Diasporic Urbanism: Place, Politics and Development in a Jordanian-Palestinian Neighbourhood

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Abstract

This research presents 'diasporic urbanism' as a framework capable of interrogating the ways in which place and locality feature in the lives of diasporic communities. The objective of diasporic urbanism is not to provide a renewed, prescriptive account of what 'diaspora' and 'the diasporic' entail. Rather, its objective is to carve out a conceptual and methodological space for the geographical study of diasporic communities in the city, reconciling important aspects of urban life with the ongoing negotiations of temporality and scale that come with living in the diaspora. The framework stresses the need for diaspora studies to commit to ethnographic forms of enquiry, and to have the confidence to think beyond the Jewish, black, postmodern, or postcolonial experiences and approaches, that disproportionately shape the discipline, when analysing and articulating diasporic life in specific communities.

Rejecting the view that diaspora represents a transnational and de-territorialised social condition, this research explores the specificities and contingencies of life in the Palestinian-Jordanian neighbourhood of Jana'a, in Zarqa. The Palestinian diaspora is often depicted as vulnerable to multiple existential challenges, relating to issues of statehood, the right of return to the homeland, and citizenship rights in countries of residence. But how do Palestinians in Zarqa articulate their own lives and their own identities? This research reveals a separate, and at times counter-intuitive, set of concerns that are of fundamental importance to residents in Jana'a. The project challenges our assumptions around both the concept of diaspora and Palestinian politics by re-examining local histories, urban politics, development, and the ways in which residents articulate their past experiences, present conditions, and aspirations for the future. Diasporic urbanism is presented as a unique opportunity to rethink diasporic geographies in relation to place, and it is through place-based research that we can successfully move beyond the entrenched conceptual crisis within diaspora scholarship.

Declaration

The material contained in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other institution. It is the sole work of the author who takes full responsibility for any errors contained.

Statement of Copyright

Jana'a

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All photographs are taken by the author, unless an alternative source reference is provided.

(Inside Page: Northern area of Jana'a neighbourhood)

List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSF	Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (UK)
CVDB	Cities and Villages Development Bank
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
GIZ	German Corporation for International Development
IAF	Islamic Action Front
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LDU	Local Development Unit (Zarqa Municipality)
MPE	Middle Passage Epistemology
MSSRP	Municipal Services and Social Resilience Project (UK)
NDI	National Democracy Institute (US)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
MoMA	Ministry of Municipal Affairs
UNDP	United Nationals Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

A Note on Transliteration and Translation

All Arabic terms have been transliterated according to the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies system. Translations are my own.

A Note on Consent and Anonymity

Consent to participate in this research was obtained either verbally or in written form (see Appendix). Interlocutors were presented with the choice of having their contributions anonymised. This thesis thus contains a mix of real names and pseudonyms.

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Maps

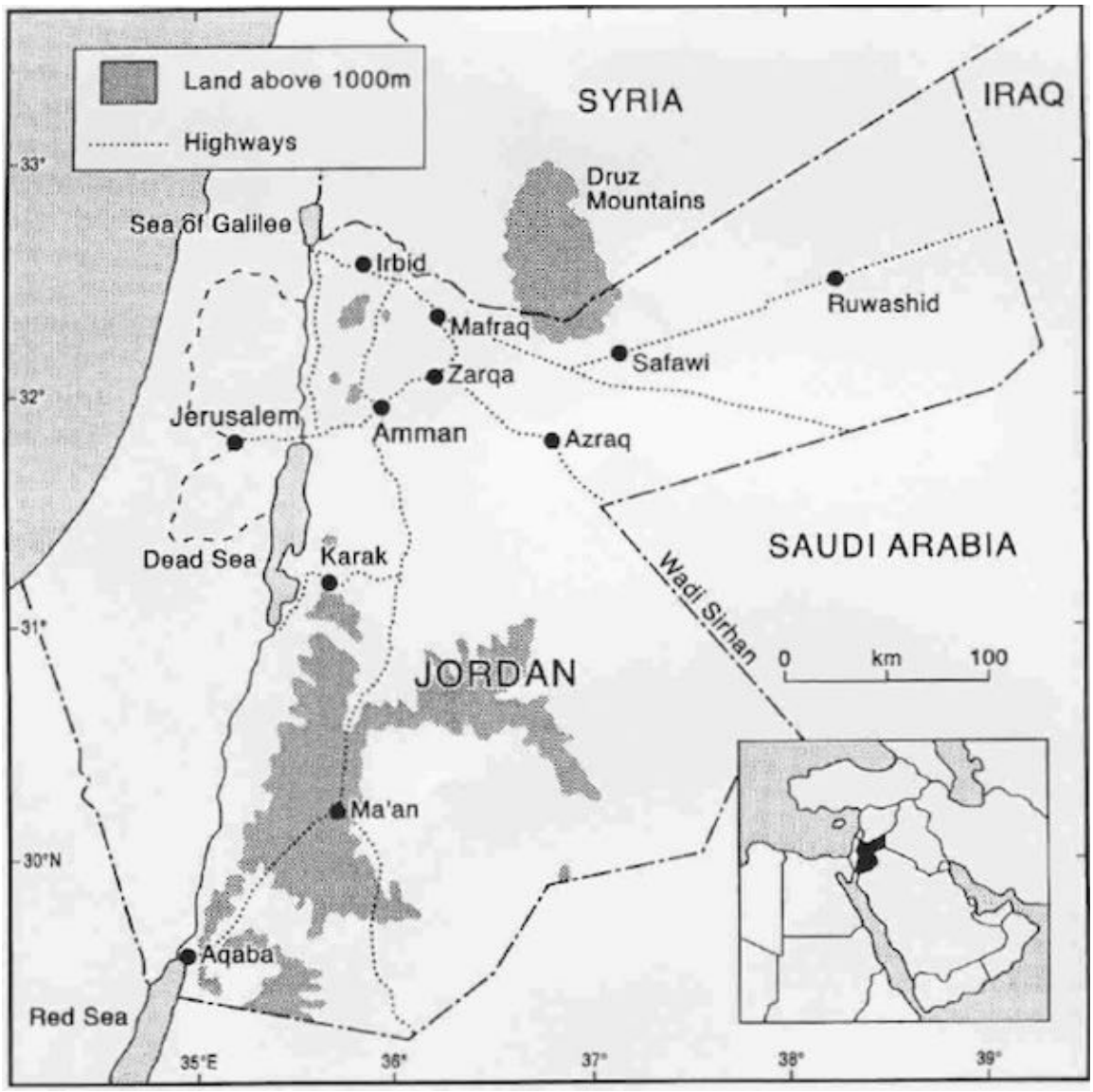

Fig.1 A Map of the Region (including Zarqa)

(Al-Eisawi, 2005)

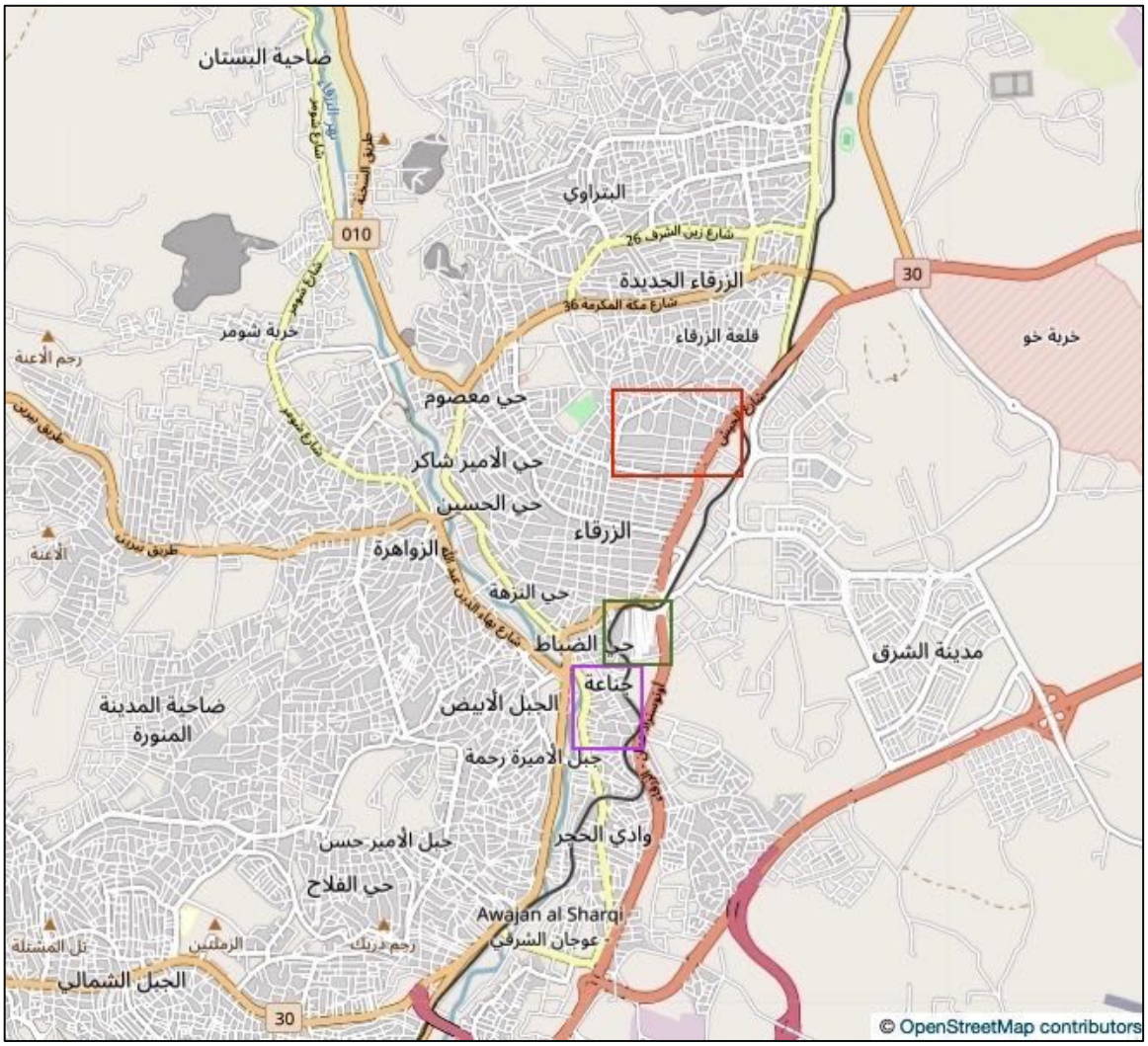

Fig.2 A Map of Zarqa, Jordan

(Map data copyrighted OpenStreetMap contributors and available from https://www.openstreetmap.org)

Al-Ghawariya neighbourhood

Zarqa Camp (UNRWA)

Jana'a neighbourhood

Fig.3 A Map of Jana'a Neighbourhood[1]

(Attour, 2009)

[1] The map key has been adapted from the original. Zarqa river runs North-South to the left of the neighbourhood, the Municipality Stadium and Jundi Park are in the north-west quadrant (lower; upper), Zarqa bus station and part of Zarqa's UNRWA refugee camp are located in the top right corner (blurred)

I: Introduction

On my third night living in Jana'a, I found myself in a car with three of my neighbours, making our way across the city to pay our respects at an Islamic memorial service, or condolence gathering (*'azāa'*). The event was being held for the brother of Khalid Othman, the Office Manager to Zarqa's Mayor. The three men alongside me were all members of the Jana'a Neighbourhood Committee (hereafter the 'Lejneh' ['Committee']), and were attending the ceremony on behalf of the Lejneh and Jana'a as a whole. The ceremony was being held in Ramzi, a neighbourhood located 2km north west of Jana'a. I had not been to this kind of gathering before, but I knew to dress as smartly as my suitcase packing had allowed. Slightly apprehensive, I asked Taisir - who was sitting next to me in the car - how I pay my respects in Arabic:

> "*'aẓam Allah ajruk.* Say it as you enter, just copy what I do."

Heavy traffic gave the four of us plenty of time to talk. I had just arrived in Jana'a and this was my first meeting with Mohammad, and he was keen to hear about my research. I explained that I was interested in exploring different aspects of everyday life and politics in the neighbourhood, and what it means to be Palestinian in Jana'a - and in Zarqa - today. Taisir told the others I had met with Prime Minister Razzaz the previous summer, to discuss the ongoing eviction dispute in Jana'a. Razzaz was Jordan's Education Minister at the time but was one of the few scholars to have focused on informal settlement evictions in Jordan

(Razzaz, 1991; 1993). Razzaz had not heard of the eviction dispute I was researching, but knew of Jana'a: an 'informal', low-income neighbourhood in Zarqa that was established by Palestinian refugees in the early 1950s. Taisir did not hide the fact that he hoped I would meet with him a second time, but I played down the chances of this now that Razzaz was Prime Minister. Mohammad saw things differently:

> "Now it's easier than before… you mustn't think the Prime Minister is a busy man!"

The men in the car had not known Mr Othman's brother. Several Lejneh members would often volunteer to attend these kinds of events, hosted by notable individuals across the city. It was not that they had anything specific to gain from attending, it was more out of a sense of duty in their capacity as neighbourhood representatives. On the drive over, Taisir explained that he had invited me along to give me the opportunity to meet Mr Othman and possibly even the Mayor, Eng. Ali Abu Sukkar. "This will help you in your research", he stated. I felt very uneasy at the thought of networking at such an occasion, but the men reassured me that introductions would not be a problem. Thankfully, my meeting with Mr Othman was limited to a shaking of hands upon arrival, giving me the opportunity to offer my condolences to him and his relatives and nothing more.

We were in and out of the *diwan* (hall) in 10 minutes. The gathering had seemed very well attended: the *diwan* was relatively full and there was a constant flow of visitors entering and leaving. For the 10 minutes we were there we spoke among ourselves, while water, dates and coffee were offered around by family members. I was more relieved than disappointed that our time there had not coincided with Abu Sukkar's visit. I was still in the very early stages of my field research in Jana'a, and had been following day-to-day events in the neighbourhood without worrying too much about what specific research questions I needed answers to. I therefore felt that the evening's proceedings had been highly useful, despite the lack of networking with Zarqa Municipality officials. It seemed clear to me that the men from Jana'a had gone to great lengths to pay their respects and offer their

condolences to Mr Othman, expressing a clear sense of duty as Lejneh representatives and a kind of brotherly solidarity with the municipality. “We are one family, the Zarqa people”, Taisir would later tell me.

It took even longer to drive back to Jana’a than it did leaving. My three companions spent most of the journey speculating as to why Mayor Abu Sukkar had not been invited by the King to last week’s opening of a new mosque in the city. Was it to do with interference by the *Mukhabarat* (Secret Service)? Or had it been against the wishes of the regional government? They were unsure, but agreed that the snub was a clear indication that the authorities were uneasy with Abu Sukkar’s leadership of Zarqa Municipality and with his significant support in the city.

More than two hours of intense conversation exposed me to the pressing political issues of the day, ranging from the status of local representatives, to national politicians and even to the King himself, all through their intersections with life in this small neighbourhood. One theme, however, was never mentioned: Palestinian nationalism and its diasporic geography. No allusions were made to the seemingly critical topic of their existence as Palestinians displaced from their lost homeland. To what extend does - and should - these issues relating to municipal politics, urban identity, and neighbourhood organisation inform our understanding of diaspora? Was it even possible to think diaspora differently, through this vocabulary of street-level urban politics? Can we square the political machinations that clearly preoccupy this small Palestinian community with grand national narratives of catastrophe and loss? The conceptual horizons of diaspora offered no obvious resolution to this tension. From this conversation with my neighbours, stuck in traffic on the way to a memorial, the critical task of this project crystallised.

Research Outline

When we think of diasporas, we may first think of the transnational Jewish community, scattered across much of Europe, the Americas, Central Asia, and elsewhere. Alternatively, we may think of the African diaspora, and particularly those living in the West whose settlement can be traced to the Atlantic slave trade, or more recent migrations within the colonial and post-colonial periods. Or perhaps we think of a single city, a single neighbourhood or a single street, in which many different diasporic communities come together each day. Each of these three imaginaries reflect the ways in which the concept of diaspora has been utilised within both popular and academic discourse. The origins of diaspora derive from the Greek words *dia* ('through') and *speirein* ('to scatter') (Brah 1996, p.178), but it is in relation to the Jewish experience of exile (*galut* in Hebrew) that the term took on its contemporary meaning of a collective, transnational community (Tölölyan, 2007). 'Diaspora' was then applied to the African context as late as the 1950s, following interest in Pan-Africanism and black internationalism (Edwards, 2001), and has since performed an important role in rethinking race, ethnicity, and culture in a transnational context. In more recent years, the use of the concept has been extended to encompass any ethnic or national community living outside of a 'homeland', and has thus become a key term in an era defined by globalisation, increasing interconnectedness and rising cosmopolitanism. This has only become more pronounced today, as 'the border' and the politics of bordering have become a key area of scholarly examination, in the context of resurgent nationalism (e.g. Yuval-Davis et al, 2019).

Linked in various ways to the experiences of transnational displacement, movement and resettlement, diaspora has proved a flexible and ambivalent concept capable of reflecting a broad range of political positions in the diaspora. As an analytical category, however, diaspora is compromised by its ability to assume different meanings, to be conflated with other terms, and thus to degenerate into a category of poor analytical value (Mitchell, 1997). Diaspora has long served as a label of convenience for many different kinds of transnational

movements and belongings (Brubaker, 2005). The recent proliferation in application of the diaspora concept across a range of empirical contexts may hint at its important and productive potential, but what is certain is that such a proliferation inevitably results in a dilution and distortion of the term's defining properties.

This project provides a re-examination of the diaspora concept by disengaging it from "its daily uses" in order to "wonder about its meaning, [to] explicate it, and render public its discursive being" (Ophir 2018, p.62). To do so, it radically shifts the scale of diaspora from the (trans)national to the 'local', and offers a re-examination of what is usually regarded as a transnational phenomenon through the specificities and contingencies of life in the Palestinian-Jordanian neighbourhood of Jana'a, in Zarqa. While the neighbourhood itself will be described in detail across most of the following chapters, it suffices here to lay bare the questions, aims and objectives of this particular intervention:

> 1) What does life in a Palestinian-majority neighbourhood in Zarqa, Jordan, tell us about diasporic subjectivity, life and experience?
>
> 2) What can the concept of diaspora tell us about the urban condition in Jana'a neighbourhood, and in Zarqa more broadly?
>
> 3) What implications does this research have for the study of urban diasporic populations, and diaspora studies as a whole?

Distinct from transnational subjectivities orientated towards a particular homeland, as well as from homogenised notions of nation and national culture, this urban focus allows us to investigate how diasporic subjectivities emerge over time as a result of new forms of place attachment, evolving conditions in places of settlement, and the shifting dynamics of local, everyday life. At the same time, a focus on diasporic temporalities and sensibilities offers a unique vantage point from which to rethink our understanding of the urban. Tropes relating to the urban

poor and urban informality - which are pertinent in the case of Jana'a - are disrupted by a commitment to understanding the ways in which diasporic communities articulate their relationship to such places. This provides the possibility to reconsider the assumptions behind forms of urban planning and international development, where the dynamics of diasporic life and expression may be somewhat lacking.

This research presents 'diasporic urbanism' as a conceptual framework capable of interrogating the ways in which place and locality feature in the lives of diasporic communities. While the framework is explored at great length in Chapter Three, it is necessary to state here that the objective of diasporic urbanism is not to provide a renewed, prescriptive account of what 'diaspora' and 'the diasporic' entail. Rather, its objective is to guide future research into exploring diasporic life free from the constraints of contemporary paradigmatic approaches. Informed by critical urban studies and the inductive approach to research undertaken in this project, diasporic urbanism attempts to simultaneously provide a new conceptual framework and a methodological pathway for research on diasporic geography. Above all else, diasporic urbanism stresses the need to commit to ethnographic forms of enquiry in diaspora studies, and to have the confidence to think beyond the Jewish, black, postmodern, or postcolonial experiences and approaches when analysing and articulating diasporic life in specific communities. The objective of this research is to study localised forms of diasporic life, without losing sight of the ways in which these forms have broader significance, particularly concerning the more existential questions we associate with diasporic communities.

A Palestinian Diaspora?

Diaspora scholarship has a great deal to learn from the empirical cases of individual, localised, Palestinian diasporic communities. "Retrospectively and without complete consensus", Palestinians tend to fit the traditional sense of the

term, conceived in the context of the Jewish experience in which victimisation lead to the forced displacement of an entire ethnic or national group (Cohen 1996, p.1). Cohen labels Palestinians as a 'victim diaspora', differentiated from 'labour', 'imperial', and 'trade' diasporas by the circumstances under which transnational movement took place. But the idea that diasporas can be so definitively categorised has been widely criticised within diaspora scholarship. Anthias (1998) criticises these typologies for emphasising only specific forms of experience in each of these diasporas, and for asserting a single vision of individual diasporas that says little about class, gender, and other forms of internal division or difference. To what extent can we describe Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, and further afield in Europe, the United States, Chile, Australia and elsewhere, as a homogenous group of victims, experiencing the same levels of victimisation? How can we talk about degrees of victimhood if we are to ignore class and gender?

And yet, Palestinians are often understood in terms of their victimhood and according to a different conceptual category: the refugee. Powerful as it may be, 'refugee' is itself a limited concept. One recent example captures the use of refugeehood in describing Palestinian life in the diaspora:

> "The refugee experience often involves living with time out of joint, in multiple temporalities at once. Coming to understand what has happened – that home is gone, that communities are sundered – takes time. And the daily rhythms of humanitarian assistance are so dramatically different from those of what had been ordinary life that it can be difficult for people to orient themselves temporally. Even as the first crisis passes, temporal confusion can continue."
>
> (Feldman 2018, p.20)

Here, we see a shift in focus from the spatiality of diaspora to the temporality of the refugee. While 'refugee' has a less ambiguous definition than diaspora, given the former's ties to a specific legal status of the displaced non-citizen, the term has stayed with Palestinians because of its implicit references to loss, upheaval, rupture, disorientation, and limbo. It must be stated that some Palestinians in the diaspora are still - technically and officially - refugees, particularly in Lebanon and

those that emigrated from Gaza to Jordan after the *Naksa* ('the setback') in 1967 (Shiblak, 1996). However, the subjective experience of refugeehood seems to resonate with populations that do not necessarily fit the legal status requirements of 'refugee', primarily due to the term's specific political and ethical connotations. As Hanafi (2003) argues, the term 'refugee' helps keep alive the injustices of Palestinian displacement, as well as the hope of returning to the homeland.

In contrast to 'refugee', Hanafi portrays diaspora as a concept focused on forms of *accepted* legal presence in host countries, as well as the existence of transnational ties (ibid., p.166). The territorial claims associated with the refugee are no longer so strongly emphasised, as the diaspora concept privileges a kind of 'progressive' politics that centres instead around transnational forms of being and senses of belonging. Diasporas are treated as distinct from both assimilated populations and populations in transit, due to a plurality of orientations (homeland, hostland, transnational community) and an affiliated "quest for a geographical position" that draws on the tensions between them (ibid., p.168). Hanafi settles on "partially diasporised people" as an adequate (or the least problematic) label for Palestinians, as a result of the group's "fragile centre of gravity" (ibid., pp.158-159). As a result, Hanafi sees value in situating the study of "recent Palestinianness" within the field of diaspora studies.

In a partial commentary on Hanafi's point of view, Peteet (2007, p.628) argues that it should not be the goal of research "to determine whether Palestinians are diasporic", but to pose questions such as 'when does one know whether a diaspora exists?' and 'can diaspora accommodate or coexist with a politics of return?'. Here, we again see the political and ethical implications of such terminology, particularly when other concepts with different connotations may be applied. Peteet calls for research that examines "how Palestinians, with their multiplicity of displacements in time and space and transnational modes of life, might, and might not, be diasporic", emphasising the importance of ethnographic methodologies over a reliance on social theory (ibid.).

Another concept distinct from the terms 'refugee' and 'diaspora', which is also commonly applied to the Palestinian context, is that of 'exile'. Diana Allan (2014) oscillates between the two concepts of exile and refugee in her research on the lives of Palestinians residing in Shatila Refugee Camp in Lebanon. Importantly, Allan (ibid., p.5) details some of the key problems relating to discourses that are driven by such ideological terms:

> "The ethical imperative that many scholars feel often leads them to emphasise the continuities of attachment in exile rather than discontinuities. By focusing on camps as temporary communities, where refugees ready themselves for return, scholarship has tended to uncritically interpellate refugees as national subjects and to neglect forms of social and political organisation and identification that have developed in exile.
> […]
> Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere are almost always discussed in ideological terms, as if they dwelled entirely within a political realm, as if their aspirations and inner lives lacked the fractured complexities of Western consciousness and identity, and as if their crucial needs were spiritual and ethno-national but not material and economic."

When Palestinian communities in the diaspora are represented in these ways, it is easy to see how localised, place-based dynamics are hidden from view. In *The Unmaking of the Arab Intellectual* (2017), Zeina Halabi details how various literary figures of the Palestinian diaspora have contributed to these kinds of 'exilic' imaginaries. Halabi demonstrates how Palestinian authors such as Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish and Jabra al-Jabra repeatedly evoke exile as a space of transcendental displacement, requiring minimal engagement with other registers of temporality and place in the diaspora. Darwish, widely considered to be the "national poet of Palestine" (Antoon 2002, p.66), successfully channels a kind of 'exilic prophecy' that is defined by "a timeless spectrality fostered by displacement", and draws on "theologically coded spaces […] in a teleological discourse of salvation" (Halabi 2017, p.16). Halabi argues that Darwish portrays his own transcendence as "a subject of history in a present that shall usher in a future of certainty" (ibid., p.155). In a similar vein, Halabi explains that al-Jabra sees exile:

> "as an unmatched sense of loss that splinters the self and disrupts it, a tragic state of displacement that had turned Palestinians into 'wanderers'."
>
> (ibid., p.99)

Al-Jabra rejected the term 'refugee' for the same reasons Hanafi cites, namely, that it signifies a willingness to "relinquish their identity and origins in exchange for assistance" (ibid., p.100). Edward Said repeats these assertions:

> "Said thinks of exile as a historical practice of banishment of individuals at odds with a social and political consensus […]. Refugees, in Said's understanding, suggest 'large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance'".
>
> (ibid.)

Halabi argues that the positions taken by these authors reflect highly privileged vantage points, far removed from the everyday realities of the 'ordinary' Palestinian in the diaspora. And yet, the influence of these writers over general representations of Palestinian life is considerable. Her book later focuses on a new generation of Palestinian writers who have engaged with this subject of the 'ordinary', and the ways in which the ordinary has transformed their portrayals of the Palestinian experience. While some have foregrounded "check-points, roadblocks, walls and sieges, […] others re-examined the notion of exile by decentring the figure of the exilic intellectual and voiding it of its signifiers" (ibid., p.23). Consider these two excerpts, analysing the ways in which Palestinian-Canadian novelist Rawi Hage and Palestinian-born film director Elia Suleiman challenge these ideas of Palestinian exile:

> "Navigating the darkness of the Canadian welfare system, Rawi Hage's exilic intellectual is a fake enactment of an ideal type. As an exilic intellectual, the Professor in *Cockroach* blurs the distinction between exile and refugee and becomes a financial burden but also a welcome addition to a self-congratulating welfare state. […] The archetype of the exilic Arab intellectual appears thus as a 1960s historical relic, a redundant laughable character voided of mystique."
>
> (ibid., pp.114-5)

> "Renouncing what he perceives as a tendency to romanticise exile, Suleiman disjoins exile from memory, or from the perception of exile as a safeguard of memory. Exile is
>
> > 'A permanent transgression of the self, one that traverses borders, and integrates traversed cultures … True exile, to me, is in fact to be in Palestine - this Palestine that is being politically, socially constructed, where even the very notion of Palestine is being construed thereby putting an end to the fantasy of return'
>
> As such, Suleiman's position is doubly dissident: first; because it stands in opposition to primordial structures of identity; and second, because it challenges the romanticisation of the (Palestinian) intellectual - reified, objectified and consecrated by exile - and condemns him to silence, or the loss of the prophetic word."
>
> (ibid., p.117)

What emerges from these debates and contrasting viewpoints is an overwhelming need to rethink and reassess the conceptual categories at our disposal when thinking about life in the diaspora. A critical evaluation of diaspora scholarship has a great deal to learn from the varied empirical cases of Palestinian communities, given the ferocity of current political discourse, and the fact that many different conceptual categories and social conditions have been used to define Palestinian diasporic life. By foregrounding the Palestinian diaspora, we are well-placed to rethink the concept's entrenched attachments to the historical cases that have created its epistemological foundations: the Jewish diaspora, the African diaspora, and diasporas as a discourse of globalisation. At stake here are the integrity of the diaspora concept and diaspora studies more broadly, as well as the ways in which we choose to represent the contemporary experiences of Palestinian communities around the world.

Diaspora in the City: Tensions and Dilemmas

The story of diaspora encompasses multiple spatial trajectories that make the diaspora concept impossible to collapse into a single geography. Diasporic

movements may involve epic journeys between continents, potentially as precarious as the recent experience of displacement. Diasporic movements may also involve fleeing only a short-distance to relative safety, just across a particular border. The diaspora concept has also been applied to instances of domestic ethnic and social cleansing, whereby the diasporic experience is said to resonate with other, class-based or racialised forms of forced displacement and dispossession (Glick Schiller, 2014). It is also plausible to think of diaspora in terms of *immobility* in the event of border changes, such as the 1947 partition between India and Pakistan (Roy, 2018), the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus in 1974 (Navaro-Yashin, 2012), or Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1948 and its subsequent withdrawal four decades later (Ramahi, 2015). In each of these circumstances, entire communities have found themselves living within a newly-created diaspora, having to come to terms with different institutional structures and population changes. Given the stark differences in places of diasporic inhabitation, it is important to acknowledge that diasporic communities do not necessarily experience extreme changes in culture, climate, and society, relative to life in the 'homeland'. The contexts of diasporic settlement are therefore of great significance when it comes to examining diasporic subjectivity and experience.

There is a case to be made that diasporas are as much an urban phenomenon as they are a transnational phenomenon. Blunt and Bonnerjee (2013) have introduced the concept of 'diaspora cities' to emphasise the point that diasporic communities may well identify with their cities of origin or cities of diasporic settlement just as much (or perhaps more so) than their nations of origin/settlement. It is worth stating that the term 'diaspora' was adopted in a specific urban context, by the Jewish communities settling in the Egyptian city of Alexandria around 250 BC (Tölölyan, 2007). Although statistics on city-dwelling diasporas are hard to come by, the simultaneous processes of urbanisation and transnational movement lead us to assume that rural-rural diasporic movements are in the minority. As an example, the urban population in Jordan and Lebanon represent 91% and 89% of the total national populations respectively (The World Bank, 2018). And while an emphasis on national forms of belonging and identity

may well remain important in the diasporic imaginary, we cannot overlook the extent to which cities offer "important material contexts for personal and collective memory work" (ibid., p.221).

Perhaps the most significant contribution to diaspora scholarship from the field of urban studies comes from Ayona Datta (2013). For Datta, diaspora:

> "… poses the question of location in structural, material, social and subjective terms. This is important in a context where historically diaspora-making has been strongly associated with dislocation and displacement"
>
> (ibid., p.89)

Datta brings together recent debates in transnational studies to view agency and subjectivity in diasporic contexts through the tensions that arise between the urban - as a more situated and spatially dense geography - and broader, transnational notions of being and belonging. And while Datta uses the urban to think diaspora beyond dislocation and displacement, her critical examination of the diaspora concept does not go far enough. The 'urban turn' Datta advocates seems to reproduce the same problems around bordering and mobility that have led to the dilution of the core meaning of diaspora. In fact, it is difficult to see how Datta makes the distinction between diaspora and the concepts of transnationalism and migration. Datta emphasises the importance of diasporic connections to a particular elsewhere, and the chapter's contribution seems limited to the mere inclusion of diasporic populations into an already-established view of the city, defined by its diversity, spatial density, and the mobilities of its inhabitants. This project will seek to deploy the urban as a way of interrogating the concept of diaspora more deeply, in order to draw out its distinctive meaning in a particular context. Through place-based research in the city, diaspora can be distinguished from migration through its particular temporal and spatial sensibilities, drawing us towards the more emplaced aspects of transnational populations, and the enduring presence of diasporic communities in the city.

Recognising the importance of cities to (urban) diasporas is not necessarily a one-way relationship. Increasingly, there has been a focus on the ways in which cities and diasporas mutually constitute one another. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011), for instance, make the point that emphasis must be placed on migration *and* cities, rather than migration *of* or *in* the city. Giving serious consideration to this relationship leads us to understand ways in which diasporas become agents of urban change and participants in a wide range of urban processes (Finlay, 2019). In 2016, French-language journal *Diasporas* published a special issue on 'Urban Scenes: Scales, Temporality, Trajectories. 16th-20th Centuries', which focused on the ways in which diasporic communities and cities of the Mediterranean transformed one another. In the introduction to the issue, Kunth (2016) explains that the purpose of their collective intervention is to rethink the category of diaspora itself, particularly by observing how localised contexts 'shape, define and redraw' the contours of diaspora. What brings the contributions together is not just the geographical focus but also the collective questioning of scale in analysing diasporic communities, as well as the temporal implications of thinking diaspora through the cumulative experience of life outside the homeland. Collectively, the papers apply a comparative analysis to diasporic communities across multiple Mediterranean urban geographies and across different time periods. While the focus in this issue is on the ways in which diasporic experience transforms across different contexts, the comparative technique says little about the diaspora concept itself. The analysis does not perform the kind of conceptual work Kunth argues is necessary in diaspora scholarship, and Kunth herself falls into the same traps as Datta (2013). The urban is presented as an arena for postmodernist approaches to diaspora: approaches that emphasise diversity, difference, spatial 'fluctuations', and transnational connections.

Central to the examination of diasporas and cities, Kunth (2016) argues, are questions and debates over imagination and representation. These two areas of analysis are all the more productive given the specific spatial interplay of diasporas and cities. For instance, Ang (2001, p.89) explains that diasporas are "constituted by ethnic unity in the face of spatial scattering", whereas contemporary urban

theory sees the urban as being “shaped by ethnic diversity through spatial convergence”. Kunth’s argument is particularly important if we think about and problematise the dominant forms of representation through the tension that arises between these two contrasting spatialities. Too frequently, though, this tension is undermined by the tendency within diaspora scholarship to manipulate the diaspora concept to fit with particular and dominant paradigmatic approaches. Diasporas either retain their sense of spatial scattering in places of settlement through various imaginative practices (e.g. memory, mobile/transnational subjectivity), or they compromise on their ethnic unity (e.g. fluidity, hybridity) in these places. Each of these versions of diaspora is often reflected in the kinds of literary, intellectual contributions introduced in the previous section, in which diasporas are imagined and represented as out of place altogether.

By thinking about the geographical tensions (space, place, scale) between diasporas and the city, we are able to study diasporic experience in a way that transcends particular theoretical paradigms. This research extricates diaspora from the spatial assumptions that lie at the heart of the concept. Instead, this research engages transnationalism and imaginative practices that transcend the present as and when they emerge in specific diasporic communities, according to place-based research. It is this emphasis on place, rather than the diverse and complex spatiality of the city, that provides the foundations to carry out the kind of conceptual work Datta and Kunth rightly identify as necessary for diasporic scholarship.

Zarqa’s Palestinian Diaspora

What does it mean to think diasporic urbanism in practice? Immediately, we encounter a problem concerning the premise of the question. Has a shift in scale - from the (trans)national to the city - not reproduced the same problem of essentialisation? Does it make sense to talk of a single, city-wide, diaspora? And

to what extent can we talk of Zarqa as a homogenous place of diasporic life? While we must avoid the analysis descending into an interminable multiplicity, it is important to explore the problems of representation discussed above in relation to 'diaspora cities' or 'urban diasporas'.

I first came to 'know' of Zarqa through conversations with friends, teachers, and most of all taxi drivers, in the capital city of Jordan, Amman. The travel time between the two cities is approximately 45 minutes. It was startling how many people I spoke to that had never visited the city, or had only visited on the rare occasion (to visit family members, for example). Most claimed to know very little about Zarqa, other than the fact that it was considered a relatively poor city, not as clean as the capital, but also not as expensive. Certainly, none of my non-Arab friends had visited Zarqa. It is located outside the traditional tourist routes that - in the north of Jordan - take in Amman, Jerash, and Ajloun, while Irbid serves as the transport hub for destinations further north, towards the Syrian border.

Naturally, the taxi drivers tended to know more about Zarqa, and in the early days of my research in Jordan I would spend many of my taxi journeys around Amman discussing Zarqa: its identity, its economy, and its politics. I would often hear how people in Zarqa are tougher but kinder than people in Amman, and that it was poorer, and very crowded. Some drivers were from Zarqa, and they would tell me about the difficult economic conditions, but also a collective sense of pride shared among the city's inhabitants, who refer to themselves by the demonym *Zarqāwiyīn*. These sentiments always seemed in stark contrast to the drivers who had grown up in Amman, but nevertheless answered my question 'where are you from?' with "Palestine". There seemed to be a greater willingness among the *Zarqāwi* drivers to answer the question with 'Zarqa' or 'Jordan', than their compatriots from the capital. These kinds of nuances and disparities in the relationship between diasporas and the city would come to inform a significant part of this project.

In those early months of my research, I also explored how Zarqa and its Palestinian inhabitants are characterised in Western publications. After all, terms such as diaspora, exile and refugee are often applied to particular ethno-national communities by external commentators, without sufficient appreciation for internal (and place-based) differences. Interest in the Palestinian diaspora has tended to concentrate on particular kinds of geographical spaces. While the vast majority of Palestinian diasporic communities reside in 'regular' urban neighbourhoods, there has always been a particular interest in the Palestinian refugee camps in the region (Allan, 2014; Achilli, 2015; Feldman, 2018). Interest has often been limited to camps in Lebanon and the Occupied Territories as opposed to camps in Syria and Jordan, the latter two having extended many rights of citizenship to the Palestinians (Khalidi, 1997) and thus - in the eyes of the West - reduced the spectacle that is the Palestinian refugee.

In Jordan, Myriam Ababsa's work (2011; 2012) stands out for having focused on Palestinian, informal, urban settlements, and for her recognition of the fact that only 18% of the Palestinian population reside in official refugee camps (2012, p.259). Across the region, official camp populations represent around a third of UNRWA[2]-registered Palestinians (Schulz, 2003). While Zarqa is home to Jordan's first ever UNRWA camp ('Zarqa Camp'), research on Palestinians has often focused on the more well-known camps in Amman such as al-Wihdat and Jabal Hussein (Ababsa, 2011). It is important to note that international interest in Palestinians in Zarqa peaked for a brief time in the early 2000s, when a Zarqa-born, Jordanian-Palestinian man by the name of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi became the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. The following excerpts provide shocking yet relatively representative accounts of how Zarqa is viewed by external commentators in this context:

> "The city of Zarqa is a depressed industrial site north of Amman, the Jordanian capital. Unemployment, especially among the young, is rampant. Poverty is widespread and hope is a forgotten concept. Over the last forty years, the growth

[2] United Nations Relief and Works Agency (also referred to here as 'the Agency')

> of the city has been marked by the proliferation of Palestinian refugee camps, a shanty belt of misery encircling its outskirts. For the residents of Zarqa, the Palestinian diaspora is like a tangible cancer, an uncontrollable growth that strangles the already weak local economy, reduces employment opportunities, and plagues their souls. Religious fundamentalism seems the sole cure for this terminal illness."
>
> (Napoleoni 2005, p.27)

> "Underrepresented in the Jordanian government and the Parliament because of its large Palestinian population, the city's fading, old-style economy and serious pollution problems leave its largely young, poor, and unemployed population with little to hope for. As a result, disaffected youth are prey to extremist messages and recruitment.
> […]
> Zarqa is not a pretty place. Stretching into Jordan's eastern desert, at the north-eastern point of the crescent formed by the Greater Amman megalopolis, Zarqa presents the casual visitor with a bleak facade of row upon row of concrete blocks housing its lower-income population, on the outskirts of which lie scattered, smoke-belching factories."
>
> Hale (2004)

Both authors focus on al-Zarqawi: the first a book on Iraqi insurgency and the second a cable released by Wikileaks, written by the United States' Ambassador to Jordan, David Hale. Both make the same links between a suffering Palestinian community, a city in decline, and Islamic extremism. While Napoleoni's treatment of Zarqa is riddled with misinformation, and both are guilty of hyperbolising conditions of poverty and 'refugeehood' in the city, these excerpts point to the significance of understanding the so-called 'diasporic condition' through particular places, and particular cities. In one of my first fieldwork meetings, an urban planner from Zarqa told me that researchers who come to the city are only ever interested in two things: Palestinians, and the Muslim Brotherhood. He explained that these agendas are often misguided, as they overlook Palestinian loyalties to Jordan, and religious belief outside of political Islam. Furthermore, they are driven by views that do not correlate with those held by the vast majority in the city. Contrary to these agendas, this research emphasises the need to view cities not as spectacles but as sources of knowledge, and to take city-based narratives seriously when examining a phenomenon like the Palestinian diaspora.

