn't just give money to people. You know all this conversation about not giving the man a fish but teaching him how to fish. It's all good but how do they legitimize all these money they spend in these hotels? When I see this, I feel like telling them: I think you want the fish for yourself!'

In addition to their concern about money and motives, volunteers also thought that partnerships with the INGOs were providing alternative meanings to community engagement and to volunteering. In the case of the former, some of the ways that INGOs attracted their beneficiaries for their trainings and workshops destabilized al-Ḥayāh's relationships with some of the families in the camp. Normally, the families of the children would come to al-Ḥayāh whenever volunteer leaders would call for a meeting to discuss their children's problems at home or at school. Hasan told me that after these partnerships some families started to ask for transportation compensation to come to al-Ḥayāh despite living within five minutes' walking distance from the association. These open discussions about money made volunteers uncomfortable, since they felt the terms of the relationship that they had established over the years with the community were being replaced by the logic of market exchange. It is not that they were not aware that there was a discrepancy between what they perceived as their work in development and that some of the families sent their children to the association to receive aid. However, they still wanted the overwhelming sentiment around giving economic aid to be one of discretion.

For the volunteers, operating under the assumption that today's children will become tomorrow's volunteer leaders (see chapter 4), the paid volunteer opportunities that INGOs provided introduced a competing logic. INGOs introducing monetary compensation for volunteers, which came in conflict with the endemic logic of volunteering in *'amal fityanī.* These compensations were made under the name of transportation costs rather than wages, but the amounts volunteers received from the INGOs at times come close to those of salaried jobs. This created an incentive for volunteers to find work in INGOs. While these incentives were regarded as completely legitimate in so far as they were conceived as professionalization opportunities,

there was always an element of anxiety that remained: what if volunteers of *'amal fityanī* stopped working for the good of the children in the camp because of their convictions in their hearts and started seeing volunteering as a form of economic transaction? This did not remain as a purely hypothetical ethical question, but inadvertently got tested during my fieldwork. At the end of the Questscope's mentorship project, for example, only a couple of the volunteers that Questscope mobilized from outside of al-Ḥayāh resumed volunteering in al-Ḥayāh, gravely disappointing Yusuf and others.

Strategies for Keeping the Spirit of al-Ḥayāh Alive

As these new anxieties unfolded in the everyday conversations, al-Ḥayāh volunteers devised new strategies to address and alleviate them. They did this primarily in two ways: first, they separated the space where INGOs conducted their business, and second, they tried to provide an interpretative framework for volunteers and children in the association on the new developments that came with INGO partnerships. Finally, they even decided to create a Youth Program in al-Ḥayāh to divert young volunteers' energies away from the INGOs.

A couple months into the Questscope's project, the association began to use a flat they rented for a boy scout training as the "Department of Relationships and Partnerships." Initially, volunteers considered the scouts branch as an investment opportunity project in late 2018, and I remember Yusuf telling me humorously that through scouting they might finally be able to meet people who were not like them: people who were not penniless! In time, the scouts project as an investment opportunity proved to be unprofitable, and this space became to be associated with where the INGOs came, meet al-Ḥayāh volunteers, and use its rooms to implement their programs. Although this physical separation was unintentionally precipitated by an earlier endeavor of creating a branch for scouts training, it worked well for the volunteer leaders in the

association who wanted to keep the spirit of the main space of the association intact. Yusuf, for example, told me it was better to keep the original space of the association, the building in the camp, separate for only al-Ḥayāh's own programs.

In addition to this physical separation, volunteers started to communicate with the children on these new developments in al-Ḥayāh and tried to make sure that the occasional absences of some of their volunteer leaders don't mean that their commitments laid elsewhere. For example, after a Friday program, during the *seria*, Nadeem addressed the children in the following way:

> Now that we have all sorts of partnerships, I may be absent sometimes. Sometimes Ms. Zaynab or Ustedh Faruq is absent. However, you should know that even one is absent the other is present. We are here. We are here to listen to you, to talk to you. All these efforts are for you: see we have gotten air-conditions though these partnerships! Aren't they great? We keep these relationships so that we learn new things and work with you in a better way. You should also always learn new things and bring it to the camp, to the association when you grow up.

With these words, Nadeem not only reassured the children about volunteers' commitment, but also gave them direction about where they should also invest their future knowledge and energies; and reminded them of the perks of these partnership by pointing out to the air-conditions.