Collectively, these initial representations of Palestinians and Zarqa highlight how easy it is to misread an unfamiliar city, and to make assertions of diasporic life around tropes of poverty, refuge, and so forth. But how do Palestinians in Zarqa articulate their own lives and their own identities? And how does this impact the terminologies and conceptual categories we use in our analysis? I asked many of my interlocutors about various terms in the neighbourhood of Zarqa where this research came to be based, called Jana'a. 'Diaspora' (*shitāt*), is not a term Palestinians use to describe themselves or the community to which they belong. Neither the Arabic words for 'refugee' (*lāji'īn*) nor 'exile' (*ghurba*) seemed to resonate either - not anymore at least. Palestinians who came to Jordan before 1967 were generally referred to as 'refugees', whereas Palestinians after 1967 were labelled 'displacees' (*nāziḥīn*). In addition, the term *ḥaqūq manqūsa* (literally 'broken/rescinded rights') is often used to describe Palestinian-Jordanians (as opposed to 'ethnic' Jordanians), as it lays bare their lack of entitlement. While a legal term in principle, *ḥaqūq manqūsa* has taken on a deep cultural significance as the gap between the two groups has grown in recent decades.

Compared to the specific imaginaries and limited rights-based discourse conjured by the most of these categories, the concept of diaspora represents a significant opportunity to interrogate the assumptions we make about 'transnational' communities. While diaspora refers to a spatial scattering, it has come to represent a contemporary social condition, the specificities of which can vary tremendously depending on the contexts in which transnational communities are situated. Diaspora need not be a stringently enforced population category, nor an identifiable social condition, but rather it could be used to think critically about the different scales at which diasporic life takes place, the different places that shape and are shaped by these lives, and how different diasporic communities experience time outside the homeland. It therefore follows that the Palestinian diaspora represents an opportunity to explore and examine the city of Zarqa, while the city itself allows us to critically analyse diasporic life.

Thesis Structure

In light of the themes introduced so far, the following chapter ('**Geographies of Diaspora**') provides a critical, geographical lens to the concept of diaspora. In an attempt to move beyond the conceptual crisis that plagues the discipline, this analysis interrogates the so-called 'diasporic condition' through a consideration of different scales, spaces, temporalities and places that may be described to varying degrees as 'diasporic'. While most evaluations of the diaspora concept tend only to rework the postmodern idea of diaspora as a social condition, this chapter positions this problem front and centre in the need to move beyond the crisis within diaspora studies. The chapter outlines and challenges the idea that life in the diaspora can be satisfactorily understood as a kind of de-territorialised and/or marginalised subjective experience, applicable to different places and different circumstances. While applying a particularly geographical form of analysis, this chapter takes account of the inter-disciplinary nature of diaspora studies and its critiques, blending together Jewish, black, and other traditions of diasporic thought. The second half of the chapter details the need for diaspora studies to take better account of place in its understanding of diasporic experience. Focusing on place-based diasporas, and arguing for a need to localise rather than globalise diasporas, this chapter provides the rationale that guides the entire research project.

Chapter Three ('**Diasporic Urbanism**') details the processes and events that shaped this project, and the context through which the conceptual arguments presented here took form. It begins with a detailed and reflective look at the research process itself: from the initial areas of interest to the early stages of fieldwork that dramatically altered the scope and direction of the entire project. The productivity of this open and inductive process is emphasised throughout the chapter. Without it, the critical engagement of diaspora studies would have remained little more than a disengaged, theoretical exercise devoid of empirical and methodological rigour. By bringing political geography and critical urban studies together, the

chapter arrives at an ethnographically-informed conceptual framework of 'diasporic urbanism', which seeks to embed diaspora studies within place-based analyses of urban life. The concept of 'intransience' is introduced in this chapter, supplementing the broader conceptual framework by providing a counterpoint to the spatial and temporal assumptions that direct diaspora scholarship towards notions of transnationality, de-territorialisation, and the metaphor of the margin. The interventions of diasporic urbanism and intransience help frame the following five chapters, which examine the concept of diaspora through life in Jana'a neighbourhood.

Diaspora discourse is principally organised around the enduring effects of displacement and transnational movement. Chapter Four ('**Settled Positions**') argues that the subsequent emplacement of diaspora has wide-ranging implications for how we think about the so-called diasporic condition, covering issues of identity, community, and politics, as well as how diasporas are viewed, governed and organised. This chapter tells the story of Zarqa through the diasporic experience, illustrating how a local community was formed with a strong sense of place and belonging, which has endured over the course of the diaspora. This narrative is significant as it highlights the consequences of 'becoming diaspora' in the city. This chapter builds on the conceptual work of the previous two chapters to highlight the importance of place in shaping diasporic life, and sets up the analysis of subsequent chapters that examine these forms of diasporic being in more detail.

Given the conditions of belonging that have emerged in the diaspora, Chapter Five ('**Nostalgia in the Diasporic Present**') argues for the need to rethink the vocabularies often used in scholarly works to describe diaspora in temporal terms. Nostalgia in Jana'a is most often articulated in relation to a more prosperous period in the history of the diaspora, and emerges in relation to a wide range of materialities in the present. Rather than conjuring memories and stories of the homeland and life before displacement, we see a clear desire for residents in Jana'a to discuss past experiences *in* the diaspora, in ways that resonate with

present day concerns. Similarly, materialities that 'haunt' the present are a form of nostalgia, making residents remember a time in the past when things were better, or when prospects for improvement seemed more realistic. These forms of nostalgia require us to consider the past trajectories of life and local development in Jana'a and in diasporic communities in general. Rather than revealing a 'presentlessness', the chapter shows how the present is filled with disappointments, unfulfilled promises, and the material remnants of what once was.

Diaspora politics is often defined by symbolic forms of representation that reinforce transnational solidarities. Through its focus on the specificities and local contingencies of diasporic life, diasporic urbanism applies a grounded perspective to diaspora politics, and explores the specific ways in which politics is articulated and practised in individual diasporic communities. Chapter Six ('**Politics in the Diaspora**') looks at how the political manifests itself in Jana'a today, and considers what can be discerned about both political and urban life in diasporic contexts. Political engagement in Jana'a is rooted not in ethno-nationalist sentiments and concerns, but in a more localised political environment, where community dynamics intersect with the politics of the city to reveal moments of (im)possibility and (dis)engagement. Diaspora politics in Jana'a is shown to be consistently rooted in place, but continuously adapting to changes in a wider, often city-based, political context. Interestingly, these forms of politics seem to have little bearing on the ways in which political life in the Palestinian diaspora is often framed, either through discourses of nationalism, religion, or ethnic solidarities.

The majority of diasporas not only originate in the South but also remain in the South (Alexander et al, 2015), and these populations are often subjected to international development interventions. Chapter Seven ('**Diaspora and the Geopolitics of Development**') deploys diasporic urbanism to challenge hegemonic development discourse and practice in Zarqa, exposing their shortcomings and biases through ethnographic, place-based engagement. Different forms of 'emergency' and 'crisis' implicate the Jana'a community in various forms of

intervention, both as vulnerable refugees and as 'host' communities on the brink of social unrest. In fact, development organisations justify their intervention in this context by denying the existence of 'the diasporic', and the conditions of intransience that challenge the developmental narrative. The research exposes pacification to be a common goal of development interventions in and around Jana'a, exposing a sensitivity within projects that seek to both support and de-politicise the diasporic community.

While the idea of a peace process between Israel and Palestinians endures, the hopes of the 1994 Oslo Accords have all but withered away. For Palestinians, the Accords were never what many international commentators claimed: the right of return was glaringly absent from an agreement that was seen as a 'sell-out' of Palestine. This right of return has long been articulated as the primary goal for Palestinians globally. Today in Jana'a, the future is articulated according to different registers altogether. Chapter Eight ('**Diasporic Futures**') highlights a generational divide when it comes to aspirations for the future: older generations yearning for a positive change to city politics and economy, and a younger generation who are looking to make their way elsewhere, preferably in Europe. At the core of these differing aspirations is a common desire for an uncomplicated, secure life. Even if, for some, this means becoming diasporic all over again. It is only by thinking of the future of the Palestinian diaspora in places like Zarqa, that we can comment on the promise of, and aspiration for, the right of return.

The concluding chapter outlines what is at stake if we are to move beyond the idea of diaspora as a social condition, and to instead take place, emplacement and intransience seriously in our conceptualisations of diaspora and diasporic life. Having allowed the ethnographic material to guide the direction and content of this research project, this chapter outlines the core arguments in favour of diasporic urbanism as a framework for navigating the production of diasporic life in the city. The chapter considers the implications of viewing Palestinian political discourse through this framework, and ends by discussing potential future applications for diasporic urbanism beyond the Palestinian context.

* * *

This project contributes to and challenges conventional understandings of diasporic geographies and Palestinian politics, but it could not do so without taking the city of Zarqa seriously as a source of knowledge, a scene of diasporic life, and a co-constituting element of diasporic subjectivity. In what follows, we encounter a city that cannot be reduced to the political, economic, and social problems that often drive academic and journalistic interest in the city. Nor can Zarqa be defined by the legacy of al-Zarqawi. Rather, we encounter a city with a strong identity and with an important history, and we therefore seek to examine this city on its own terms: how the city is produced in Jana'a and how it is articulated by Jana'a residents. Diasporic urbanism has as much to give to our understanding of the urban, as it does to our understanding of diaspora and Palestinian politics.

II: Geographies of Diaspora

Introduction

Diaspora studies is in the midst of a protracted conceptual crisis. A vast array of syntheses and critiques of the field have emerged over the last two decades (Anthias, 1998; Brubaker, 2005; Mitchell, 1997; Tölölyan, 2007), responding with caution to the proliferation in academic interest in diasporas and the uncritical application of the term to numerous empirical cases. These critical responses highlight a dissatisfaction with the way in which diaspora has been stripped of its conceptual rigour. It has been reduced to a buzzword that is used to represent diverse forms of transnational movement and transnational identity (Brubaker, 2005; Safran, 2005). Diaspora literature polarises: forms of transnational being are either defined by their a) 'rootedness', in a shared place of origin, or b) 'routedness', towards an emergent, hybrid, and transgressive identity (Safran, 2001; Cheyette, 2013).

Scholars such as Mitchell (1997) and Alexander (2017) have questioned the prominence of particular epistemological perspectives being applied to the study of the 'diasporic condition', whereby accounts of diasporic subjectivity are increasingly articulated in abstract forms of analysis, removed from situated political and economic relations. These perspectives raise important questions for

critical engagement with the diaspora concept. What, for instance, does this emphasis on transnationalism and transcendence say about the grounded realities of life in the diaspora? What can this notion of a diasporic subjective condition tell us about these grounded realities, and about the productive potential of resettlement? Or, in other words, what does the diaspora concept tell us about life outside of the homeland that concepts of transnationality cannot?

This chapter explores how diasporic communities are conceptualised in the critical social sciences, focusing particularly on those that have experienced forced displacement (as opposed to voluntary migration). The chapter steers a path through the conceptual crisis by drawing on the critical and distinctive qualities of diaspora, and particularly those that remain under-utilised in the social and spatial sciences. It will be argued that diaspora has been blurred and distorted by the specific political and paradigmatic approaches that dominate diaspora scholarship. Research into the phenomenon of diaspora is therefore enriched when it does not limit itself to these norms. In fact, when these perspectives are put to one side, it becomes clear that the field of diaspora studies has yet to take sufficient account of the *emplaced* conditions and concerns of diasporic communities. In broad terms, this means the concept must relinquish its transnational ties that essentialise and homogenise aspects of the so-called diasporic condition. Instead, diaspora must be understood as a plurality, and diaspora scholarship needs to pay closer attention to the specificities and contingencies of place-based diasporic subjectivity.

Deploying a geographical lens, this chapter identifies a multiplicity of emplaced concerns centred around the places in which diasporic life is lived and experienced. A focus on place and emplacement helps us move beyond the entrenched crisis within diaspora scholarship, and grounds the concept of diaspora in the specificities and contingencies of localised diasporic experience. In doing so, this chapter sets the scene for the empirically driven work that is to come in later chapters, which investigate the diasporic experience of a Palestinian-Jordanian community in Jana'a neighbourhood, in the city of Zarqa.

The De-Territorialised Subject

Diaspora has proved a flexible and ambivalent concept capable of reflecting a broad range of subjective positions in relation to diasporic life, tied to experiences of transnational displacement, movement and resettlement. But it is the position of the de-territorialised subject that has come the closest to defining the 'diasporic condition', both historically and in the contemporary academy. Diaspora as a concept has long been synonymous with the fate of Jews following the forced exodus from the Land of Israel (Safran, 2005). The Jewish experience is widely acknowledged as the "epistemological source" of diaspora and, accompanied by the African diaspora, "enjoys pride of place in the pantheon of diaspora studies" (Zeleza 2005, p.36). In more recent years, a de-territorialised notion of diasporic life has been a core element of postcolonial theory; challenging territorial loyalties and presenting displacement as an epistemology and source of 'political radicalism' (Giri 2005, p.216). In particular, diaspora and postcolonialism merge to counter hegemonic understandings of race, empire and nation, "while opening up new and better avenues of sociality and belonging at the margins of these formations" (ibid.). An emphasis on de-territorialisation in each of these areas implies only a limited appreciation for place in our understanding of diasporic life.

In relation to the 'archetypal' Jewish experience, several scholars have noted how it is abstract space and text - rather than places - that become sites of hope, resistance and belonging in the diaspora (Mitchell, 1997). The perceived permanence of de-territorialisation means that it is *movement* that serves as place, and allows for transnational solidarities to form (Steiner, 1985; Medam, 1993). In the absence of territorial belonging, the Torah has long been a central part of Jewish diasporic life, described as both a 'portable Temple' (ibid., p.64) and a 'portable fatherland' (Safran 2005, p.44). Boyarin (2015) argues that territorial homelands can be rendered obsolete when replaced by transnational cultural connections. In the Jewish context it is the Babylonian Talmud[3], rather than the

[3] "Arguably the most important Jewish text" (Rubenstein 2005, p.1), the Babylonian Talmud is the basis of the rabbinic tradition within Judaism. The

Land of Israel, that produces the Jewish diaspora and constitutes 'home' and allows disparate territories to be considered part of the same locale. He writes, "bonds of language, religion, culture and a sense of a common fate impregnate such a transnational relationship to give to it an affective, intimate quality" (ibid., p.4). Reflecting on Boyarin's work, Lieber (2017, p.267) states that in the diaspora "multiple geographic (and textual) centres coexist simultaneously and in parity, through centuries and across continents". Despite the relatively modern phenomena of Jewish movements that have sought the *re-territorialisation* of the diaspora, most notably through Zionism, Wistrich (2016, p.136) reminds us that such territorial claims have been widely criticised within diasporic Jewish communities:

> "Religious critics […] feared Zionism above all as a 'heretical' secular movement. They saw it as an alarming challenge to the authority of the Torah and […] to the prevailing self-definition of Jewry as primarily a religious community. […] As for Reform Jews, especially in Germany, Britain, and the United States, Zionism to them seemed like a reactionary retreat into a parochial and narrow nationalism".

De-territorialisation has been even more hotly contested in the context of the black (sometimes 'African') diaspora. The "nearly hegemonic" framework known as the 'Middle Passage Epistemology' (MPE), referring to the most intense period of the transatlantic slave trade, grounds black identities in a "shared geographical as well as historical trajectory" (Afful 2016, p.558). Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993) is perhaps the most influential work of this tradition, using the journeys across the Atlantic to position black subjects (and black culture) in relation to globalising processes of industrialisation and modernisation. Critics of MPE have taken issue with the implications of this de-territorialised subjectivity, creating its own myth of origin around the journey and disrupting a more historicised reading of the past, particularly regarding life before the middle passage (Dayan, 1996). However, there is metaphorical value in de-territorialisation that proves

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Babylonian Talmud was compiled during the 5th-7th centuries CE in the diaspora, in Sasanian Mesopotamia (ibid.).

particularly compelling for thinking in diasporic terms, as it encourages us to think through commonalities as well as through difference, and to tie subjectivity to political economic processes (McKittrick, 2006). In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy provides an interesting interplay between the materialities of the middle passage and their metaphorical value. It is not necessarily the formative experience of the journey that de-territorialises the diasporic subject. Rather, it is the materialities of the journey itself that encourage us to think in transnational, de-territorialised terms.

Exiled intellectuals have long played a prominent role in reinforcing the importance of the de-territorialised subject to the diasporic condition. While the introductory chapter highlighted both the power and the limitations of this discourse in the Palestinian context, it is worth noting that the lines between 'exilic' and 'diasporic' subjects have been blurred irrespective of empirical case. In *Diasporas of the Mind*, Cheyette (2013) takes a similar view to Gilroy, expressing the need to think metaphorically in order to explore commonalities across disparate geographies and examines how Jewish, black and postcolonial exilic intellectuals have understood the 'diasporic condition'. Frantz Fanon (1961), Hannah Arendt (1971), Salman Rushdie (1991) and Edward Said (2001), among others, have all produced influential contributions to the idea of the elusive, de-territorialised subject. As Cheyette states, diaspora literature occupies a range of positions that nevertheless emphasise forms of de-territorialisation: often either a historicised notion of diaspora as "a timeless exile", or diaspora as a collection of "emergent transnational and post-ethnic identities" (ibid., p.xiii).

Exiled intellectuals often speak from a position of privilege, relative to the displaced community they come to represent. The "comprador intelligentsia, postcolonial critic, and progressive exile" (Nesbitt 2002, p.70) all occupy compromised positions in this regard. These exilic positions tend to reflect narrow, external interests or specific, contemporary theoretical paradigms; they may be crafted for particular audiences; or they may espouse a politics of liberation and structural transformation (ibid., pp.73-4). Rarely, it seems, can the exiled

intellectual write diaspora in a way that reflects the everyday experiences of the majority of those in the community. When Dionne Brand (2001) says that her home is in poetry rather than place, or when Gayatri Spivak (1990, p.37) remarks "one is always on the run […]. I think it's important for people not to feel rooted in one place", it is difficult to see how these perspectives reflect the broader diasporic experience. In the exilic intellectual we encounter two problems linked to the conceptualisation of diaspora. The first lies in the emphasis on the singularity of individual experience over the collective experience of a diasporic community. The second problem is that these intellectuals write from a position of privilege that is detached from the physical places in which diasporic life is lived.

In both the exilic imaginary and across contemporary diaspora scholarship, it is memory (rather than territory) that serves as the principal ground of identity formation in the diaspora (Fortier, 2000). Vieten (2006, p.268) notes that:

> "the experience of a life in exile […] cannot be separated from memory of the homeland. In leaving the place called home, the migrant lives in memory, a nomadic and impermanent home"

For Lily Cho (in Tölölyan 2012, p.8), diasporic subjectivity is associated with racial memory, loss, and longing, whereby the "spectrality of sorrow" meets "miracles of [transnational] connection", providing the social and cultural capital necessary to make sense of displacement and allow for the creation of identities around the single, cataclysmic event of departure (Eng 2008, pp.111-112). In this sense, memory is the prosthesis of territory; making up in symbolic and imaginative terms what has been lost in matter. The act of de-territorialisation thus scars, haunts and absorbs both the individual and collective diasporic subject, and the 'wound' attached to memory is mobilised as a key frame of orientation for diasporic commemoration, discourse and practice (Tölölyan 2012, p.9). In these forms, memory compensates for de-territorialisation, which serves to "erase histories and geographies, which are, in fact, present, legitimate and experiential" (McKittrick 2006, p.33).

This focus on memory, mobility and exilic imaginative practices has been reinforced by a widespread acceptance of postmodernist thought within the critical social sciences. 'De-territorialisation' no longer merely describes the act of forced displacement and its enduring impact on diasporic communities; for Deleuze and Guattari, de-territorialisation is a political ontology in and of itself. Formulated at length in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), de-territorialisation denotes a kind of becoming, in which subjects are no longer so constrained by 'territorial' limitations; "a Jew becomes Jewish, but in a becoming-Jewish of the non-Jew" (ibid., p.292). In other words, de-territorialisation denotes a process through which a subject position can become more fully realised. Deleuze and Guattari present the nomad as the de-territorialised subject 'par excellence', due to the absence of a subsequent re-territorialisation (ibid., p.381). However, this ontology is routinely, and often uncritically, applied to the *literal*, territorial dispersion experienced by diasporic communities (Vieten 2006; Chivallon, 2018). As a result of this conceptual convergence between nomad and diaspora, diasporic subjectivity is often associated with notions of "uprooting, mobility, nomadism, and the multiplicity of membership" (Chivallon 2018, p.281), leaving little room in the diasporic imaginary for settled positions and emplaced concerns.

Stuart Hall once claimed that "the classic postmodern experience is the diasporic experience", explaining how the diaspora-migrant-nomad is "continually moving between centre and periphery" (2006, p.492; 1994, p.234). The contemporary and postmodern preoccupation with subjectivity has meant that diasporic scholarship tends to emphasise fluid and transcendental features of diasporic identity, uncritically defining the diasporic condition as a transnational phenomenon. For Hall, cultural identity transcends both time and place, is simultaneously historical and transformative and "subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" rather than "externally fixed in some essentialised past" (1994, p.225). Following this line of thought, Paul Gilroy (1987, p.154) locates black cultural expression at the intersections of race and class, the performative value of which allows the diasporic subject to transcend structures

of dominance and exist in a "temporarily settled" diasporic condition. Exilic and diasporic subjectivities seem to diverge in these moments of becoming and ambivalence. Furthermore, diaspora proves capable of resisting essentialist categorisations of culture as indivisibly racial, ethnic or national, and the term diaspora emphasises hybridity and emergence across multiple transnational planes. As Hall and Gilroy suggest, there is a shift in focus from 'roots' to 'routes', whereby a "common-sense view of place" is rejected in favour of a spatially defined 'global sense of place' (Grossberg 1997, p.290). Occupying a world of becomings, the de-territorialised diasporic subject locates meaning in and identification with movement, transcendence, and transnational collective space.

There are several problems with the prominence of de-territoriality as a defining feature of diasporic experience. Firstly, it tends to equate the diaspora concept with a celebratory, progressive form of transnational politics (Giri, 2005). Secondly, it is often based on diasporas in the anglophone world rather than reflecting other contexts of diasporic existence (Zeleza, 2005). Thirdly, it is seen as compelling only because it fits neatly with “the global social fact” of ever-increasing levels of individual mobility and displacement (Malkki, 1992). That said, the majority of critiques seem either unable or unwilling to relinquish the association between diaspora and the transnational, and in emphasising the importance of historicisation and multiplicity, they retain a de-territoriality that only serves to dilute and complicate the diaspora concept. While an argument will later be made of the importance of place in overcoming these problems, it is important to turn to the prevailing way in which diaspora studies tends to move beyond de-territorialisation in favour of a more grounded analysis: by defining diaspora in terms of a marginalised subjectivity.

The Marginalised Subject

In critical scholarship, diasporic subjectivity is often located in the interstices between structures of political, economic, social and cultural dominance. In these instances, the diasporic subject tends to be defined not in relation to its territorial displacement, but in relation to the subsequent and ongoing acts of marginalisation that take place across disparate, 'newly'-inhabited territories of the diaspora. Cohen (1995) explains that this shift in the term's usage results from the experiences of the Jewish diaspora entering the Christian world. The dispersal of Jews away from a territorial homeland was portrayed by Christian theologians as evidence of "God's punishment [for] the Jews' heinous crime of deicide" (ibid., pp.6-7). It was therefore Christian theological intervention, rather than the traumatic events of mass exodus or the destruction of the Second Temple, that shifted the meaning of 'diaspora' from its association with displacement and transnational movement, to its association with the Jewish experience of alien rule, hostility and marginality.

In describing disorientation as the "defining feature of the African diasporic experience in North America", for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois recognised this as a product not of territorial loss but of the "withering, steady blast of American racism" (Gomez 2004, pp.176-7). Resulting from racism, Du Bois argued, is a marginalised subjectivity he calls 'double consciousness' ([1903] 2007, pp.8-9):

> "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.
>
> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self."

Double consciousness results in the fracturing of the diasporic self; forever having to reconcile how one is viewed in a racialised society with how one feels. Importantly, Du Bois writes of a ‘colour-line’ which, while metaphorical, also stands for the material conditions that produce double consciousness. As McKittrick states, the colour-line is “manifested by and produced in relation to the physical environment”; it is “material, philosophical, and an analysis of what it means to know and re-imagine ‘place’” (2006, p.22).

In contrast, ‘the margin’ has also featured as an alluring spatial metaphor in postmodernist accounts of diaspora, once again theorising the diasporic subject without directly engaging in questions of place. Exemplified by Bhabha's (1994) notion of 'in-between space', this line of enquiry stipulates that the identities of marginalised populations are produced in the spaces where the ideology and practice of dominant social groups intersect with tensions of remaining and becoming for non-domiciled groups (Rose 1993; Aneby-Yemini and Berthomière, 2005). The diasporic subject is particularly attuned to these spaces, it seems, when authors and researchers assume that their subjectivity is defined by a pre-existing connection to a particular elsewhere, and the moment of displacement itself is portrayed as stifling any possibility of a more straightforward, even positive affiliation with the places inhabited and navigated by diasporic communities. 'Babylon' - originally referring to a specific territory in which acts of oppression and subjugation of Jews took place - has morphed in both Jewish and Black diasporic thought into a transcendental space, signifying "the afflictions, isolation and insecurity of living in a foreign place, set adrift, cut off from their roots" (Cohen 1995, p.6).

Within this framing, imagination and transcendence become particularly prominent in what constitutes the so-called diasporic condition. It is as Giri (2005, p.221) suggests: “the diasporic mind constitutes its own unique place, and under the conditions of a traumatic history”. Reflecting on the works of bell hooks, McKittrick explains how the margin can become a place of strength and site of resistance for non-majority groups, as subjects negotiate these contradictions and

tensions and imagine alternative futures and ways of being (2011, p.224). However, an over-reliance on spatial metaphors to capture experience runs the risk of creating "unstable, […] diverse and sometimes contradictory subject positions", that provide little analytical insight (Pratt 1998, p.14). Pratt's critique of this perspective rests on its political positioning; "the metaphors […] help us to see difference, but they encourage us to lose sight of commonalities" (ibid., p.16). Similarly, Mitchell argues that spatial metaphors are abstractions "away from the situated practices of everyday life" as well as a "situated historical perspective" (1997, p.535). Mitchell warns that conceptual fetishisation is only possible when disarticulated from historical and geographical anchoring.

There is also a tendency to treat bodies in the diaspora as a kind of metaphor, which detaches them "from the legacy of sexism and racism and other diasporic conditions" (McKittrick, 2006, p.20). When both the body and the margin are thought of in metaphorical terms, we can lose sight of the "empirical realities" and implications of spatial and political bordering (Cons and Sanyal 2013, p.6). Ghettoisation and segregation are processes intricately tied to material and often violent acts of marginalisation in the diaspora (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou, 2006). In Axel's enlightening work on the Sikh diaspora, though, he understands the body as one of two geographies (the other being 'homeland') that stand as:

> "points of mediation between various populations of Sikhs around the world, […] they have a quality of measure and mobility that exceed the movement of people" (2001, p.37)

If, in the Sikh context, "violence is the thread by which the diaspora is constituted as a community" (ibid., p.156), the Sikh body and the corporeal violence it experiences generates a symbol of collective solidarity, as well as the "promise of liberation from present violence" (ibid., p.37). Whereas McKittrick warns of bodies being reduced to ahistorical metaphors, here they are mobilised as a site of oppression, and symbolise particular claims relating to political, social, and cultural forms of justice. But to what extent can diasporic subjectivity be reduced

to the experiences of bodily violence, apparently shared across the diaspora regardless of more localised contexts? And to what extent does an embodied diasporic experience - formulated in relation to the masculinised body of *amritdhari*[4], for instance - provide an essentialised view of diaspora? These questions relate to the fact that diaspora scholarship has often struggled to disentangle itself from the concept of ethnicity (Anthias, 1998).

Race and ethnicity have been highly contested terms in the context of the African diaspora, largely between those who assert a 'strategic essentialism'[5] over these identity markers, and those who see value in their deconstruction. Gilroy (1993, p.117), a key advocate for deconstructing race, draws on double consciousness to define the marginalised subjectivities that - in the context of the 'Black Atlantic' - produce "a densely interconnected cultural formation", defined as much by discontinuities across diasporic space as continuities (Potter 1995, p.19). The central theme running through Gilroy's work is the notion that black culture and politics reflects both an "inescapable hybridity and [the] intermixture of ideas" (ibid., p.xi). Hybridity is arguably the most recognised of the concepts associated with the diasporic experience, and occupies the common ground between de-territorialised and marginalised subject positions. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) discusses hybridity in relation to the aforementioned concept of 'in-between space', in which individuals negotiate the ambivalences that arise within coloniser/colonised relations. It is through this 'in-between space' - or 'third space' - that hybrid cultures emerge. Hybridity does not mean the "exoticism of

[4] "A man who is an *amritdhari* signifies his membership in the orthodox order of the Sikhs called the *Khalsa* through specific corporeal adornments known as the *Five Ks* [*kesh* (uncut hair), *kangha* (comb), *kara* (bracelet), *kachera* (undergarment), *kirpan* (dagger)]. The *amritdhari*, however, is most commonly recognised through the image of the Sikh man with a beard and turban" (Axel 2001, p.35)

[5] While this term is most closely associated with Gayatri Spivak, the post-colonial writer later abandoned the phrase (although not necessarily the project it represents) when its popular usage no longer reflected her original intentions. Simply, 'strategic essentialism' is an argument against the tendency for politics to be reduced to the personal and the individual (Spivak in Danius et al, 1993)

multiculturalism", but rather reflects the conditions of contingency and contradiction that define minority or marginalised positions (ibid., p.38).

Stuart Hall has developed the concept of hybridity in a specifically diasporic context, again warning against any romanticisation of the term that derives from the idea of fluid, de-territorialised subjectivities (in Clifford, 1992). Instead, Hall (1990, p.235) defines diasporic experience by:

> "the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are the constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference"

Hall harnesses the concept of hybridity to illustrate that post-colonial experience is expressed through a 'diaspora aesthetic' that challenges the homogenising aspects of nation, race and ethnicity (ibid., p.236). Hall (1996, p.475) does express sympathy for, but nevertheless rejects, the alleged need for 'strategic essentialism'. He argues that the diasporic cultural binary (between 'origin' and 'host' cultures) must be refused, for it provides a two-way contestation that undermines the "potentiality [and] possibility" of hybridity. It is not a question of being black or British, for example, but of being black *and* British (ibid.).

For these scholars, hybridity involves a narrow and limiting engagement with place. In the story of the Caribbean diaspora, Hall writes about America as the 'New World', a place emptied by European colonisers that subsequently served as "the juncture-point where the many cultural tributaries meet, [...] where the creolisations and assimilations and syncretisms were negotiated" (1990, p.234). Place, here, is the site of movement and encounter; culture is not fixed in place, but rather is produced and reproduced in these sites through connection and transformation (Clifford, 1992; Morley, 1996). What this theorisation achieves, however, is a crowding out of other forms of life that are situated in place, for instance dwelling and residence. In the discussion that follows his intervention relating to the travelled encounter, Clifford (1992, p.115) admits that a focus on

travel and movement means that dwelling becomes "an artificial, constrained practice of fixation" rather than a significant aspect of place-based experience, or a starting point for place-based investigation. While the broader significance of place in diasporic contexts will be outlined later in this chapter, it is important to stress that diaspora scholarship must not lose sight of place and the different forms of life that emerge in relation to place. It is thus important to think about what is omitted by the spatial contours of hybridity: a concept that has proved highly influential in all aspects of diasporic scholarship, beyond its intended use in relation to cultural form.

That said, Afrocentrism takes an oppositional view to questions of race and ethnicity in the context of diasporic marginalization, and engages with place in a more explicit but nevertheless still problematic manner. Afrocentricity has been defined as:

> "A frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. […]. It is Africa asserting itself intellectually and psychologically, breaking the bonds of Western domination in the mind as an analogue for breaking those bonds in every other field"
>
> (Asante 1991, p.172)

In Afrocentrism we witness the reassertion of the homeland and of 'origin' culture. While this paradigm has faced criticism for homogenising African diasporic culture and essentialising the very idea of a diasporic origin (Gilroy, 1993), it uses 'Africa' as a means of challenging the unfamiliar, invariably oppressive, diasporic present. As Mazama (2001, p.387) states in defence of Afrocentrism:

> "We thus find ourselves relegated to the periphery, the margin, of the European experience […]. We do not exist on our own terms but on borrowed, European ones."

Traces of Du Bois' writing on double consciousness are clearly apparent here, as well as an idea of race as a social construction allowing for the domination of one group over another (Appiah, 1992). In many respects, Afrocentrism is borne not

out of a shared African past but particular experiences of marginalisation in the Western world. In fact, Gilroy's work has been seen by some as an extension of the 'Anglo-centric' bias that - during the era of decolonisation - saw the "colonial gaze" move from the continent to places of black settlement 'at home' (Bourne, cited by Zack-Williams 1995, p.350). Such a view also arguably marginalises the experiences of diasporic communities elsewhere, such as in Brazil - the largest of all African diasporas (Zeleza, 2005).

Afrocentrism takes issue with the likes of Gilroy and Hall for deconstructing race and putting forward a view of diasporic subjectivities as inherently fluid (Janis, 2011). The central criticism in Afrocentricism is that the deconstruction of race undermines the prospect of transnational, racial solidarities - all the more important given the assumption that the African diaspora occupies a marginalised position in the West. Afrofuturism has emerged in part as a means to move past this deadlock:

> "Afrofuturism can be broadly defined as 'African American voices' with 'other stories to tell about culture, technology, and things to come'."
>
> (Nelson 2002, p.9)

Afrofuturism is a cultural project "grounded in the histories of black communities", which "reflect[s] African diasporic experience" and "attend[s] to the transformations that are the by-product of new media and information technology" (ibid.). There are similarities between the ways in which Afrofuturists situate the diasporic body in relation to the technological future, and how Gilroy situates these bodies in relation to the modernity of the past and present. Afrofuturism is by definition transformational and transcendental, as it provides a critique of the present through imaginative and creative means, and places the African diasporic voice and body at the heart of these critiques. But it is Afrofuturisms's creative possibilities that allow us access to the "nuances of ethnicity and contemporary and local processes of racialisation", which Afful argues are lost in homogenised understandings of 'Africa' and 'African' identity

(2016, p.562). Unfortunately, such nuance and openness to local processes have failed to be written in to the conceptualisation of the diasporic subject, which remains too closely tied to de-territorialisation, marginalisation, and to the theoretical paradigms that encourage this focus.

Place-Based Diasporas

When the diasporic subject is thought through frames of de-territorialisation and racial difference, diasporic subjects (and bodies) are positioned as objects inhabiting places of a predetermined composition. When metaphors of ‘dislocation’ and ‘exile’ dominate the discourse, "actual places" are often presented as simplified and static in comparison to social locations "unconnected to place" (Pratt 1998, p.19). The concept of 'home', for instance, is usually understood as "the place you come back to, and always from a place of greater complexity" (ibid.). Pratt goes on to call for a "fuller examination of the relations between places and subject formations", particularly as a means of overcoming the ways in which spatial metaphors obscure "the mutual constitution of place and identities" (ibid., p.21). While Pratt's primary concern is with feminist geographies, this call can be extended to postmodern geographies more broadly and diasporic geographies more specifically; places are rarely the focus of diasporic, analytical enquiry (Bonnerjee 2012, p.7), and neither is a local politics of belonging (van Riemsdijk 2014, p.963).

Place, like diaspora, has undergone an important conceptual shift due to the influence of postmodernist thought. Having once been defined as more-or-less “closed entities” that form a constitutive part of “authentic identities” (Schnell and Meshal 2008, p.243), the significance of place has been reduced by an emphasis on globalisation, globalising networks and unbounded spatial formations (ibid.; Massey, 1995). The use of the term 'place' has itself become de-territorialised, mimicking what Zukin (1992) outlines as a movement away from the

geographical basis of stable identities, anchored to the social world and towards postmodern transitional space. This paradigm contends that one's sense of place need not be rooted or grounded, as it takes advantage of transnational connections and various imagined geographies. As a result, places have been viewed as limited in their influence over identity formation. For those who reject this view (Cresswell, 1996; Escobar, 2001; Massey, 2005), places retain their significance in people's lives, but the constitution of place is fundamentally different. No longer closed entities, places are viewed in relational, non-essentialised terms, and are "made and remade on a daily basis" (Possing 2010, p.6).

This has produced a 'progressive' sense of place - an outward-looking view that takes account of global forces and geographical difference - that seeks to displace 'reactionary' forms of place identity (Massey, 1991). The comparisons to the concept of diaspora are clear; diaspora is often defined by difference and its 'global sense of place' (ibid.; see also Grossberg 1997, p.290). Places of diasporic habitation, life, work and movement, are 'givens' in the world of the diaspora, through which the diasporic subject must learn to navigate, however disorientating, marginalising or ambivalent this may prove. In opening up both concepts to more sophisticated spatial analysis, something important is lost. Writing in relation to place-based identities in Gaza, Schnell and Mishal (2008, pp.245-8) note how places:

> "remain intimate and personal, relevant to individuals and small groups […]. They give meaning and a sense of warmth that adds to their sense of quality of life and attachment to certain places. […] The Gaza settlers tend to describe their sense of place in personalised and localised terms. Their rhetoric emphasised more what the place has done to them than what they have done to the place"

This rendering of place - not necessarily a closed entity but nevertheless attached to a notion of local authenticity - has significant implications for diaspora scholarship. By resisting postmodernist paradigms that uncritically define diasporas in terms of geographical difference and multiplicity, scholarship remains

attentive to the myriad of ways in which places constitute subjectivities, and diasporic subjectivities in particular.

Diaspora scholars have exercised a lasting commitment to identifying practices of 'place-making' among diaspora communities, typically focusing on practices that memorialise the past in the material present, as well as other forms of making the diasporic present both familiar and meaningful (Werbner, 2002; Kuah-Pearce, 2008). In such accounts of diasporic life, locality and place are often imagined as passive theatres of memory, resistance and transnational being. In Davis' *Palestinian Village Histories,* diasporic geographies of displacement and dispossession are understood not only in terms of geographical relocation, but as the reconstitution of communities and memories in places of resettlement (2011, p.20). Across the diaspora, geographies of dispossession "result in an arresting similarity of narratives and activities in terms of space, temporality and form" (ibid.). Similarly, Werbner (2002, p.121) identifies such place-making practices as "ties of co-responsibility across the boundaries of empires, political communities or […] nations", reaffirming the place-making diasporic subject as a predominantly transnational being. While it is vital to document these forms of place-making among diaspora communities, it can be argued that such representations offer a narrow view of diasporic life, failing to adequately engage with the place of settlement through a continuous framing of the timeless present in relation to the place of origin (Axel, 2001). Even when places of settlement are foregrounded, as in the case of Goldschmidt's (2000) paper on a multiracial neighbourhood in Brooklyn, New York, the 'diaspora' element means that place is often reduced to a particular site of a broader, globalised contestation. In Crown Heights, Goldschmidt sees local, place-based politics as a series of strategies that aim "to build a homeland of sorts"; to re-territorialise the de-territorialised subject (ibid., p.87).

Far from being simplistic or static geographical configurations, places harbour significant transformative potential. Arturo Escobar, a key advocate for foregrounding place within geographical enquiry, writes: "places gather things,

thoughts, and memories in particular configurations and that place, more an event than a thing, is characterised by openness rather than by a unitary self-identity" (2001, p.143). The openness of places means they must be recognised as productive sites of encounter, *through* which community identities emerge (Bonnerjee 2012, p.21). Leshem (2016) and Navaro-Yashin (2012), focusing on post-conflict sites in which the forced displacement of Palestinians and Greek-Cypriots (respectively) have taken place, both point to this transformative potential of the emplaced encounter. Navaro-Yashin writes that the "phantomic presence" of Greek-Cypriot materialities left behind in northern Cyprus "carry an effect that can be studied and detected in all social, political, legal and economic transactions" (ibid., p.16), while Leshem writes of the impact of such encounters on issues ranging from "urban planning and social engineering, and the administrative and legal organisation of the urban environment, to the intimate practices and religious rituals through which space is made meaningful for individuals and communities" (2016, p.202). These interventions have significant implications for the ways in which the emplaced diasporic subject is conceptualised, not only in terms of grounding diaspora in place-based concerns, but by acknowledging the wide range of processes that coalesce in and around these places.

While the materialities of place 'haunt' the present in the two above cases, a similar relationship must be drawn out between diasporic places of settlement and diasporic experiences of temporality. Place-based diasporas are partly defined by their evolving and emerging properties *in* the diaspora, which take shape as their political and spatial orientations are internalised, nurtured and reproduced. In Massey's (2005, p.154) terms, places are able to transform subjects through "the practicing of place [and] the negotiation of intersecting trajectories". As earlier accounts of diasporic subjectivity have implied, trajectories in a diasporic context are invariably complicated and multiple, ranging from the suspension of stunted temporalities to practices of resistance, memory and commemoration, to practices of assimilation, hybridity and becoming. The concept of 'spectrality' can offer insight into this relationship between subjectivity, place, and temporality. Whereas

spectrality is often associated with disjointedness between past and present, as “something not yet laid to rest” (Cheah, 1999; Simone 2004, p.92), spectrality can also be viewed as a kind of social intelligence; an ability to live among fragmentation, to navigate changing (and oppressive) complexity” (Simone 2002, pp.2-3). Spectrality signifies the ongoing tension between past, present and future in diasporic contexts, as communities accommodate the legacies of the past with both present circumstances and future imaginings, all in relation to specific place-based contexts. Above all else, these works are invaluable to studies of diaspora because they emphasise the need to ground scholarship in the specific trajectories, and present specificities of individual diasporic communities. This shifts the concept of diaspora from being inherently malleable, fluid, and ambiguous, to having a more complex appreciation of time and subjective orientation in the periods of emplacement and resettlement that follow displacement.

To develop this point further it is vital to return to the discipline of black studies and its compelling insights into the relationship between subjectivities (black, racial and/or diasporic) and place. McKittrick (2006) presents diaspora in the form of an analytic capable of interrogating and reimagining the politics of place. The goal of such an intervention is to rid space of its innocence, exposing the assumptions around "physical and material geographies [being] readily knowable, bound up with ideologies and activities that work to maintain a safe socioeconomic clarity" (ibid., pp.5-6). Spatial metaphors of invisibility and peripherality, McKittrick contends, abstract away from "grounded everyday meanings […] by emptying out the material contours implicit in spatial articulations" (ibid., p.6). Black geography, McKittrick argues, must account for the ways in which subjects utilise their sense of place to "manipulate the categories and sites that constrain them" (ibid., p.xvii). Subject to processes that seek to naturalise place, diasporic subject formation and agency are such that geography - and presumably place - becomes an alterable, rather than static, terrain (ibid.).

While this perspective sees the diaspora concept transition from a kind of social condition to a form of social critique, Smallwood’s (2007) concept of ‘saltwater’

further advances our understanding of place-based subjectivities. On the face of it, 'saltwater' seems to recreate many of the same analytical frameworks as Gilroy's emphasis on 'the ship' in *The Black Atlantic* (1993), namely, an overriding focus on transnational movement. However, Smallwood recognises that the idea of a 'mobile' subjectivity is complicated by the fact that movement in the black diaspora has historically been one-directional, and has involved only limited transnational contact. 'Saltwater' is used as a conceptual category for writing the diasporic experience by holding multiple places in constant tension with one another; in this case, "African, Atlantic, and American arenas of captivity, commodification, and enslavement" (ibid., p.8). Smallwood provides an increased emphasis on places of settlement, considering the formation of regionalised slave communities, and thinking about the formative experience of arrival, "to take their place" and to "[put] down tentative roots" (ibid., p.7).

So far in this chapter, we have seen how diasporic communities are often understood through the prism of various de-territorialised and marginal spaces they are said to occupy and negotiate, often in a disorientating, complex and unfamiliar present. We have also seen that as a result of these spatial logics, displaced populations are often viewed as permanently displaced, as opposed to *emplaced* or *re-placed*. In other words, representations of these communities marginalise the significance of place in framing the displaced subject, particularly when it comes to a sense of, and sensibility towards; locality, resettlement, and immediate presence. To move this argument forward, the next section explores the role of locality in the subjective experience of diasporic communities. This 'turn' towards locality disrupts the notion of diaspora as a singular, transnational collectivity, and instead encourages us to think about diasporic communities in their inevitable multiplicity.

Localising Diaspora

Gregory (1998), in his ethnographic work in an African-American neighbourhood in New York, argues that while it is of little conceptual worth to treat communities as 'bounded', the existence of communities is made evident through the ways in which "people move into them and are excluded from them. Public authorities chart their borders and 'develop' them. [...] Politicians represent and appeal to them", and, crucially, community members "define their needs, interests, and identities by constructing and mobilising their own often oppositional versions of 'community'" (ibid., p.11). Understanding diasporic communities in purely spatial terms is too narrow and simplistic a rendering of the diaspora concept. Instead, we must understand the ways in which these communities are produced and reproduced in, and in relation to, specific places.

For Brown, who studied black communities in Liverpool, place is best understood as an abstraction, which "operates powerfully, though not exclusively, through the invocation and naturalisation of matter" (2005, p.9). Place, therefore, is understood as "a basis for the construction of difference, hierarchy and identity" (ibid., p.8). While place may not be bounded nor fixed, it is nevertheless constructed, mobilised and politicised as though it were. Diverse histories, experiences and constructions of identity, Brown argues, "alternatively and contentiously come to bear in the formation of Black Liverpool": "not simply in Liverpool but in view of 'Liverpool'" (ibid., p.6). While the spatial aspects of place are undeniably significant, so too are the emplaced aspects of diasporic space. Even the global and transnational aspects of diasporic subjectivity "find themselves reverberating in a space ideologically defined as 'local'" (ibid.).

Diaspora studies is yet to build on the insightful work within critical black studies, discussed earlier in the chapter (Berlin, 1980; Gregory, 1998; Brown, 2005; McKittrick, 2006), that begin to home in on the localised geographies of diasporic experience. This may reflect the fact that diaspora studies itself appears to be significantly siloed; scholars tend either towards in-depth research into a specific

empirical case (Cheyette, 2013), or towards a shallow conceptual evaluation of the 'diasporic condition' (e.g. Cho, 2007).

The 'local' is a specific rendering of the concept of place, and is understated as a constitutive element of the diasporic life. There exists a temptation within diasporic literature to articulate locales as passive stage sets for the fluid, unbounded spatial flows of a transnational diasporic subjectivity. While dual orientations towards the past/present, homeland/hostland, and transnational/local community are often highlighted, research tends to centre on the former in each of the three cases, failing to hold the two in tension with one another. As Anthias (1998, p.569) argues, the 'phenomenology of displacement' cannot be defined *a priori*, and it is therefore "a matter of empirical investigation at the level of the local and particular".

When defined either by de-territorialisation or marginalisation, the diasporic subject is stripped of its qualities as a 'local' subject, and cannot be said to "properly belong to a situated community of kin, neighbours, friends, and enemies" (Appadurai 1996, p.179). Appadurai defines locality as "a property of social life" that is produced and assigned a particular value, and thus locality is not a terrain but an ethos; a "structure of feeling" with an intrinsic sense of inertia (ibid., pp.179-80). While this could be construed as a particularly spatial form of analysis, Appadurai presents locality alongside neighbourhood in a dialectical relationship. For Appadurai, neighbourhoods are the "actually existing social forms in which locality [...] is variably realised" (ibid.). A local terrain is meaningless without local subjects, while the practices that create local subjectivities would be sterile without a "known, named and negotiable terrain already available" (ibid., p.181). This work should be viewed as a provocation to areas of study that have yet to sufficiently take account of place-based dynamics. Diaspora studies is a case in point. What would happen to the concept of diaspora if it were no longer so firmly attached to transnationality and, instead, was thought in terms of a multiplicity of place-based diasporic communities? What

does local life look like for these communities? And what impact do these dynamics have on diasporic subjectivities?

In a highly influential contribution to diaspora scholarship, Clifford (1994, p.303) argues that a focus on locality can "obscure" more than it reveals. Clifford takes the view that localised representations of diaspora lose sight of the ways in which a diaspora is constituted as a single community scattered across disparate places (ibid.). In a similar fashion to how Goldschmidt (2000) would later represent diasporic life in Crown Heights in Brooklyn, Clifford defines diaspora as:

> "a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement"
>
> (1994, p.308)

It follows that locales provide the context and matter through which a uniquely diasporic set of tensions play out: between de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, between hybridity and purity, and between margin and gravitational centre (Goldschmidt, 2000). While these contributions represent a step forward in relation to much of the rest of diaspora literature, they nevertheless fail to extricate the concept of diaspora from its global, transnational ties. Missing from these more nuanced appreciations of place and locality is a critical focus on temporality. We can unravel the above quote from Clifford by asking: when does displacement no longer define the historical context of a diaspora community? To what extent is the struggle over locality and community always about the assertion of ethnicity or nation?

It is important for diaspora studies to resist the lure of de-territorialised analysis and move beyond connections either homewards or outwards, into the wider diaspora. This research proposes a localised, place-based understanding of diasporic life and experience, in order to illustrate how multiplicity and heterogeneity manifest in specific contexts, according to very particular contingencies. Localised diasporas are not simply the re-territorialisation of a

transnational group; they challenge the core assumptions behind diaspora scholarship by paying attention to situated realities. Ignoring these new directions, and deploying a spatial lens that emphasises the transnational over the local, will only ensure that the discipline's conceptual crisis remains unresolved.

Conclusion

The use of the term 'diaspora' as a singular noun denotes a shared existence that undermines any place-based differences. This idea of a transnational collectivity invariably draws on the shared homeland, shared ethnic ties, and transnational movement as formative aspects of the so-called diasporic condition. This chapter has argued the case for a revised understanding of diaspora directly and intimately related to the places of habitation, settlement, and diasporic existence, and to the conditions of emplacement that foster new political engagements and developmental imaginings. The assumptions behind the so-called diasporic condition are brought into question through a consideration of place: it is through place that diasporic life emerges, taking a specific, contingent, and highly contextual form.

This chapter has examined the contours of the conceptual crisis that besets diaspora scholarship. There are multiple sites of contestation within the discipline, ranging from the importance of metaphorical thinking relative to the examination of material realities, to the very nature and importance of race, ethnicity, and nation. The concept of diaspora poses a problem for the case of displaced Palestinians, not just because of the political sensitivities associated with this specific instance of diasporic existence. The term diaspora is itself highly contested, and its definition is both ambiguous and potentially contradictory. In deciding where the emphasis should lie in the conceptualisation of diaspora, this chapter has shown that it is vital for research to engage directly in the dynamics of place. It is through place-based research that we can begin to understand how the various contours of 'the diasporic' manifest in particular diasporic

communities, and how prominent and relevant these contours are to diasporic experience. At stake here is not just the integrity and conceptual rigour of diaspora, but also our representation of populations that have undergone complex and highly contingent processes of de-territorialisation, transnational movement, and re-territorialisation. Places of diasporic life should be integral to any approach that seeks to engage with diasporic communities on their own terms, rather than through specific political or paradigmatic positions.

The proceeding chapters will apply this reorientation of the diaspora concept to the experiences of the Palestinian-Jordanian community in Jana'a neighbourhood, in the Jordanian city of Zarqa. These chapters seek to understand the relationship between residents' attachment to place, and how residents articulate their own diasporic subjectivities. Consequently, the analysis examines how residents also view and navigate their urban environment, and negotiate for improvements in their livelihoods and locality. The next chapter maps out the conceptual framework that lends its name to the title of this research, 'diasporic urbanism'. Diasporic urbanism is as much a concept and method as it is a provocation. The framework draws us towards place and locality as producing important and perhaps even counter-intuitive insights into diasporic experience and life, thus challenging the assumptions that have been discussed and critiqued throughout this chapter.

III: Diasporic Urbanism

Introduction

In her book *Diasporic Agencies,* Nishat Awan (2016) writes of a 'diasporic urbanism to come'. The book is an attempt to bring dynamism to architectural representation, principally by mapping the spatialities of migrants in the city and "working with and through diasporic inhabitations of space in order to reveal how diasporic agencies are produced and lived in the city" (ibid., p.1). The diasporic condition, according to Awan, is a universal phenomenon in that it points to the ways in which "we are all" being distanced from 'home', given the ever-increasing migrations and displacements that characterise the contemporary world (ibid., p.4). The 'diasporic' in diasporic urbanism is deployed as a challenge to homogeneity in our approaches to urban-based research. Awan's work combines critical cartographic methodologies with postcolonial approaches to urban life, and involves a politics of 'making visible' the hidden, subversive ways in which minority groups (re)produce the city. While 'diasporic urbanism' is hinted at rather than explicitly articulated - at the beginning and end of the book - Awan suggests that it emphasises both the qualitative and material aspects of diasporic place-making (ibid.).

However, Awan's use of diaspora is problematic on several levels. As made clear in the previous chapter, there are serious flaws in defining a concept by its inherent fluidity and multiplicity, particularly when this reflects a specific paradigmatic position. While Awan's work does pay attention to situated diasporic practices and therefore resists the comparative lens often applied to diasporas, it uncritically

defines the diasporic subject in relation to the experience of displacement and a position of marginality (ibid., p.9). Diaspora, then, takes on a metaphorical dimension that is not clearly differentiated from the term's use as a category of population: identifiable, diasporic communities that may challenge Awan's narrow definition. In short, Awan misses a valuable trick in treating diaspora and the city as a dialectic. While her work is dedicated to using the 'diasporic' as a way of informing and representing the urban, 'urbanism' is not used to reconsider the spatial assumptions that lie behind 'diaspora'.

This research - and this chapter specifically - proposes an alternative conception of diasporic urbanism, and one that has been formulated without prior knowledge of Awan's work. It is argued that this notion of diasporic urbanism represents a necessary and timely intervention in the study of diasporas, reflecting the need to take locality and place seriously in explorations of diasporic subjectivity and experience. This logic rests on the idea that the 'diasporic' can only be revealed by paying attention to the specificities and contingencies of the lives and experiences of specific diasporic communities. In fact, diasporic urbanism itself emerged from the research process that began with an interest in place, community, and politics. Before describing the framework of diasporic urbanism in more detail, and situating the framework within critical urban studies, this chapter begins by explaining the processes that led to this intervention. The chapter then proceeds to discuss and theorise the ethnographic encounters that shaped the research process and informed the investigation of a place-based diaspora. Alongside the framework of diasporic urbanism, this chapter introduces the concept of 'intransience' as a way of thinking about the spatial and temporal qualities of place-based diasporas, and as a counterpoint to spatial concepts such as transiency, transnational and transcendence.

Two, related questions drive the narrative forward throughout this chapter: what are the implications of place-based research for diaspora studies? And how can a framework that claims to perform both conceptual and methodological work do justice to both?

Research Process

This research project began to take shape on the 17th January 2017, when browsing through the online news pages of the *Jordan Times* I discovered an item that immediately sparked my interest. The Magistrates' Court in Zarqa, Jordan's second largest city, had ruled to evict around 700 families from Jana'a neighbourhood, one of the city's oldest and most densely populated areas. In addition to the order to evict, all affected homes were to be demolished, and residents were to pay compensation for decades of unlawful settlement to the landowners (Al-Emam, 2017a; 2017b). The roots of the dispute lay in the ambiguous transfer of land to Palestinian refugees in the 1950s, shortly after the area had been offered to them by the Jordanian military for refugee settlement. The court now had ruled that the descendants of the Mayor at the time, Baha al-Din, were the legal owners of the land in question, while many of the residents believed the *ḥujja*[6] agreements signed in the 1950s had put any dispute to rest indefinitely. Tragically for the residents, *ḥujja* agreements are not legally binding under the present-day Jordanian legal system (Ababsa, 2012).

It was through the articles cited above that I first learned of Jana'a. As I was already in the process of designing a research project in Zarqa, with an interest in secondary cities, informal urbanism, urban political economy and postcolonial enquiry, the eviction case seemed a potentially productive way of understanding how these related interests manifest in circumstances of social and political significance such as this. Influenced by Benjamin's (2008) notion of 'occupancy urbanism', I decided to explore "spaces of politics revealed via ethnographic explorations of land, economy and institutions", approaching the city as a multiplicity of "contested territories inscribed by complex local histories" (ibid., p.720). This conceptual framework in combination with the eviction sought to decentre neoliberalism and globalisation (see Malkawi, 2008; Daher, 2013; Atia, 2017), as well as refugee camps (see Ababsa, 2012) as the geographies that

[6] "A traditional document based on Islamic principles and Ottoman law" (Darmame et al 2011, p.447)

dominate urban knowledge production in Jordan and the wider region. 'Occupancy urbanism' therefore offers a distinctive postcolonial perspective to the local concerns over eviction, choosing to highlight forms of political agency that cannot be restricted to the policy or civil society realms. However, with a focus on ethnographic enquiry, Benjamin's framework has the potential to evolve into something beyond the post-colonial; towards popular forms of politics that may not necessarily be tied to ideas of subversion, refusal, and contestation. To unlock this potential, it becomes necessary to reflect critically on what is of "interest" to the researcher (Spivak 1999, p.265), and whether populations are objectified according to particular ontological perspectives (Roy, 2011). My interest in the eviction had been sparked by a sense of injustice, but I needed to put my initial reaction to one side and allow the research to be shaped by ways in which residents articulated their current predicaments, as well as their local and complex histories.

Within days of the court ruling, Rum News Agency[7] uploaded two videos to YouTube; the first presented six minutes of footage from a protest rally in Jana'a's Municipality Stadium, held in reaction to the court ruling (Rumonline News, 2017), and the second consisted of thirty minutes of interviews with a number of residents directly affected by the decision (Rumonline Channel, 2017). The prevailing message was one of injustice and defiance, respectfully calling on the King to intervene in favour of the residents. The residents interviewed were not prepared to leave their homes, not only because of the financial costs facing this overwhelmingly poor area of Jana'a, but also because they perceived their presence in Jana'a to be both lawful and justified:

> "This is our land, no one loaned it to us. They say we came here as immigrants and made a home for ourselves here. We didn't come as immigrants, we bought the land from the owners by way of *ḥujja* agreements. […] No one gave this to us. It's true everyone here is poor, they say it's 700 homes, and there are four or five families in each. They say this is an immigration issue - not to do with the

[7] Rum News Agency is a Jordanian, Arabic-language, online news organisation

> ownership of land - and the court ruling reflects this. I don't know why it's this way."
>
> "I have been in Jana'a for 23 years. Where are we supposed to go? Our life and our culture are here. We pay for water, electricity […], everything, we pay for everything here in Jana'a. Where are we supposed to go? It's a complete surprise. Where do we go? Where do we find shops? Where do we find customers? This cuts off my livelihood."
>
> "We have been here for 50 to 60 years, not just a few days. At the time we bought houses and land from people. Allah knows these people, perhaps they bought it from the owners. It's unbelievable, this decision was so surprising – we must leave our homes but also pay compensation in addition! This is unbelievable, telling people who have lived here for 50 years. Why didn't the owners make these demands 50 years ago?"

Interviewees repeated several statements to support their claims to remain in Jana'a; that they were the victims of a non-legally binding agreement used by Baha al-Din to transfer the land to residents; that they had been fully integrated into the urban system through taxation, political institutions, and urban planning consultations; and that over six decades of continuous settlement should count for something in this period of significant upheaval. What I found most revealing in these interviews was a sense of how the eviction served as a point of reflection for residents, both in terms of their own experiences of the past as well as the set of assumptions that had underpinned their prolonged settlement in the diaspora. The interviewees articulated a sense of belonging and place attachment that was deeply contextual, drawing on a sense of locality that did not neatly fit within pre-conceived notions of Palestinian refugeehood, exile, or diaspora.

It was at this point that I began questioning whether these concepts were capable of taking these emplaced aspects of life after displacement into account. To what extent do these concepts point to a subjectivity that centres on the homeland, rather than one that emerges, evolves, and endures in relation to place and life outside the homeland? One advantage of the diaspora concept, and its emphasis on hybridity, was that it seems to provide greater opportunity to move beyond the rigid concepts of 'exile' and 'refugee', which are overtly political in relation to their

claims over the homeland. However, and as was argued in the previous chapter, the concept of hybridity is problematic due to limited account of the complexities and nuances of the places inhabited by diasporic communities. The concept of hybridity fails to capture the broader, lived realities of diasporic communities, as it reduces diasporic life to a negotiation between essentialised notions of homeland and hostland. This also implies that these are not hybrid geographies in themselves (Anthias, 1998). I recognised potential in the concept of diaspora, but determined that a new vocabulary is required if we are to move beyond the limits of hybridity, as well as beyond the concept's overarching focus on transnationality and mobility.

I was finally able to visit Jana'a in April 2017, three months after the eviction order had been announced. Having found few updates on the eviction case in either English- or Arabic-language press since the week following the court ruling, I took the bus from Raghadan in Amman to Zarqa in order to speak to residents directly about the case. My first sit-down meeting with residents took only twenty minutes to arrange, once I had introduced myself to Abu Munthur, a shopkeeper in his sixties. As soon as I explained the reason for my visit, Abu Munthur called his friend Jamal, a factory worker of similar age, who lived within the borders of the eviction area and was also a member of the Jana'a Neighbourhood Committee (hereafter the 'Lejneh', the Arabic term for 'committee'). Having been satisfied with my various forms of ID, and having accepted my assurances that there were no ulterior motives to my visit, Jamal took me to his home and welcomed me inside. We were soon joined by three other members of the Lejneh; Abdullah, a retired PE teacher and the current Head of the Lejneh; Taisir, a retired engineer; and Abu Alaa, a retired English teacher. Both Jamal and Abu Alaa had appeared in the January interviews with Rum News Agency, and I recognised them immediately. The men told me that there had been no significant update since January, and that the case was back in the courts on appeal with no decision expected for at least a year. The process seemed to be very drawn out, an experience at odds with the sudden nature of the initial announcement in the January. Again, the question on my mind was whether the diaspora concept is

equipped to consider not only the importance of emplaced concerns, but also the significant changes in local political conditions and residents' experiences of temporality.

This initial meeting with the four Lejneh members, and subsequent visits organised through Taisir over the course of the summer, redirected the focus of this research. Following my interest in informal urbanism and postcolonial enquiry, I had begun my field research with questions about the dynamics of the eviction dispute, and moved on to ask about living in a low-income, informal neighbourhood like Jana'a, and living in Jordan as citizens of Palestinian origin. Almost without exception, residents spoke positively about living in the neighbourhood, about its close-knit community and the opportunity to live the 'simple life' that was becoming increasingly rare in the largest cities in Jordan. Such positive sentiments were expressed in spite of relatively harsh economic conditions in Jana'a, its deteriorating houses and declining services. Moreover, this combination of place attachment on the one hand and a negative appraisal of urban development on the other were expressed at multiple scales; in relation to the neighbourhood, to the wider city, and to Jordan as a whole. It felt like a stark contrast to the taxi drivers in Amman, who would almost always tell me they were from Palestine, rather than Amman, or Jordan, or elsewhere.

In those first meetings with residents, I also asked about the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the neighbourhood and the city - a topic closer to that of the original project proposal. Residents played down any anxieties or fears associated with Jordan's growing Syrian population, instead expressing a solidarity with the refugees and citing their mutual historical and geographical ties as people of *Bilad as-Sham* [the Levant]. Any concerns regarding the impact of refugee inflows on jobs and service provisions - a key message coming from development practitioners at the time[8] - were immediately turned on their head; a lack of jobs and inadequate services were issues that spanned decades, due to a gradual

[8] see UNDP (2014); Carrion (2015); Government of Jordan (2017b)

decline in Zarqa's economic fortunes that began in the late 1960s and early 70s. When I then asked about international development agencies operating in the area, given the developmental discourse around impact mitigation of refugees on host communities, my questions were met with bemusement. Taisir asked from across the room "which organisations? We don't have any projects here". The separation between developmental discourse and situated realities was self-evident. Any approach that sought to analyse international development policy interventions in Jana'a seemed futile, given the apparent absence of any such organisations. And while I would later come across a number of interventions that tell us a great deal about diasporic life (see Chapter Seven), it seemed important that Taisir instinctively dismissed the suggestion that international organisations were a permanent feature in and around the neighbourhood.

The priorities of residents regarding political, economic, and urban issues also seemed in stark contrast to the ways in which diaspora communities, and particularly Palestinian diasporas, are understood in popular and academic discourse. Community attachment to place spoke against a norm within diaspora studies that equates diasporic subjectivity with notions of de-territorialisation and marginalisation. 'Hybridity' told me little beyond the cultural affiliations and bureaucratic realities of a community of residents that self-identified as Palestinian-Jordanians, if not residents of Zarqa and/or Jana'a. Among the Lejneh members there was a clear concern surrounding the future of Jana'a and the other older parts of the City, but the strong attachment to place was undeniable. Aside from the small Egyptian and Syrian populations in Jana'a, most of the neighbourhood's residents had lived there for the majority of their lives, and it was in Jana'a that they and/or their older relatives had found a secure place to live, having fled Palestine. The threat of eviction did not just have economic consequences, but it stood as a threat to a whole way of life and a prolonged history of settlement.

The research project thus moved in a direction that reflected these insights and the issues that residents were keenest to speak to me about. Having resisted

institutional pressures to formally frame the research agenda as early as possible, due largely to my own self-doubt and indecision, these simple and frank conversations with residents allowed me to eliminate whole areas of study and critical review, and turn to new areas of theoretical, conceptual and empirical debate. This doubt originated from two places. The first reflected having only just transitioned from political studies to human geography, and a reluctance to apply any one methodological, theoretical or conceptual framework before having made a site visit. The second reflected my naturally critical position, having previously conducted research into the ways in which rap music in Jordan challenges common tropes about regional geopolitics. In fact, I had already been influenced by the work of Stuart Hall, regarding the refusal to define the research problem according to a particular axiom or orthodoxy, and seeking instead:

> "Concepts with which to cut into the complexity of the real, in order precisely to reveal and bring to light relationships and structures which cannot be visible to the naive naked eye"
>
> (Hall, cited by Grossberg 1996, p.153)

Without a conceptual or theoretical framework in mind when I travelled to Jana'a for the first time, I felt able to distance myself from forms of "theoreticist or intellectualist bias", best outlined by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.69). Bourdieu warns of how an academic gaze tends to distort our interpretations of the social world, and is rarely proactively used to inform the frameworks through which we make sense of the world (ibid.). While self-doubt and indecision does not detract from the fact that I was in Jana'a for the purpose of academic fieldwork, it allowed me to first explore the eviction in the terms articulated by the residents affected, and then to move beyond the eviction to reflect the other immediate concerns of the community.

This approach proved particularly fruitful when it came to thinking about Jana'a as a place of diasporic life. Reading diaspora literature and academic debate soon after my initial visits to Jana'a highlighted the prominence of exilic intellectualism in the theorisation of the diasporic condition. In the literature, and as detailed in

the previous chapter, diaspora tends to be presented as a particular kind of social problem. This social problem is bound together with questions of how people and communities make sense of a transnational existence: the impact of displacement and mobility on subjectivity and consciousness in a globalised world. In Jana'a, diaspora emerged in a radically different context. Diaspora itself made little sense as a transnational phenomenon, given the localised orientations of this Palestinian community in relation to home, identity, politics, memories of the past, and future aspirations. Following the physical de-territorialisation of these families, examining community life now requires an emphasis on place and the co-constitutive relationship between place and subjectivity. Temporality in the diaspora did not seem to reflect a timelessness, nor a complicated folding together of past, present and future. Instead, the experience of temporality in Jana'a made sense in relation to the conditions of emplacement and subsequent processes of emergence and evolution within diasporic life.

But what vocabularies do we have at our disposal that help make these aspects of diaspora visible? Again, as the previous chapter shows, diaspora has become synonymous with notions of transnationalism, transiency, and transcendence. In other words, diaspora blends the actuality of mobility and movement with the cognitive and imaginative processes related to being 'elsewhere'. In this respect, it was difficult to discern the difference (conceptually) between diaspora and concepts of migration, exile, the nomad, the refugee, and so on. Diasporic experience in Jana'a and the conceptual crisis within diaspora studies both required a different vocabulary and proposition. I began thinking about 'conditions of intransience' as a way of thinking through the relationship between diaspora, place, and temporality. With a focus on intransience, diasporic subjectivities are located in the interstices of everyday life, reflected in the everyday negotiations of multiple spaces but also, crucially, places. In other words, the study of intransience (/conditions of the non-temporary) considers the emplaced and temporal aspects of diaspora, in conjunction with the cultural, political, and psychosocial spaces often emphasised by diaspora scholars.

Intransience directs our attention towards a subjectivity that emerges, evolves, and endures *within* the diaspora, and in relation to place.

Intransience will be explored in more detail below, as it forms the starting point for framing diasporic urbanism. It suffices to say here that the concept of intransience has remained a constant undercurrent to the research. Intransience was not intended as a way of defining particular aspects of diasporic life, but as a counter position to the discourses that uncritically emphasise the transnational, transient, and transcendental. As I was beginning to consider the significant implications of the concept of intransience, I became certain that I should design my research around place-based dynamics, and embark on an ethnographic exploration of diasporic life in Jana'a.

Ethnographic Encounters

I situate my use of ethnographic methods within critical urban studies and political geography. Lancione (2016, p.4) warns against the "(re)production of stereotypical and disempowering knowledge" when studying urban life at the margins, and endorses a grounded imaginary that accounts for the complexities and potentialities of marginality: an argument that can and must be recognised in the study of diasporic life. Similarly reflecting on ethnography as a tool for human geography, Scholl et al (2014, p.52) argue that:

> "the openness and inchoateness of the ethnographical approach makes it compatible to the messiness, contingency and fluidity of the spatial and the serendipity of spatial encounters in the context of different absences and presences".

Ethnography therefore seems highly relevant for any attempt to explore diasporic life and experience both within and beyond the meta-narratives of de-territorialisation and marginality. Ethnography provides insight into "emic categories of meaning" (Megoran 2006, p.627), and allows us to explore diaspora

identity, politics, belonging and so on according to how these concepts function in everyday life. Historically, this approach has been particularly rare in political geography (ibid.) as well as in research in, and of, the Arab world (Kanafani and Sawaf, 2017). While this deficit has been reduced in recent years, innovations in ethnographic work have tended to follow the spatial turn in focusing on spatial difference and mobility, side-lining the 'problem' of places, locations, and localities (Appadurai, 1996; Roy, 2012). This research seeks to reaffirm the value of grounded, place-based qualitative research for political and urban geography in the region.

Given the ways in which the focus of this project shifted and evolved over time, I was fortunate enough to secure a visit to the field at an unusually early point in the project, so that by the time the final visit to the field was complete, I had been in contact with the community for two years and two months. At the time of my first meeting with Jana'a residents, I had been studying Arabic for almost three years, and had reached an advanced level of proficiency by the time I moved to Jana'a the following year. I made four research trips to Jordan over the course of the project, but I remained connected to the community through various forms of social media, and was able to take note of local developments, engage in conversation with individuals as well as groups, and respond to messages and ask questions and seek points of clarification. This ability to revisit themes which required additional clarification mitigated the impact of any remaining language barrier, and this remote contact thus became crucial to my methodology. This contact also ensured my interpretation of events, comments and spectacles reflected the perspectives of Jana'a residents as much as possible.

The two field visits in 2018 were spent living in Jana'a, to facilitate these processes of selection and construction. My interactions with residents and eventual interlocutors were rarely anything more formal than a conversation between friends or acquaintances, aside from the necessary stipulation that I made sure I explained the scope and aims of the research project. To aid participation and help to legitimise my presence in the neighbourhood as a foreign researcher, I had

obtained two letters of authorisation to practice research in Jana'a, from Mohammad al-Zawahreh (Head of the Local Development Unit, Zarqa Municipality) and Walid al-Musri (Minister for Municipal Affairs) (see Appendix). Mohammad had introduced himself to The British Institute in Amman,[9] hoping to meet with researchers with an interest in Zarqa. The authorisation from Minister al-Musri was organised by the Minister for Education (now Prime Minister) Dr Omar Razzaz, whom I had met during my research visit in 2017 in order to discuss the Minister's own academic research on the topic of eviction and informality in Yajouz, near Amman (1991, 1993). When meeting interlocutors for the first time, I would present these documents alongside an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix). While many interlocutors preferred to provide verbal consent, these documents proved important in establishing a sense of legitimacy, and overcoming people's initial scepticism.

My conversations with interlocutors were not recorded in order to retain a sense of informality between researcher and interlocutors, and it would have proved quite impractical given the spontaneous nature of immersive research. The conversations would take place in streets, in shops, in offices, in homes, in cafes, and in the public areas that residents were keen to show me. These meetings were a chance for me to explore the concerns and opinions of residents, on issues that mattered to the residents themselves. As a foreign researcher, perceived as possessing connections that might be useful to the community, residents sometimes wanted to engage with me in order to further their own agendas, and usually in relation to issues concerning local development and the provision of municipal services (see Chapter Six). It was these kinds of conversation that drove the research project forward, allowing me to continuously reimagine the diasporic in relation to the concerns that mattered in Jana'a.

While living in Jana'a, Taisir took it upon himself to act as my guardian, taking responsibility for my living conditions, vouching for me when my presence in the

[9] The Jordan branch of the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL)

neighbourhood was questioned, and for checking in on me a few times a week. I lived in a large, second-floor unfurnished apartment owned by his cousin, situated less than a minute walk from both the main street in Jana'a and Taisir's house, a five-story building situated on the eastern edge of the neighbourhood. Over the course of the fieldwork we developed a close friendship. Taisir would call me to tell me about a meeting he had set up, or about a person he wanted to introduce me to, or about a part of the neighbourhood he wanted to show me, and in return I would keep him updated on my own progress, and present his and the Lejneh's points of view in meetings with development practitioners or municipal officials whenever appropriate.

In many ways, Taisir was a kind of 'gatekeeper', although not one who would *formally* grant or deny me access to certain people, places and institutions. If we acknowledge the "complex dynamics in which gatekeeping is operationalised in the field" (Crowhurst and kennedy-macfoy 2013, pp.457), his role in the research becomes much clearer. What was not always clear, for instance, was the extent to which I should operate independently of Taisir, particularly in the early days of research when Taisir expressed a desire to accompany me on my research visits. This became an issue once more when a group of residents were hostile to my presence in the neighbourhood, and sought formal clarification on my right to carry out the research. While tensions were diffused by a number of other residents who knew me and could vouch for me, this limited the extent to which I was prepared to work without some form of mediation. Taisir's gatekeeping also emerged on the occasions where he had set up meetings on my behalf. Some of these meetings were unlikely to further my research in any clear way, but were important to him in the context of local urban development. For one such meeting, Taisir walked me across the neighbourhood to see an online magazine editor, who ran a nursery for local children out of his home and out of his pocket. While the meeting itself was perfectly pleasant and interesting, I left unsure of why exactly the meeting had been arranged.

The design of the research mitigates against the influence of the gatekeeper. Firstly, the personal relationship between myself and Taisir was such that I always felt able

to push him further on anything I perceived to be overtly generalised or sweeping, or potentially unsubstantiated. I was able to offer alternative points of view in my questioning, to which he would often qualify his statements. This goes for the vast majority of residents I encountered during the field visits, having met with the same individuals multiple times in a range of settings and contexts. It is difficult to envisage this process taking shape in a one-off interview or in a more formalised setting, where there may be a greater potential for the researcher to take on a more 'complementary role' (Devereux, 1967), without the time to gauge the social norms and boundaries within which to operate appropriately.

Furthermore, the length of my stay in Jana'a meant I was able to pursue new lines of enquiry based on my conversations with certain residents, continuously testing out particular claims with others, exploring alternative possibilities and points of view. Despite Taisir's initial idea of accompanying me throughout the research, this potentially problematic level of supervision never materialised. I was free to speak to those who held opposing points of view to him and the Lejneh, and to have private meetings with officials, practitioners and politicians. I developed friendships with my neighbours, with other Lejneh members, and with the shopkeepers in the vicinity. With or without Taisir, I was able to take advantage of the social norm that one's door was always open, whether it be at the office of the municipality's Local Development Unit, political representatives, the headmistresses of the schools in Jana'a, or other individuals I was encouraged to seek out.

Residents were also free to knock on my door. Some would come in while others would engage in a brief conversation on the doorstep. In time I would meet development practitioners in areas of the neighbourhood they were interested in, and I would walk them through the wider neighbourhood and relay to them a deeper sense of community life, and introduce them to residents if appropriate (see Chapter Seven). Many of my encounters with Jana'a residents would also take place on the move, taking in different parts of the neighbourhood and allowing conversation to evolve according to our new surrounds. This was, in part, a strategic decision. As Buscher et al (2011, p.13) point out: "shadowing, stalking,

walk-alongs, ride-alongs […] – enable questions about sensory experience, embodiment [and] emplacement". 'Walking interviews' have also been said to generate "more place-specific data than sedentary interviews, […] engaging to a greater extent with features in the area under study than the autobiographical narrative of interviewees" (Evans and Jones 2011, p.856). The use of mobile ethnography in Jana'a signifies an important break from the traditional use of the methodology. Mobile ethnographies have been deployed as a means of capturing the increasingly transnational and interconnected contemporary world (Novoa 2015, p.98), or of revealing people's tactics of navigation, their networks and encounters (McFarlane and Silver 2017, p.461). These kinds of mobile ethnography may artificially reinforce tropes of transnationality and mobile subjectivity in diaspora scholarship. In Jana'a, mobility was incorporated into the methodology as a way of understanding the significance as well as multiplicity of place and locality. This mobile methodology partially does the work of 'memory maps', which Bonnerjee (2012, p.8) argues are a "performative device to enquire into the relationships between people and place".

This ethnography also engages with political practices; attending meetings of the Lejneh and meetings between residents and local authorities or political representatives, as well as being exposed to more spontaneous acts of 'the political'. In this regard, this research takes inspiration from Mills' (2010) study of Kuzguncuk neighbourhood in Istanbul. Through a methodology that revolves around an immersion in the day-to-day activities of the Neighbourhood Association and its members in Kuzguncuk, Mills details the contested narratives about, and interpretations of, the neighbourhood's history and future, while revealing the policy priorities of its members. Similar to Mills' experience, my ethnographic engagement often led to invitations to continue discussions at interlocutors' homes over tea, and allowed me to follow politics first-hand and as a series of processes, rather than as a public spectacle. However, my participation depended on the invitation of the residents attending these meetings and, on occasion, it was only after the event that I would be told a meeting had taken place.

Opportunities to engage in conversation with female residents of Jana'a were significantly restricted. Cultural sensitivities deem it inappropriate to approach women in public spaces, and when invited into the homes of male acquaintances, gender separation was enforced. Home visits were always limited to the *majlis*; a living room for entertaining male guests, located either in the first room of the house or accessible via a side entrance. While I was able to speak to two women in Amman with expertise in Zarqa - a prominent urban planner, and one of Jordan's leading historians – in Jana'a standards of modesty and the conservative nature of local life had to be recognised and respected. While I did not want to restrict my research to male-only interactions, it was essential I was able to think through the consequences of this limitation. Firstly, it must be recognised that diasporic experiences are gendered (Clifford 1994, p.313) and particularly so among communities where gender roles are more clearly defined. While gender is not so much of a concern for Boyarin and Boyarin (1993, p.721), who take "diasporised identity" to involve bodies "sometimes gendered and sometimes not", this research takes the view that findings based on predominantly male interactions cannot be normalised and taken to represent the entire community. Achilli (2015) identifies the same limitation in his ethnographic work in Wihdat refugee camp in Amman, and distinguished between the study of "Palestinian refugees in Jordan at large", and his study of "the *shabāb* [young men] of Wihdat" (ibid., p.28). In contrast to Boyarin and Boyarin, this research is not seeking to make claims about 'diasporicised identity' or a so-called 'diasporic condition'. Rather, this research uses the predominantly male accounts of diasporic life in Jana'a to critically examine the prevailing narratives found within existing diaspora scholarship.

In the few instances where interaction with women was possible, the nature of these interactions was limited to the context in which they were taking place. I met a number of female teachers in Jana'a, during visits to schools I undertook in order to learn more about a couple of international development projects; one involving maintenance work and another involving a student project relating to

local development. While their voices are amplified in this research to the greatest possible extent, they nevertheless reflect relatively non-gendered discussions, regarding particular education projects (see Chapter Seven) or the politics of school building maintenance. One productive - albeit still limited - method of capturing the gendered experience of diasporic life came from an unlikely source; the oral histories of men that recounted details of motherhood and family life, and the formative contribution their mothers made to the men's memories of childhood in the diaspora.

These ethnographic, place-based techniques are used to rethink the concept of diaspora; away from the notion of a definitive 'diasporic condition' and towards an appreciation for individual community dynamics and the places they inhabit. This is not meant to localise diasporic subjectivities, but to understand how place, politics, and temporality are experienced and engaged in the diaspora. 'Diasporic urbanism' provides a framework for taking this conceptual intervention seriously, and for the application of a place-based approach to diaspora in other contexts, according to different national, ethnic, gendered, and class characteristics and formations.

Diasporic Urbanism: A Conceptual Framework

The proliferation of interest in the concept of diaspora took place during a particular 'historical moment' (Brah, 1996), when globalisation, diversity and transnational mobility came to define many aspects of the contemporary social world. In developing alternative frameworks for the discipline today, it is important to challenge the spatial assumptions that underpin such time-specific narratives. The emphasis placed on transnationalism and hybridity within diaspora scholarship is the result of a complex set of socio-cultural relations that transcend national borders, drawing on subjective orientations towards the homeland, the hostland, and towards a unifying transnational collectivity.

Inherent to the diasporic condition are numerous evolving and emerging properties that take shape as these orientations are internalised, nurtured and reproduced. Therefore, in characterising displaced communities, the concept of diaspora is significant not only for its inherent malleability, but for its more complex appreciation of time and subjective orientation. This complexity results from the prolonged period of emplacement and resettlement that follows displacement.

The concept of intransience serves as the starting point for diasporic urbanism, directing our attention towards a subjectivity that emerges, evolves, and endures within the diaspora, and in relation to place specifically. There are significant implications to this relatively simple proposition, given the potential of intransience to destabilise a discourse built around spatial and conceptual fluidity. This position asserts that any claims to spatial fluidity need to be qualified by the dynamics of place, and the co-constitutive relationship between place and subjectivity. Whereas notions of transiency and transcendence undermine the importance of place, intransience directs us to exactly these kinds of dynamics and relationships. Intransience forms the other half of a dialectic, ensuring the spatial fluidity associated with diaspora is kept in tension with the opposing dynamics of emplacement, endurance, and emergence. It is through this set of tensions that diasporic life takes form.

Building on intransience, diasporic urbanism is, at its core, a provocation: attending to place and locality provides important, relevant, and often counter-intuitive insights into diasporic experience and life. This serves to challenge the assumptions that dominate the conceptual discourse itself. Crucially, a focus on place and locality does not negate the importance of the other scales at which diasporic life is understood. Rather, this commitment to place means that notions of transnational being, hybridity and other imaginative practices are derived from the specific articulations of individuals and communities. The claims of a so-called diasporic condition are not universal, but emerge in specific ways, according to specific contexts, and in specific places. The research process described above has

highlighted the importance of the city - and in particular the neighbourhood - to the ways in which residents speak about their histories, their present-day concerns, and their individual and collective identities.