As their encounters with the INGOs increased, many of them learned the jargon international humanitarian organizations utilized and shared this knowledge with new volunteers so that they learn effective ways to present themselves and their work to "outside" *barra*.
In one such training on how to engage in these conversations, Faruq, introduced the *mandate* of the association as human development, using the English word "mandate" and commented how "people from outside," meaning INGOs, didn't use to understand him when he said the same concept in Arabic. Even in such a training, however, Faruq's anxiety was reflected in his constant assurance of volunteers' efforts:

> You volunteer because it is in your heart. Because of your love for your friends and for your camp. All of us are on the same side. I swear that I see all your efforts. This is priceless, nobody can try to pay for it with money. You see how INGOs work, people volunteering for money for a couple of hours. Your efforts would mean hundred thousand JDs.

One of the quick-witted comments of a 16-year-old Guide, Murad, made me understand the reasons behind Faruq's anxiety. When Murad giggled and asked as to why they were not becoming an INGO, the Haifa room filled with agreeing murmurs of some of his friends to which Faruq responded in a serious way: "Because we don't want to become one. We want to work on the ground in the camp and from our hearts, the camp is our place."

In March 2021, al-Ḥayāh announced that it was starting a Youth Program, but only a handful of pilot meetings were held when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. During this time, I went to many of these meetings and joined in early discussions on the role of this Youth Program will be. In these meetings, volunteers discussed several issues; including the individual motivations of young volunteers in joining *'amal fityanī*; how long they saw themselves engaging in this work, what place youth had in the Palestinian and Jordanian society, and whether they actually had something better to offer than the INGOs operating in Jordan. On this last issue, many said yes, arguing that they were the ones who knew their own needs and those of society the best.

In one of these meetings, a conflict arose between two of the volunteers. Sireen and Yusuf. A young volunteer woman from the nearby neighborhood, and Layla's friend from high school, Sireen, insisted on holding the meetings of the youth program in the building outside the camp. She had recently started studying sociology in the university, and argued that she knows many people, especially young women from her department, who do not want to enter the camp because of the street harassment and the general bad environment of the camp. Yusuf objected to this suggestion and was backed by Nour and Alaa and argued that the real place of the association is in the camp. He tried to propose a solution and suggested that al-Ḥayāh could

provide them jackets with logos or could create a team of male volunteers to accompany Sireen's friends in their walk to and from the camp to deal with street harassment. When she insisted, Yusuf curtly told her that they did not want to work with people who did not want to enter the camp. Nour and Alaa gave her another reason and told her that their families would not let them join a program that takes place outside the camp, arguing that they barely got permission to volunteer at the camp as it was. The girls' argument allowed Sireen to stop insisting.

In my conversations with Yusuf, I asked him why he insisted on the space of the camp and why they had this sudden interest in creating a Youth Program. Wasn't it enough that they worked with children and shared their skills and knowledge with each other? He told me that as a son of the camp, he believed that al-Ḥayāh's core programs should be in the camp; "Palestinian refugee camps are what motivates our work," he told me. That is why it was important for him that any success or failure would take place in the camp. On the second issue, his answers reflected the anxieties connected with the INGOs which entered their lives. He told me that they realized that not every beneficiary-turned-volunteer wanted to limit themselves to working with children and they understood that a youth program was needed for the youth to realize their own needs and problems in the camp and then, find ways to address them in a space where they are familiar. There was another reason behind this new program:

> We want to create a cadre that sees this place (the association) as the nucleus to create projects because we don't want them to go to INGOs. We want them to put their energies here, in the camp. Also, people go to INGOs with great ideas and then those ideas start to get smaller, they start changing their ways of thinking in order to get funds and in the end the projects become distorted. We want to have a space to encourage the ideas of youth, not to distort them.

Yusuf's comments reflect the anxieties volunteers feel for the future of their association, of their camp and even that of *'amal fityanī*: if today's children did not grow up to be the volunteers of the association as they hoped, the association would cease to exist. Moreover, these

youths would be driven by a desire to receive funding, and in the process their aspirations would be distorted.

Conclusion: Wrestling for Hegemony and Whose Humanitarianism is Humane?

Although these initial plans were interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, they resumed after the restrictions were lifted. By February 2023, the Youth Program became a sister association to al-Ḥayāh and called itself a development organization. From a distance, I can only talk to my friends online and follow their Facebook posts to keep up with new developments. As far as I know, volunteers created an ongoing podcast through which they read poems by Arab poets and discuss the life of these poets and their work. They do events on Earth Day, carry out interactive theatre shows (one of which was to raise awareness on the difficulties faced by people with disabilities in their community), organize conversations about the election law in Jordan, and talk about important events in Arab and Palestinian history.