To understand the relationship between 'diaspora' and 'the urban' in diasporic urbanism, it is important to reflect upon Simone's notion of 'black urbanism', as presented in the highly influential *City Life from Jakarta to Dakar* (2010). Black urbanism is explicitly addressed towards the end of the book, and as a result the concept is given the space and time to emerge via deep, empirical exploration. Through Simone's discussion on blackness, we immediately see how black urbanism informs our refashioning of the concept of diaspora:

> "Blackness […] is the commitment to make something without clear maps or certainties"
>
> (ibid., p.295)

> "[The black] subject cannot speak as a coherent entity which sees evidence of its coherence all around it."
>
> (ibid., p.296)

> "The black subject emerges as an external and spatial entity, a product of global relations that was brought into consideration as an effect of universal reason and the relationships between things that race and culture regulate"
>
> (ibid.)

In many respects, 'blackness' defies definition; it is brought into being in specific contexts. For Simone, the black subject is defined less by an internal coherence than through external efforts to regulate, control, and undermine blackness. As a result, black urbanism is a transnational project to piece together the ways in which black populations have had to negotiate and mitigate against these oppressive structures, as well as against the city itself. However, this nod to comparative urbanism is by no means contrived, and requires the scholar to write of each place in its own terms, according to its own rhythms, materialities, and lifeworlds. It appears futile to attempt to separate the black subject from the city and vice versa, and this is reflected in the conceptual framework of diasporic

urbanism. To write about diasporic life, we must examine the ways in which it is brought into being by external actors, and situate the diasporic subject in relation to their urban surrounds, and the memories, hopes, fears, anxieties, itineraries and strategies that fill in the gaps between the community and the city.

The practices of black urbanism tend to be situated at the periphery of cities, carried out by populations who are marginalized from city life but who nevertheless contribute to the making of the city (ibid.). This is where 'blackness' and the 'diasporic' can be most clearly differentiated: it is only the former that is grounded in experiences of struggle and oppression. As we have already established, the concept of diaspora is materially different to that of the refugee and exile for this very reason. While diasporic communities may well occupy marginalised positions in their host societies, diasporic urbanism relies on the malleability of the concept to examine the full, lived realities of communities in the diaspora, in all their complexity, multiplicity, and contradiction. Both blackness and the diasporic can be used to interrogate urban life in ways that go far beyond the imaginaries associated with either category, and in doing so, reveal much more about the black or diasporic subject than versions of the terms that objectify these populations in their attempts to define and situate them.

On this note, diasporic urbanism has also been informed by one of Simone's earlier works, developed in conjunction with David Hecht (1994), which brings a critical and insightful perspective to political life as a localised, experiential phenomenon. 'Micro-politics' is a term used by Hecht and Simone to challenge the commonly asserted view of African postcolonial agency in terms that reflect the "continent's supposed loss of tradition or its propensity to death-rattle, knee-jerk popular resistance" (ibid., p.8). Instead, the authors understand politics in relation to how "people compensate for the impossibility of their everyday lives, and locate the complex and ambivalent social conditions within which these lives are embedded" (ibid.). While 'impossibility' is too loaded a term to approach everyday life in diasporic contexts, this focus on micro-politics is important for simultaneously

challenging the 'macro' political narratives and asserting a politics that is deeply embedded in context.

Binnie et al's (2007) focus on 'mundane geographies' makes the link between micro-politics and subjective orientations, arguing that habitualised practices can provide assurance in what may otherwise be uncertain or insecure contexts (ibid., p.516). The creative potential of the mundane does not obscure the effects of political, economic and social processes that impact the everyday, but rather provides us with a moment to pause and to reflect on what these processes entail, how they produce particular effects, and how they are actualised in the social world. While it may be problematic to define particular geographies as 'mundane' and particular manifestations of the political as 'micro', these concepts lend themselves to ethnographic exploration, and invite us to challenge our pre-existing conceptions about individual diasporic communities.

A further influence on diasporic urbanism derives from work by Staeheli and Kofman (2004), who challenge the dominant focus on difference within postmodernist approaches to political analysis. "The political", the authors argue, "is not just about differences [...]; it is also about the webs of power and social relationships that are the basis of connections" (ibid., p.6). Again, difference is often viewed as an integral, definitive part of diaspora scholarship, perhaps most notably in the black diasporic geographies of 'the Atlantic' (Gilroy, 1993). However, the politics of difference within the discipline can take a range of contradictory forms: from the celebration of difference and diversity on the one hand, to the calling-out of racialisation on the other (Anthias, 1998). In this research, stories of connection in diasporic contexts are as fundamental to diasporic agency and subjectivity than stories of difference. Again, difference and commonality are derived *in* and *through* place, as places and identities mutually constitute one another (Pratt, 1998).

By drawing on these critical perspectives in political and urban geography, diasporic urbanism marks an important intervention into a well-established debate within urban studies, between the production of generalised theories of

global or regional urbanisms on the one hand, and of prioritising "local uniqueness" (Massey 1984, p.299) on the other. The debate is in part a question of scale, and the types of knowledge that can be discerned by emphasising one scale over another. Where is it, exactly, that 'the urban' exists? And "through what categories, methods and cartographies should urban life be understood?" (Brenner and Schmid 2013, p.155). Postcolonial approaches, for example, tend to view the urban as "always variable, polymorphic and historically determinate" (Robinson 2014, p.52). And while this recognition of multiplicity has an important part to play in thinking critically and imaginatively about urban life, a postcolonial approach reproduces the limitations of the postmodern tradition within diaspora studies, emphasising difference and spatial fluidity above all else. That said, universality in urban theory tends to reflect the other side of diaspora scholarship; the side that defines diaspora as a category of population, and overlooks gender, class, and inter-ethnic differences in favour of a transnational homogeneity built around ethnicity, nation and movement (Anthias, 1998).

Diasporic urbanism provides an original entry point into this familiar debate between universality and local specificity. As a concept, diaspora naturally transgresses particularised forms of spatiality, scale and temporality. As highlighted in Chapter Two, the diasporic present always appears in relation to, and in tension with, a range of specific geographical framings; past events of displacement and transnational movement, as well as imaginative practices and material processes that reflect the period of time spent *in* the diaspora. Through place-based engagement, a critical diasporic geography examines how these tensions and relations manifest in specific contexts, and in ways that make sense to individual communities. Diasporic urbanism therefore locates both 'the diasporic' and 'the urban' at the scales, in the spaces, and according to the temporalities that are revealed through specific places. Diasporic urbanism does not assume difference in empirical settings, nor does it define diaspora according to its points of difference. Instead, it uses difference *conceptually* as a way of writing the urban; diasporic experiences are revealing not only for what they say about diasporic life and subjectivity, but also for what they say about the places in

which these experiences are situated. In other words, the goal of diasporic urbanism is to always remain conscious of difference, while avoiding the dangers of assuming or fetishising it.

Diasporic Urbanism: Methodological Implications

Diasporic urbanism asserts that it is only through place-based engagement that diasporic experience can be sufficiently contextualised, and capable of reflecting the specific concerns and subjectivities of individual communities. Like black urbanism, diasporic urbanism represents a kind of 'inventive methodology' (Simone, 2010). It seeks to do the work of a concept and a method simultaneously; emphasising what is lost when these two endeavours are approached separately. The research presented here focuses on one specific diaspora community. Simone's articulation of black urbanism seems to suggest that research must engage in this kind of granularity in order to begin to understand the experiences of black people in the relevant contexts and situations. This is also true in diasporic urbanism. The goal of diasporic urbanism is not to understand the commonalities of diasporic communities in a transnational context, but rather to understand how diasporas exist in particular places, and whether lines can be drawn between these places.

One question remains: how do we do justice to this kind of conceptual and methodological work simultaneously? The answer lies in the design and the writing-up of ethnographic inquiry. It has long been established that ethnographic approaches have often followed an inductive approach, with the researcher immersing themselves in 'the data' and discovering which research "puzzles" remain unanswered by existing theoretical literature (Mears, 2017). But it is precisely the role that theory plays in the research that needs problematising, if we are to undertake methodological and conceptual work in parallel. This research demotes the importance of theory production in research of this kind, as theory for theory's sake can confuse and dilute the significance of empirical

description (Besbris and Khan, 2017). Only by displacing the pressures of theory production can we allow empirical description to contribute to our understanding of existing concepts, to challenge their underlying assumptions or to advance particular aspects of their constitution. This is exactly the type of work that is required in diaspora studies, which has struggled to enforce a sense of conceptual clarity, and to operate independently of dominant theoretical paradigms.

As a methodology, diasporic urbanism reflects the notion that "concepts only become fully developed in their implementation in specific contexts" (Jones 1999, p.549). This fundamentally differs from the first step of this research, which purposefully extricates the concept of diaspora from its common presuppositions (Ophir, 2018), regarding transnational modes of being and a fluid subjective condition. In diasporic urbanism, the objective is to *re*-articulate the concept according to the ways in which it re-appears in specific contexts. In many respects, this resembles Simone and Pieterse's (2017) practice of 're-description':

> "Re-description implies a capacity to cope with enormous variation and texture […]. It is so important to keep an ear to the ground to understand the complex and paradoxical rhythms of popular neighbourhoods. The format of making this case is also meant to incite a conceptual and methodological openness, not always to try and squeeze everything into singular theoretical and political registers"
>
> (ibid., pp.63-72)

The purpose of re-description for the authors is to observe what is taking place in many cities throughout the global South defies simple definition, theorisation, and even 'economic logic' (ibid., p.72). By paying close and imitate attention to people's lives and their practices and performances in the city, the authors argue that we are able to see the city itself in a new, more representative light, which may resonate with city life across disparate places. The method and the objective of diasporic urbanism is similar: it involves engaging in deep ethnography and retaining an openness that does not require diaspora and the diasporic to be neatly defined.

Diasporic urbanism does not abandon theory altogether. Rather, the framework seeks to use empirical description as a primary method of conceptual critique. This is important given that the concept of diaspora is often understood through spatial fluidity and its progressive potential. Empirical description allows us to extricate the diasporic experience from both of these essentialising projects. Acknowledging the risk of becoming *overly* descriptive, in the sense that description loses its analytical rigour, it is useful to reflect on Abbott's (2007) notion of 'lyrical' sociology as an antidote to the 'narrational'. While narratives tend to write the social world at a distance, Abbott endorses a lyrical sociology that seeks to recreate experience through an engaged research process (ibid.). The purpose of the lyrical is to convey the emotions that accompany social experience, using imagery to accompany the story-telling we do in qualitative research. In many respects, this project continuously negotiates this tension between the lyrical and the narrational. The previous chapter indeed takes a critical and distanced approach to diaspora literature, but it must be stated that this content derives directly from place-based engagement in local diasporic life. The following chapters seek to incorporate the lyrical into its story-telling, establishing a writing style that reinforces my interlocutors' experience of place and temporality, and their articulations of subjective experience more broadly.

Conclusion

Following on from the previous chapter, which provided a critique of diaspora scholarship and proposed a conceptual re-orientation around the relationship between subjectivity and place, this chapter presents a detailed overview of what this intervention looks like in practice. It is important to emphasise that the diasporic urbanism framework emerged after a lengthy research process that had transformed the objectives and scope of the project. The eviction in Jana'a did not prove to be the defining issue of the research, but instead served as an entry point into exploring place-based dynamics of life in a Palestinian-Jordanian diasporic community.

Diaspora scholarship requires a vocabulary capable of taking localised forms of being and belonging into account. We have established that our understanding of diasporic life and livelihoods are enhanced when we think beyond the state and the nation, and engage in practices of imagination alongside material realities. Diasporic urbanism encourages the use of ethnographic methodologies, and urges the discipline to take seriously the productive potential of the city in questions of diasporic subjectivity, identity, politics and belonging. In constructing this framework, critical urban scholarship has proved useful in thinking different about the concepts and methods we use to write about diasporas.

The notion of 'intransience' reflects a particular quality to life in Jana'a that did not seem to be sufficiently addressed in the existing literature, be it diaspora studies or human geography more broadly. While I recognise the contributions of concepts such as transnationalism (challenging state-centrism), transcendence (a human response to material conditions) and transience (as an antidote to stasis), these concepts occupy an overly dominant position in the critical social sciences. Intransience provides an essential counter-balance to these spatialities, and encourage us to think about the role of place and locality when analysing issues concerning subjectivity, identity, politics, belonging, temporality, and so forth.

Having provided a background to the methodological and conceptual work that underpins this project, the next five chapters apply these vocabularies and frameworks to diasporic life in Jana'a. These chapters explore the role of emplacement in identity formation; the relationship between past and present; political organisation and agency; the developmental gaze; and articulations of the future - all in relation to diasporic experience and diaspora literature. Each of these chapters provides empirical insight that challenges and develops our understanding of life in the diaspora - sometimes counter-intuitively, but always grounded in the realities of urban life. Each of these chapters reinforces the central message of this project: that place matters. Place plays a defining role in diasporic life, and provides a means to understand how diasporic communities negotiate their multiplicity of scale and complex experiences of temporality.

IV: Settled Positions

Introduction

"*Min wayn inta*?"

This question - 'where are you from?' - was asked of me by all of my interlocutors - sometimes with suspicion but most often with genuine interest. It was certainly unusual for a researcher to turn up in a place like Jana'a, and ask questions about the eviction and about life in the city. Jana'a residents had a somewhat difficult time placing me: it was clear I was not Arab, both in terms of appearance and my imperfect command of the language. In fact, many believed me to be Chechen, explaining that my appearance was similar to those within Zarqa's Chechen community. Their questioning of, and interest in my origins was important because it allowed me to ask it back to each of them in context. To my surprise, and unlike the taxi drivers in Amman, the answer they gave me was rarely 'Palestine':

"We are Jordanians."
"We are Palestinian-Jordanians."
"We are from Zarqa."
"We are from the great neighbourhood of Jana'a."

Identification with multiple communities, at different scales, poses a problem for diaspora scholarship. These answers either undermine discourses that try to place the diaspora within a particular framing - usually in a transnational context, or a minority position in a national context - or, they seem to reaffirm the postmodern

trope of diasporic subjectivity as inherently fluid, malleable, and hybrid. Over the course of fieldwork, it became clear that neither of these approaches were sufficient in explaining how diasporic communities position themselves in a broader social context. The responses were not emphasising fluidity, but asserting a genuine affiliation with the nation, the city, or the neighbourhood. Statements on identity did not reflect the idea that the diaspora is located in the nexus between the local and the global; it is located instead within a specific, identifiable community, to which one can be said to belong. It soon became clear that in order to understand diasporic subjectivity in Jana'a, I would have to understand how place functions in people's lives. Diaspora scholarship would require a vocabulary capable of taking these localised and emplaced forms of being and belonging into account.

As argued in Chapter Two, place radically alters the characteristics of any given diasporic community, and particularly the places of settlement that – over time – become home. This chapter foregrounds Jana'a neighbourhood and the city of Zarqa as two such formative places. The story of Zarqa is itself diasporic, and its history raises important questions about the narratives commonly associated with the formation of urban diasporas, and the city's Palestinian communities in particular. Setting the important history of displacement and dispossession to one side, this chapter foregrounds the dynamics of emplacement to reveal an important and situated set of concerns that impact our conceptualisations of diasporic identities, politics, communities, and livelihoods. Focusing on emplacement does this by a) treating 'destinations' of diaspora populations as both dynamic and historicised places, b) exploring the moments in which diasporas encounter these places, and c) charting how diasporic subjectivities transform in relation to these places. This focus helps us pay attention to the situated realities of diasporic communities, and to gain an understanding of what these realities teach us about the diasporic condition in relation to the city. The chapter proceeds to use emplacement to reconsider the ways in which memory, home, mobility, history, identity, community and citizenship are typically understood in diaspora scholarship.

Memories of Home

Jana'a has no formal meaning in the Arabic language. I looked in dictionaries, searched online, and asked my Arabic teachers, Arab friends, and Jana'a locals if they could decipher the term. "Most places don't have meaningful names," my friend Fadi told me dismissively. It was not until my final visit to the neighbourhood, sitting among three interlocutors, reminiscing about their childhoods in Jana'a, that I discovered the origins of the name. "Jana'a", Ahmed informed me, "is a shortened version of what we all used to call this area…. *Jenat ul-Na'im*". Although it is still the case that place names do not translate easily, *Jenat ul-Na'im* roughly means 'heavenly paradise'. Saleh added, "it was indeed a heavenly paradise. But as things deteriorated, so did the name!"

'Heavenly'… 'paradise'… these are not terms often associated with the unfamiliar destinations of forcibly displaced populations. Nor are they associated with the kind of low-income, informal neighbourhood that Jana'a typifies today. The name derives, it seems, from the natural forms of infrastructure that helped sustain local livelihoods, and allowed settlers to build towards a more prosperous future. In the 1950s and 60s, the area still evoked the kinds of reaction recorded centuries prior by individuals making the Hajj. Four fresh water springs were located in the north western area of Jana'a, and the river was beautifully clear. Ahmed, Saleh, and Taisir recalled how central this water was to local life when they were children. Their mothers would go down to the river four or five times a day to collect water for their cooking pots, and to wash their families' clothes. For the men themselves, the river was the ultimate playground; they could swim but they could also fish for food to eat. The infrastructural importance of the river extended to its surrounding areas, providing fertile land for the production of all kinds of fruit and vegetables, as well as for keeping livestock for milk and meat.

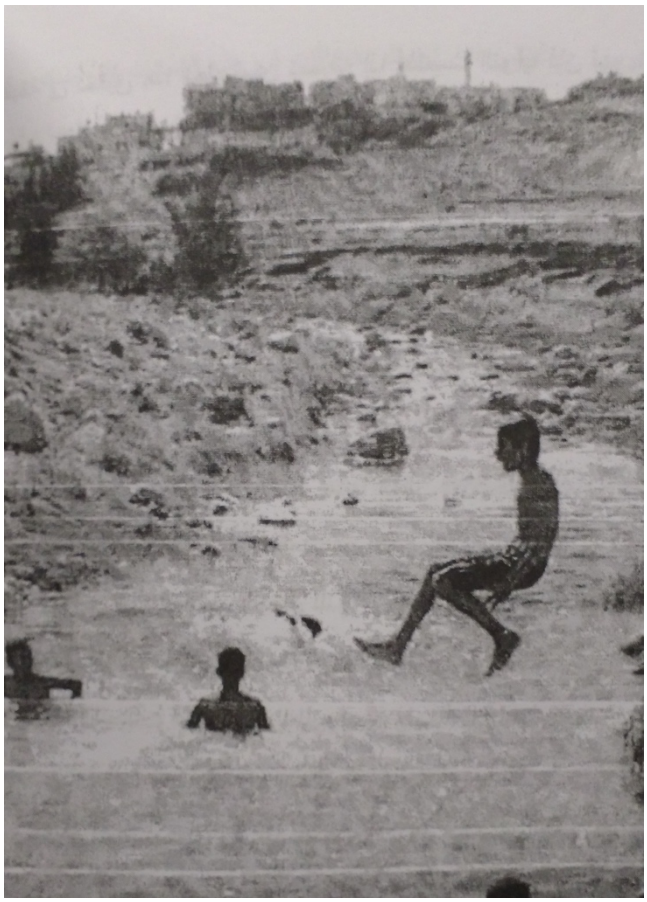


Fig.4 Children swimming in Zarqa river, date unknown

(Zaloum, 2011, p.168)

Place is most often evoked within diaspora scholarship in relation to people's memories of the homeland, and 'post-memory'[10] for subsequent generations (e.g. Alshaibi, 2006; Baronian et al, 2006). The effects of forced displacement and transnational movement on Palestinian identities are often emphasised to provide a sense of placelessness in the diaspora:

[10] "'Postmemory' describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before - to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up" (Hirsch 2012, p.5)

> "Palestinian narratives abound with descriptions of an identity that is out of place, without centre and on a constant journey. […] The condition of being Palestinian is, then, to move."
>
> (Schulz 2003, pp.85-6)

But the relationship between place and identity in diaspora communities is more nuanced than these framings allow, primarily due to the fact that processes of emplacement and memories of life *in* the diaspora are marginalised. If 'home' represents "the place you come back to, and always from a place of greater complexity" (Pratt 1998, p.19), then Jana'a fits the bill in both a physical and a metaphorical sense. As well as the childhood memories detailed above, residents felt closely attached to the history of the city and the neighbourhood they called home. These narratives and memories hint at a diasporic identity grounded in the enduring impact of both emplacement and the processes and transformations that have been experienced *in* the diaspora.

By the time Palestinian refugees began arriving in Zarqa in 1948-9, Zarqa had transformed from a tribal area and remote outpost of the Ottoman Empire, to the military centre for the newly-established Kingdom of Jordan (Young, 1972). The land that would become known as Jana'a was owned by the military, as was the adjacent plot of land that became Jordan's first Palestinian Refugee Camp in 1949, opened by the International Red Cross and then run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Jana'a was a poor, informal refugee settlement, with the majority of occupants living in tented accommodation. Upon arrival, families registered as Palestinian refugees with UNRWA in order to receive vital food packages and gain access to education and healthcare. At this time the refugees were also reliant on the military for basic provisions. At the end of each day, Imad recalled to me, Palestinians would line up against the fence of one of the nearby military compounds, and any leftovers from the military's dining hall would be given to the refugees. These are important details, for they show Palestinians being assisted in vital, material ways following their tumultuous displacement and arrival in Zarqa. Eventually, these families would gain enough financial

independence to end their reliance on such handouts, and were able to cultivate land as well as purchase goods from local markets.

Fig.5 The City of Zarqa, 1949
(Twitter: @obeida_swalha. Photographer unknown)

In these early years and as time went on the military also played a significant role in the financial security of families in Jana'a. Mohammed, an elderly owner of an electrical shop in Jana'a, came to Zarqa as a child in the 1950s. His father had been serving in the military in Nablus in the West Bank, and had moved his family to Zarqa for a new posting. Mohammad would later follow in his father's footsteps and seek employment in the Jordanian military. Walid, 8 years Mohammed's senior, came to Jana'a under very similar circumstances, albeit much later, in 1967. Following the Six-Day War, Walid was assigned to a military camp in Khow, on the outskirts of Zarqa. His wife's family bought the house in Jana'a that they live in

today, and ever since Walid's retirement from the Army in 1968 on grounds of diminishing eyesight. The logics of settlement were slightly different for Ahmad's family. Ahmad was born in Amman in 1948, and his family moved to Jana'a in 1955 when his father closed his restaurant in order to join the military. In the military, his father received a stable, monthly salary; an important shift away from the precarity of his previous line of work. Ahmed's father was able to find affordable land, and he along with neighbouring families built more resilient homes using mud and sand, as well as tree branches for the roof.

Palestinian integration into the military is important not for what it symbolised geopolitically, but for the material benefits that could be accrued from stable, respectable and purposeful public-sector employment. Some were posted to Zarqa to continue their military service, while others took advantage of the new employment opportunities. In both instances, the first- and second-generation Palestinians I spoke to in Jana'a look back on the context surrounding their families' settlement as being particularly formative to a localised as well as a new, national sense of belonging. It appeared that trust and loyalty emerged through these opportunities that allowed many Palestinian families to gradually improve their material conditions. It is important to note that these conditions of settlement were taking place at a time of significant geopolitical change; Jordan had seized control of the West Bank shortly after Israel declared independence in 1948 (Migdal, 1979). A year later, Jordan's population stood at 1.43 million across the two territories; two-thirds were Palestinians, and over half of the Palestinians were refugees (George, 2005). The decision to grant full citizenship rights to Palestinians in 1950 is often recognised as being a key factor in the long-term wellbeing of Palestinian-Jordanians (Ramahi, 2015), but it is important to document how Palestinians fared in particular cities and economic contexts. While it is true that Jordan extended citizenship rights, expanded formal political representation, and embarked on constructing a 'hybrid' national identity (Nanes, 2008), residents in Jana'a remember the availability of land and jobs - above all else - as key determinants of their settled positions in Jana'a.

The chance to remain in place was naturally welcomed by the local refugees, as were the opportunities available to them. This opportunity to settle was particularly important for those who had experienced long, complex journeys before arriving in Jana'a. Mahmoud explained the route his family had taken before finding their permanent home:

> "My family were originally from Jaffa. My grandfather moved on his own to Egypt, but when the trouble started he returned to Palestine. He was reunited with his family in Gaza, as they had been forced to flee their homes in Jaffa. From Gaza, they went to Lebanon, but they had to leave for political reasons. They came to Jana'a and my father built the first house here. […] Jordan has been excellent for Palestinians."

Diasporic identities were not formed through these initial encounters in Jana'a, but were formed over time as the community began to benefit from transformations taking place in the Jordanian economy. By the early 1960s, the vast majority of residents had transitioned from tented accommodation to mud-brick housing, and the municipality duly responded to the growing needs of the urbanising community. They soon began laying pipes for water and waste, and a few years later a bridge across the river was constructed nearby. A few years on from that, paved streets were introduced into the neighbourhood. The urbanisation of Zarqa was also marked by the arrival of industry to the city. As public sector work became increasingly difficult for Jordanians of Palestinian origin after 1970, due to significant political tensions across the country (see Chapter Six), the growth of industry was key to the employment prospects of the Jana'a community. Ahmed gave me an extensive list of goods that were manufactured nearby, which provided many jobs for the local community:

> "There was a leather factory, a paper factory, matches, all kinds of metals, and clothing factories. We had a 7Up and Mirinda factory here. There was even wine and beer. Of course, we still have the marble and cement factories, just across the river from here."

Children in Jana'a were also benefiting from decent schooling; first from the temporary, small and modest UNRWA facility, and later from the schools that were established within the neighbourhood's boundaries. Basil explained the importance of quality education to the wider society:

> "Education was good in Jordan, everyone wanted to become engineers, and many were able to go abroad to earn good money. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai. They sent money back to Jana'a and their relatives built new floors to their existing homes, people had more money, the whole neighbourhood was developing."

When speaking to residents about the history of the neighbourhood, the sense of opportunity in those early years is striking, particularly given the context of forced displacement and dispossession. Its historical record of settling refugees sets Jordan apart from many other countries (Francis, 2015) and the rather radical decision to provide citizenship to Palestinians (Achilli, 2015; Yom, 2016) is particularly extraordinary. But in addition to these policies, Palestinians were encountering a city built on the recognition that its diasporic populations needed land, employment and basic provisions. A more cynical perspective would concede that the economic integration of Palestinians was a vital part of nation-building during this time (Sayigh, 1991). In Jana'a the opportunity to work and settle were instrumental in the formation of new localities and localised senses of belonging. The availability of important natural and urban infrastructures, in the beginning and over the course of diasporic emplacement respectively, provided dignity and valuable resources to an otherwise dispossessed population. Industrialisation and modernisation did not just 'reach' Jana'a, in the sense that it spread out towards the more peripheral urban communities. Rather, Jana'a was central to both transformative processes.

Diasporic Mobilities

These experiences of emplacement and life *in* the diaspora provide an important anchoring device for thinking about diasporic mobilities beyond the trope of

'forever being out of place' (Schulz, 2003). As detailed above, Palestinians had full access to the excellent education system in Jordan, and many were able to take advantage of job opportunities abroad. In 'becoming diasporic' for a second time, these predominantly young, male Palestinians from Jana'a inevitably faced the question of whether to stay in their new homes, move elsewhere, or return to the neighbourhood. By exploring the logics and decisions that underlie movement and settlement, it soon becomes clear that any notion of the 'mobile diasporic subject' (Ho 2009, p.12) requires qualifying in relation to place and time.

Place-based engagement in diasporic communities is not well suited to unearthing the stories of those who decided to leave Jana'a and remain abroad permanently. What it does allow, however, is an understanding of how place features in the lives of those who decided to return home. The *Mukhtar* of Jana'a, now in his seventies, used to be employed by the Royal Jordanian Air Force, and spent a significant amount of time in the United States, Britain, and Canada. As he was of Palestinian origin, however, his pension was significantly lower than that of his colleagues, and he had been forced to come back to Jana'a for financial reasons. While he told me he would leave Jana'a again if he could, the *Mukhtar* did not have to start from nothing when he returned to the neighbourhood. His family were settled in Jana'a, in the house that his father had built and expanded over the years. The *Mukhtar* was able to open a small repairs shop in the neighbourhood, too, close to his house and on Jana'a's main commercial street. In his retirement, the *Mukhtar* came to play a decisive role in local political life, and garners the respect and loyalty of the entire community. While the *Mukhtar* may want to leave Jana'a behind, the neighbourhood has continued to provide him with a home, a community, and a renewed purpose.

The Gulf was a particularly popular destination among other young men in Jana'a, and particularly those with engineering and other technological skills. Several people drew my attention to the fact that much of Jana'a's development over the years was a direct result of remittance payments that came from sons of Jana'a working across the Gulf. Travel to and from the region was relatively simple, and

some jobs allowed workers to move their families over with them. Taisir, in fact, was one of the lucky ones. He moved to Saudi Arabia in 1979, having first moved abroad for his engineering studies five years prior. He had enjoyed his time studying in Athens, Greece, but he left in 1976 to fight for the Palestinians in the war in Lebanon, staying for only two weeks:

> "No one knew what they were doing, who they were fighting, where the next enemy would come from – including from within! I packed up my things, travelled from Beirut to Cyprus, and then to Athens, all in order to fly back to Jordan. I came back to Jana'a and studied computer science, and then found work in Saudi Arabia."

The bleak realities of Palestinian nationalism on the war-torn streets of Beirut had overwhelmed and confused Taisir. His commitment to the Palestinian cause travelled with him through different parts of the diaspora, only for him to be disorientated by the realities of violent, nationalist struggle. In returning to Jana'a, he was able to restart his studies, and found new opportunities elsewhere. When he left Saudi Arabia in 2009, Taisir returned to a Jana'a completely transformed: fully urbanised and significantly overcrowded. The most significant increase in population came in 1990-1, when Palestinians working in Kuwait were forced to flee the country during the first Gulf War (Schulz, 2003). Some returned to Jana'a to the homes they had left behind, while for others Jana'a was once again a place of refuge. These Palestinians, many of whom had Egyptian travel documents having originally fled Gaza, settled in places like Jana'a for its relative affordability, as they faced obstacles to finding new employment in other locations. Others working elsewhere, most typically in Saudi Arabia, would return home to Jana'a having accumulated significant savings, in order to settle down with their families, and in close proximity to parents and extended family members.

Thanks to significant remittance payments over a prolonged period of time, Taisir had been able to move his family in Jana'a from the centre of the neighbourhood

to its periphery, and build one of the tallest houses in the area. One relatively unique feature of the house was the external staircase that provided access to each floor without having to step inside. Not many of the houses in Jana'a have painted external walls, but Taisir's had been painted red, which had subsequently faded into pink. When I asked him why he came back to Jana'a after his years working in Saudi Arabia, he simply said "because Jana'a is home. Where else would I go?" On another occasion, he provided an additional reason for his return: "I had to come back to look after my Mother and Father. They are old… I cannot abandon them".

These stories of return help us to highlight the ways in which diasporic life is grounded in the most ordinary of issues - financial needs, safety and security, and family well-being. Within each of these stories, Jana'a features as a place that is not just a home, but a 'centre of gravity' often assumed to be lacking in diasporic contexts (Hanafi 2003, p.159; Khalidi 1997, p.179). Diasporic urbanism is specifically attuned to these aspects of diasporic experience, by examining the evolving and emerging properties of diaspora in relation to places of inhabitation. Jana'a, for these men, was the place to return to when plans did not work out and stages of life came to an end. It is also important to acknowledge that the transnational movements these men undertook in the diaspora were qualitatively different to the experiences of displacement that tend to foreground questions of mobility and diasporic communities. Having been a point of destination for Palestinians between 1948 and 1967, broadly speaking, Zarqa has been a point of origin for Palestinians ever since.

A Diasporic City

Before the mass migration of Palestinians to Zarqa after 1948, diasporic settlements were already a core element of the city's history and identity. In becoming diasporic for the first time, these Palestinians were encountering a place

with its own history and sense of identity. And while Palestinians may not have experienced this history first-hand, it is clearly reflected in the ways in which Jana'a residents talk about their own histories and identities today. Having established the processes of emplacement that helped secure a sense of belonging among Palestinians in Jana'a, this section provides a historical account of the city these families settled into. Zarqa was not just a destination, but a place with distinctive and historical characteristics.

Chechen and Circassian migrants were the first permanent settlers in Zarqa, arriving in 1902-3 at the invitation of the Ottoman authorities (Al-Shaar and Al-Asaaf, 2014; Chatty, 2010). In *Displacement and Dispossession in the Middle East*, Chatty (2010) provides a glimpse into the various logics behind these migrations. Approximately 75 families were sent from Anatolia to Zarqa to aid with the construction of the Hijaz Railway, linking Damascus to Medina via a series of stations through modern-day Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. These migrations were by no means forced:

> "In 1902 my grandfather made the decision to come here. There was a wave of Muslim migration from the Northern Caucuses after the end of the Shamil-Russian Tsar Wars […]. He was exiled to Russia at first but then he demanded to be allowed to go to Mecca, which he did […]. Some took shelter in Turkey, but some were not happy and asked Abdul Hamid (the Ottoman Sultan) if they could migrate to Bilad al-Sham and thus get closer to Mecca. So the Circassians sent some groups of people to check out the land, and the group that my grandfather belonged to came to Jordan. At that time Jordan was green, there were rivers running and they selected Zarqa to settle in, then the rest of the families came, and as time passed they had a religious leader, not a political leader, and they abided by whatever this religious leader said and formed a small community in Zarqa."
>
> (Sheshani, in Chatty, 2010, p.120)

These earlier instances of diasporic settlement in Zarqa follow clear logics of settlement. Premised on a pursuit of work, religious legitimacy, and freely available and fertile land, the Northern Caucasus migrations founded Zarqa - as a

place of permanent settlement - in 1902. Although voluntary, the settlers were tasked with jobs that helped deepen their connection to the place. As well as building the railway, the settlers maintained a security presence around the new Hijaz station as well as the historical site of *Qaṣr Shabīb*, which had offered shelter to those performing the *ḥajj* pilgrimage for over five hundred years (Al-Shaar and Al-Asaaf, 2014). The security role played by the new arrivals was in part due to the presence of a second group of people in Zarqa at the time; the nomadic Beni Hassan and Balqa Bedouin tribes, who would sporadically settle by the river and cultivate its fertile land (ibid.). The area was notable for its fresh spring water and beautiful scenery, both of which had been referenced in accounts of the *ḥajj* pilgrimage, dating back to the Mamluk as well as Ottoman eras (ibid.).

Fig.6 Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque ('The Chechen Mosque')
Centre of Zarqa City, est. 1904

Bedouins, Chechens and Circassians were all well represented within the Jordanian army, officially known at the time as the Arab Legion (Vatikiotis, 1967;

Alon, 2005). The migrants from the Caucasus who had founded the city enjoyed full citizenship, and occupied a well-respected position in Jordanian society (e.g. Shami, 2009). For the Bedouins in Zarqa, the Arab Legion represented an opportunity for a dignified life, after having suffered enormously from the political and economic changes that had swept the country following the end of the Ottoman era (Alon, 2005). Having fallen victim to British-led militarisation in Transjordan in the 1920s, by the 1930s the tribal populations were a key feature and the 'striking force' of the Arab Legion, following a change of policy from British officials (Vatikiotis 1967, pp.69-73). In 1948, Zarqa was chosen as the site for the Engineer Base Camp; a prestigious technical arm and training facility for the Arab Legion (Vatikiotis, 1967). What is most significant about this development is that the Engineer Base Camp began recruiting "craftsman and tradesman from among the Palestinian refugees", and was therefore almost entirely made up of *ḥaḍarī* (townsmen) (ibid., p.85). The entwined histories of refugee settlement and military employment in Zarqa thus extend from the Circassians in 1902 to the Palestinians half a century later.

Some historians have noted that allowing Palestinian participation in the Jordanian military was a tactical move, enabling the monarchy to defuse "discontented and alienated" voices (Vatikiotis 1967, p.29) and allow for the integration of Palestinians into Jordanian society (Massad, 2001). Glubb Pasha, the infamous British leader of the Arab Legion in Jordan, wrote that Palestinians "could not be half-citizens. We must make them feel trusted, and the first sign of trust was to arm them" (Glubb 1957, p.289). But in Zarqa, away from the 'frontier' communities in the West Bank that Glubb was referring to, it appears as though integration into the military meant integration into the city. It represented a continuation of the dynamics that had given Zarqa its meaning over the previous fifty years.

In the West, we are adept at identifying people in relation to their cities, sometimes combining an urban identity in relation to class, ethnicity, or cultural division. We can think about what distinguishes Londoners from Liverpudlians, Bostonians

from New Yorkers, Parisians from the Marsellais, and how different groups are situated within each of these places. Western imaginaries of Arab cities, in contrast, tend to account for the identities of city inhabitants in a more indirect way. The Orientalist or Islamic city, the modern city, and the global city, say more about the spatial materiality of the city than it does people's relationship and attachment to these places (Shami, 2007). Likewise within diaspora scholarship, identities - however hybrid or fluid - are assumed to be stable enough for transnational solidarities to remain present in spite of localised differences. Memories, cultural cues, and the homeland retain a strength of meaning and attachment that reduces local differences to a form of parochialism. Furthermore, these 'diasporic' sentiments can be engaged through various kinds of performance or imaginative practice, and thus they retain their significance irrespective of place. Shami's remarks on urban identities in Amman provide important relief from both discourses, explaining that while a multiplicity of displacements and population movements to the city have contributed to a lack of a distinctive urban identity, place attachments have nevertheless been formed in relation to residential spaces of settlement (ibid.). She quotes an Ammani, Palestinian interlocutor who tells her "we (Palestinians) leave our fingerprints wherever we go. We changed this place from a valley of the dead to a valley full of life, as you see" (ibid., p.215). Similar narratives can be heard across Zarqa today, not only in relation to neighbourhoods like Jana'a but also in relation to the wider city; a 'melting pot' of a city, a 'microcosm' for all of Jordanian society.

These widely-held views portray Zarqa as a cosmopolitan city, and one in which the Palestinian diaspora - and neighbourhoods like Jana'a - are an integral part. 'Cosmopolitanism' is a highly contested term, but is relevant to this research given the argument that a diverse urban population "may constitute the ultimate site for the development of cosmopolitan sensibilities" (Müller 2011, p.3415). This is important in diasporic contexts, as cosmopolitanism provides an avenue through which communities may be able to "supersede the parochialisms of their own national, ethnic and religious identities" (ibid., p.3418). As diasporic populations enter and settle in the city, according to this view, their national and transnational

identities may be weakened (or at least be challenged) by competing forms of community and belonging, in terms not only of the city but also in a global sense. Naturally, the study of cosmopolitanism is closely related to that of diaspora, as both are in part driven by a liberal fetishism for openness that prioritises notions of hybridity and fluidity over other aspects of social life and cultural exchange (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007).

Post-colonial and urban-based scholarship have challenged the euro-centricity of the cosmopolitanism concept, exploring what 'living together' means beyond ideas of 'corporate globalisation', 'statist multiculturalism', or 'the liberal project of a cosmopolitan world' (Mayaram 2009, p.9). Instead, these perspectives ask questions such as: 'how is cosmopolitanism lived?' and, 'whose cosmopolitanism?' (See Glick Schiller and Irving, 2014). In a particularly influential paper, Pollock et al (2000, p.580) explain cosmopolitanism as relating to "our need to ground our sense of mutability in conditions of mutability, and to learn to live tenaciously in terrains of historic and cultural *transition*". Again, this has clear implications for common understandings of the so-called diasporic condition and the importance of mobility for the diasporic subject. Cosmopolitanism appears to make sense in a context of dispossession and forced displacement, as the affected communities try and come to terms with such upheaval and the subsequent arrival in a 'foreign' place.

Glick Schiller (2014) coined the term 'diasporic cosmopolitanism', which goes some way in explaining diasporic subjectivity in Jana'a in relation to the city. Glick Schiller views cosmopolitanism in terms of shared commonalities rather than the acceptance or celebration of difference, arguing that the latter only reinforces problematic, racialised binaries. Interestingly, Glick Schiller extends the diaspora concept to "those who find themselves displaced not only through movement but also through the neoliberal structural adjustment of the global economy and urban spaces" (ibid., p.104). It is around a shared experience of displacement, she argues, that "bonds of sociability" are forged between migrants and non-migrants (ibid., p.105). This is particularly thought-provoking when thinking about how

the Palestinian refugees in Jana'a became attached to the city that had given them a home as well as opportunity, and how they came to belong to a city that had its own separate history. Glick Schiller's term is useful for considering diasporic subjectivities, but crucially it reproduces the problematic assumption within diaspora studies that displacement is the most applicable framing for capturing diasporic life and experience. Jana'a residents' shared urban experience and bonds of sociability offer an alternative framing that supersedes Glick Schiller's assumption of the centrality of displacement.

Localised Identities

Oral histories of Jana'a also teach us to question merits of cosmopolitanism in diasporic contexts, as they highlight the importance of locality in shaping diasporic experience. Among 'liberal' and 'progressive' voices within and outside the academy, cosmopolitanism is lauded for its opposition to parochialism, and a view of the local in essentialised, romanticised, and reactionary terms (Tomaney, 2012). Indeed, Muller (2011) uses parochialism in a pejorative sense to separate out the concept of cosmopolitanism from 'narrower' forms of affiliation. It is important for diaspora scholarship to resist such subjective assessments when considering the scales at which diasporic experience plays out. What if these 'narrow' identities are more strongly expressed than broader ones? And what if 'narrowness' better depicts diasporic subjectivities in the context of everyday life? This final part of the chapter explores the constitution of local identity in Jana'a, and reflects on the implications for diasporic communities and the concept of citizenship.

For residents today, the two main advantages of living in Jana'a are the strength of the local community, and its location. Once blessed by its proximity to the river and local springs, Zarqa's increasing size meant that Jana'a became desirable for its proximity to the city centre. While new neighbourhoods popped up on Zarqa's peripheries, isolated from the central nodes of city life, Jana'a remains only a short

walk or *service*[11] ride from the city's main souqs, its major bus and taxi transport hub, and to the new main road (*Autostrad*) with its own commercial businesses that link directly to the capital, Amman. The *Autostrad* is popular among families and younger groups of friends, with plenty of cafes, restaurants, and confectionary shops. Despite its central location, Jana'a has continued to be an affordable part of the city, mainly due to the fact that overcrowdedness has reduced living space and affected utility provision and infrastructure. Financial constraints among residents have contributed to the increasing verticality of the neighbourhood, as any growth in the size of families can best be absorbed by extending upwards, rather than finding alternative accommodation elsewhere. What this means, though, is that families have been able to stay together in the same place, reflecting long-held cultural norms and contributing to a sense of community cohesion. Today, many rooftops have protruding, re-enforced concrete pillars; ready in anticipation of a future need for extra living space.

While residents are to some degree forced into this high-density way of living by a lack of financial resources, these dynamics have contributed to the neighbourhood's perceived ability to resist the destabilising effects associated with urban transformation and modernisation elsewhere in Zarqa. Hassan, a social worker in Zarqa, told me that it is more common to find mental health problems in newer, more affluent areas of Zarqa than in the poorer neighbourhoods. In his experience, this is due to the increased isolation and the absence of community in these areas, and the loss of traditional forms of everyday life and sociality. Many of my interlocutors across Zarqa tend to refer to communities like Jana'a as exemplifying 'the simple life'. The Arabic would *basīṭ* - translated in this context as 'simple' - is used to denote an environment where strong inter-personal relationships are reinforced through daily interactions; where traditional forms of sociality are practiced; where there is a slowness to the pace of life; and where life is lived in accordance with strong ethical principles, including modesty and

[11] White taxis that follow set routes and a set price (0.35JD) per ride. There is one *service* route that runs through Jana'a, and takes residents to and from the food markets near the centre of town.

religiosity. This ‘simple life’ was often embodied by those who would make reference to it during our conversations. Men like Jamal, who would spend hours each day sitting with friends and family members outside his cousin’s convenience store. Meeting most days for a breakfast of bread, hummus and fool, and reuniting throughout the day and then during the long evenings, when the streets were at their busiest and loudest. The majority of shopkeepers would frequent each other's stores to sit and talk while business was quiet and the neighbourhood peaceful, rather than resort to their phones for entertainment. Coffee, tea, bread and other daily necessities could be sourced nearby, and, for that matter, more cheaply than anywhere else. Jana’a has a sense of community that to them is almost unrivalled, and this was often reaffirmed by residents of other areas of Zarqa, who I would meet in cafés or shops in the middle of town. When I would ask my new acquaintances for their opinions on Jana’a, the responses I would most often receive were: “a simple, kind people” or, not unrelated it seemed, “there is a strong community there… the people they have a white [‘good’] heart”.

In addition to simplicity, I have also had many tell me that the people in Jana’a are “tough”. And this was often said in a complementary sense, too, referring to the difficult circumstances associated with a low-income, relatively informal community. Certainly, this feeling of toughness is shared from within the neighbourhood’s borders. “Jana’a in the fifties was like Africa,” Taisir once said to me. “It was difficult… we had nothing. But things got better”. Within a matter of years, this Palestinian diasporic community had gone from dispossessed refugees to Jordanian citizens with stable jobs and a reasonable standard of living, and were active participants in the urbanisation of local life. In many respects, I saw these two notions of simplicity and toughness as inextricably linked. Both were features of endurance in the diaspora, highlighting the community’s success in preserving a traditional sense of identity and way of living, and in coping with the relatively harsh conditions they face on a daily basis. Diaspora scholarship often focuses on ways in which communities adapt to life outside the homeland, and tend to resort to notions of hybridity and ambivalence to explain the negotiation of the familiar with the unfamiliar. Local life in Jana’a, though, provides a more

nuanced picture of diasporic experience. Emphasising sensibilities such as these, that are both specific and contingent, provides a challenge to the idea that the 'diasporic condition' can ever be suitably defined.

While Jana'a has changed significantly since Palestinian settlement seventy years ago, with rapid urbanisation and the arrival of modernity in the form of construction technologies and infrastructure provision, an Islamic ethos remains central to the spatial organisation of the neighbourhood, as well as residents' everyday routines. Local life and sociality in Jana'a revolves around the mosque. There are at least four mosques in Jana'a, and many others close by. The largest and most well-attended mosque is situated at its heart, and is named after a contemporary of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Khalid Ibn al-Walid (Fig.7). The significance of Jana'a's main mosque is clearly evident in its impressive appearance: it is by far the largest and best-kept building in Jana'a. The mosque was rebuilt in 2014, funded by a wealthy resident of Jana'a, who did not want to be interviewed for this research. Its façade is lined with trees and solar panels are fixed to the roof. Large numbers of men respond to each of the daily calls to prayer, pulling down the shutters of their shops if necessary, and when the prayers are over, many congregate outside the mosque, saying their extended goodbyes as they slowly moved on elsewhere. The hall located in the basement of the Mosque is the largest meeting space in the neighbourhood, and is used to host a range of events including meetings with political figures and representatives. On the most important days in the Islamic year, the congregation is so large that the prayers at dawn are held in the Municipality Stadium.

This is not meant to exoticise the religious aspects of local life, in the way that Orientalist scholarship has defined Islamic urbanity by the mere presence of religious institutions in cities (Abu-Lughod, 1987). Rather, these details illustrate the multiple forms of community life and belonging within diasporic communities, challenging a number of preconceptions about the 'diasporic condition'. Islamic identities are often viewed in relation to the *Umma* (global Muslim community),

which itself complicates the ethno-nationalist basis of the term diaspora (Silverstein, 2015). The concept of the *Umma* thus sheds light on the relative territoriality of diaspora (Cainkar, 2013) - situated within specific nations, cities and locales - and this is often downplayed in scholarship that emphasises the de-territorialisation of the diasporic subject. However, the *Umma* also has limited explanatory powers when it comes to understanding diasporic subjectivities in Jana'a. The details above highlight *territorialisation* of religiosity in the neighbourhood; a set of localised, spatial practices that help give meaning to places of habitation and sociality in the diaspora. As an ethos, Islam seems to play an important role in preserving simplicity and strengthening toughness, the two defining characteristics of Jana'a. When I once asked an elderly resident - who had encouraged me to find Islam on a number of occasions - if he enjoys living in Jana'a, despite the problems associated with a low-income, over-crowded neighbourhood, he replied: "Of course. It is really quite simple. If you can be happy here, you can be happy anywhere. If you are not happy here, you will not be happy elsewhere".

Fig.7 Khalid Ibn al-Walid Mosque, Jana'a

Within diaspora studies the concept of citizenship is traditionally used to highlight formal aspects of inclusionary/exclusionary processes in host nations (Werbner, 1999). From this perspective, Jordan is praised for its extension of citizenship rights to Palestinians, but criticised for the limitations of this citizenship, particularly when it comes to political rights (freedom of expression and association, for example) (Brand, 2007). However, the narratives of settlement in Jana'a evoke a different kind of citizenship, away from a formal, rights-based discourse to something more grounded and less abstract. Al-Sayyad and Roy (2006) speak of informal neighbourhoods like Jana'a as just the type of place where such forms of citizenship may emerge, and where the rules of the game are forged by local alliances. Located in specific urban enclaves, these forms of citizenship have "territorial manifestations" and are distinct from the "set of abstract individual rights embedded in the nation-state" that underpin modern citizenship (ibid., p.3). Staeheli's notion of 'ordinary' citizenship also proves particularly instructive in this context. For Staeheli et al (2012, p.631), citizenship is a kind of order that "enables us to go about our lives", transcends public/private spheres of daily life, and is a product of "social norms and collective values" (Staeheli 2011, p.4). Diasporic subjectivity thus constitutes a broader social order and subtler forms of civic inclusion and exclusion, which form the basis for a localised sense of being and localised political orientations.

Conclusion

The homogeneity and singularity of diaspora – drawn from shared cultural traits and ties towards a homeland – is permanently disrupted by the logics of emplacement and rootedness that emerge in the multiplicity that is 'the diaspora'. This chapter has shown that diasporic populations are viewed differently when the settled conditions of diasporic life are taken seriously, showcasing the localised experiences and more nuanced value judgements that emerge within these communities. The processes that underpin diasporic emplacement are formative

to the diasporic experience in the sense that they shape identities, everyday practices and concerns, economic activity, and community politics. To what extent, then, does it make sense to conceptualise Palestinians living outside of the homeland as a single diaspora, rather than a multiplicity of diasporas? Despite the immense suffering and gravity of the *Nakba* ['the Catastrophe'] in 1948, the contexts of displacement and emplacement - and the journeys taken in between - vary considerably across families, communities and regions. Many were forced from their homes in 1948, but others sold property and migrated out of Palestine having accepted job postings elsewhere. Some were displaced only short distances – mainly to Gaza or to the West Bank – before crossing external borders and making their way into the diaspora. The diversity of the early diasporic experience is evident even within Jana'a, which represents only a small fraction of the Palestinian diasporic totality.

Diasporic urbanism emphasises the fact that diasporic communities from the same place of origin encounter many different worlds. Those who arrived in Jana'a in the early 1950s encountered a city and a nation in the early stages of their development. While the environment they encountered was both welcoming and nurturing, these early years were also punishing and rudimentary. A sense of community emerged over time, and particular histories of diaspora formed around the very specific social, economic and political realities of local life. It seems implausible, then, to suggest that the Palestinian diaspora in Jana'a is representative of the Palestinians that settled elsewhere in Jordan, in the Levant, or further afield. Both the city and the neighbourhood disrupt the very notion of a transnational diaspora, as the diasporic condition is fundamentally altered by its situatedness in particular locales. The different scales of city life highlighted in this chapter invite, foster, and force important transformations on the diasporic condition; from singularity to plurality, from transnational to local, from de-territorialised to emplaced.

Emplacement provides an important, historicised disjuncture in the so-called diasporic condition, which disrupts those narratives of diasporic existence that

contain within them a bias towards places of origin or some form of de-territorialised, mobile, diasporic transcendence. Diasporic urbanism, through its insistence on place-based research and ethnographic enquiry, is a framework that simultaneously challenges the very notion of a diasporic condition and produces important and arguably counter-intuitive insights into diasporic life. This chapter has highlighted how place-based scholarship provides a grounded sense of diasporic history and subjectivity, unique to the case of Jana'a. The following chapters build on emplacement to rethink temporality, politics and development in a diasporic context, beyond the vocabularies we currently have at our disposal.

V: Nostalgia in the Diasporic Present

Introduction

> "Does the experience of a day, or days, define the present for the displaced? Or are their former lives still present to them? Can a refugee's future have any continuity with the past or will it only be rupture?"
>
> (Feldman 2018, p.20)

Unlike diaspora, the term 'refugee' is - by definition - inescapably tied to the past. Refugees are labelled according to a legal framework that takes account of their forced displacement and serves to protect them from extradition. In Jordan, however, the assignment of 'refugee' to its Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian populations has been the site of political contestation. Due in part to the predicament over the country's Palestinian majority, more recent refugee communities have been referred to as '"visitors', 'irregular guests', 'Arab brothers', or simply 'guests'" (ILO 2015, p.12). While the act of determining refugee status has effectively been delegated to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since 1998 (ibid.), Jordan's approach to refugees has significant implications in terms of the lack of recognition of specific past experiences. The alternative labels of 'guest' and 'visitor' strip these populations of the significance of their forced displacement, and the potential traumas they have experienced before arriving in Jordan. These terms also suggest that their presence in Jordan is only temporary. In effect, this de-politicises their presence and undermines the prospect of more settled positions in the future, while at the

same time alludes to Jordan's role as a host that has welcomed these populations in to the country.

Diaspora, and diasporic urbanism in particular, reveal these complexities of temporality and geographical relations, while avoiding some of the pitfalls of other concepts that have been more widely mobilised in the field. By attending to the specific ways in which diasporic communities recount the past, and analysing how the past features in their lives in the present, we can navigate this complexity and improve our understanding of the temporal experiences of these communities.

The past undoubtedly plays a significant role in diasporic imaginaries. Research that directly engages with concepts such as nostalgia, melancholia and hauntology attest to this, highlighting how memories of the homeland and of displacement and dispossession continue to define aspects of diasporic experience in the present. A focus on these dynamics tend to reflect a moral imperative, as defined by the researcher, to capture the histories and memories of displaced communities, that may otherwise be forever lost. Allan explains this imperative through her own work on 'The *Nakba* Archive', in which she recorded oral testimonies of Palestinians who had experienced the 'catastrophe' of 1948. In doing so, though, Allan (2014, p.7):

> "discovered stark discrepancies between how refugees recalled these experiences in the course of formal archival interviews and how they spoke of them in casual, everyday contexts. During informal conversations, nationalist imperatives would often give way to aspirations conceived in terms far more personal."

Davis (2011) documents a similar experience in research for her wonderful book *Palestinian Village Histories*, which documents the experiences and outcomes of groups of Palestinians who have participated in writing 'village memorial books' about their place of origin. In the book, Davis shows how representations of the past can be a highly contested subject for diasporic communities, given how differently particular subjects, events and places can be remembered and narrated. Diasporic urbanism anticipates these contestations, and thus insists on localised,

focused engagement in individual diasporic communities when writing about the geographies of diaspora.

Due to the epistemological primacy awarded to both the homeland and transnational movement in defining the diasporic condition, scholarship often has a hard time reconciling the past as a feature of the diasporic present. The questions offered by Feldman are indicative of this dilemma, suggesting that unresolved pasts invariably haunt the present for displaced communities, and that any further ruptures to everyday life are likely to curtail any expectations the displaced hold for their future. The past, for displaced communities, continue to be experienced, remembered and felt, with relative intensity. Yet in the previous chapter, diasporic subjectivity in Jana'a was shown to have little to do with the existential questions we often use to frame the diasporic condition. That chapter highlights a continuity between past and present - a continuity that is reinforced - rather than undermined - by the recollection of memories and histories in relation to a place of continuous diasporic settlement. The continuous appeal of the 'simple life', as well as the strength and hardened character of the community, is contextualised by stories of modest beginnings and gradual neighbourhood development.

This chapter harnesses the concept of nostalgia to explore the diasporic present on terms that are meaningful to the Jana'a community. As its starting point, this analysis separates the concept from its presumed connection to both the homeland and the event of forced displacement. Without presuming the object of nostalgic desire, the concept can be defined in broad terms relating to the unrealised dreams of the past, and the visions of the future that have become obsolete (Boym, 2001). Nostalgia implies a longing, but a longing for what? Where is this longing orientated toward? The homeland would be one answer, but where else? By continuing with a place-based analysis of diasporic experience, this chapter identifies the objects of nostalgia as they are articulated by residents themselves, and explores what this reveals about the varying intensities of the change that have taken place over the course of the diaspora. This avoids the temptation to impose a pre-existing set of assumptions to questions such as: which pasts matter?

How much power do those pasts yield over the present? By engaging nostalgia on terms that are meaningful to the diasporic community, we become attentive to experiences of diasporic temporalities as well as the objects of diasporic desire and hope, and of loss and disappointment.

Nostalgia for the Homeland

The term 'nostalgia' has is routes in the diasporic condition: the Greek terms *nostos* (return home) and *algos* (state of pain) were first amalgamated by Johannes Hofer in 1688 to describe what he believed to be a medical condition, and what has since been expanded "to include [the] pathological attachment to any faraway place […], to distant times and persons" (Natali 2004, p.10). Today, the term remains connected to its diasporic traditions:

> "Nostalgia is a cultural scheme that is alive in the immigrants' minds […]. This ancient, powerful, and romantic idea renders meaning to their interpretations of their relationships to the old home, and enables them to develop a continuous sense of time and place"
>
> (Lomskey-Feder and Rapoport 2005, p.313)

The inability to return to one's homeland provides the necessary conditions for nostalgia to grow in intensity (ibid.), suggesting that the past may play more of a role in defining the present as the diasporic condition becomes more protracted. Nostalgia emerges in the physical separation between people and home: it is reinforced by both memories of home, and the psychological need to maintain connections to the places and times through which identities were historically formed. In many readings of diasporic life, nostalgia is primarily a condition of melancholy: a profound sadness for the lost homeland coupled with a desire to return (Fritzsche, 2001).

Nostalgia has never been merely a reference to the past. Rather, the melancholy of nostalgia is the result of contrasting conditions between the past and present, or between the past and anticipated future (Jankélévitch, 1974). This is perhaps

no clearer than in the case of diaspora, given the fact that diasporic communities inhabit a foreign place in the present, as opposed to the homeland of the past. But can we conclude definitively that diasporic expressions of melancholy are always in relation to the homeland? Or does the concept of nostalgia too easily lead us to assume that this is the case? Kaplan (2007) reminds us that melancholia is a condition of grief that may relate to a person, object, or even an ideal (Kaplan, 2007). Kaplan's notion of 'diasporic melancholia' is in fact removed from any explicit reference to homeland and nostalgia, and instead Kaplan situates her concept in relation to "past griefs and current political desires", recognising both as pluralities (ibid., p.512). Kaplan expands on her understanding of melancholia:

> "melancholia not as a private, backward-looking phenomenon of paralysing psychic conflict, but as an embodied individual and collective psychic practice with the political potential to transform grief into the articulation of grievances that traverse continents and cross time"
>
> (ibid., p.513)

Whereas the 'object' of nostalgia is often assumed to be the homeland in diasporic contexts, Kaplan explains how the vagueness of the object of melancholia can be mobilised politically to refocus and reenergise a general sense of collective grievance, and make important connections between past and present in the process. This has relevance for the conceptualisation of nostalgia, as it encourages us to expand the temporal orientation of nostalgia into the present. If we want to redirect the critical focus of nostalgia to better reflect the conditions of specific diasporic communities, we must explore the specific contexts in which nostalgia is mobilised and articulated.

Alongside the melancholic, the concept of 'hauntology' provides a second important point of reference in the reshaping of nostalgia. While nostalgia involves the imagined recreation of the lost object – be it a thing, a place, an event or moment – 'hauntology' describes an almost opposite state; an inability to proactively engage with and move beyond that which haunts. Hauntology is often reduced to the particular experience of trauma and the ruins of a disastrous past

event (Trigg, 2009), but in a more general sense, refers to the experience of some problem in the past that has not yet been solved (Hirschkind, 2019). Trauma itself is said to “overwhelm” place and - due to its “radical singularity” - it disrupts any notion of continuous time (ibid., p.88). Scholarly focus on hauntings and ‘ghostly matters’ do in fact rest on the concept’s potential to “problematis[e] all boundaries” (Chassot 2018, p.6), in much the same way as postmodern renderings of diaspora. Sometimes referred to in terms of a ‘spectral turn’ in the social sciences and humanities, this approach performs both theoretical and political work in deciphering different renderings of “history, memory, and identity” in the diaspora (ibid., p.8).

The concept of hauntology moves our understanding of nostalgia forward in a number of important ways. Nostalgia and hauntology point in different temporal directions: the former seeks to recreate the past, however painful, while the latter points to variations of the past that cannot be avoided in the present. Diasporic urbanism takes interest in this dialectical relationship, for it opens us up to the many different temporalities in which the past and present intertwine in the diaspora. Probing the relation between nostalgia and hauntology also allows us to focus on the histories and narratives of the past that are most relevant to individual communities. When approached uncritically, both nostalgia and haunting lead us toward specific kinds of past experience at the expense of other, possibly contradictory experiences. Had this research decided to conceptualise diaspora through articulations about the homeland, the event of displacement, or the persecution of Palestinians in recent history, it is likely that the research would reproduce the conventional narratives we are used to associating with these communities. Instead, through diasporic urbanism and the reorientation of the temporalities and spatialities of nostalgia, we are able to analyse whether these conventional narratives are at odds with how specific diasporic communities engage with the past, and use the past to articulate the present.

For the vast majority of Palestinians in the diaspora, the chances of returning to the homeland are severely restricted, if not impossible. The right of return - which

has been a guiding and unifying principle of Palestinian politics ever since the *Nakba* in 1948-9, explicitly recognised within United Nations Resolution 194 (Adelman and Barkan, 2011) – has been sustained in part by a deeply emotional attachment to the homeland. In the passage below, Mourid Barghouti (2000, p.28) evokes an idealised and romanticised view of Palestine, based on childhood recollections that do not happen to reflect the reality he encounters thirty years later, upon his return 'home':

> "I used to tell my Egyptian friends at University that Palestine was green and covered with trees and shrubs and wild flowers. What are these hills? Bare and chalky. Had I been lying to people, then? Or has Israel changed the route to the bridge and exchanged it for this dull road that I do not remember ever seeing in my childhood?
>
> Did I paint for strangers an ideal picture of Palestine because I had lost it?"

Barghouti wonders whether his nostalgia for Palestine has been compromised by a sense of loss sustained throughout his time in the diaspora. Certainly, his memory of Palestine has had an enduring impact; its disorientating absence of all that he imagined and remembered is felt as he is driven away from the Jordanian border towards the Palestinian city of Ramallah. The reality he encounters, conversely, appears to be a haunting presence, forcing Barghouti to come to terms with what has been lost. These Palestinian landscapes mediate Barghouti's experience of what Leshem (2016, p.48) describes as the "shattering collision between idealistic [dreams and] mundane realities". Here, Leshem is referring to the moments in which Jewish communities encountered the realities of an inhabited, Arab Palestine: a reality at odds with the Zionist promise and the nostalgia they held for the lost biblical homeland (ibid.).

Notions of nostalgia, melancholia, and haunting are all present within Barghouti's writing, and raise questions about the relationship between memories of the past and the realities of the present. As we have already established, nostalgia inserts meaningfulness into our interpretations of the relationship between past and present. Nostalgia also allows for imaginative forms of subjective experience,

particularly "within those spaces from which one is perpetually excluded or denied existence" (Gopinath 1997, p.485). Importantly, however, nostalgic sentiments related to the homeland tend to dominate in the study of Palestinian communities in the diaspora, and at the expense of the material conditions of the present. Academics often harness nostalgia to assert a narrow and particular view of how Palestinians experience space and time in the diaspora:

> "The pre-1948 Palestinian homeland is the normative focus of narratives of belonging, yearning, and political attachment. […] The ethical imperative that many scholars feel often leads them to emphasise the continuities of attachment in exile rather than the discontinuities. […] Within the implicit logic of this canonical account, moreover, the past is a moral condition and a fixed inheritance rather than a sequence of events and contingencies that have brought the Palestinians to where they are."
>
> (Allan 2014, pp.6-7)

Focusing on the homeland as the primary object of nostalgia, while serving an important political and ideological purpose, fails to take into account the diversity, complexity and perhaps even contradictory nature of people's relationship to their place of origin - whether it be through memory or imagination. But the implications of such a focus go beyond the simplification of place; it fixes the temporality of diasporic experience around the moment of displacement from the homeland. In doing so, it diminishes the importance of other historical moments and events in the diasporic experience, or ignores them altogether (Stoler, 2008). This chapter responds to Allan's views by reorientating the concept of nostalgia around the ways in which residents in Jana'a articulate both their past and their present. This not only provides us with more relevant sites of nostalgia for understanding the diasporic condition, but it also sheds light on the textures and intensities of diasporic history and past experience.

‘Jana’a is Not Resigned to Memory Alone’

As I entered into the final few months of writing up the research, a former resident of Jana’a posted the following message to the Jana’a Community group page on Facebook:

> “Jana’a is my hometown.
>
> I left 32 years ago, and went to America and Europe, but I never found anywhere as beautiful as her. When I visit I am filled with happiness.
>
> The best people are the families of Jana’a.”

The post was not entirely out of the ordinary. Many of the themes of belonging and attachment emphasised in the previous chapter are often reinforced by social media posts from local residents. What was a little unusual was that this particular post was written by a former resident who had long left the neighbourhood, and had in fact become diasporic once again, outside of Jordan. For this second-generation Palestinian, and for the majority of Jordanian-Palestinians, their place of birth lies to the east of the Jordan river. Upon returning to his hometown, the former resident has his nostalgic sentiments for Jana'a reaffirmed. The place he encounters has retained its familiarity, suggesting a kind of continuity through time that Barghouti did not manage to experience in Palestine.

The post attracted noticeable attention. One man seconded the sentiment by commenting “This is true. My heart resides in 1983, in Jana’a.” Two further comments provided a more contemporary picture of Jana’a, but a picture that differs from the nostalgia expressed in the above passage. The first translates as follows:

> “I have nothing but respect for what you’ve said, my friend. I also grew up in Jana’a, in the Rusan area. I lived there for 20 years and left 26 years ago. But now it changed significantly. It has become a drug den, and the comments above do not tell the half of it.

> Yes, nothing more beautiful than the days and the nights, the simple life and good neighbours. Everything was nice, just like Spring. But no longer."

The second comment reads:

> "The brothers who love Jana'a, they work for the neighbourhood, any work, no matter how small. And wherever you may be, Jana'a is not resigned to memory alone.
>
> Many influential men have left, and Jana'a remains lacking in progress and development. Some of those that have left are now Ministers, Heads of Government Departments, and leaders in the Army and Security Services.
>
> Jana'a suffers from their ingratitude. Do not be like them."

Things had changed since those earlier years in the diaspora, when a sense of development, opportunity and fulfilment had helped transform diasporic life in Zarqa. The conditions that fostered new, urban, and localised identities and forms of community had since been eroded. Residents' relationship to the city's past and present had seemingly changed, even if their attachments and commitments to the local community had not been irreversibly undermined.

These exchanges were significant for the different ways in which residents were engaging with the same, shared, nostalgic past they associated with Jana'a. How each of them engaged with this shared past, however, depended on their reading of the present. For the returnee, the sense of nostalgia was brought to life by the familiar surroundings. For those with a greater understanding of the problems of the present, these nostalgic sentiments had appeared out of context, perhaps even ignorant of how the neighbourhood has changed. For these residents, a kind of resentment had emerged in place of the fond memories of their neighbourhood. Throughout my research in Jana'a, these resentments were often expressed through different examples of ruination and erosion that seemed to define the present.

Jana'a's western border is comprised of a section of Zarqa river; "once the most important freshwater source for […] Amman, Zarqa, Jerash and Irbid" (Al-Kayed, 2019). Today it is referred to as Seil az-Zarqa ['the Zarqa stream']; only a small trickle of water runs into the almost entirely dried-up waterway. Stagnant pools of a milky, grey-green hue fill the deepest areas of the river bed, which now resembles a dumping ground scattered with car tyres, litter, and the liquid waste products of the marble and granite factory, located on the opposite bank of the river to Jana'a (Fig.8). The hollowed-out area of what was once a major river provides a natural end point for anything picked up by the wind from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Fig.8 Seil al-Zarqa, Jana'a (July, 2018)

The older generation of men living in Jana'a regaled me with childhood memories of swimming and fishing in the river. The oldest café in Zarqa displays a photograph of exactly this, along with other pictures of a more sparsely-populated and less polluted city. Before the area near the river had become fully urbanised, Jana'a contained fertile land suitable for the cultivation of many different kinds of fruit and vegetables; potatoes, tomatoes, strawberries, apricots, and, of course, olives. Whereas children today play in any available space in the crowded neighbourhood – whether it be in the streets, the narrow alleys, the larger open areas used to park cars or in and around piles of rubble – in the fifties and sixties children would play on the edges of the river banks, and families would picnic under the trees that lined the river. Usually, people would tell me these details as we stood beside one another, looking out over the dried-up river from the main road that runs along the western boundary of Jana'a. The memories were forthcoming, and the spectacle of the Seil was itself enough of a prompt to trigger these nostalgic inferences.

Kathleen Stewart (2014, p.549) understands objects of analysis to contain "intimate registers of knowledge and power", which are to be explored through the "forms and forces immanent to ordinary ways of living". Objects – and, in Stewart's case, roads - animate "patterns of being and becoming" with respect to "diverging practices, materialities and events that comprise [these] objects" (ibid., p.550). Crucially for this research, Stewart does not make assumptions about the nature of these registers. This contrasts with work that explores the relationship between subjectivity, materiality and temporality through a particular experiential state, such as trauma (Trigg, 2009). Stewart's insight allows for greater critical reflection, allowing for different aspects of subjectivity to emerge in relation to the materialities and processes of erosion. Diasporic urbanism complements this approach by exploring how the urban co-constitutes the diasporic experience, exploring these registers as opposed to assuming their existence *a priori*.

In addition to the Seil, various public and community spaces in Jana'a have also fallen into disrepair over the years. Covering approximately seven square

kilometres, the remnants of Jundi Park (Fig.9) lie behind the Municipality Stadium in the north-west section of Jana'a. The site is a mix of trees, shrubs and paved paths, and a road snakes through the area, beginning at the main road by the river and ending at a set of large set of black and permanently closed gates on the opposite side. One of the paths leads to a long-abandoned building – once housing a small shop. The open areas are littered with broken playground equipment – slides, tunnels, a see-saw, and frames upon which swings were once attached. Jundi Park became abandoned when the municipality could no longer afford the cost of maintenance, and while a UN Habitat plan to re-establish the park emerged years later, the project never materialised. Inside the Municipality Stadium, a small playground had once been installed by local representatives of the International Medical Corps, only for residents to witness the subsequent removal of the equipment, once the finished project had been photographed.

Fig.9 Jundi Park, Jana'a (July, 2018)

Towards the centre of the neighbourhood lies two further abandoned spaces; 'Army Park' and Al-Abassi Youth Club'. Army Park had once been a walled, and well-maintained public space, apparently torn down with the intention for it to be sold to private buyers, as the price of land has risen so steeply. Al-Abassi was an active social club in the heart of Jana'a. But due to a lack of funds it could not be adequately maintained and the site soon became disused (Fig.10). The ruins of Al-Abassi now serve as a shelter for local homeless men, while Army Park has been completely demolished, with nothing on site other than a broken and disused bus shelter.

Fig.10 Entrance of Al-Abassi Youth Club (July, 2018)

Each of these broken urban landscapes have what may be described as a 'haunting' presence within the neighbourhood. Each of the sites register as uncomfortable

reminders of a time of greater activity and prosperity in the neighbourhood, and when the urban environment was more attuned to local needs and desires. Whether it be the parks, clubs or the river, the erosion of the urban present highlights how the projects of development and modernisation - that residents had once been so invested in – are themselves in ruins. Modernisation has unravelled, and progress halted. Jana'a is moving into the future much more slowly, hoping that urban development does not grind to a complete halt. These materialities mimic what some have referred to as the "slow violence" of history (Nixon, 2011; Pain, 2019), referring to the ways in which destructive processes often have wide-ranging effects that are spread out across time and space, becoming 'attritional' without necessarily appearing violent. Where this research departs from these framings is in the label of violence, which assumes an intensity in the effects of ruination that may not be present. Instead, what we witness in Jana'a is a slow erosion in both the urban environment and residents' expectations of future improvement.

By reconsidering the temporality and spatiality of nostalgia, we gain a better understanding of the impact of slow erosion on diasporic subjectivity. The above sentiments, made in reference to examples of slow erosion, prove important vantage points from which to reflect upon the so-called diasporic condition. This condition is often premised on a set of emotional signifiers that emerge from processes of displacement – such as loss, trauma, and nostalgia for the homeland. In this sense of diaspora, there appears to be little in the empirical evidence presented above that can be understood as 'diasporic'. And yet, when we recognise that diasporic subjectivities emerge through the material concerns and problems within individual diasporic communities, we become aware of the limitations of a discourse built around one particular form of nostalgia, and one particular moment of dispossession. Instead, we see how events of varying temporalities and intensities impact diasporic subjectivity.

Ann Laura Stoler (2008) uses ruination as a means of exploring "protracted imperial processes", in part as a postcolonial challenge to the ways imperialism

lives in public memory. Crucially, Stoler explicitly detaches herself from the objective of writing "victimised pasts", understanding ruination and the material traces of the past as "unfinished histories […] but consequential histories that open to different futures" (ibid., p.195). Ruination is often applied in places that were once sites of conflict, displacement, or loss of some other form (Stoler, 2008; Nixon, 2011; Leshem, 2016). Where this research differs is that the ruins are not of a diasporic community's initial displacement but of its prolonged settlement outside the homeland. These instances of erosion are much further removed from the ruined places left behind (e.g. see Leshem, 2016), and thus point to narratives of diasporic life that are less likely to be tied to the nationalist and geopolitical stories of displaced Palestinians.

Rupture

While slow violence "occurs gradually and out of sight […], dispersed across time and space" (Nixon 2011, p.2), 'ruptures' produce immediate shockwaves, often with visible consequences and producing more visceral sensibilities. Despite the noticeable presence of various forms of slow erosion in Jana'a, I was acutely aware of how these more entrenched realities of neighbourhood life were occasionally thrown out of kilter, interrupted by immediate and unexpected developments. As this research presents diaspora as a concept not necessarily rooted in the past, nor the geography of the homeland, it is important to consider these additional temporal experiences in the present, however momentary. The following examples of rupture tended to confirm what the instances of slow erosion signified: that livelihoods were continuing to be threatened by an urban system not working in the interests of the community. While ruptures represent serious indictments of the present, a focus on nostalgia continues to prove instructive in illuminating how individuals contextualise these events. Rupture and slow erosion emit different intensities, but both reveal significant, emotive aspects of diasporic life that require contextualisation.

On the 21st July 2018, after an 18-month appeals process, the High Court of Justice upheld the rights of the landowners and ordered the eviction of Jana'a residents (Fig.11). Al-Ghad newspaper ran with the headline, "The spectre of eviction is once again hovering over hundreds of families in Jana'a" (al-Tamimi, 2018), illustrating the ways in which an unresolved aspect of the diasporic past can haunt and undermine the present. The fact that the courts had dismissed the legality of the *ḥujja* agreements signed in the 1950s - thus rejecting the significance of the continuous inhabitation of these families on the same land ever since - illustrates how the diasporic present in Jana'a had never been permanently secured. The historical event of displacement had therefore remained a lived reality not just for those living within the boundaries of the dispute, but for the collective memory of the neighbourhood in general.

Fig.11 Land Ownership in Jana'a[12]

(Attour, 2009)

[12] red - government-owned; blue – at risk of eviction; yellow - mosques

And yet, this is not how residents chose to frame their situation when the Court returned its first ruling in January 2017. The eviction did not represent the continuation of an underlying logic of de-territorialisation or marginality, but as a rupture in their otherwise permanent, emplaced present. A 68 year-old, life-long resident of Jana'a told journalists:

> "We cannot leave Jana'a or accept an alternative, we will be like fish out of water. Our children were brought up here […], we built our homes from handouts, from wherever we could […]. Jana'a is our world […]. Where do they want us to go? They build schools and health centres for us and everything is available to us here, and we pay taxes for water and electricity and they take rent for government-owned land."

Jamal, Abu Munthur's friend, offered journalists a similar point of view:

> "People must be treated fairly and equality. It cannot be the case that the streets were widened and that old houses were replaced by houses double the value, only for them to now come and demand that we leave."

Upon first glance, the eviction order frames the diasporic present in terms of stasis and limbo; in other words, the antithesis of intransience. While the eviction order makes it seem as if the diasporic present in Jana'a has never been permanently secured, residents interpret the past differently in order to infer the opposite is true, and to thus undermine the logics behind the order. Through taxation, education, health provision, infrastructure and urban upgrading projects, diasporic settlement became legitimised by a seeming disregard (on the part of the state) for formal, legal discrepancies, and their commitment to contributing to the well-being of residents. The eviction order thus represents a kind of crossroads in terms of time and place. The spectre of eviction haunts residents, as the informal and illegal aspects of their settled status become an immediate and existential concern. From the threat of being removed from place, we see residents recall their past experiences of Jana'a in nostalgic terms, pointing to a time of greater

security and prosperity that they could no longer equate with their present circumstances.

Fig.12 Building Collapse, al-Ghawariyah

On July 4th 2018, I experienced a further rupture to local life when a residential building in al-Ghawariyah neighbourhood collapsed (Fig.12), killing its five occupants. Like Jana'a, al-Ghawariyah is a densely-populated informal neighbourhood, and the building in question had been undergoing poorly-executed and under-supervised renovations. The construction company were removing internal walls on the 50-year old building, and moisture in the foundations went unnoticed and caused the building to come down. The day after the tragedy, Taisir walked with me around Jana'a to show me where similar buildings had collapsed in the past, also identifying the currently-occupied buildings at risk of collapse. Walls would begin crumbling as soon as he ran his finger or shoe across them. Steel reinforcement mesh was exposed in the ceilings, in areas where the concrete had already begun to disintegrate. The incident in al-Ghawariyah reinforced the collective feeling of neglect and marginalisation of the

developmental concerns of informal and low-income neighbourhoods like Jana'a and al-Ghawariyah. Like the potholes and the undeveloped public spaces throughout the neighbourhood, the crumbling homes and ruins of former buildings were legacies of a prolonged period of public neglect; the material consequences of a developmental agenda that had ground to a halt.

Fig.13 A Home in Ruins, Jana'a (April, 2017)

There were renewed calls among Jana'a residents for abandoned buildings to be safely dealt with, given the risk they posed to human life. The tragic event in al-Ghawariya meant that residents in Jana'a saw the instances of slow erosion in a new light. It created a renewed sense of urgency for something to be done. The *Mukhtar* posted pictures to Facebook of a semi-ruinous, two-storey building that was just 10 metres down the road from my front door. While the building itself was full of rubble, I had seen it used as a playground for children, as well as a shelter for local stray cats. The *Mukhtar* called on local government to take action.

In one of my meetings with the Local Development United (LDU) in Zarqa Municipality, I was told that the municipality was responsible for clearing wastelands and sites of collapse but, when buildings are still standing and situated on private land, there was nothing the authorities could do regardless of how unsafe they were.

Fig.14 Neighbourhood Upgrading Plans for Jana'a[13]
(Attour, 2009)

Unlike instances of slow erosion, the immediacy and intensity of a rupture often lead to certain forms of government response or public debate. In the aftermath of the al-Ghawariya tragedy, the Prime Minister announced that the families evacuated from nearby buildings would all be re-homed, and a Commission was set up to investigate the causes of the collapse. Dr Khalid Balawi, who sat on this commission, explained to me that although it was the building work that had caused the collapse, it had also been decades in the making. He told me that

[13] The proposal recommended street widening, de-densification, increased public spaces (green), and the enforcement of building regulations

building regulations are unfit for densely-populated neighbourhoods, as residents face large fines for carrying out works on properties that do not have the legally-required space of 2-3 metres around the building. This either stops old and damaged buildings from being maintained, or it means families attempt to cut corners, employing often lower quality contractors to carry out the illegal work. Dr Balawi also suggested that the collapse could have been prevented if the government had found the money for urban upgrading projects that had already been drawn up for both al-Ghawariya and Jana'a (Attour, 2009; Fig.14).

There were also immediate implications for the final rupture in the eviction saga in Jana'a, when the High Court returned its decision in 2018. Tariq Khoury, a particularly popular MP in Zarqa, took a group of affected Jana'a residents to meet the Prime Minister, who subsequently agreed to suspend the order for five months in an attempt to reach a political solution. Khoury reassured those attending that he believed the Government could pay 1 million JD ($1.4m), in the event that a solution would require residents to pay a fee to the landowners. Having met with the Prime Minister, a second delegation of Jana'a residents went to the Royal Hashemite Court [*Diwan al-Malaki al-Hāshimi]*; the institutional link between the Monarchy and government, security forces, and the people (George, 2005). Having not heard of the eviction case until the meeting, the President of the *Diwan* assured the delegation that the court order would not be implemented, and that they would work with the Prime Minister in finding a solution.

By the 11th of March 2019, Khoury and Razzaz confirmed via social media that a political resolution had been reached. No residents would have to leave their homes, the land would be registered under government ownership, and the original landowners were to be given lands elsewhere in Zarqa Governate, near Azraq to the south-east of Zarqa city. No compensation would need to be paid by residents to the landowners, as had originally been planned. In essence, the resolution formalised everything residents had hoped for and demanded from the

King when the court had first ruled against them in January 2017.[14] The agreement was not just what they had hoped for but what they had expected to happen, given the gravity of the problem and their trust they bestowed in the authorities to intervene. The questions of social justice that were deemed too important for political authorities to ignore reflect the conditions of diasporic intransience that defines the diasporic present in Jana'a; conditions that the Courts had been unable to consider.

Instances of slow erosion and rupture show how the diasporic condition is littered with different intensities, trajectories, and episodes that permeate the present. By affirming the existence of these different textures as constitutive elements of the diasporic experience, we are critiquing the idea of the diasporic present as being defined by presentlessness, and that diasporic time is stuck in the moment of displacement and de-territorialisation, unable to move forward. In these two sections, we have seen how the past is mobilised through the material conditions of the present. This intersects neatly with the psychological literature on nostalgia, which shows how the concept is often triggered by adverse material and emotional conditions of the present (Wildschut et al, 2006; van Tilburg et al, 2013). By engaging with nostalgia in this way, we resist the supposed urge to romanticise the story of diasporas, and are instead encouraged to engage in the past as an extension of the present. In other words, the past inhabits the present (Hirschkind, 2019); the legacies of multiple, historical trajectories are continuously lived, and the past co-constitutes subjectivity alongside the material present. Nostalgia thus only becomes meaningful, when it is built into the present (Massey, 1995) and it is ruptures and instances of slow erosion that make nostalgia meaningful in Jana'a.