Of course, since it is a new association, it is too early to talk about its possible fate, but it looks like by targeting the youth and giving space to conversations about history and politics, the volunteers aim to provide an alternative to the individualistic approaches of INGOs. The association is located in al-Naṣr refugee camp, which shows that volunteers still think of the camp as central to their concerns and aspirations. Thus, despite the erasure of the "Palestinian refugee camp," in the conceptualizations of the Ministry and the INGOs, the camp remains a Palestinian space of displacement and as the nucleus of young volunteers' efforts carries a meaning transgressing the discourse of "local associations" which the localization of aid agenda promotes. Moreover, this chapter also shows the importance of researching these "local organizations" on the ground, by demonstrating that al-Ḥayāh volunteers grapple with concerns and considerations that transcend the issue of faith.

Conclusion

My research shows that from very early on in their displacement, Palestinian refugees were not only objects but also subjects of care. Anthropological scholarship on the lives of refugees has already shown us that refugees are never as passive as they are usually perceived to be; refugees engage in politics as well as transform the humanitarian regime under which they live. In Jordan, Palestinian refugees have long taken part in humanitarian institutions by working as local staff in UNRWA facilities or by volunteering in YMCA/UNRWA-created Youth Clubs and Women Programme Centers. This dissertation further demonstrates that even in the absence of support from the UNRWA, refugees continued to develop their own intergenerational, intercamp and gendered repertoire of care from the late 1960s to today.

I also argued that as a repertoire that is transferred from generation to generation, *ʿamal fityani* (Boys' Work) gets refashioned as the milieu the refugees found themselves in the midst of change. In the late 1960s, the locations in which this repertoire was enacted were primarily the Youth Clubs of the camps, which at the time were supported by the UNRWA and the YMCA. Today its main location is in the associations that are registered with the Ministry of Social Development of Jordan. While YMCA staff perceived PLO training camps as their main competitors during the early years, today *'amal fityanī* volunteers face competition from the Islamic charities and INGOs which mushroomed in the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis. I also explicated the ways of remembering of the origins of the repertoire among Palestinian refugees, arguing that these debates designate different versions of the past shaped by the concerns of the present.

My methodology combined mixed qualitative research methods, archival research, and oral history interviews with different generations of volunteers. I also conducted interviews with

INGO workers/volunteers and officers in the Ministry of Social Development, which helped me understand both the visions of these different actors on social development and the way they perceived the collaborations between INGOs and local associations in the management of Syrian refugee crisis. UNRWA never permitted me to look at the archives in their headquarters in Amman or to conduct official interviews with the organization, but I was able to interview multiple retired personnel. The archives and oral history interviews helped me to trace the historical trajectory of boys' work, yet it was my long ethnographic research that illuminated the full picture of how this repertoire is practiced today. I came to realize the centrality of volunteering in my interlocutors' lives and their sense of self-realization as I participated in their volunteer and fund-raising efforts and their preparations for Ramadan, stayed at some of their houses, and played cards with them in the cafes in downtown Amman. My interactions ranged from these activities to long conversations lasting until the dawn about their volunteer work, their understandings of aid, and their aspirations for themselves and the children in the camps they serve.

In this dissertation, I showed how young Palestinians aspire to create a particular refugee subjectivity while silently responding to the many emergencies that the precarity of the camp life creates: someone's house burning down because of poor infrastructure; people losing loved ones to ill health or getting heavily into debt trying to get healthcare; families falling into abject poverty; children suddenly forced to work to support their families. Children who are objects of this care often struggle with the precarity of camp life. Some of their grandparents or parents escaped during events such as the *Nakba*, the Six Day War, or the Syrian Civil War, while others fled from crushing poverty in Egypt and elsewhere. I argued that precarity is at the core of the

lives of these youth and children, and it is this sense of shared precarity that mobilized young people to serve the children in their refugee camps.

Like all research, my research was limited in some ways, and understanding these can suggest avenues for further work. At the time I did my archival research on the YMCA, Covid-19 restrictions were in place, and I depended on digitized archives related to boys' work in Amman. Thus, further research may show us how the YMCA and organizations other than the UNRWA approached the displacement of Palestinians at different periods and in different locales. One promising overview of INGO work is Lyndall's (2017) work on the competing non-state governmentalities in the Gaza Strip between 1948 and 1967, which includes the YMCA as one of the study's central organizations. Another example is Feldman's (2007) work on Quaker practice in Gaza, demonstrating an ethical practice that combines a concern for others with care of the self.

As I was limited to staying in Jordan, I was not able to focus on volunteers in Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, some of whom also participated in the annual summer camp. Research on the interconnections among Palestinian refugee volunteers in other locales may make us understand how being and contending with life in different host states or settler-colonial context shape this practice.