Retrospection

So far, the focus on nostalgia in the diasporic present has revealed the ways in which subjectivities are moulded by specific and important changes in the

[14] Interviews with *Rum Online* (2017)

neighbourhood. Together, experiences of slow erosion and rupture point to a collective and overarching sense of loss. This is not the loss of homeland or national identity - as diasporic literature tends to emphasise - but the loss of a particular vision of the future in the diaspora; the loss of a developmental promise that had helped to define those earlier years of diasporic experience. Walid moved his family to Jana'a in 1995, and had therefore not lived in Jana'a during the neighbourhood's formative years. He had only known the back end of the long period of decline that has led to the impasse of today's development landscape. When I asked him about the future for Jana'a, he replied, "if it hasn't happened already, why would it happen now? Little has changed… everything is constant."

It is worth pausing for a moment here, in order to examine what changed, and how residents articulate and rationalise these changes. In recent years, a complete lack of municipal savings and high levels of municipal debt have led to a sharp decline in the development capabilities of local government (Al-Deeb, 2019; Bulos, 2018). In line with the previous two sections, Bulos highlights the ways in which this impasse takes a number of material forms in the city, from potholed roads in the centre of Zarqa to pools of industrial waste and sewage on its outskirts (ibid.). Blame for the city's problems is often directed at the municipality for its perceived absence. I was repeatedly told "there is no municipality" by residents, in the specific context of urban development. There were also stories of corruption and self-interest among decision-makers: 75% of municipal income is spent on staff salaries, while its social security bill is currently being covered by loans from the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB) (Abescat, 2019). But placing the impasse in its wider context, Zarqa's indebtedness coincided with substantial falls in fiscal transfers from central government from 2007 (Ababsa, 2013). Furthermore, the high number of municipal workers has its origins in the impact of externally-imposed austerity measures. In return for large loan facilities, the World Bank and the IMF pressed for a host of austerity measures: higher taxes, lower subsidies, the privatisation of public assets, budget cuts, and other substantial reforms (Nsour 2002, p.24). Rather than adhering to the requirements of external loan agreements in the 1990s, local governments throughout Jordan

vastly expanded their payroll to limit the social impact of structural reform, worried about the crisis of rising unemployment (The World Bank, 2004; Harrigan et al, 2006; Bulos, 2018). It has been viewed as "political suicide" to reverse this form of welfare, given unemployment and high living costs continue to affect the city (Yom 2015, p.298).

During the period of rapid urbanisation in Jordan in the 1970s - that Jana'a residents remember so fondly - municipalities were pressured by landowners to provide expensive infrastructure and services, while a corresponding 'valorisation tax' to pay for the development works was legislated for but never implemented (Razzaz, 1991). At the same time, recession in the Gulf oil economies resulted in declining rental income for Jordan, a severely weakened dinar, increased public borrowing and unsustainable debt levels (Brand 2003, p.152). In the 1980s, Jordan suffered a debt crisis that lead to the intervention of central government to temporarily relieve municipal debt burdens in a bid to avoid bankruptcies (The World Bank, 1998); a policy decision that has not been considered in relation to the most recent municipal debt crisis. Since the 1980s, central government have since taken charge of spending on infrastructure, education, health and urban services, leaving little political or financial resources for local investment (ibid.). The cumulative impact of these developments is that municipalities like Zarqa are blamed for the problems that they no longer have responsibility over (Abescat, 2019). While the 2015 Decentralisation Law sought to address this centralised system, little has changed. Power has not been transferred to local decision makers, while the changes that have been implemented were poorly planned.[15] In addition, the limited institutional changes that have been implemented have not been met with improved fiscal transfers, required for an increase in decentralised spending.

[15] According to Tariq Khoury MP, interviewed 22nd September, 2018. Khoury's office, Amman.

It is in relation to these processes that residents articulate their current predicament - brought to life by instances of rupture and erosion. The political economy of the city therefore provides an important context through which to understand diasporic life in relation to both the past and present. Nostalgia, in other words, is deeply rooted in concrete economic realities and nuanced political processes that are rarely accounted for in this context. Appadurai's (2001) work on spectrality and housing in Mumbai remains an important exception to this. Likewise, analysis of this type and at this scale are lacking within the discipline of diaspora studies, although there are subtle references to this in what Johnson (2011) refers to as 'diasporic materialism', which importantly buck the trend (e.g. Berlin, 1980; Smallwood, 2007).

Whether in relation to the river, the parks, the roads or the buildings, I would often ask my interlocutors, "when do you think the situation changed?" It proved a difficult question to answer with precision, but would instigate the kinds of nostalgic sentiments that have informed the analysis presented so far. People would tell me that life was probably best in the 1960s, and that problems began in the 1980s. But many differentiated between the political situation and the economic situation. Economically, life was better in the 1970s and 1980s, after the political situation for Palestinians in Jordan had changed for the worse (see Chapter Six). With reference to the shift in the 1970s, both Taisir and the *Mukhtar* told me separately that this had led to a change in municipal governance mentality. The Beni Hassan tribe yields significant power over local government, and the pair argued that the municipality has at times halted development projects in non-tribal areas, and even dumped municipal waste in these areas. Since the 1980s, according to the female owner of a small convenience store on the edge of Rusan Square, the population in Jana'a has soared while jobs and money have become increasingly scarce.

The tendency to cite a decade - or a similarly vague timeline - to explain the shift in developmental trajectory is significant in the context of diasporic subjectivity. Residents were aware of the ways in which the community had been altered by

broader political, economic and social change in the country. The trends and the material consequences of these changes were freely acknowledged, but there was no obvious event, or series of events, that politicised, dramatised, or even mythologised what had taken place. Transformations away from a more desirable past are not seen as symptomatic of broader structural forces at play, whether they be neoliberalisation, modernisation, Westernisation, or globalisation. Instead, they are articulated as part of a comparative exercise between the specificity of localised versions of past and present.

That is not to say that residents are unable to make the connections between the local and the more distant manifestations of economic change processes. When I asked Jamal what he thought would happen to Jana'a should the eviction be upheld, for instance, he responded "they will make it like Abdali"; the 'new downtown' of Amman that symbolises the Kingdom's global ambitions (DeBruyne 2013, p.246). Mango (2014, pp.121-125) gives us a fair description of what this 'new downtown' represented:

> "A towering example of modernisation, the welcoming of Jordan to a new-era, an emulation of the successful and liquid Gulf economies […]. The Abdali project was designed to drastically change the face of Amman, a predominantly 'horizontal' city with low-rise sparse buildings. The development will introduce the first cluster of high-rises [… and] a 350-metre-long pedestrian shopping boulevard will connect the towers to the 'Central Market' mall."

While Jamal's claims may sound like an exaggeration, given the stark differences between one of Zarqa's poorest informal areas and prime real estate in the middle of Amman, Jamal nevertheless understands how Jordan has and is changing, which populations serve to benefit from these changes and who is likely to suffer. By paying attention to conditions of intransience and their temporal qualities, it is argued here that overarching narratives such as neoliberalism only serve to simplify and abstract from the specific and material changes taking place. In Jana'a, the dynamics associated with neoliberalism have reinforced the underlying political and economic logics that contribute to life in the neighbourhood. I did not find that the community objected to attempts by the state to open up Jordan

to global markets or to direct foreign investment towards the Kingdom, and by extension the City. Rather, residents objected to the ways in which the neighbourhood had become neglected alongside these broader processes of change; roads, rivers, buildings, and services. Residents, on the whole, were not ideologically driven. They simply believed that the gains of the past – namely a basic standard of living and livelihood – should be preserved and continued into the present.

Conclusion

When I first travelled to Jana'a to investigate the eviction order, I had expected to be exposed to agonising stories of protracted dispossession and marginalisation, the eviction being just the latest and possibly most invasive example of continued subjugation. I had expected to witness some kind of collective existential crisis; claims that Palestinians had never been accepted in Jordan, and how the possibility of eviction is like 1948 all over again. Instead, residents expressed nostalgia for a time when neighbourhood life was transforming for the better, but told through specific materialities that haunt the present: everyday reminders of what once was, and what has yet to be realised.

It was this set of revelations in particular that provided the impetus for developing the framework of diasporic urbanism. Conventional diasporic narratives of the past had little bearing on how residents in Jana'a themselves chose to articulate their histories and past experiences. A more representative context to diasporic life could only have been revealed through a careful consideration of the past in localised terms. Despite people's emotional connections to the neighbourhood, no one told me that life was in any way easy in Jana'a. The slow erosion of trust in the local government's willingness and ability to develop the area was supplemented by the rise in the cost of living, the occasional but repeated disruption to electricity supplies, and the scarcity of well-paying jobs. In this context, which is arguably typical of many informal neighbourhoods, it is difficult

to envisage how subjectivities transcend the immediacy of compromised urban living.

Nostalgia, when applied in relation to the diasporic present, proves capable of re-writing the dominant narratives of the past, and of re-writing diaspora itself. Nostalgia emerges through the articulation of present circumstances, and is made meaningful by instances of rupture and slow erosion. Deployed in this way, nostalgia gives us a sense of how diasporic life has unfolded over time, and how it is constituted by both gradual and sudden changes in the urban environment. These changes provide impetus for particular and often critical reflections on both the past and present, and are likely to challenge, or at least add nuance to, the more structural forms of analysis carried out by observers less interested in engaging with people's experiences. By re-asserting what matters, what is meaningful, and what needs to change, nostalgia speaks to the core of the relationship between place, subjectivity, and temporality.

VI: Politics in the Diaspora

Introduction

> “Colonisation, dispossession, and statelessness have meant that the ‘national’ has featured as the prime lexicon for speaking of Palestine. The 'national' has functioned as the affective and symbolic frame for the political project of liberation for Palestinians and has also been the underlying grid of most of the scholarly work on Palestine."
>
> (Salih and Richter-Devroe 2018, p.2)

Politics in the Palestinian diaspora is often characterised by particular, ethno-nationalist claims over territory, identity, and representation. Through our explorations of local histories and localised diasporic subjectivities in the previous two chapters, however, we have seen traces of the political emerging in a different array of urban contexts: in questions of citizenship, identity, development and, of course, tenure insecurity. By engaging in political life at the city and neighbourhood scales, diaspora politics widens from traditional associations with symbolic representations, towards a set of practices rooted in contemporary experience and everyday life. Shifting our focus to these concrete practices allows us to examine political context, political representation, and political agency as they exist in individual diasporic communities, and the ways in which these dynamics may (or may not) relate to the structures of the more banal and conventional side of diaspora politics.

This chapter argues that local forms of diasporic politics should not automatically be viewed as either an extension or micro version of a broader, more familiar,

geopolitical narrative (see Pain and Smith, 2008; Culcasi, 2016). The qualitative evidence gained through my research rejects this as a contrived practice that will, at best, only ever provide us with a partial reading of diaspora politics, and which risks considerable misrepresentation of the specificities and contingencies of political life in diasporic communities. We begin therefore by mapping the more conventional and familiar form of Palestinian politics, and then proceed to 'mind the gap' - exploring the actual circumstances in- and registers through which politics is practiced in Jana'a today. The focus is unapologetically on the local, and is perhaps even parochial, because the following descriptive account of the local political issues that matter to residents in Jana'a, strongly demonstrates that diaspora politics is not restricted to the (trans)national sphere(s), and that localities are also important geographies "of social practice, discourse, and power" (Paasi 2005, p.541). The analysis builds upon Chatterjee's (2004; 2011) concept of 'political society', and considers how politics emerges; why it might take the forms it does; and how this affects community-state relations. It also draws on Simone's (2008, p.186) work regarding the 'politics of the possible', to illuminate how politics in the diaspora - as in the city - are not predetermined but are nevertheless contextual, and reflective of the human desire to "construct the conditions that [allow] for the viable organisation" of everyday life. Both of these interventions are important to give context to politics in the grounded realities of diasporic experience. The objective here is not necessarily to situate diaspora politics in relation to postcolonial or critical urban theory, but to allow politics in the diaspora to exist in the ways in which the community intends.

(Trans)national Politics

Let us begin by asking to what extent does a diasporic community internalise the political developments taking place in the homeland, or in other, distant parts of the diaspora? For example, are the political lives of Jana'a residents bound to every twist and turn of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, or to the news of further

settlement expansion in the West Bank, or to updated accounts of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza? How does Palestinian politics travel and translate across disparate communities? Providing a chronological account of the political history of Palestinians post-1948 is problematic in the context of diaspora, challenging the heterogeneity of diasporic experience and undermining the ways in which the political emerges in particular places. Where possible, this chapter seeks to re-write the Palestinian political narrative through local experiences and historical encounters in Jana'a. In doing so, it becomes clear how broad political ideologies, movements, and subjectivities can be simultaneously familiar and remote to individual diasporic communities. It is not that residents in Jana'a are necessarily removed from a collective, transnational narrative concerning Palestinians. Rather, political life in these communities is not necessarily determined by these overarching narratives.

Unsurprisingly, Palestinian nationalism is typically evoked in Jana'a in relation to the period in which the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) reached its peak strength in Jordan. Established in 1964, the PLO represented the culmination of a gradual process of state-building since 1948 (Sayigh, 1997). Khalidi (1997) provides insight into the forms this process took, as well as the places in which it took place:

> "In the refugee camps, the workplaces, the schools and the universities […], we find the beginnings, the pre-history as it were, of a new generation of Palestinian nationalist groups and movements which started clandestinely in the 1950s and emerged into the open in the mid-1960s."
>
> (ibid., pp.179-180)

While 1967 is widely acknowledged to be a low point for the Palestinian cause, given the scale of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War (Achilli, 2014), a single event in March 1968 has succeeded in displacing national humiliation with national pride. A strong mythology has developed around the Battle of Karameh, in which the Jordanian military and the *fedayeen* [Palestinian military groups] are said to have successfully resisted a 15,000-strong Israeli attack on the town (Terrill,

2001). Taisir explained that huge numbers joined the PLO after Karameh, and that Jana'a was a part of "the revolution". He recalled proudly how, after Karameh, King Hussein had declared himself "the first *fedayeen*". Although the actual quote seems less assertive ["we have reached the point where we are all *fedayeen*" (Hudson, 2013)], the sentiment has nevertheless continued to resonate in Jana'a and across the Palestinian community in Jordan.

Over the next three years (1968-71), the PLO resembled a "state-within-the-state" (Sayigh 1997, p.ix): a semi-territorial manifestation of a nationalist politics forced to exist only in the diaspora. September 1970 marks the beginning of a new chapter in relations between the Jordanian authorities and Palestinian-origin communities. As the PLO came to threaten the Kingdom's sovereignty, the Jordanian army drove the PLO out of the cities and out of the country altogether (Achilli, 2014). Known as 'Black September' and lasting around ten months, the conflict represented "a clear turn toward privileging non-Palestinian aspects of national identity", and from the 1980s onwards this became "firmly ingrained in the regime's agenda" (ibid., p.239). These events broadly correlate with the feeling among Jana'a residents that the political situation in Jordan deteriorated around 1970, as discussed in the previous chapter.

During one of my first visits to Jana'a in 2017, Taisir told me about the night he heard a group of neighbours surround his house, all male PLO members, who told him to stay inside and not to worry. Soon, he heard gunfire. The father of one of his friends was killed in what he learned was an army raid seeking to oust the PLO from another one of its urban strongholds. According to Taisir, the PLO had become dangerous in Jordan. "King Hussein (may God have mercy on him) wasn't putting down Palestinian resistance, he was putting down something dangerous that developed from it". Without such testimony, it would be tempting to liken the events of September 1970 that sparked this prolonged period of marginalisation to some kind of haunting presence in the lives and subjectivities of Jordan's Palestinian communities. What is intriguing is that neither Black September nor subsequent, related events were overtly politicised by any of my interlocutors.

However, as the previous chapter explained, there is a clear understanding in Jana'a today that their rights as Palestinian-Jordanians began to decline at around this time.

For the next quarter century, PLO relations with the Jordanian State waxed and waned, with periods of *rapprochement* followed by a re-severing of ties, often in line with regional and international attempts at establishing peace (Schulz, 2003). Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, in which PLO members were allowed to return to the Occupied Territories, the "centre of gravity" of Palestinian nationalism shifted from the diaspora back to the homeland (Ghanem 2010, p.1). By 1993, the PLO had been expelled from Jordan for over two decades, and thus the Accords merely cemented what had long been a reality in terms of Palestinian nationalism in Jordan. Studying everyday life for fourth generation Palestinians in Wihdat, the historical centre of Palestinian nationalism in Jordan since the 1960s, Achilli understands the transformation of Palestinian nationalism from ideology to ethos through ambivalent processes of 'becoming-ordinary' (2014; 2015, p.8). This subjective condition emerges through everyday, grounded practices, and a desire to simultaneously "live an idealised ordinary life in Jordan" and [swear] "a binding allegiance to the Palestinian nationalist struggle" (ibid., p.29). This does not only highlight the shifting forms of nationalist sentiment over time, but it also indicates that Palestinians show a willingness to focus on the present and relinquish the past. As Allan (2014) found in Shatila Camp in Lebanon, research agendas geared towards memories of the past, rather than problems of the present, can often be dismissed as irrelevant and unnecessary.

The notion that Palestinian subjectivities transitioned from ideology to ethos itself needs problematising. It suggests that nationalist politics is always the driving political force of diasporic subjectivities, and merely that it changes form with changing material circumstances. In the first instance, we must recognise that 'ethno-nationalism' in a Palestinian context is deeply complex and multiple. As Peteet (2007, p.641) states:

> "Palestinians are not an ethnic group with a distinct language, religion, or culture, and their sense of history and collective identity, although distinctly Palestinian, is embedded in the complex web of a regional history of Islam, empire, colonialism, and Arab nationalism."

As well as being Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin, the vast majority of Jana'a residents are also Sunni Muslims and of Arab ethnicity. It is important to establish this multiplicity, for the political life of Palestinians in the diaspora have often been shaped by these two forces as well as by nationalist sentiments. Islamic and Arab identities have long taken hold in this part of the world, providing direct challenges to various manifestations of nation-based political discourse. While pan-Islamism took prominence at the expense of pan-Arabism during the Ottoman era (Nasser, 2005), the latter emerged as "the hegemonic ideology of the first half of the twentieth century (Khalidi 1997, p.181). And although Arab unification was never achieved, Arab nationalism gave birth to several major political parties and movements, as well as a radical social, cultural and economic programme - Arab socialism - that transcended national borders (Choueiri, 2005).

The liberation of Palestine has been a prominent feature of Arab nationalism (and later Arab socialism) since the 1930s, following a period of relative failure of indigenous attempts to challenge European colonialism (ibid.). While Palestine may have been "its most celebrated cause" (Karsh 2010, p.39), Arab nationalism has tended to reflect an anti-Zionist position as opposed to supporting Palestinian nationalism, as the latter undermines the alleged coherence of pan-Arab unity (ibid.). Arab nationalism continued to be a powerful force in in the post-independence era, spreading throughout most of the Arab world through Ba'thism, Nasserism, and the Movement of Arab Nationalists (Chouieri, 2005). Despite suffering a significant decline after the 1967 six-day war, and following the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the rise of Saudi Arabia after 1973 (ibid.), 'Arabism' has continued to feature prominently in affirming the Jordanian monarchy's legitimacy. Having been "latecomers" to Jordan themselves, the ruling family often pander to pan-Arab sentiments through an emphasis on regional cooperation, its welcoming of refugee populations in the region, and Arab (and

Bedouin) values (Brand, 1995). In addition, the Monarchy continues to emphasise its commitment to the defence of Jerusalem (ibid.). These strategies are important to note, as they reveal the ways in which established political ideologies are seized upon as a way of appeasing diasporic communities. However, the question remains whether these ideologies and transnational trends reflect political life in the diaspora.

The rise of Islamist movements across the region have in part reflected the failures of Arab countries to remain united and in control of their destinies, with the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait in 1990 the clearest example of this failure (Wagemakers, 2016). The rise of these movements also reflects their effectiveness in militant resistance against Israel in the Occupied Territories and Southern Lebanon (Rougier, 2007; Wagemakers, 2016). Many Palestinians have been willing to support Lebanon's powerful Shi'a organisation, Hezbollah ('Party of God'), against the secular, Palestinian nationalist group Fatah, given the strength of its militant resistance against Israel. In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi groups have both received significant support from citizens of Palestinian origin, although it must be recognised that both the Brotherhood and Salafism include competing ideologies and political strategies. External political commentators have highlighted how 'radical' elements of the Brotherhood became particularly prominent after 2008, with significant support among Palestinians (as opposed to 'East Bankers') for its hawkish approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its positioning as both a political party and an advocacy group (Schenker and Barnhard, 2015; Al-Naimat, 2018). The prominence of radical elements of the Brotherhood has become increasingly fragmented, however, as the Jordanian government has supported more moderate, rival factions (Schenker and Barnhard, 2015). Salafism in Jordan has a significant transnational history, imported from returning students and workers in Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (Wagemakers, 2016). Palestinians returning from Kuwait *en masse* in 1990-1 brought with them a particularly political form of Salafism, which received far less repression from the Jordanian State, relative to the Brotherhood.

Political life in the Palestinian diaspora has always been infused with elements of Arab, Islamic, and Palestinian movements, identities, and expressions of solidarity. While the first two of these affiliations are transnational by definition, Palestinian nationalism becomes transnational with the very existence of the diaspora. While this section has sought to tie this political history to sentiments expressed by residents in Jana'a, the truth is that national and transnational forms of politics were rarely expressed or performed during my time in the neighbourhood. In terms of political Islam in Jordanian society, the contestations between the State and religious groups appear to be a kind of spectacle removed from the realities of everyday life for the majority of Sunni Palestinians. Among even the most pious of my interlocutors, I was told that Palestine was always a place for the three Abrahamic religions to exist alongside one another. A taxi driver in Zarqa once told me "there are no differences between Jordanians and Palestinians, and no differences between Muslims and Christians!" Residents also tended to separate Jews and Judaism from the Israeli government and the political ideology of Zionism. I therefore spent much of my fieldwork following political life and political agency as it exists in Jana'a today, and situating the politics of residents in relation to the relevant context: the politics of the city.

'There is No Municipality'

My first sit-down meeting with residents in Jana'a was in June 2017. The meeting was held at Jamal's house, between myself, Jamal and three of his friends - all male, all in their 50s and 60s, and all residents in Jana'a. Having made my introductions to Jamal during my first visit to the neighbourhood, before Ramadan, I was back to ask more questions about the ongoing eviction dispute. Inside Jamal's house, we drank coffee and began talking about the eviction while the others filtered in slowly. Having familiarised myself with the case as much as I could online - locating English- and Arabic-language news articles, and watching YouTube footage of interviews given by residents to the press - there was little

more that the gentlemen wanted to add to the story as I had understood it. It was the upcoming elections that were the more pressing issue for debate. Billed as the 'decentralisation elections' (Sowell, 2017), citizens would not just be voting to elect their Mayor, but for the first time the municipal council would be elected rather than appointed. Nonetheless it was still the race for Mayor that prompted discussion. Whilst none of the four men were willing to endorse any of the candidates, the merits and drawbacks of each were discussed openly and in detail. Financial and moral corruption, willingness to serve the public, and candidate self-interest were hotly debated matters, and all agreed that the current condition of Jana'a was unlikely to change under any of them.

There were three main contenders for the position of Mayor of Zarqa. Ali Abu Sukkar was the candidate for the Islamic Action Front (IAF)[16], and had promised to tackle municipal corruption are restore a sense of morality in local government. The IAF were well organised, but the men didn't seem enamoured by the prospect of an Abu Sukkar victory. The incumbent Mayor, Engineer Imad Momani, was also running, and elicited a slightly more positive response from the room. "He has been good for Zarqa, but bad for Jana'a", one of the men told me. Although Momani had been sympathetic to those affected by the eviction dispute, Jana'a still lacked the level of attention and funding that local residents felt they deserved. It had not gone unnoticed, too, that Momani had prioritised a series of public, highly visible, but largely cosmetic interventions in key areas of the city, in order to maximise his popularity and chances of re-election. Some of Zarqa's city-centre roundabouts had undergone an upgrade, for example, while little had changed within residential neighbourhoods like Jana'a. The third mayoral candidate, Mohammad Mousa al-Ghawari (Abu Nasser), was the least preferred option. They referred to him as 'the tribal candidate'[17], and recognised that he was able to draw on a significant base of support for the election, with no other

[16] The political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan

[17] Tribal identity is strong in Jordan, and represents a familial loyalty that trumps other forms of political allegiance (Layne, 1987). The largest tribe in Jordan (and Zarqa) is the Beni Hassan (Gao, 2015), whose members dominate Zarqa Municipality.

similarly identified candidate in contention to split the 'tribal' vote. However, the men in Jana'a questioned his morals - telling me he was known to have a drinking problem. Abu Nasser was seen as the most corrupt candidate, and there was little Jana'a stood to gain from his 'public' service.

Discussions over these three main candidates proved valuable in understanding how the transnational politics of the previous section fails to translate neatly into contemporary urban politics. The mayoral race was depicted as a contest between the moral probity of Abu Sukkar, the capabilities of Momani, and the personal network of Abu Nasser. Who would be good for Jana'a was very much up for debate; the men wanted a candidate of good standing, but perhaps more so a candidate that would get things done. There was a clear need for something to be done about the city's downward trajectory. It was also clear that Palestine and Palestinian-ness were simply not factors in deciding which candidate to support.

The Zarqa people chose Abu Sukkar, the IAF candidate, to take over City Hall. Many were surprised by the result, having expected the Government and the *Mukhabarat* (secret services) to manipulate the results in the event of an IAF victory. Established in 1992 following the legalisation of political parties, the IAF have long occupied a controversial position in national political life. Early on, the IAF faced claims of having links to transnational groups - specifically outlawed by the 1992 legislation. In subsequent years, IAF activity on issues ranging from governmental corruption to relations between Jordan and Israel led to state restrictions on political association, expression, press freedom, and public gatherings (Sahliyeh, 2005). The IAF boycotted elections in 2010 and 2013, citing the lack of political reform and ongoing repression of IAF-affiliated political activists (Magid, 2016). However, re-entering the political process in 2015 reflected the will of party members, a feeling of responsibility to press for reform, and increasing uncertainty over the movement's political future (ibid.).

The position of the IAF in Jordanian politics also has a local dimension to it. Zarqa is widely viewed to be the urban centre of the IAF and Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan:

> "Relatively prosperous in the 1970s because of the oil and phosphate industries, the city began diminishing in wealth as the upper crust moved to the richer neighbourhoods of Amman. […] As a result of the increasingly impoverished conditions, the Muslim Brotherhood found in Zarqa a fertile terrain for recruitment. The city is also largely dominated by Palestinians, many of whom share a strong feeling of marginalisation, which further facilitated the rise of Islamic factions."
>
> (Alami, 2010)

Political research on Zarqa has tended to highlight its Islamic characteristics, focusing on a select number of individuals from Zarqa known for their contributions to Salafi thought and modern Jihad (Rosen, 2006). Chief among them has been Ahmad Fadeel al-Nazal al-Khalayleh, who became the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq until his death in 2006 (Nakleh and al-Shawabkeh, 2018). Al-Khalayeh had changed his name to 'al-Zarqawi' ['of/from Zarqa'], and this seemed to bring undue attention to the city and its role in Islamic radicalisation (Napoleoni, 2005; Mekhennet and Moss, 2007). After the death of al-Zarqawi, Abu Sukkar had paid his respects to Zarqawi's family, and spoke of him as a "martyr and freedom fighter". Abu Sukkar was an MP at the time, and was barred from returning to the Jordanian Parliament as a result of his actions. This controversy, coupled with the fear of the Brotherhood gaining widespread popularity, were surely enough - locals thought - for the higher authorities to intervene in the 2017 Mayoral race.

Abu Sukkar's victory was welcomed more positively in Jana'a than I had expected would be the case, following that first meeting. Of course, the Momani supporters I knew were dejected by the result, but Taisir and his friends expected Abu Sukkar to run the municipality according to a decent set of ethical and moral guidelines. Abu Sukkar had criticised the pervasiveness of corruption throughout the campaign and, as a relative outsider, had seemed to draw significant support on

this basis. Again, the Brotherhood's support for Palestinians did not seem to feature in the men's rationalisation of the result. Despite the positive sentiments expressed in terms of Abu Sukkar's character, there was little expectation of any concrete change. Even among those who were part of the small minority (15% (Al-Emam, 2017c)) of eligible voters that *did* cast ballots in Zarqa, their apathy towards, and distrust of, formal politics was clearly evident.

These sentiments were not a reflection of their compromised position in Jordan as Palestinian-Jordanians, but a reflection of their experiences as long-time residents of Zarqa. Feelings of apathy and alienation are often cited in political analysis to shed light on the failures of political and economic inclusivity in Jordan (Itani, 2013; Milton-Edwards, 2018). But this provides a one-dimensional understanding of political life in the diaspora, constricting the scope of political agency and subjectivity around one single issue: the state of democratic representation. Rather than allow apathy and alienation to define the political in this context, it is important to understand formal aspects of politics as an everyday event. This encompasses aspects of the development impasse, which were described in the previous chapter, but it also includes a view of municipal politics as a continuous process, even if this process is defined by a lack of substantive policy and activity.

The city's development impasse did not let up in the eighteen months of Abu Sukkar's mayoral term. As the previous chapter highlighted, Abu Sukkar inherited an urban system whereby most responsibilities for service provision and development had been transferred to other public bodies or private companies (Abescot, 2019). Whether residents blamed the municipality or 'the system' for the lack of progress, the phrase "there is no municipality" could be heard across Zarqa, and accurately describes the state of local political and economic affairs in the city today. A few months into his term, Abu Sukkar had called a temporary halt to municipality services in protest at the withholding of funds by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA). Within a day of the protest, the Prime Minister had intervened and announced a loan of 22 million dinars ($31m) to the municipality, with additional grants to the city in the near-future. The figure of 22 million dinars

was by no means random. Five months prior to the shutdown, the municipality had applied to the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB) for a loan facility for this exact amount. It was the withholding of these funds by the MoMA that sparked the protest.

However, after eighteen months in charge, health problems caused Mayor Abu Sukkar to announce his resignation. In his resignation speech, he apologised for any "unintentional neglect" of the city's development concerns, citing the debts he inherited as the cause for such scant progress on development in his time as Mayor. Many in Zarqa felt that Abu Sukkar and his team had lacked the will and governance expertise to meet the needs of the city's large and struggling population. While those in charge cited the municipal debt crisis as the cause for the continuing development impasse, those outside of City Hall were sceptical, and saw the lack of progress as business-as-usual, but this time under the banner of Abu Sukkar and the IAF. Momani was re-instated as Mayor after a short interim period, on the grounds that he had finished second in the municipal elections in 2017. This change in leadership may seem of marginal importance to the story of the Palestinian diaspora, but it is a significant recent event in the story of Zarqa and its Palestinian-majority population. We must be wary of representations of diaspora politics that seem unwilling to engage in these kinds of political machinations. While Mayor Abu Sukkar's health concerns were very real, having been hospitalised within months of becoming Mayor, there were rumours in Zarqa that he would be encouraged to step down at some stage. The city needed a more proactive, functioning municipality.

To supporters and critics alike, Momani was a very different proposition to Abu Sukkar. He was a recognised politician, who had a strong grasp of municipal politics and bureaucratic process, and was able to facilitate development in a way Abu Sukkar had failed to do. The pressure for policy action was partially relieved within two weeks of Momani's re-instatement. On 14th April 2019, Momani announced that 2 million JD ($2.8m) had been secured from central government to allow the municipality to begin a city-wide road restoration project. Although

many credited Abu Sukkar as the man responsible for the project, having applied for the funds before his forced-resignation, the announcement was timely for Momani, given how important infrastructural improvement was for people in Zarqa. Sentiments over local development in Jana'a seemed to be shared across the city. And there was a sense that the two mayors were operating in different political environments. When I first met one of Zarqa's MPs, Tariq Khoury, Abu Sukkar was a year into his term:

> "His first year has been a big loss. Nothing has happened. […] Something needs to happen - either he resigns or he's removed and a transition government installed until there are new elections"

When we spoke again after Momani's re-appointment, Khoury suggested there was a renewed impetus for ensuring the city moves forward:

> "We are helping him [Momani]… thinking of ways to do something good for the people of Zarqa, especially for investments. I guess it can't be like Amman […]. We'll do our best."

These details may seem overly nuanced - parochial even - diverting the discussion from the allegedly more important forms of diaspora politics. But can political life in Jana'a be sufficiently understood without taking these of urban politics - service-level compromises, fiscal bottle-necks, political manoeuvrings - into account? If not, can we claim to understand politics in the Palestinian diaspora without engaging in municipal governance and political contestation at the city level? If we were to focus on the extremely low voter turnout in 2017 and the widespread feeling that the municipality is largely absent from urban affairs, we might assume that these forms of local politics do not matter to communities in a diaspora context. On the contrary, these political developments provide an essential context for understanding everyday life in the city, not necessarily in terms of policy impact but more in terms of the effects of policy absence.

'We Had to Become One'

Despite low voter turnout and disillusionment in terms of corruption and a lack of progress, it is the municipal level that provides the context for political organisation in Jana'a. More specifically, it was the failures of the municipality - and not the larger transnational issues - that drew sections of the population into the political arena. The development impasse was evidence enough that things needed to be done differently:

> "Plans are drawn up, money is found, and then the money disappears inside pockets, or the money is transferred to other areas. We realised that we had to become one, to come together in strength to pressure the authorities."

Saleh's description of municipal corruption above points to the ways in which residents perceived the system to be rigged against them. Not since the 1990s had residents felt they had a municipality that worked for the benefit of the people. Corruption, increasing municipal debt and the prioritisation of lands belonging to families of the Beni Hassan tribe, were all seen as contributing factors.[18] As the previous chapter highlighted, people in Jana'a wanted to see change relating to the neighbourhood's deteriorating infrastructure, costly and unpredictable utility provisions, low incomes, and the gradual erosion of their 'simple' way of life.

It was in this context that, in 2012, a number of residents came together to form the Lejneh. The group were mostly retired male professionals, who had both the time and motivation to advocate for development on behalf of the wider community. The chief organiser, though, was an engineer in his thirties called Mahmoud, who had had enough of inadequate service provision and infrastructure in Jana'a, and felt the need to organise. An attempt had been made in 1994 to establish a neighbourhood committee, but the organisation folded after five years of internal division. When Taisir returned to Jana'a from Saudi Arabia in 2012, he asked old friends what was happening in the neighbourhood, and

[18] Adapted from the author's own published work (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020)

what - if anything - was being done to improve local living conditions. He was told of Mahmoud's intentions, and recalled being told that they were proving difficult to implement due to widespread cynicism in the neighbourhood concerning political action. What would a committee - with no formal or legal standing - be able to achieve?

Establishing the Committee was an attempt to change the way in which the political game plays out locally. It was hoped that establishing the Committee would open a new channel of communication between residents and the municipality, strengthening the hand of the former by showing commitment to- and respect for formal, urban, political process. It was clear that more formally-recognised avenues of political engagement were not open to ordinary citizens and community groups. In many respects, the founding of the Lejneh represents an act of 'political society' (Chatterjee, 2004), in the sense that the pursuit of claims over local development take place outside the state-civil society framework. According to Chatterjee, political society emerges out of the specific, political and developmental contexts of individual communities, and it is crucial that scholarship is able to acknowledge the importance of these contexts to political life in the diaspora. Lejneh members had bought in to the ideas that state-led political reform was supposed to empower citizens, that development was more-or-less a right, and that the system was failing to uphold its promise on both counts.

The first Lejneh comprised of fourteen men. The youngest member of the Lejneh, Akram, an electrical engineer working in Amman, was tasked with setting up and running a Facebook page for the Lejneh, and forming a youth committee in the neighbourhood. Over forty attended the initial meeting, and Akram himself went on to become a member of the Zarqa City Youth Council. The oldest member was made both committee president and *Mukhtar*, the latter a position of town/village representative, first established under the Ottomans in 1864 and amended by law under both the British Mandate and, later, the Kingdom of Jordan (Baer, 1979). The appointment of *Mukhtar* was largely symbolic, a gesture of respect that

granted the *Mukhtar* enhanced social and political standing. With the development of municipal government, the role of *Mukhtars* in contemporary Jordanian society has dwindled (Davis, 2011). That said, *Mukhtars* are technically granted a role in local policing and law enforcement, and play a liaison role between local citizens and authorities (Human Rights Watch, 2006). In the Occupied Territories, though, the position has played a more-or-less continuous role in Palestinian nationalist politics. *Mukhtars* served as a point of entry for both newspapers (late Ottoman) and political authorities (post-Oslo) to embed themselves within every town and village (Khalidi, 1997; Ghanem, 2010). The presence of the *Mukhtar* is an important reminder that local institutions are a core element of national political contexts, in the homeland and in the diaspora.

The founding members of the Lejneh struggled to persuade residents of the need to form their own organisation, not because the needs of the community were not serious enough to warrant a new approach, but because it was seen as a futile endeavour, unable to overcome the corruption and self-interest of local authorities. In fact, this self-interest played a major role in bringing the Lejneh into being. 2012 was also an election year for the municipality, and a number of candidates saw the initiative as a potential vote-winner. Momani, who was elected Mayor in that year, and Naif al-Da'ja, who was elected to the Council for Zarqa's 2nd district, both supported the residents' move to organise. Their endorsement had a profound impact, and around 100 residents attended a meeting in the Municipal Stadium to formally establish the Committee and begin electing representatives. Early enthusiasm for the Lejneh from these two politicians was later replicated across other institutions, including the wider municipality, the Governorate, and the local police. The Lejneh made a concerted effort to visit these connections on a regular basis, often to maintain existing relations but also as an opportunity to articulate specific concerns. Despite the fact that the Lejneh had no legal basis for their activities, cultural norms around hospitality and respect allowed members entry into the offices of influential figures. With one phone call and perhaps a day's notice, it was possible for members to have one-to-one conversations with

policy-makers, and seek to take advantage of their positions of power and wide network of contacts.

Fig.15 Rusan Square, Jana'a (September 2018)

The Lejneh enjoyed a significant victory during its first year. Rusan Square (Fig.15), the site of Taisir's childhood home, had for years been little more than an urban wasteland, and was surrounded on all sides by multi-story housing. "Since the beginning of Jana'a", Taisir told me, "we were told this land belonged to Majid Rusan", an army official who supplied water to houses and agricultural land in Jana'a in the 1950s and 1960s. The commonly held view was that nothing could be done to the area, given that it did not belong to the municipality nor, since Rusan's death, to any known, living individual. "It was only recently we found out this land has always formally belonged to the municipality, and so the municipality fulfilled our request for the square to be asphalted". Asphalting what had previously been urban wasteland, situated in the middle of Jana'a, was exactly the kind of modest, small-scale intervention the Lejneh had been set up to force onto the municipality's agenda. The square became a particular source of pride for Lejneh members: a symbol of local, aspirational fulfilment and a reminder that local political action can work. Once asphalted, the square became a space for

children to play and for residents to park cars. Hearing residents talk about Rusan Square, it was clear there was a broader significance to their success. It showed that positive change was possible, and that their involvement could bring about much sought after local development.[19]

Fig.16 Typical Multi-Storey Housing in Jana'a (April, 2017)

A second success story soon followed for the Lejneh. The Lejneh lobbied Mayor Momani to authorise permits that would allow more than one electricity meter per building (Fig.16). Having one meter in each building proved extremely costly, as the cost per unit of electricity increases significantly as the usage recorded on any one meter rises. During my time in Jana'a, I had numerous exchanges with my neighbour on the topic of shared utilities. We were the only occupants in our half of the building, and shared two water tanks and a single electricity meter. Although our brief discussions were always cordial and verging on neighbourly,

[19] Adapted from the author's own published work (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020)

Saleh would always remind me to use lights as little as possible, and to not use air conditioning (I had none, I would always remind him). We had no way of telling how my usage - a single occupant - compared to the usage of his family of six. These encounters were revealing in terms of how inadequate utility provision forced residents to control and monitor each other's behaviour, constantly having to negotiate the uncertain and inconsistent derivations of such inadequacies. By installing additional meters in the buildings, electricity could be more evenly distributed and at a lower cost.

Knowing the significance of the issue to Jana'a residents, the Lejneh threatened to stage a protest outside the municipality building if nothing was done. But Momani had no problem authorising the permits. Explaining these events to me one afternoon, Taisir told me that he was able to purchase two additional meters for his own home. His bills were cut by a factor of three, from 120JD to 40JD ($170 to $56) each quarter, and many residents in Jana'a followed suit. It is difficult to imagine a political act that could have produced financial benefit as immediately or as substantial as this. Its direct impact on everyday life in Jana'a is not to be underestimated, nor undermined by other, more distant forms of diaspora politics. Taisir claimed that the municipality were now 'afraid of the Lejneh's power', and that this explained the productive encounters with the State soon after the Lejneh's formation.

'They've Corrupted Him'

But aside from Rusan Square and electricity meters, further gains were hard to come by. One of the Lejneh's priorities involved redeveloping Jana'a's lost public spaces, most notably Jundi Park and Army Park (Fig.17), both of which were introduced in the previous chapter. Despite its name, it was not known for sure whether the Army Park was military land. No one seemed to know who had ordered the original park to be razed to the ground. Connected wasteland that backed on to the river was also of questionable ownership status, according to the

municipality's Local Development Unit. From their perspective, the uncertainty over land ownership meant that any request from the Lejneh to develop these spaces must either be rejected or put on hold, until the issue could be resolved. The Lejneh were also unable to deal directly with international agencies interested in developing public space, as they were only mandated to work on publicly-owned land. During my time in Jana'a, little if any attempt was made by the municipality to clarify the land ownership problem.

Fig.17 Army Park, Jana'a (June, 2018)

Ambiguity seemed to serve as a key control mechanism through which local authorities could manage and subvert the development aspirations of community residents and representatives. Aside from ambiguous land tenure arrangements, local authorities also pointed to tight budgets and a lack of resources as semi-permanent restrictions on project implementation.[20] The community would host municipal officials every few months in the large basement of *Khalid Ibn al-Walid* Mosque, and each meeting would resemble a particular kind of political performance. Officials would reiterate their commitment to the promises made in previous meetings, and would proceed to explain that plans were still ongoing,

[20] Adapted from the author's own published work (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020)

timelines pushed back, and funding less certain than had originally been assumed. The aforementioned Lejneh visits to key institutions and politicians also tended to have a far smaller impact than Lejneh members hoped for. The group would be welcomed, kind words exchanged, and tea and coffee supplied. Issues would be discussed, and promises or assurances granted. And this process would repeat the next time around, by which time these promises and assurances were failing to hold true.

In many respects, the success of the Lejneh rested on the extent to which local authorities were willing to act upon the demands of Jana'a residents and their representatives. Without a clear policy mechanism in place, ambiguity within the political system became the means through which local expectations were managed, and local demands subverted. In political geography, Oren Yiftachel (2009) uses the term 'grey space' to denote the "pseudo-permanent margins" of urban politics where social relations are produced and maintained (ibid., p.250). Various methods of control, beyond simplistic dichotomies of approval/rejection, legality/illegality, and permission/eviction, are deployed to maintain existing power relations, while somewhat paradoxically initiating new forms of mobilisation and possible resistance from those experiencing them.[21] Grey space is an important tool for thinking about possibility in diasporic contexts as it requires an attentiveness towards logics and dynamics of specific relations of power.

Through the concept of grey space, we come to understand a state of limbo not as an inherent characteristic of the so-called diasporic condition, but as a feature of urban governance that has implications for diasporic communities. However, grey space appears here as more than a tool of governance and political control. It also reflects the economic realities of a municipality unable to deliver on resident demands, and it is the product of historical land tenure arrangements that prove difficult to solve in the present. While this extended definition of grey space

[21] Adapted from the author's own published work (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020)

diverges from the concept's original meaning, these broader dynamics provide a more complete understanding of how the Lejneh encounters ambiguity in the political system. Grey space does not necessarily produce marginalised subject positions. As will be shown in later sections, these grey spaces produce political subjects that engage in complex negotiations, take risks, and remain adaptable in an ever-changing urban environment.

By the time I moved to Jana'a, the initial cohesiveness of the Lejneh had broken down, not unlike the attempts to organise two decades prior. Both the *Mukhtar* and Akram, along with one other, had resigned from the Lejneh. According to remaining members, the *Mukhtar* had been co-opted by the municipality - they had "corrupted him", one member told me - while Akram had been seeking the approval of local officials more explicitly. Under Akram's control, the Lejneh Facebook page was increasingly being used to praise the Mayor and his allies at the municipality, rather than to showcase the work of the Committee or to hold power accountable. Remaining members also drew a connection between Akram's withdrawal from the Committee and the awarding of a commercial license to Akram's brother, which enabled him to set up a small coffee shop in Jana'a, opposite the entrance to the Municipal Stadium. When he left the Committee, Akram took the Facebook page with him. As for the *Mukhtar*, Committee members felt that Momani himself had convinced him to stand down as the Lejneh's President, and that he was taking the municipality's view on almost every issue. Lejneh members did not blame the *Mukhtar* for the falling out. His mind was easily swayed by the authorities, they believed. Upon leaving the Committee, Akram became an assistant to the *Mukhtar*, and it was through these two men that the municipal and regional authorities connected with the wider neighbourhood - at the direct expense of the Lejneh and its attempts to formalise and democratise local urban politics.

As the Lejneh tried to rebuild, through the recruitment of new personnel and a renewed commitment to prove their worth to the community, the split had taught them a great deal about the realities of local governance. By organising locally,

members believed they would be able to exert significant pressure on the institutions that were failing to deliver adequate services and development in Jana'a. The reality, though, was that these institutions were adept at dealing with localised groups, and were experienced in the manipulation and co-opting of certain individuals in order to undermine any potential popular resistance. It was not that residents had gathered together naively, as they had all experienced decades of relative neglect and a lack of development in Jana'a. Rather, they had proved powerless in reasserting themselves when the strength of the group became compromised by outside influences and internal differences. It is necessary to recall that Chatterjee is explicit in explaining that there is nothing inherently successful about 'political society':

> "The success of these claims depends entirely on the ability of particular population groups to mobilise support to influence the implementation of governmental policy in their favour. But this success is necessarily temporary and contextual. The strategic balance of political forces could change and rules may no longer be bent as before."
>
> (2004, p.60)

The Lejneh's informality worked against them, as local authorities took advantage of the traditional and respected institution of *Mukhtar* to undermine their claims to representation. Many residents and officials regarded the *Mukhtar* as the only legitimate authority in Jana'a, and expressed dissatisfaction with Lejneh 'meddling' in neighbourhood politics. The rules of political society may come from without - through the manipulation of grey space - or from within, as politics is contested between different factions of the same local community.

'Things Will Become Clear'

The exercise and subsequent navigation of power is clearly an important constitutive element of political life in Jana'a. Rather than viewing the diasporic subject in terms of marginality or subjugation, it is important to recognise the

ways in which conditions of marginality and the like (informality, illegality, peripherality) are produced by political - as well as cultural and social - forces (Datta, 2012). It is within these processes, which produce particular forms of possibility and opportunity, that people's political agency is implicated (Pieterse, 2008). When faced with very limited opportunities through recognised processes and channels, Lejneh members carve out their own opportunities wherever and whenever they may arise. These opportunities may come into view thanks to prior experience in negotiating the urban present, or may open up unexpectedly, at which point city dwellers must make the most of their adaptability, skilled judgement, and propensity to take risks.

As a way of compensating for their weak political position as an informal neighbourhood organisation, the Lejneh attempted to register as a civil society organisation (CSO) with the Ministry of Social Development in September 2018. The new social enterprise would be called the 'Jana'a Charitable Organisation', and the plan was to open premises in the neighbourhood for community use, particularly for women and children. This was a clear priority because, other than the home or the street respectively, women and children had very few places to congregate and socialise within Jana'a. The premises would include an education centre and a medical centre, and a playground for the children. Until recently, there had been a charity operating out of a building near the large bakery on Jana'a's main commercial street. While some of the charity workers were from Jana'a, it was not exclusively *for* Jana'a, Taisir told me, and the charity had subsequently moved elsewhere. The Lejneh members sought to take advantage of their departure, and to meet local needs by establishing a replacement charity themselves.

"We have a friend in the Ministry of Social Development", they told me during one of the monthly committee meetings. And having spoken to a number of different development agencies, they believed that once they secured their status as a charity, they would have access to funds and resources soon after. The Lejneh arranged a meeting at the ministry, but were informed upon their arrival that a

different application for the same premises had already been submitted. While the ministry was unable to provide them with any specific information about the application, they told the residents that the application came from outside Jana'a. Undeterred, the Lejneh pressed ahead with registration. They would need at least seven members, all of whom would need to provide ID documentation. They would need a premises for registration, and clearance from a court certifying that none of the members had any convictions or ongoing prosecutions. Despite the initial setback over their choice of premises, the Lejneh had received an offer from a Jana'a resident that they could use one of his properties. One of the Lejneh members also offered to help; he had a charity in Amman and could look into opening a second premises in Zarqa. As the offer was made at another of the Lejneh meetings, Abu Zaid leaned in to me and said, smiling, "many things happen when we get together".

The legal clearance proved to be a more significant obstacle. One of the more prominent members of the Lejneh was facing a personal crisis. One of their sons had not been paying rent for a number of months, and his landlord had notified the police. The police visited his father in Jana'a, took him to the police station, and told him that he was liable and must pay the debts. While he had little money to spare, he was able to slowly repay this debt, but it significantly delayed the CSO proceedings. By the time I ended fieldwork in September 2018, the process was on hold. By January 2019, I was informed by Taisir that the Lejneh had come up against a new obstacle, and six months later the members had abandoned their hopes of registering a CSO altogether. While he did not want to discuss what happened, it seemed as if the Lejneh were back to square one. When I enquired about the CSO registration process with contacts at one of the Embassies in Amman, I was told that the Ministry had significantly cut back on the number of applications they were willing to approve. Sources within the Ministry stated that it was proving too difficult to control, regulate and oversee the funding arrangements of existing CSOs. A further obstacle to approval was the fact that a second Ministry had to approve the applications, and the Ministry chosen was

dependent on the type of CSO activities being proposed. Anything political, for instance, would be referred to the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs.[22]

Initially, CSO registration appeared to offer the Lejneh a better opportunity for realising their objectives than other existing institutional processes. These existing processes were not only repetitive and unfulfilling but also exhausting, and as much as the Lejneh felt compelled to maintain existing relationships regardless, this new opportunity seemed to be re-energising and re-affirming. Unfortunately for them, it transpired that this process was heavily controlled and managed, and that their chances of approval were severely limited by these subtle and disingenuous tactics by those in power. Residents speculated about the reasons why they had been unable to complete the registration, and there was a collective sense that the State is uneasy about relinquishing power, when they have little say over how that power is used.

Having given up on the plans to register and run a CSO, political relations between the neighbourhood and the authorities remained unchanged for months. But in October 2019, on a routine visit to the Governor of the Zarqa region, Dr Mohammad al-Samirat, the Lejneh came under yet another attack. As with most meetings, photographs of the meeting where posted on the Lejneh Facebook page along with a brief description of the issues discussed, and a message of gratitude to their hosts. One particular Lejneh member, however, spoke out publicly to express his political support for the Governor, in the context of ongoing political disputes with the Decentralisation Committee and other officials and institutions. Many in Jana'a expressed their worries about the Lejneh working in its own self-interest, and embodying overtly political interests that did not reflect the views of wider neighbourhood and had not been through any kind of consultation process. Lejneh members responded, reiterating their service to the neighbourhood and dismissing the remarks made by that one individual. Abu Zaid explained that the Lejneh would not be discouraged from their duty towards the people of Jana'a,

[22] Adapted from the author's own published work (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020)

and reaffirmed the Lejneh's sense of allegiance to the nation, to the city, to King Abdullah II, and to the neighbourhood ("to which we all belong").

Abu Qasim, the leader of the Lejneh, contacted an influential journalist who lived in Jana'a, and who had contributed to the online criticism of the group. The journalist retracted his remarks, and reassured residents that Abu Qasim and the others had taken the meeting simply to present their demands for local development, and to maintain their existing relationship with the regional Government. At the time of writing, the controversy was not going away. I spoke to Abu Qasim about what would happen next. He didn't know, and simply said, “in the coming days, things will become clear”.

Conclusion

In only a short period of time, political representation and organisation have undergone significant changes in Jana'a, suggesting an evolutionary process to politics in the diaspora. This should not be unexpected; the day-to-day conditions and concerns of diasporic communities are ever-changing, and communities appear to understand the complexities of political systems and engage in difficult negotiations with these systems. The community in Jana'a - while in many ways diasporic - is naturally diverse, and significant disagreements exist within sub-sections of the community. Diaspora is a concept that must remain attentive to its heterogeneity, and to the reasons and nature of the international contestations that emerge within any given diasporic community. When approached via a concern for the changing possibilities of the present, diaspora is shown to consist of multiple and diverse points of view, with dynamic itineraries responsive to openings and closings in the political and urban environment.

In *The Politics of the Possible*, Simone (2008, p.186) describes the agency of urban majorities in terms of the wide-ranging attempts "to construct the conditions that enable the city to act as a flexible resource for the viable organisation of their

everyday lives". This view of urban life and possibility has immediate attraction for diaspora studies. Rather than approaching diasporas as a point of difference in city life, based on race, ethnicity and/or nationality, diasporas are defined by a broader collectivity that is undermined by the regimes and institutions of formal political power. Within this framing, the diaspora scholar is attentive to the ways in which different diasporic populations are implicated in these processes, and in turn rely on their adaptability in order to get by. However, diasporic urbanism offers an altogether different proposition for thinking about possibilities in the urban present. The geographical contours of diaspora can be applied to the everyday experiences of specific urban communities, through which forms of marginality and informality may emerge. Equally, though, this approach may also reveal the ways in which communities envision possibilities within formal processes, legal frameworks and socio-cultural conventions. These possibilities are likely to be contingent not only on personal and collective networks in the present, but also on the historical experiences and encounters with place, people and institutions. As previous chapters have shown, these experiences shape political subjectivities, and "give rise to new possibilities of claims-making and critique in the present" (McKay 2012, p.289). Diasporic urbanism can make a contribution to studies of the urban majority by encouraging scholars to examine the relationship between the individual and the collective, between mobility and emplacement, and between historicised subjectivity and everyday experience.

The Lejneh had been undermined by the very logics of governance that it had been established to overcome. An important aspect of 'political society' is that participation and organisation is not necessarily destined to succeed; successes may be temporary while there is also the possibility of outright failure (Chatterjee, 2004). Despite the fact that residents knew of the pervasiveness of corruption, self-interest, and a lack of transparency within municipal governance, they nevertheless chose to try and rework their situation, rather than subvert formal processes or lose faith in the system altogether. While this does not reveal anything intrinsic to the diasporic condition, it shows how political engagement in diasporic contexts is rooted not to ethno-nationalist principles, but to the political

environments within which diasporic communities find themselves. Diasporas seek out new possibilities, and make judgements based on their knowledge and experience of place-based dynamics to do so. Diaspora politics therefore takes place *in* place, mobilised at multiple scales and with multiple geographical orientations, encapsulating the mundane as well as the more fundamental, the situated as well as the transcendental. This chapter has argued the case for a revised understanding of diaspora and diaspora politics, directly and intimately related to the places of habitation and community, and to the conditions of intransience that foster new political engagements and developmental imaginings.

VII: Diaspora and the Geopolitics of Development

Introduction

The previous chapter challenged the conventional narratives surrounding political life in the diaspora, tackling issues of governance, representation, and community organisation. This chapter, however, focuses on a second, often overlooked political context within which diasporic communities are often implicated: international development. The majority of diaspora communities originate from, move across, and settle in other locations within the global South (Alexander et al, 2015), and it is the South that has long been the subject of Western ideas of development, "as both a cognitive category and a relation of force" (Mahmud 1999, p.26). In bringing development into view, familiar notions of hybridity, assimilation, nostalgia and mobility are replaced with developmental concerns around stability, social cohesion, resilience, participation and sustainability. To more fully understand how diasporic communities are situated in specific, place-based contexts, it is important to recognise how development reshapes political space (Choudry and Shragge, 2011), and how development encounters affect community life and diasporic experience.

Diasporic urbanism asserts that we cannot assume a pro-, anti-, or post-development position without investigating the specific ways in which developmental ideas and practices circulate within individual communities and places. As de Vries (2007, p.27) puts it:

> "development interventions are not good or bad in themselves but must be analysed in terms of their role in wider processes of social change, the question being what kinds of interests they stand for."

Diasporic urbanism resists the urge to apply a particular theoretical paradigm to development and diaspora, and thus offers a valuable contribution to development scholarship in post-colonial geographies. This is particularly valuable given the contrasting temporalities inferred by the concepts of development and diaspora. Development theory views the present as a problematic (Brun, 2016), which provides the basis for legitimate intervention and regardless of whether these representations reflect local realities (Escobar, 1991). By understanding place as a temporal event (Massey, 2005), diasporic urbanism provides an important critical angle to development-driven interventions, highlighting the experiences and forms of life that are overlooked by the developmental gaze (see Davidov and Nelson, 2016). Additionally, development imagines the future as something to be shaped, desired and promised, and the past as something to be manipulated to reflect certain development imaginaries: something to be forgotten, ignored, hidden, or something to be idealised and re-imagined (Lewis, 2016). These temporal relations are significant given how clearly the developmental imaginary necessitates engagement with the lives of the Other. In a diasporic context, the political space of development holds within it the prospect of misunderstanding, mis-representation, and outright manipulation of the lives that have taken shape *in* the diaspora, over time.

This chapter reveals that 'pacification' is the common theme that runs through a number of prominent interventions in Zarqa, implicating the diasporic community in Jana'a in a variety of ways. Pacification is at the core of the international development project, both historically and in the present (Power, 2019). Pacification is intrinsically tied to the long-standing concept of 'community development' used within both foreign and domestic policy, seeking to lower the risk of popular resistance and counterinsurgency in poor neighbourhoods (Roy et al, 2015). Throughout the chapter, we see how pacification features in development strategy and planning, and how the local is the key terrain in which

pacification intersects with diasporic life. The chapter begins by developing the argument that diaspora represents an existential challenge for development. It explores the history and politics of UNRWA in Zarqa, and elaborates on the role of pacification in the context of UNRWA's continued presence in the diaspora, as in one of USAID[23]'s counter-extremism initiatives that arrived in Jana'a in 2017-18. The chapter then explores how the diasporic community in Jana'a are represented entirely differently in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. Here, we see pacification strategies within two very different international development interventions: one that is pursued through the formal channels of municipal governance (DFID[24]), and another that revolves around local, place-based engagement in Jana'a (GIZ[25]). The chapter explores these two interventions in detail, focusing on the extent of their accommodation of lived, diasporic realities. Together, these sections highlight the importance of challenging hegemonic development discourse and practice, exposing their shortcomings and biases through ethnographic, placed-based engagement in specific diasporic communities. By focusing on how development interventions are received at the local level, we become less concerned with the political agendas they reflect, and more concerned with whether they reflect pre-existing community needs.

UNRWA's Diaspora Problem

UNRWA administers refugee camps not only in Jordan but also in Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, and its work extends to the provision of financial services and spaces for community-based activity.[26] It was in Zarqa where the first UNRWA refugee camp in Jordan was opened, on military-owned land that shares a northern border with the old city centre, and a south-western border with what was to become Jana'a. During those early years, the majority of families in Jana'a

[23] United States Agency for International Development
[24] UK Department for International Development
[25] German Corporation for International Development
[26] unrwa.org/where-we-work

were reliant upon UNRWA provisions and services: tented accommodation, food packages, health clinics, and schooling for children. Today, Zarqa Camp remains a distinctive geography. Long, straight roads run from north to south, high walls demarcate its eastern and western borders, and the UNRWA flag flies high over the schools and health clinics inside.

An expectation was built into UNRWA's original mandate that it would cease operation once peace and stability had been secured for Palestinians in the diaspora:

> "5. Recognises that […] continued assistance for the relief of the Palestine refugees is necessary to prevent conditions of starvation and distress among them and to further conditions of peace and stability, and that constructive measures should be undertaken at an early date with a view to the termination of international assistance for relief"
>
> (General Assembly Resolution 302 (UN, 1949))

But what would these 'constructive measures' entail? Did peace and stability require a political solution that would allow refugees to return home? Or did it point to the need to foster conditions of intransience in the diaspora: a more permanent, settled solution that allowed Palestinians to establish a *new* home and sense of belonging, to feel secure, and to become financially independent? The mandate gave UNRWA license to distribute humanitarian aid and establish work programmes (ibid.), but many refugees were reluctant to participate in programmes contributing to local urban development (Rempel, 2010). To accept and participate in development, many believed, would be to accept their fate in the diaspora, normalising their settlement and detracting from the political imperative of returning home, to Palestine.

Despite this resistance and the expectation of temporariness, UNRWA has maintained a continuous presence in the region since it was established over seven decades ago. Its mandate has been consistently renewed every three to five years (Al Husseini and Bocco, 2010), and the Agency is widely praised for its continued

service, its “stabilising ‘peace servicing’ factor”, and for the symbolic value it lends to the Palestinian cause (ibid., pp.268-269). Given that life in the diaspora is contingent on a range of political, economic, social, and cultural factors in any given place, some commentators have viewed this process of constant renewal as a positive resource, ensuring a level of flexibility that “equips it to address the challenges that lie ahead” (Bartholomeusz 2009, p.474). But what does UNRWA’s “paradoxically long-term temporary status” (Irfan 2017, p.16) say about the diasporic population the Agency claims to represent and support? Is life in the diaspora just as paradoxical? Is temporariness still a part of their diasporic existence? The symbolic value of this 'long-term temporary status' is politically charged, reinforcing the notion that Palestinian displacement still requires a durable and satisfactory solution to be found (ibid.). This claim may well stand up to scrutiny in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, where numerous political, civic, and human rights of Palestinians have been both restricted and violated (see Khalidi, 2006), but does it hold in Zarqa? In a country where the vast majority of Palestinians enjoy the rights of full citizenship? The conditions of intransience identified in Jana’a suggest a rejection of this claim, and that diasporic life has in many ways outlived UNRWA’s original mandate.

UNRWA remains shackled by the institutional limitations inscribed in its founding mandate, and has thus been unable to come to terms with the realities of diasporic life. Completely reliant on voluntary contributions, Bocco (2010, p.233) states that UNRWA services have often been hit by “constant fluctuations in financial support”, as donor policies shift “in different periods and at several levels”. Never has this been more pronounced than in 2018, when the US administration pulled its funding from the Agency, describing it as an “irredeemably flawed operation” (Beaumont and Holmes, 2018). The decision was heavily criticised by countries that had long supported the Agency. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, expressed his “deep worry about the increase in human suffering and the destabilising impact if we fail to find the necessary resources to maintain vital UNRWA services” (UNRWA, 2018). A “doomsday scenario” was declared by UNRWA spokesman Chris Guinness two months later, citing the “devastating

impact" on refugees' access to education, health, and food, particularly problematic for the "vulnerable women, children and disabled refugees" (Al Jazeera, 2018). The declaration of UNRWA's financial emergency generated a sense of urgency, encouraging donors to make up the shortfall as immediately as possible to avoid a humanitarian disaster. This event of emergency reinforces the image of the Palestinian diaspora as a population in crisis, with immediate humanitarian needs that UNRWA is best-placed to meet.

The reliance on a discourse of emergency shows how UNRWA legitimises its presence through the denial of 'the diasporic'. Supporters of the institution have rallied behind the Agency, expressing the view that Palestinians today are inherently vulnerable and reliant on the Agency's work. Alistair Burt (2018), Minister of State for International Development in the UK, described UNRWA during its financial emergency as:

> "A necessary humanitarian and stabilising force across the Near East, providing millions of Palestinian refugees with hope and opportunities every day. Its basic services […] provide a life-line to the five million and more Palestinian men, women and child refugees across the region, and enable them to live in dignity until a negotiated peace agreement."

The visibility of UNRWA and its refugee camps helps to reinforce this notion of refugeehood, defining Palestinians not only by their assumed vulnerability but by their exclusion from 'normal' and political life, their supposed lack of individual or collective agency (e.g. Agamben, 1995). A vast literature has developed in opposition to such narratives, focusing on the longevity of Palestinian experience in the diaspora to refute such reductionist claims (Abujidi, 2009; Perdigon, 2011; Ramadan, 2013; Salih, 2013). And while these critiques offer important, grounded insight into Palestinian diasporic life, it is far rarer to see their theoretical arguments being used to critique the role of UNRWA and the wider international development industry for their complicity in such reductionist narratives.

In the face of perpetual financial crisis, UNRWA justifies its presence through the denial of the diasporic, resorting instead to the portrayal of a continuous, protracted emergency. The concept of emergency allows Palestinian lives to be defined by vulnerability and a paternalistic need for protection. UNRWA's existence is thus not premised on its ability to *deliver* progress and development, but on its ability to prevent the emergency from escalating. When the Agency's financial problems pose an existential threat, its supporters are quick to emphasise the potentially disastrous impact of UNRWA becoming forced to suspend its operations. These claims, however, are thrown into doubt by everything we have so far witnessed regarding diasporic life in Jana'a. Diasporic urbanism leads us to question the claim that UNRWA's continued presence in the diaspora is the result of continuous Palestinian vulnerability, and the persistent threat of instability. The use of this narrative and the denial of the diasporic requires us to examine the politics of humanitarianism and development in greater detail.

'Economic Reintegration'

If UNRWA is judged according to its mandate, which tasks the Agency with furthering "conditions of peace and stability" (UN, 1949), then its success is determined not by improvement but by an absence of disaster. By emphasising the potential for conflict and instability that would follow its forced withdrawal from the region, the Agency provides a rationale for the more-or-less permanent place it occupies in certain Palestinian communities. But what are the broader implications of the Agency's permanency, beyond its alleged role in maintaining peace and stability? Another way of reading this commitment to peace and stability is through the use of the more controversial notion of 'pacification', which has long been linked to the geopolitics of development:

> "Development has a long history […] as a strategic response to various threats, a role that is still not widely appreciated since as a practical technology of security,

> development exists in the here and now and its benefits are always cast as a future yet to be realised."
>
> (Power 2019, p.311)

Pacification ('to make peace') is both a) a technology of security, bringing stability through the creation of governable subjects; and b) a product of development provision, a consequence of interventions that help foster conditions of intransience (Power, 2019; Duffield, 2010). While fostering peace and stability are positive and commendable objectives, pacification implies an underlying logic of control or even subversion, that brings the geopolitical logics of development into question. Certainly, in the case of UNRWA, this particular aspect of its mandate would conflict with its supposed symbolic value in support of the Palestinian cause.

Critics of UNRWA point to the Agency's alleged vested interest in the perpetuation of the Palestinian settlement issue, undermining the support the Agency lends to the Palestinians. Consider two excerpts from anthropologist Rosemary Sayigh, writing in 1998:

> "In the absence of any breakthrough towards justice, this majority [of Palestinians] will maintain an oppositional potential for the foreseeable future. Their weapons are what they have always been: refusal to forget, anger and a remarkable capacity for collective survival" (p.19)

> "UNRWA encourages the perception that Palestinians are 'looked after' […]. Though Palestinians speak through UNRWA, what they say is constrained by the agency's accountability to the UN secretary-general and major donors" (p.20)

Sayigh notes the pressure on international actors to pacify Palestinian communities, given the impossibility of permanent refugee settlement either across the diaspora or in Israel/Palestine. Similarly, Rempel (2010) explains how UNRWA, following the direction of the Jordanian government, curtailed refugee attempts to self-organise. This limited the influence of refugees over relief and service provisions, and other aspects of life outside of their control. Despite the reluctance among refugees to participate in large-scale development projects, UNRWA found success in the implementation of smaller-scale, less politically

sensitive projects, using participation as a means to achieving the "economic reintegration of the refugees" (ibid., p.417). While Rempel is talking in general terms and not about Zarqa specifically, his account is illustrative of the way in which the hyper locality - perhaps bordering on the parochial and mundane - becomes crucial to the success of developmental pacification techniques.

According to many of the Agency's critics I spoke to in and around Jana'a, UNRWA has helped to institutionalise the very same problem that it claims to be resisting. Dr Balawi told me in our first meeting that UNRWA are simply a cover for the West's support for Israel. I then asked him for his views on the future of UNRWA. With resounding confidence, Dr Balawi shook his finger at me and stated, "they will still be here when the last Palestinian child takes his last breath". There remains a political imperative, he believed, to keep the Palestinian question unresolved. Two months later, Deputy Tariq Khoury, whose constituency includes the UNRWA camp as well as the wider city, echoed Khalid's sentiments. "UNRWA is entirely political. The goal is to settle Palestinians in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, to make them feel comfortable so they won't need to return to Palestine".

These anecdotes, in conjunction with scholarly literature on pacification, speak to the politics of humanitarianism discussed in Eyal Weizman's *The Least of All Possible Evils* (2011). For Weizman, a more assertive and potentially transformative politics of displaced populations is undermined by the presence of humanitarianism, particularly when these interventions become protracted, and the humanitarian's role transitions from the provision of basic services to a mode of governance. In defining a problem and implementing measures to solve that problem, development institutionalises new sites of power, "regulating and disciplining Third World populations" (Kapoor 2017, p.2666). In Jana'a and across the region, we see UNRWA occupying a political space far beyond the institution's moral, humanitarian underpinnings (Ophir, 2010), and thus the Agency becomes a means through which Palestinian displacement and refugeehood are managed (Weizman, 2011).

Having established the political ambiguity embedded in the UNRWA narrative, it is important to consider the broader implications of the Agency's commitment to peace and stability. If the objectives of international development have shifted away from ideas of progress to more stripped-down notions of survival and stability (Sachs, 2017), how is UNRWA received in a community eager for development solutions? Many associate the Agency with corruption and self-interest; Taisir explained that “the money never reaches the people”. Even those less critical of international development presence in Jana’a explain that the Agency has very little impact these days, their services having declined significantly over time. It is also widely acknowledged that residents have taken it upon themselves to improve their living conditions in Zarqa Camp, given the complicated relationship between Palestinians and the top-down development structures of UNRWA (Rempel, 2010). Tents were replaced by informal structures with corrugated roofs, which were in turn replaced by more permanent, multi-story concrete homes - creating additional living space for the extended family. Some families sold or rented-out their homes, and as a result the camp today is home to significant migrant populations, particularly Egyptian labourers and more recently some Syrian families. In many respects, UNRWA camps throughout the region are as much a part of the urban fabric today as the neighbourhoods surrounding them (Ababsa 2011, p.260).

The continuous presence of UNRWA in Zarqa bears resemblance to Nixon’s (2011) concept of slow violence, a by-product of actions carried out in the name of development. Examining the extent of environmental crises in the context of 'turbo-capitalism' (ibid., p.4), the concept of slow violence has implications for how we think about development crises and the geographies of emergency.

> "By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, […], an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. […] A violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales."
>
> (ibid., p.2)

It is not that UNRWA have instigated violence among its Palestinian communities, but rather that its presence is seen as having served - or, at least, not conflicted with - external geopolitical interests over the needs of local Palestinian communities. Residents are acutely aware of the fact that UNRWA have been operating in Zarqa while the city has undergone decades of substantial economic decline (see Chapter Five). There is scant evidence that UNRWA have managed to mitigate against the resulting problems, and the quality of their service provision has also fallen during this time. Meanwhile, the prospect of securing the right of return for the Palestinian diaspora is as far off as it has arguably ever been. Residents are left questioning the role of UNRWA in Zarqa today, and whether the Agency have been complicit in the slow erosion of the city.

UNRWA's logic of pacification is not necessarily something to dismiss offhand as conspiratorial or subversive. Taisir has always been critical of UNRWA and its administration of Zarqa Camp, but when I asked him for his thoughts on the potential impact of UNRWA having to leave Zarqa, he answered in terms of an increased security threat:

> "UNRWA leaving Jordan would be very bad for political stability. If there is no solution for Palestinians, there will be instability. Palestinians in Jordan will demand equality, and Jordanians will work to ensure this doesn't happen. There will be a sense of betrayal. Palestinian neighbourhoods have proven difficult to police in the past. This will only intensify their [Palestinians'] criticisms."

According to Taisir, UNRWA had helped keep peace in Jordan and in the region, through its own provisions and by absolving national governments of some of the responsibility for their Palestinian diasporic communities. But they had done so while the strength of Israel over the Palestinian cause had continually increased, and their presence in Palestinian areas had not prevented "apartheid" in Gaza. This contradiction gets to the heart of UNRWA. While its interventions and mere presence may have helped stabilise life in the diaspora, this success was only identifiable (and therefore unquantifiable) by an *absence* of a particular threat or problem, namely conflict and social discord. As this research has shown, the

absence of conflict could equally be down to the Jordanian government's positive response to the refugee question in the 1950s, and to the subsequent formation of Palestinian communities in particular urban locales, supported by employment rights, citizenship and state-led modernisation projects. Progress, though, as an objective of development, requires a more positive impact from intervention. This could be in visible, material terms, while it could also take the form of a subjective experience of things getting better, and moving in the right direction. And it is progress, rather than pacification, that development interventions appear to be judged upon by residents in Jana'a.

The 'I Participate' Programme

During my time in Zarqa, I was introduced to a development project that spoke directly to these geopolitical concerns over development, and the role of the local in attempts to pacify diasporic life. The project was an educational programme funded by USAID and the American National Democracy Institute (NDI), aimed at improving political participation among Jordanian youth and involving both classroom exercises and, at the end of the course, a community-facing project of the students' choice. The 'I Participate' [*Ana Usharek*] programmes were first rolled out in universities, but then extended to schools in 2015 through the Queen Rania Foundation. In the spring of 2018, the former US Senator (and Senate Majority Leader) Tom Daschle had come to visit Rushida School in Jana'a, where a group of 10th grade female students had used the course to stop local factories from emptying their waste into the river (Fig.18).

Amani, the class teacher, told me that the students work through the textbook, and they then decide democratically what local project they want to undertake. All of the girls involved in the course were from Jana'a, and the problem of river pollution in the local area proved a popular topic. The students designed questionnaires to investigate the pollution issues, and discovered that the cause of

the contamination problems was a combination of sewage and industrial waste upstream. The students then lobbied the municipality, the regional government and the ministry of the environment to take action. The governor agreed to intervene on their behalf, writing letters to the factories and forcing change elsewhere to alleviate the sewage issue. Amani summarised the outcome of the project to me:

> “This was all great. The best thing was that the girls felt empowered. They worked very hard, and became so engaged that they want to continue to work on these types of issues in the future”.

Amani made the process sound so straightforward and positive, and it contrasted sharply with the experiences of the Lejneh who had repeatedly sought this type of response from policy makers. That said, the project was a resounding success and warmly welcomed across Jana'a. River pollution had been a serious concern for so many local residents, and particularly those who were around to remember the river in its former state.

Fig.18 Seil al-Zarqa, Jana’a (July 2019)

The NDI/USAID educational programme included a great deal of flexibility, as there were no restrictions on the practical project, so long as it was targeted inside

the school or within the local community. Intriguingly, community development was not the end objective but a means towards something entirely different:

> "There isn't one answer to the question of what causes extremism in young people, nor is there one solution to address the problem. The *Ana Usharek* provides Jordanian students […] with an entry point to learn more about democratic values and to get involved with the community and politics. While it isn't a panacea for every problem, it is a way to start conversation, give students and community members an outlet for discussion, and help spread more moderate, non-violent, democratic ideas"
>
> (NDI, 2016)

Ana Usharek seems to be explicitly designed with pacification in mind. Those participating in the programme learn about existing political processes and institutions, and are encouraged to take localised action within these structures. The projects are further controlled by the fact that they are designed and implemented within a schooling environment; detached from broader political or social movements and causes, with teaching, mentoring and monitoring. Any positive outcome in Jana'a was also dependent on the responses of those in power - in this case the municipal and regional governments. Other projects do not even require this much engagement in the political process, particularly for projects that identify problems in the schools themselves, such as a lack of shaded outdoor space, or the need for nutritional food provisions for children from poor families.[27] In these cases, it seems as though participants experience the benefits of enacting small but nevertheless significant changes in highly localised environments, without overtly engaging in the political system. Regardless of the objectives behind the programme's funding, the girls in Jana'a and the wider community were more than happy with what the programme could achieve.

In the case of the *Ana Usharek* programme, as well as the case of UNRWA's reintegration employment programmes, it is the local that serves as the terrain for development-driven pacification, and the key determinant in the projects' success. With its focus on locality, diasporic urbanism is able to unravel the politics of

[27] Two recent examples (July 2019) of *Ana Usharek* programmes, at two different girls' high schools in Karak, in central Jordan.

development discourses circulating in the diaspora, and hold them in tension with the developmental concerns of individual diasporic communities. Residents in Jana'a are critical of UNRWA for having failed to advance the material conditions of the Palestinians in Zarqa Camp. And over the course of my research in Zarqa, I got the impression that UNRWA would not be so easily dismissed by my interlocutors if it had successfully contributed to the Palestinian chances to thrive and transform their lives in the diaspora. What is so impressive about the USAID/NDI programme is that - in spite of its counter-extremism agenda - it has proved successful in instigating positive change for the community. After all, it is progress, rather than pacification, that development interventions are judged upon by residents in Jana'a.

The examples of UNRWA and USAID, along with the political ambiguities at the heart of their operations, raise important questions about the political tensions between diaspora and development. In the rest of this chapter, we consider a different kind of developmental emergency that implicated the region's Palestinian diaspora. While the representation of diasporic life shifted under this new context, pacification remained a central objective to new forms of intervention.

The 'Protracted Crisis'

In 2011-12, anti-government protests in Syria escalated into an outright war, displacing 5 million Syrians from their homes ('Final Evaluation Report', 2019). News media and international development organisations produced powerful images of Syrian families fleeing both on land and by sea. There was no doubting the emergency of the Syrian refugee crisis. In 2019, more than 600,000 Syrian refugees remain in Jordan, concentrated in the largest cities including Zarqa[28]. The number of Syrian refugees in Zarqa is assumed to be much higher than stated in official reports, as many registered with the UNHCR further north before

[28] UNHCR data, December 2019. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36

making the journey southwards. Mohammad al-Zawahreh, the director of Zarqa Municipality's Local Development Unit (LDU), explained the implications of this for the city:

> "There is fierce competition for a small number of jobs. Rent prices have increased dramatically. Syrians are able to get financial support from organisations, and because their entire family is willing to work - the women, the sons, the daughters - their situation is ok."

The UK response to the Syrian refugee crisis in the region has given rise to a newly expressed interest in the phenomenon of the 'protracted crisis'. In a DFID discussion paper produced in October 2017, protracted crises are defined as:

> "situations caused by conflict where government systems, essential services and markets are unable to absorb or adapt to the impact of crises, leaving a significant proportion of the population acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of livelihoods and at risk of forced displacement over a period of more than three years"
>
> (DFID 2017, p.3)

The idea of a 'protracted crisis' emerged out of a discourse around 'complex emergencies', defined broadly by conflicts that lead to a "breakdown of authority", thus requiring an international response (Russo et al 2008, p.2). The 'complexity' of these emergencies was emphasised, referring to what Duffield (1994, p.38) describes as "unprecedented levels of abject poverty, political insecurity, conflict, state disintegration and population displacement". These emergencies posed a direct challenge to the very notion of development. As a project geared towards progress, development had no substantive answers to the deepening of such crises (ibid.). While the idea of the 'protracted crisis' emerges from this phenomenon, the complexity of the crisis is displaced by a focus on the duration of the crisis, as DFID's definition above highlights. This is a significant shift in the geopolitics of development, as the emergency is no longer defined by that which development is ill equipped to tackle, but instead defined by a 'protractedness' that makes intervention all-the-more necessary. The scope of the protracted crisis has also

widened in comparison to the complex emergency, covering not only conflict zones but pandemics and financial crises (Flores et al, 2005).

The concepts of the complex emergency and the protracted crisis are examples of the way in which the objective of international development has shifted from one of instigating progress to one of ensuring survival (Sachs, 2017). Influenced by Hannah Arendt's writing, Brun (2016, p.399) explains how humanitarianism is far more attentive to "biological life than [it is to] biographical life", committed to providing life-saving and life-enhancing aid than it is engaging in people's lives and future orientations. This focus on the biological means that development practitioners are required to focus on the immediacy of the protracted crisis, without necessarily looking forwards, or engaging with local communities in a pro-active and responsive manner (ibid.). In attending to the biographical, diasporic urbanism provides an important antidote to the development perspective, encouraging us to understand not only how communities are implicated in such crises, but also how they are implicated in humanitarian responses.

The Syrian refugee crisis was six years old by the time the DFID paper was published, and the report argues for more sophisticated long-term planning for crisis situations, and that donor countries enter into development projects with the assumption that any crisis will become protracted (DFID, 2017). DFID's critique of existing interventions goes deeper still, explaining how "parallel" humanitarian systems are deeply problematic, that the role of the state and local economic forces are critical to the success of any given response, and how each crisis must be seen in the context of the pre-existing development issues in any given place. While written as part of an ongoing and evolving strategy in the context of the Syrian crisis, the paper provides valuable insight of how practitioners could re-evaluate the Palestinian refugee crisis in the late 1940s and early 1950s. If we define UNRWA as a parallel humanitarian system, for instance:

> "Trends in practice and funding demonstrate that development donors are not investing sufficiently in services, governance and the private sector in conflict and refugee settings. Parallel humanitarian systems are often set up and prioritised when this is not the most effective and sustainable way to respond."
>
> (DFID 2017, p.7)

The authors note how a humanitarian lens is problematic in that it often favours an immediate, short-term response, which in a protracted crisis becomes overstretched, underfunded, volatile, and unevenly distributed (ibid., p.5). "Just as economies and services reach crisis point", they continue, "they are provided with far less reliable, long-term external support". The centrality of the highly emotive label of 'refugee' to the discussion of protracted crises is politically significant, as it is applied in every national context, disregarding any local variation in state or humanitarian responses. In this sense, 'diaspora' serves as a provocation, encouraging us to assess the extent to which such a shift in policy may or may not change the overall impact of external intervention. The language of the DFID paper seems to advocate an institutional response of 'long-term temporariness'; a commitment to long-term humanitarian support, a political commitment to the rights of refugees, but an absence of any permanent settlement solution, similar to that which underpinned the establishment of UNRWA in 1949.