Another related limitation and potential for further research comes from the fact that my research took youth as primary interlocutors of this repertoire, but incorporating the oral history narratives of older volunteer leaders in a systematic way may tell us other facets of *'amal fityanī*, especially its relationship with the historical events and developments in Jordan, Palestine, and the region. My preliminary observations and research suggest that the political developments influenced both the contents of *'amal fityanī* chants and the way refugee groups created their

networks while excluding some associations and clubs and including others due to political schisms.

My dissertation contributes to scholarship on humanitarianisms in the Global South in three interconnected ways. First, my research reorients the focus from refugees as objects to subjects of humanitarianism and shifts the scholarly attention away from the often-invoked secular-religious distinction. Scholars have long shown that Islam is one of the significant organizing forces of civil society in MENA (Harmsen 2008; Wiktorowicz 2000, 2001). Recent research has recently shown that within displacement situations, local faith actors mobilize spiritual and psychological assistance (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020), effectively employ religious language and utilize available resources to address humanitarian concerns such as violence against women at the community level (El-Nakib and Ager 2015). These actors may possess social advantages, including the ability to quickly mobilize human and financial resources from displaced, local, or host communities (Ager, Ager, and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015). While recognizing the significance of constructs like faith and religion, scholars also demonstrated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to assert this binary between faith and secular action, as refugees and their organizations mobilize different aspects of their identity in dealing with structural demands of refugees' lives (Capri and Qasmiyeh 2020). An example of this complex interweaving of faith and secularity can be seen in the way that neoliberal, market-oriented approaches increasingly converge with the practices of Muslim humanitarians (Atia 2013; Clarke 2008; Mittermaier 2021). My research shows that that although faith and religion are important constructs that may guide humanitarian action, they can never reach total hegemony, nor do they remain stable. This, I believe, necessitates us to think of these constructs in intersectional terms, by paying attention to their relationship to other social markers like identity, space, gender, and

historical context. Thus, rather than assuming that humanitarianism undertaken by Muslims is first or foremost faith-based, my research shows the interplay among these intersectional social markers.

Second, my dissertation demonstrates the importance of analyzing the role of historically specific repertoires in mediating refugees' experiences of humanitarian services and their interactions with humanitarian actors and service providers. In my analysis, I focused on *'amal fityanī* as practiced by volunteers in multiple refugee camps. Young refugees strive to overcome the precarity of camp life and find the tools for this in the community and in relation to one another without disinvesting their energies from the camp. While being born in the camp is a matter of chance, staying in the camp is a conscious decision: volunteers find their legitimacy and motivation by remaining connected to their fellow camp dwellers despite the difficulties that this entails. Especially for a youth association like al-Ḥayāh, which gives particular importance to sharing the same habitus with their fellow camp dwellers, their interaction with the camp requires a lot of pragmatism, on-the-spot solutions to problems, and constant work for the community's trust and approval. My findings, while emerging from the context of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, have broader significance since refugees often both originate from and remain in the global South because of European Union's policies for refugee containment (Achilli 2015b).

My dissertation also contributes to scholarly discussions on humanitarian governance in the renewed context of post-Syrian-refugee-crisis localization of aid agendas. Although INGO's strongly emphasized the localization of aid following the Syrian refugee crisis, a localized approach has been part of global humanitarian responses since the 1970s. Erdilmen and Sosthenes, for example, demonstrate that in Tanzania, which has been a host to many refugee

populations from southern African countries, local actors such as tribal leaders, faith-based organizations, and the Tanzanian government managed refugee reception and settlement, with minimal involvement from international non-governmental organizations in the 1960s and 1970s (Erdilmen and Sosthenes 2020). During this period, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) primarily provided funding to local non-governmental organizations leading refugee operations (ibid.). Focus on localized aid has once again become a dominant strategy following the Syrian refugee crisis, based on the belief that transferring resources and power from international actors to local actors would better address humanitarian crises at a granular level (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020). In line with this, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit underscored the importance of involving local faith actors, communities, civil society organizations, and local governments in the decision-making processes related to refugee response. The INGO sector itself is filled with reports on challenges, successes, and impediments of localization, most of which prioritize the perspectives of the international organizations. My dissertation reverses this trend. By taking the al-Ḥayāh Association, which INGOs would deem a *local* institution, as the primary voice, my work provides a view from the margins. Thus, my research joins those who have critiqued this agenda, showing that the localization of aid often fails at achieve its objectives: instead, it instrumentalizes local institutions for international means (Qasmiyeh 2018), strengthens already established global power inequalities among different countries (Wurtz and Wilkinson 2020) and provides different mobilities to "expats," "locals," and "refugees" on the ground (Farah 2020). It argues that partnerships among INGOs and local institutions are characterized by misrecognition, as each party views the process and goals of the partnerships in different ways and attributes more importance to their roles. Moreover, it foregrounds the critiques that young refugees raise about international humanitarian

organizations, and the ways they engage in a power struggle with INGOs to assert the hegemony of their own understanding of how to approach aid, volunteering, development, and community engagement.

By demonstrating that youth have their own goals for raising a new generation that defies both the INGOs aims and Islamic charities' conceptions of care-work, my research also contributes to youth studies in the MENA. In my interviews, the youth articulated ties to the Palestinian nation and its history and also offered a vision of how to flourish in Jordan. Their connection to their nation's broader history can be seen in the way that generation operates as a defining element among Palestinian refugees in the diaspora. Importantly, each generation takes its name through the regional political events like "generation of the Nakba," or "generation of the revolution" (Allan 2014). Thus, the youth project partially connects with Palestinian iterations of the concept of generation, and it should be considered within the broader Palestinian collective resistance against colonialism and practices of "steadfastness." The preservation of Palestinian identity and the continued hope for the Right of Return also creates a counternarrative to Israeli claims that Jordan is the proper homeland for Palestinians.

Finally, my research contributes to ethnographic studies on refugee camps, by considering how "being of the camp" operates as social marker in the socially and economically multi-dimensional society of Jordan. Scholars have shown that despite being extra-territorial spaces where the emergencies become long term situations (Agier 2011, 65), refugee camps are also spaces where desocialized refugees become resocialized (Agier 2011, 70) and refugee camps generate refugees' identities and historical consciousness, as in the case of the 1972 Hutu refugees in the camps of Tanzania (Makki 1995). My research demonstrates that despite having blurred boundaries and new non-Palestinian residents, being of the camp as a social marker gets

renegotiated, yet still matters for refugees. Relatedly, the social maker of "being of the camp" also shows that Palestinian youth still see their camps as Palestinian places and undertake efforts to make sure the upcoming generations will do so as well. These findings are particularly significant considering that today INGOs perceive Palestinian refugee camps or similar contexts of overlapping displacement merely as "host community" spaces, rendering these camps into disadvantaged urban areas where new refugees reside.

Underlying all of these interventions, my central contribution to Middle East Studies is to emphasize the agency of refugees as practitioners of aid and illuminate their negotiations with the logics and practices of humanitarianism from within a local context. Scholarship on refugee youth, as Chatty (2007) argues, tends to fall within the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry, and tends to prioritize the experiences of young *men* in the refugee camps (Achilli 2015, Hart 2008, Barbosa 2022). My dissertation shows the need to explore youth's lives and "youthfulness" in MENA at the intersection of class, gender, space, and sense of identity. The very complexity of the lives of youth defies a clear taxonomy into a unified category of youth, and reducing youthfulness to observable behavior makes us miss their own varied aspirations.

Although international organizations now conceive of youth as assets rather than problems, these understandings are still mainly driven by neoliberal ideology (Sukerieh and Tannock 2011). Middle East Studies provides an important lens to understand how the logics of developmentalism, humanitarianism, and national identity often discount local voices, as well as the negotiations and unintended results of these logics (Mitchell 2002, Lockman 2004). My work builds on this tradition, but also extends it by looking from the margins of humanitarian governance and showing that young refugees' understandings of volunteering, aid, charity, and community engagement is also significant for the practitioners at INGOs to understand the

complexity of overlapping displacement, places where the localization often is imagined to be taking place. My research thus also centers the institutions created by Palestinian citizens of Jordan within the refugee camps, where Palestinians receive, learn, and practice their care work. This is a significant divergence from and contribution to Palestinian Studies perspectives which have mainly focused on Palestinians' relationship with the UNRWA (Schiff 1995, al-Husseini 2010).

Understanding how protracted refugees conceive of humanitarianism as well as their lives in the urbanized camps is especially significant when one remembers that long term displacement is increasingly becoming a norm rather than an exception. While they push against the neoliberal logic of self-reliance, they unwittingly replicate the demands for citizens to take on more responsibility for their own care. Even so, the way that refugees provide for the needs of their communities offers a stark contrast to crisis-driven language about emergencies and centered around saving lives. Even if they operate under humanitarian governance aimed at immediate solutions, refugees prioritize daily, intimate, and long-term forms of support. They become the ones who determine who is worthy of care, and whose expertise counts in giving this care and the context in which it is given.

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