In the context of the protracted Syrian refugee crisis, local communities in places like Jana'a have come to be understood through the prism of vulnerable 'host communities'. This discourse produces a binary between Syrian refugees and the populations already living in destination areas. As a result, the concept of host community reduces the diversity of local urban communities to a state of pre-existent vulnerability, at risk of becoming exacerbated by the effects of the protracted crisis. However, this does provide an acknowledgement of the underlying, structural dynamics that affect how host communities respond to the crisis of additional refugee arrivals:

> "A key factor behind the high levels of poverty is the low level of employment, and the fact that many of the jobs that are created are low quality jobs. […] The deepening of the Syrian crisis required an approach that recognised the protracted nature of the crisis and sought to address its impact on the development prospects

> of the country. The longevity of the crisis will likely translate into mounting costs and ever-increasing challenges to the social and economic fabric of the country."
>
> (Government of Jordan 2017a, pp.27-8)

In Lebanon, Palestinians continue to be "deprived of most civil, socio-economic, let alone political entitlements" (Salih 2013, p.90) and in Jordan, Palestinians have faced increasingly hostile practices that reinforce "the widespread and rooted narrative of Palestinians as "guests" (*ḍyūf*) rather than citizens" (ibid.). While these hostilities may not capture the diversity and nuanced nature of Palestinian diasporic experience, both these representations of diasporic communities - as guests and as hosts - illustrate how the diasporic condition can easily be distorted by a developmental lens.

In the Government of Jordan's report quoted above, we see a narrative of city life where different, existing crises - in employment, living costs, community life - are compounded by the apparently single event of the Syrian refugee crisis. By dehistoricising life in 'host' communities, the current crisis is seen to exacerbate – perhaps even cause – these structural concerns, and is seen to create the potential for destabilisation and the alleged necessity of external intervention. A project information sheet from GIZ is a case in point:

> "The rapid population growth puts immense pressure on the country and its people, who compete for jobs, water, electricity and food. It has become increasingly difficult for local people to earn sufficient income, especially in the low-wage sector. The infrastructure in host communities is no longer adequate to meet the needs of the growing population and, in this context, municipalities lack the resources to maintain and create green spaces."
>
> (Nölting 2018, p.1)

Under these conditions, the developmental priority lies in the 'mitigation' of risk; to reduce the vulnerability of communities to external shocks, to keep tension between Syrians and 'hosts' to a minimum, and to increase the capacity of host communities to 'absorb' the new refugee population (UNDP, 2014).

Another prominent and overlapping concern is that of fostering 'social cohesion', which is mentioned throughout the UNDP project reports on their 2013-2017 response to the protracted crisis (e.g. Hassan, 2016). Social cohesion and the 'prevention of violent extremism' in fact make up one of the UNDP project's three main pillars (ibid., p.3). Social cohesion has replaced integration as a key policy objective in the West (Shukra et al, 2004), both at home and abroad. This shift is significant in diasporic contexts, as 'social cohesion' alleges to acknowledge and respect differences within communities, while attempting to foster a sense of community and belonging in a broader, more inclusive sense (ibid.). Nevertheless, Vasta (2010, p.507) argues that 'social cohesion' often has "assimilationist undertones", particularly in cases where cultural difference is seized upon by "anti-immigration and anti-diversity" political agendas (ibid., p.504). This places ambiguity at the core of development policies that are designed with pacification in mind. Given that diasporic urbanism is conscious of, but not driven by social difference, the framework allows us to consider the political ambiguity and contradiction within development, and does so with a focus on the ways in which development is implemented in specific locales.

Interestingly, I did not come across anyone in Jana'a who thought the increase in Syrians would lead to social problems, and certainly not in comparison to the effects of continuous, structural, urban decline in the city. People were aware that the increase in population was leading to higher rents across the city, and that many Syrians would provide added competition to Palestinians and Jordanians in the private sector and informal economy. But the high cost of living and a lack of employment opportunities had long preceded the arrival of Syrians. Syrians were in fact neighbours, both in terms of a regional Arab community and at the neighbourhood level. Syrian children have secure places in schools and, since 2016, Syrians have been working in the formal as well as the informal economy (Turner, 2019). I did not witness nor hear about any conflict or resentment in relation to the Syrian crisis. For Jana'a residents, their social, economic and political concerns long predated the arrival of Syrian refugees.

Nevertheless, it is in the context of this ‘protracted crisis’ that international development organisations were developing interventions in Zarqa over the course of 2016-2018. In the following two sections, I will focus on the work of DFID and GIZ, who proposed different solutions to the crisis but shared a commitment to pacification, articulated through the language of security and social cohesion. Living in Jana'a at the time, I was able to interact directly with project officials, and I even invited two practitioners from each organisation on walking tours through Jana'a, to further examine how the developmental lens is applied to Jana'a specifically. In the passages below, we see how these organisations rationalise intervention, how they represent and misrepresent community dynamics, and the extent to which local dynamics and community needs are taken into account. DFID's commitment to 'long-term governance gains' represents an underestimation of the city's much deeper and protracted decline, whereas GIZ's 'acupuncture approach' to development stands to satisfy local needs, albeit in a limited way. These final two sections strike a different tone to the rest of the chapter, helping to highlight the nuanced, critical perspective that diasporic urbanism brings to development.

‘Long-term Governance Gains’

The idea of a walking tour around Jana’a crystallised following a meeting between British development practitioners and Mohammad at the Local Development Unit (LDU). The delegation visited Zarqa in July 2018 to assess the impact of their municipal grant, which had funded a new city-centre car park, a public park, an extension to the LDU premises including new public facilities, an exhibition space for handicrafts made by Jordanian and Syrian women in Zarqa, and finance for municipal capital expenditures, such as new waste collection trucks. At the meeting, DFID appeared critical of the municipality, showing frustration that projects were behind schedule, and that the priorities of the municipality were at odds with their expectations. For instance, the only part of the park project that had been completed was the on-site building, fitted with air conditioning and new

office space for the municipality. Above all else, DFID representatives wanted to hear how their grant had contributed to 'social cohesion' in Zarqa, as well as to improved municipal services.

Knowing the state of the municipal finances and the scale of the city's economic issues, I was perplexed by the ambitious scale of DFID's objectives. One of the senior representatives struck a particularly patronising tone when speaking to Mohammad and his team, and gave the impression that the investment they had made in Zarqa municipality had not been utilised efficiently, due to failures within local government. After the meeting, I submitted a written report to the British delegates, placing the grant and associated projects into the context of a chronically under-funded municipality, and an over-worked Local Development Unit. The LDU was tasked with overseeing numerous projects from different donors concerned with the protracted crisis, all with different requirements, specifications, processes, and levels of direct engagement. Coordinating and implementing these diverse projects to the standards expected by donors, seemed like an impossible task, given its sheer complexity and the lack of manpower. DFID delegates seemed to be elevating the impact of their interventions while ignoring the critical, structural issues that significantly limited the possible developmental outcomes.

Anna, who had attended the meeting, took me up on the offer of the tour, and brought along her colleague David, who had only recently relocated to Jordan. As I showed them around Jana'a, sharing stories of developmental decline and impasse, David explained that the UK's policy was to work directly with the municipality as much as possible. The grant was administered through the UK's Municipal Services and Social Resilience Project (MSSRP), which was under the remit of the 'Conflict, Security and Stability Fund' (CSSF). According to its official website, the CSSF:

> "… is a cross government fund which supports and delivers activity to tackle instability and to prevent conflicts that threaten UK interests"
>
> (Conflict, Security and Stability Fund, 2019)

The MSSRP began in 2016 to "support integration, social cohesion and increase capacity in key services", given the risk of the Syrian crisis exacerbating existing problems (DFID 2016, p.1). While acknowledging structural weaknesses in local governance institutions, Anna and David made it clear that DFID was committed to "long-term governance gains" and that this approach complied with accepted development standards. A focus on governance often involves administrative alterations more than it involves actual improvements to the lives of target populations (Mkandawire, 2010). Regardless of any specific dynamics within individual host communities, they believed the problems could be mitigated via a more centralised response. I asked whether long-term governance gains were realistic expectations, given that the financial support represented a fraction of the municipality's high levels of debt and significant social insurance liabilities, not to mention its lack of expertise and institutional support. The MSSRP grants total £12 million, spread across four years and involve fourteen municipalities in Jordan (ibid.). David reiterated the importance of working through these formal channels, emphasised the importance of procedure, and assumed that positive outcomes would follow from these strategies.

Throughout the tour, I was frequently asked about the Syrian refugee crisis from a security perspective, and particularly the ways in which Palestinians were coping with the increase in the Syrian population locally. While I was explaining the strength of community in Jana'a, its sense of cohesion and belonging and the lack of conflict in the area, they both commented that they could feel it themselves. In fact, what surprised the pair the most about Jana'a was how safe they felt walking around the neighbourhood. Anna was an FCO employee and had been working on political issues in relation to UNRWA and Palestinian refugees, whereas David had been working specifically on conflict resolution for DFID. Both were used to associating neighbourhoods like Jana'a - poor, informal, and majority Palestinian - with various political, economic and social problems. After a tour of Jana'a I showed them the neighbouring UNRWA camp, and they were impressed by the cleanliness of its streets relative to Jana'a, and its well-maintained school buildings and health clinics. They were surprised to hear the camp being criticised by local

residents, having previously assumed that UNRWA were vital to the political and economic future of camp residents. Accusations of corruption, ulterior political motives, and a disregard for everyday problems - all issues that locals had talked to me about - came as a surprise to both of them, and seemed to unsettle their unequivocal defence of the institution.

Both Anna and David were well versed in recent Palestinian history, and appeared to approach Jana'a through the geopolitical narratives familiar to them. They were deeply interested not only in the UNRWA camp next door, but in the conditions following the *Nakba*, and the aspirations of current residents for the future. They were firmly in support of the Palestinians' right to return, and slightly taken aback when I told them of my impression from conversations with locals that, in the unlikely event that return became possible, many would elect to stay in Jana'a (see Chapter Eight). As I had expected, neither of them had heard of the mass eviction order in Jana'a, and were visibly shocked by the details and the socio-economic implications. The eviction, along with the signs of slow erosion across the neighbourhood, were by far the most important developmental priorities of the community at the time. But due to the intensity of the Syrian crisis, a focus on security, and a commitment to supporting local government, it was clear that these priorities had evaded the gaze of this particular organisation. While I could see the logic behind the UK's strategic response to the Syrian refugee crisis, which reflected the protracted nature of most humanitarian crises, the intervention failed to address a range of local factors impinging on the city's response and its own development trajectory. The funds were only enough to cover a small number of projects, and it was unlikely to have the impact the officials were demanding the LDU deliver for them.

'The Acupuncture Approach'

Mohammad had also asked me to get in touch with Jonas, a Technical Advisor for GIZ, to help facilitate the planning and preparation process for their park project

in Jana'a. Jonas accepted my invitation to a tour around the neighbourhood and came to Jana’a early on a September morning in 2018, with his colleague Walaa. I took the two of them around the neighbourhood, along an almost identical route to the tour with the British pair, starting with Jundi Park. This park - the large, abandoned public space in the north-west of Jana’a, detailed in previous chapters (see Fig.3) - would be the site of their 'green infrastructure' project for Zarqa. Jonas said that this was one of eight similar projects taking place across Jordan, although each was different from the last. The needs of the community and the landscapes varied, and the relationship between GIZ, their partners, and local authorities also varied. They had discussed having a more direct relationship with the municipality in Zarqa, for instance, but had decided against it due to a lack of project management experience at City Hall.

This approach had important implications for how the intervention would engage the local community, and its potential to reflect the more specific, contingent aspects of community life. At the time of the visit, GIZ had received the go-ahead from the German government for the Jundi Park project, and were accepting tender applications for both the design and implementation phases of the project. Residents in Jana’a were due to meet the designers a few months later, in either the November or December, in order to discuss the needs of the community and their hopes for the project. While it was not possible to follow the project through to its latter stages, this decentralised and participatory framework appeared to be flexible enough to reflect local concerns. Jonas told me that each of their eight projects represent a different stage of the learning curve, the idea being that the practitioners learn from their mistakes as they go on, and in theory improve on a continuous basis. It was unclear in my mind whether Jana'a residents would benefit from such a reflexive approach - allegedly informed by best practices - or whether they would fall victim to such experimentation. There was a hint of a trial-and-error mentality.

This small-scale intervention, coupled with a reluctance to support existing developmental structures in local government, exemplified what one urban planner at GIZ referred to as the ‘acupuncture approach’. Before joining GIZ,

Rawan Attour had worked as an urban planner for the Greater Amman Municipality, where she had experienced the difficulties involved in obtaining political approval for masterplans and other urban development proposals. At the Amman Institute, Rawan and her colleagues had developed the acupuncture approach as a way of bypassing political self-interest and mistrust. As the analogy implies, the objective was to scale down the proposed intervention to one locality, at a much lower expense and thus with an increased number of potential donors. The idea was that if the intervention proved successful in one locality, with tangible benefits to the community, it would be much easier to secure an expansion of the project to new areas. Rawan was attracted to GIZ because they shared this development philosophy. Jundi Park was viewed as one particular 'acupuncture point' that would deliver a wide range of benefits to the Jana'a community, and demonstrate to Zarqa Municipality that further green infrastructure projects are needed elsewhere in the city.

News that the Jundi Park project had been authorised was well received by the community. While residents had no control over the scope of the project, or its timeline, they welcomed the intervention and the chance to meet with the designers. An additional element of the project that satisfied locals was the fact that the project objectives focused on labour-intensive methods, involving a cash-for-work programme aimed particularly at those who were without a regular wage and in need of the work experience (Nölting, 2018). The workforce had to be local, and comprised of 50% Syrian refugees and 50% Jordanian citizens. Although the project would only create temporary employment for a small number of locals, it was popular because it met one of the major demands of the local population: more and better-quality public space.

Jonas had already visited Jundi Park during a previous meeting with Mohammad. Nevertheless, he was keen to see more of the neighbourhood given the intended impact of the project on the wider community. Like the British pair, Jonas and Walaa were interested in learning more about local history and present living conditions. After Jundi Park I took them to see the river (opposite the entrance to Jundi Park), the abandoned site at Army Park, the residential area that had been

threatened with eviction, the ruins of Al-Abassi Club, the main commercial street, the Hijaz railway, and the municipal dumping site, before returning to the Municipal Stadium where they had left their car. With a keen interest in green and sustainable development, they were particularly saddened by the stories of urban decay and decline behind most of the sites we visited. As many of these sites were privately-owned, or at least not formally registered as government-owned land, Jonas said international development agencies would not be able to intervene. On a different note, and like the British pair, Jonas and Walaa were visibly taken with how peaceful and safe the neighbourhood felt. Walaa was surprised to find that residents were making eye contact with her when talking - “this never happens when I go to neighbourhoods in East Amman… it’s amazing!”. Walaa was Jordanian-Palestinian herself, and I asked her if she could fathom why the interactions in these two places were so different. She was unsure, but seemed to agree with my view that it may have something to do with 'the simple life' in Jana'a, which distinguishes local life and social relations.

During his visit to Jana’a, Jonas told me that the likes of USAID and DFID “tend to throw money at [development] issues and expect the results to reflect the money put in”. He explained that GIZ were more deliberate in their specific targeting of development projects, identifying specific needs within local communities. The redevelopment of Jundi Park seemed to support this claim. It is true that GIZ tightly controlled the participatory process and interactions with the community, but in contrast to the DFID approach, the organisation was at least visible to the local community. Regardless of how these organisations viewed the diasporic community, Jana'a warmly welcomed their commitment to improving the neighbourhood and the quality of local life.

The fixation of international development on the Syrian refugee influx has led to the displacement of the real concerns of the local community, which long predate this latest protracted crisis. In comparison to DFID's project, GIZ seemed better-equipped to respond to these localised developmental needs, even if their perception of the development crisis did not reflect the longer-term trends residents had made clear to me time and time again. However, the aid from GIZ

and DFID represented a level of engagement that had been absent for much of the developmental impasse in the city. Residents in Jana'a were keenly aware of the concept of donor fatigue, and worried about the volatility of future funding. Locals widely believed that the Jordanian government could and should have been investing more in inner-city schools, public parks, community services, and infrastructure projects, but had little hope of such investment. Therefore, it did not matter how the international organisations articulated the crisis, nor did the geopolitical agendas behind their humanitarianism. What mattered to the local community was whether they would help places like Jana'a secure the development they had long sought.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how the longevity and intransience of diasporic communities complicates and even challenges development narratives that seek to govern aspects of the diasporic present. Diasporic histories, subjectivities and material concerns offer us a unique and critical vantage point from which to examine the ways in which development discourse simplifies, manipulates and overlooks particular forms of diasporic life. Geopolitical narratives associated with the Palestinian refugee continue to frame the engagements of organisations such as UNRWA, USAID, and to some extent DFID, in Zarqa today. For DFID and GIZ, the Syrian refugee crisis has provided a new impetus for developmental engagement. These new engagements have brought with them a shift in perceptions of Palestinians from vulnerable refugees to hosts of a new refugee population in the city. The visibility of USAID and GIZ projects were central to residents' favourable opinions of both interventions, and this was in stark contrast to both the invisibility of the projects funded by DFID, and the lack of improvements inside the UNRWA camp. In both cases, the developmental lens struggles to come to terms with contemporary life in the city, and the specific needs of the communities that are affected by these interventions.

As outlined at the beginning of the chapter, diasporic urbanism does not assume a pro-, post-, or anti-development position, but nevertheless provides a unique and critical perspective on the temporal assumptions and geopolitical justifications of development. However, we must recognise that critical perspectives on development can have significant repercussions, particularly in the context of forcibly displaced communities. UNRWA's shortcomings, for instance, have long been hijacked by the Israeli right. These critics argue that Palestinians remain vulnerable as a direct consequence of the Agency's alleged corruption, institutional weakness, and its refusal to secure Palestinians permanent resettlement in a third country (Gordon, 2018; UN Watch, 2018; Prosor, 2019). In their attempts to undermine the political symbolism of the Agency, these critics not only draw on genuine failings in the provision of services and development, they also argue that the hope UNRWA gives to Palestinians is a falsehood: a fantasy that cannot be realised (Gordon, 2018; UN Watch, 2018). From this perspective, UNRWA's emergency has been an opportunity to forward a different political position, one that undermines the Agency rather than attempts to keep it in operation. As has already been established, many of my interlocutors would refute the notion that they remain in a state of victimhood. And, rather counter-intuitively, many would agree with arguments put forward by the pro-Israel critics, albeit for entirely different reasons. They too, argue that claims of humanitarianism, development, and emergency are a façade for a political agenda that does not help improve life within the diaspora itself.

Diasporic urbanism exposes the contradictions of UNRWA's operations, both in terms of its 'long-term temporary status' but also in terms of the political implications of this paradoxical status. The framework does not advocate nor refute the continued presence of UNRWA in places like Zarqa, nor does it claim that Western policies of pacification preclude all successful interventions grounded in the needs of the community. Instead, diasporic urbanism performs two important functions. Firstly, the framework critically examines the spatial, temporal, and political dimensions of development, recognising that the concept

of diaspora poses an existential problem for development. Secondly, diasporic urbanism examines the merits of development through local, place-based engagement, and to judge the efficacy of development according to the views and needs expressed by the communities subjected to interventions. Today, development is no longer associated with the idea of progress, which has been replaced by a preoccupation with survival, resilience, and crisis management (Sachs, 2017). As a result, development decontextualises the pasts of communities like Jana'a, fixates on the problems of the present, and ignores the possibilities of the future (Brun, 2016).

VIII: Diasporic Futures

Introduction

The critique that runs through this entire project includes a deep concern with temporality, and more specifically how temporality is conceived in diasporic settings. Invariably, emphasis within diaspora scholarship is placed on either the discontinuity of time (Axel, 2001; Cho, 2007), or the ability of the diasporic subject to transcend time, in addition to place (Hall, 1994). Through its place-based approach to diasporic experience, this ethnographic research has succeeded in illuminating the more sensitive, nuanced aspects of time that help to define diaspora in specific contexts. What this research has uncovered is that the concept of diaspora *refracts* time in various ways. Certain aspects of the past are inscribed in the present, and are brought to the fore by particular events or material points of reference. The past itself is forever changing shape in accordance with the conditions of the present. Each of the previous chapters has highlighted the importance of paying attention to this refraction of temporality in the diaspora, the intensities it emits, and its productive capacity in relation to diasporic subjectivity.

This penultimate chapter brings the story of diaspora and temporality to a logical conclusion, by exploring the ways in which the future is perceived, predicted, and worked towards in Jana'a. Ending the analysis with a concern for the future does not mean to reproduce the linearity of past-present-future. Instead, this chapter approaches the subject of the future on its own terms - as a starting point for understanding life in the diaspora. For so-called 'victim diasporas' (Cohen, 2008),

it is common to define life in relation to a 'year zero', demarcating the moment of displacement, or of dispossession. In the context of Palestinians, the year zero is most often attached to 1948 or 1967, or even 1929 - when processes of Palestinian displacement were arguably set in motion (Cohen, 2015). In contrast, a focus on diasporic futures disentangles the diasporic condition from its historical meta-narratives, and explores diasporic life as it manifests today, from a point of origin that moves with the present. This point of origin derives from a particular place in the present, but the futures that are conjured up, anticipated, and actively worked towards are potentially unbounded. This is a practice of imagination as much as it is a reflection of material realities. Whereas the previous chapter focused on the actuality of development, this chapter explores the 'virtuality' of development (de Vries, 2007); the desire and imagination for the future, both on an individual level and in terms of a collective diasporic consciousness.

This chapter proceeds by exploring the role of the future in current understandings of diasporic subjectivity, focusing on diasporic cultural projects related to 'futurism', and how the future is studied within the critical social sciences. While the latter provides an important critique of the prominent discourses within diaspora literature, I argue that scholarship must engage with the future on terms that are meaningful to specific communities in the diaspora. For this research, this means paying close attention to the specific aspirations that both individuals and the broader community hold for the future. The chapter then moves on to examine two very different sets of aspirations in Jana'a; one based around a collective desire for local development and an improvement in living standards, and the other around individual hopes of moving abroad, and becoming diasporic once more. Given the prominence of these two narratives in Jana'a, the chapter finishes with a reflection on that most fundamental aspiration (Turki, 1977) of Palestinians in the diaspora; that of securing the right of return to Palestine.

The Concept of Future

We have established that concepts such as nostalgia, hauntology, trauma and loss are often utilised within diaspora scholarship as a means of defining the diasporic present, in relation to the diasporic past. If we assume temporal linearity, it follows that the future is also defined in relation to the past. For instance, Lily Cho (2007) takes the view that in diasporic contexts, futures "have already happened" (ibid., p.16):

> "Cultural memory in the present is the work of the future in the name of losses not yet redressed and sadness not yet recognised"
>
> (ibid., p.28)

By deploying this kind of temporal gymnastics, the future is largely written out of conversations about diasporic subjectivity: it suggests that the future is in many ways pre-determined by the traumatic disruptions of the past. While there may be considerable appeal in seeing the future in this way, due to the emotive nature of these concepts embedded in the past, it is also simply the case that 'the future' has received far less attention as a conceptual category than memory, hauntology and the past (Anderson, 2010).

When diaspora scholarship *is* orientated around questions of futurity, the concept of diaspora itself becomes detached from its association with the past, such as a shared place of origin, a shared experience of displacement, and a shared history spent in the diaspora. But conceptually, diaspora tends to evoke a blinkered reading of the future; one that reflects the presumed inevitability of globalised society (Zeleza 2005, p.35). In this view of the future, identities around nation, race and even class and gender break down, as the world becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, interconnected, and 'progressive' (ibid.). Over the course of this research, it has become clear how diaspora is used as a metaphor to signal a form of 'progressive' transnationalism; particularly in relation to notions of identity, sense of place, and political consciousness. Hamid Dabashi (2016) argues that Palestinians in the diaspora - along with other ethnic minorities who are under-represented in the region - can overcome their supposed futurelessness through

forms of post-national solidarity. With every re-articulation of this diaspora-as-metaphor, we see that local orientations are drastically overlooked in explaining the formation of diasporic subject positions. While this research has shown this is primarily a problem of scale and spatiality, it also means other forms of futurity are written out of diasporic life.

In many respects, it is these kinds of narrow, limiting discourses that give the experimental projects of diasporic 'futurisms' their power and appeal. Discussed briefly in chapter two, Afrofuturism is a cultural project that draws on diasporic experience to imagine new, creative futures, often through a combination of science fiction and magical realism (Nelson, 2002; Nazif, 2018). In addition, Afrofuturism provides a range of counter-narratives in relation to Western conceptions of the future, which tend to be either detached from the past or embedded in a problematic, nostalgic, and primitive view of the past (Nelson, 2002). In terms of diaspora, Afful (2016) highlights the importance of Octavia Butler's novel *Wild Seed* in challenging the narratives commonly associated within Black diaspora scholarship, and focusing on alternative futures to write gender, racial and generational differences into the story of Black women (ibid.). Afrofuturism, then, creates a kind of "epistemological space" through which futurity can be approached from a wide variety of angles (ibid., p.569). In urban geography, Simone (2019) has credited this perspective in his own exploration of life and city-making across various parts of the global South. In *Improvised Lives* (2019) and in other works (2004; 2008), Simone encourages us to think through this epistemological space, showing how possible futures are folded into various forms of improvisation in the present. Urban life is itself a kind of science fiction, in the sense that there is always something real but not necessarily verifiable about its shifting temporalities and spatial complexities. Traces of Afrofuturism appear in a process he calls 'districting':

> "[Districting] provides the opportunity for residents to write themselves into a milieu that otherwise might seem to marginalise them and their ways of doing things. It is a process that aims less to make a particular place inhabitable than it does to enable residents to spiral in and out, propel themselves into the larger

> urban surrounds and then bear back down again into the familiar places now rendered unfamiliar"
>
> (2019, p.5)

Alternative futures are thus not only products of artistic imagining, but are also the result of everyday negotiations of urban life and urban places. Futures are constantly being anticipated, worked towards, and remade by urban residents, and may defy simple articulation.

While Afrofuturism is itself a relatively modern creation, Arabfuturism is an even more recent development, but has particularly resonated with a number of Palestinian artists in the diaspora. Arabfuturism is perhaps most associated with Palestinian-born artist Larissa Sansour. Her most iconic work, *A Space Exodus* (2008) concerns a future Palestinian space mission, in which Sansour plants the Palestinian flag on the moon and - in a Stanley Kubrick-inspired aesthetic - sees Sansour float endlessly in space, after waving back to Earth. Suleiman (2016) explains how the piece presents "a grim visual image of a Palestinian expelled as far as the moon, drifting alone in outer space, and into oblivion". Dystopian futures are also the subject of *Nation Estate* (2012), in which Sansour presents a series of images that sees Palestinian statehood 'solved' by the repackaging of Palestinian life through a high-rise development, overlooking Jerusalem but still closed off by the separation wall. In these pieces, Sansour foregrounds the tension between peace and sterility, between a modern utopia and a political dystopia, and - in relation to the territoriality of Palestine - a simultaneous closeness and distance. Sansour's latest project, *In Vitro* (2019), depicts two Palestinian women of different generations who have survived an ecological disaster and live in a bunker under Bethlehem. At the heart of their relationship is a tension between competing representations of the past, in light of more recent events:

> **Alia:** I was raised on nostalgia. The past spoon-fed to me. My own memories replaced by those of others.
>
> **Dunia:** Soon, what we have achieved here will create a myth of its own.

> **Alia:** I don't care about your nations. These scents, this fabric, this history reduced to symbols and iconography. A liturgy chronicling our losses. These plagues, these disasters, this exodus.
>
> **Dunia:** And every exodus before that.

Despite Dunia's [Hiam Abbass] efforts to hold on to a mythologised past, this exchange directly challenges the relevance of these familiar narratives in the present. Here, the story of Palestinian displacement seems to undergo a timely death; not only does it appear as irrelevant in the context of the present, but there is a question over whether it was ever as relevant as it once seemed. Here, Sansour seems to suggest the difficulty with which the future extricates itself from the ongoing struggle over past and present, between memory, representation and experience. In terms of the concept of diaspora, these interventions highlight the importance of refusing particular ideas associated with nation, politics, and temporality.

Dystopian futures are also the major theme of *Harb al-Kalb al-Thanawiyya* ['The Second War of the Dog'], a novel by Palestinian-Jordanian writer Ibrahim Nasrallah (2016) and winner of the International prize for Arabic Fiction in 2018. In his own words, the novel:

> "is a warning of what we could become in the future in the light of what we have been experiencing over the past number of years. The novel was in need of some fantasy, imagination, the absurd and science fiction, […] I feel that when describing a gloomy or dark environment, an extremely hard life, or great destruction, one needs to depend on photographic or cinematic imagery."
>
> (in Mabrouk, 2018)

It is poignant that Nasrallah emphasises the importance of fantasy in writing about the future. It points to the extreme difficulty in contemplating the future when the present is itself so hard to make sense of, and where there is so much at stake. Both his and Sansour's work present dystopian visions of the future not necessarily as predictions but as warnings and commentaries about the fractures within present-day political life among Palestinians and across the wider region.

Collectively, these works highlight how the future can be harnessed by artists and cultural commentators in the diaspora as a device to re-write the past and present. But it is important to acknowledge that Arabfuturism and other 'futurisms' represent a form of diasporic ethos as much as they do an artistic form. In some respects, Arabfuturism reproduces many of the spatial tropes that this research finds problematic within diasporic scholarship. "An origin in imagined space", Arabfuturism claims that "the nation is dead" and seeks to accelerate "the transformation of representation" (Majali, 2015). Commenting on the Estonian-based project of Ethnofuturism in the post-Soviet era, however, Kreuger (2017) argues that at the core of this 'futurism' ethos is a collective desire to find a place for the community in the future; a place that does not exist today. Ultimately, it points to a dissatisfaction with the present and a desire to move beyond it. While places are either fictionalised or imaginatively recreated in these works, they nevertheless play an important role in disentangling broader diasporic narratives and replacing them with a more specific, place-based recreation of the present and future.

How does this ethos translate from the futuristic to the lived realities of diasporic communities? The ethos relates to a vision or desire for a future that is not pre-determined, but open to a range of possibilities. The future, then, is something to anticipate and work towards. The future is not some kind of "abyss" (Majali, 2015), necessarily; the future can also either be utopian or within reach. For Ben Anderson (2010, p.777), anticipatory action can be understood as "the presence of the future", whereby a vision of the future warrants action in the present. The future, then, is something to be expressed, imagined, anticipated, and desired. For Anderson, the future involves an assemblage of styles, practices and logics, highlighting the ways in which future anticipations take form, are performed, and follow specific decision-making processes (ibid.). This reflects the ways in which the future has been approached by both Appadurai (2004) and Simone (2008). Appadurai (2004, p.69) speaks of a "capacity to aspire", which thrives "on practice, repetition, explanation, conjecture and refutation". This capacity requires a "navigational capacity" that is largely dependent on access and exposure to

various networks, opportunities, and possibilities. Whereas Appadurai suggests that aspirations are clear enough for individuals to actively pursue, Simone (2008, p.201) hints at the "disparate, even contradictory" nature of aspirations, particularly in fast-paced, urban contexts. Simone writes of the city as a site "where individuals can hedge their bets […], and fashion different ways both to recognise themselves and support these multiple recognitions" (ibid.; also see Ruszczyk and Price, 2020).

Each of these points of view suggest that the future can be understood through the observation of anticipatory practices in the present. While the 'emotional turn' in geography may have appeal for diasporic scholarship concerned with the future - focusing on hope, hopelessness, and future uncertainty - it is important that diaspora studies focuses on anticipatory practices, and avoids making assumptions about the subjective diasporic condition. But how do we distinguish the future from the present in our readings of these practices? What prevents the interpretation of observation becoming mere speculation, on the part of the researcher? For this research, I decided to ask interlocutors directly about the future: 'What do you think the future holds for Jana'a?' 'How do you envisage your future?' 'What would you like to see happen to you in the future?' These sorts of questions targeted the articulation of aspiration rather than the observation of anticipation. This approach complements Bunnell et al's (2018, p.36) work that explores the future "as part of people's everyday lives and cultural imaginaries". Not only does this hope to achieve a level of authenticity in thinking about the future through a particular place, but it also provides a potential counter-narrative to articulations of the future based on 'developmentalist' mindsets (Pieterse, 2013), from the likes of planners, engineers, and social workers (Zeiderman, 2016). These mindsets rely on various forms of calculated knowledge to predict or anticipate the future, and do not necessarily reflect the realities and visions of the future within their targeted populations (Ruszczyk and Price, 2020). In contrast, diasporic urbanism proves capable of critical reflection and insight concerning the futures of cities and their inhabitants.

Aspirations for Jana'a

On one of my last nights in my apartment in Jana'a, Taisir came to visit for a chat, and to see how my research was going. I was about to travel to Egypt, and he wanted to hear about the 'Remake the City' project I would be involved with in Alexandria over the next few days. I told him about the workshop's objectives, and its focus on regenerating public spaces, sustainable transport solutions, and heritage preservation in the city. He told me that it sounded excellent, and he wished me a safe flight. His voice was more sombre than usual, and it seemed as though we were both conscious of the fact that our time together was drawing to a close. Taisir thanked me for coming to Jana'a, and said that my stay "has been good for us", referring to local residents. He said that he now saw me as a son, and that it was his dream for me to find Islam. I thanked him, and returned the heartfelt compliments, expressing my appreciation for how much he had done for me, and how open he had been to my endless questions. And then, almost out of nowhere, he asked:

> "What do you think will happen in the future for Jana'a… because I am 64 and nothing has changed".

I was used to addressing this question to my interlocutors, asking about their aspirations, and what they expected to happen in the future. Slightly blindsided by his curiosity in my opinion, I gave a rather unsatisfactory answer, arguing that little can change until the municipality is properly funded, but that until then there are small instances of progress; the GIZ park project, the USAID schools programme. He agreed these programmes had their benefits, but added the caveat "the problem is that the money will eventually stop". This time it was my turn to agree; we had often talked about the unevenness and unpredictability of the international development presence in Jana'a. Taisir and the wider community were keenly aware of the short-term nature of development intervention, donor fatigue, and the limited reach of individual projects.

I later reflected on Taisir's claim that 'nothing had changed'. During my short time living in Jana'a, for instance, I had seen the eviction dispute come full circle. I

decided to look back over transcripts of interviews given in the immediate aftermath of the eviction order, to explore the gravity of this change, and whether it revealed anything about how people envisaged the future. One resident interviewee said:

> "Where will we go? How can we be expected to destroy our homes, losing our shelter? How will we live as costs of living continue to increase all the time? We are uncertain about the next generation and future services. Everyday things get more and more expensive… where can we find the money? The price of land, rents, accommodation… always rising. Only a small minority have enough money. Most residents cannot live with this news. The only solution lies with the King. […] Inshallah people will stay, and do well, but it depends on the King."

The sense of precarity and near hopelessness was clear at this time. The residents in Jana'a were being denied their future, and this sense of rupture had compounded pre-existing fears about the affordability of their modest livelihoods in the future, with prices continually rising. Over the two years that followed, this initial shock gave way to a long period of waiting, as the case worked its way through the legal system. And when the order was eventually upheld, political intervention was swift; the eviction order was suspended and an agreement was reached between the government and landowners, securing the futures of those affected by the entire process. Within two years, the future had been taken away from residents, to then be reinstated with the help of external actors. Perhaps Taisir was right, and the settling of the dispute meant that ultimately nothing had changed. However, the eviction showed how quickly and effectively the future can be derailed, and how these changes clearly intensify certain aspects of the present.

Taisir's view that 'nothing had changed' seemed to stem from his tireless efforts in relation to the Lejneh and the pursuit of local development. And while little had been achieved in terms of improving life in Jana'a, the Lejneh had experienced significant disruption over the last two years. Since the *Mukhtar* resigned from the Lejneh, members have attempted to regain the trust of the wider community. New leadership was sought to improve the Lejneh's image and legitimacy, and members provided regular updates to their work on social media. But when the Lejneh became mired in controversy, after the meeting with the regional government and

the expression of political support by one of the Lejneh members, the future of the committee was brought into question. The episode sparked a new level of debate among the more politically-engaged quarters of the neighbourhood, with calls on social media for a new kind of institution to be formed; one with more democratic legitimacy and accountability, whose membership better represented the "voice" of Jana'a. Members of the new body would need to be chosen based on their competencies, know-how, and experience, to ensure they could deliver the demands of the neighbourhood. This had in fact been the goal of those who had established the Lejneh in 2012, but over time it had proved difficult to maintain.

In 2019, residents reaffirmed their desire for effective organisation and representation at the local level. Returning to debates from the previous chapters around Chatterjee's (2004; 2011) notion of 'political society', the community's sustained commitment to neighbourhood-level organisation reflects a view of the future that is beyond the realms of both party politics and civil society. As has been shown in previous chapters, formal politics is tarnished by accusations of corruption and self-interest, while civil society is predominantly shaped by international organisations. The neighbourhood thus becomes the primary terrain for residents in Jana'a to mobilise and act on their own terms, and to take part in anticipatory action (Anderson, 2010). During the first two weeks of December 2019, residents were invited to submit their candidacy for one of the 17 membership positions on the new Committee. 52 residents opted to run in the election, to be held early in 2020. In an act of fairness and commitment to official procedure, the *Mukhtar* rejected calls for the candidates to contribute a fee towards the administrative costs of the election. Instead, the *Mukhtar* announced he would cover the expenses himself.

Tracing neighbourhood organisation from the present and into the future highlights the importance of grounding diasporic life in the specific situations and processes that define the present. Hopes for a more effective and representative committee illustrate the importance residents place on certain democratic ideals, and forces us to question the idea that Palestinians in the diaspora are somehow naturally disengaged from the political realm (Achilli, 2014).

In fact, after Taisir asked me for my views on the future of Jana'a, he then narrowed his line of questioning in an unexpected way:

> "And what about democracy?"

Despite the fact I had invested so much time in neighbourhood life and politics, I had not expected Taisir to ask me for my views on democracy, and the possibility for political change in Zarqa and indeed Jordan. I was later reminded by the sentiment at the heart of Chatterjee's (2011, p.xi) notion of 'political society' that democracy "cannot be brought into being, or even fought for, in the image of Western democracy as it exists today". It transpired that Taisir did not aspire for democracy as a mere form of institutionalised political reform, but as a means of achieving the kinds of local development the neighbourhood had sought for years. Before I had a chance to offer an answer, Taisir interjected:

> "It will take just one good man - who wants to work for the people and to do something about the money problems - then good change will come."

Democracy, it seemed, meant having politicians that represented the will of citizens. Taisir and others had previously told me about former mayors of Zarqa who had succeeded in the role, working for the people to bring much needed development to the city and its residential neighbourhoods.

In spite of these questions, conversations and local developments, part of me continued to wonder whether these localised aspects of diasporic life were still somehow secondary to the existential questions of Palestine, occupation, and the right of return. We had also spoken a great deal about the future in relation to UNRWA and its seemingly terminal crisis, and I had seen Taisir and others take to the streets to demonstrate for Palestinians' rights to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and I had read countless accompanying messages of defiance online. It was undeniable that the community - whether Palestinian, Jordanian, or more broadly Arab - desired an end to occupation and the re-emergence of Palestine as a national, sovereign entity. My research in Jana'a had never sought to undermine the importance of ethno-nationalist politics for this community of Palestinian

diaspora, but rather to highlight the parallel and sometimes counter-intuitive political and social realities of diasporic life. So when Taisir asked me these questions, I was caught off guard by how they were phrased in such existential terms. Despite my ongoing awareness of ethno-nationalist political consciousness, the local continued to assert itself in the community's articulation and imagining of past, present, and future.

Aspirations for Elsewhere

The more formal side of local politics and political organisation is somewhat of an old man's game in Jana'a. Most of those involved seem to have found a career, married, and had children. Some have travelled and worked abroad, while others have lived much more local lives - sometimes out of choice, sometimes out of circumstance. Nostalgia, too, is composed of sensibilities particular to each generation. The older men within the neighbourhood remember a time of progress, modernisation and development, even though they were only children when the neighbourhood was going through its most dynamic period. Jana'a's youth, however, were born long after this time, and long after the Jordanian state began its hostilities towards citizens of Palestinian origin. I met and became friends with several men in their twenties, who had a different take on what the future may bring.

Laith, a 27-year old IT specialist, graduated from the Hashemite University in Zarqa and works from home in Jana'a. His parents died in his teenage years, and he lives with two of his brothers, while a third sibling, Abu Ali, owns a bakery just down the road. I would visit the bakery most days to buy either breakfast or lunch, and to talk with Abu Ali and his eldest son. Abu Ali, who was in his 40s, used to enjoy joking to me, "take me with you to England", "get me to Germany, or to America… when are we going?". For Laith, emigrating was a serious issue. He would come to England and find work, if only he knew a way. He held aspirations for settling in Germany, and frequently talked to me about possible routes and what I thought about his chances of success. He knew people who had made it,

and who had found girlfriends there. These people had connections in one of the embassies in Amman and it seemed possible Laith could use this contact if the formal application process failed. He would have no problem spending a year in a refugee camp in Europe, he told me. Then, he would seek asylum, he would claim he was Syrian and that he had lost his documents, and then they would let him in. “European women love Arab men”, he told me, “you don’t believe me? You don’t think I will find a wife in Europe?”.

Laith could not see any way of improving his life in Jordan. He saw little change of securing any job progression that would allow him to buy a house and have a potential wife’s family agree to the marriage. But he could see a future in Europe, based on testimonies from those who had already made it. In this sense, Laith’s aspirations did not resemble pipe dreams or overly ambitious yearnings for change, he perceived them as the most likely and effective way of changing his material circumstances. Laith was not alone in this quest. Atef, the mechanical engineering student, planned to study for a master’s degree in Europe and to marry a European woman. He had his sights set on a course on renewable energy in the UK; a subject he loved learning about during his undergraduate degree, and one that he felt would be of vital importance in the future. While Atef recognised the sense of social cohesion within Jana’a, he nevertheless felt disconnected on a personal level. His university friends lived in Amman and he was an only child in Jana’a, living with his very elderly parents. He spent his spare time studying, or visiting video game cafes in New Zarqa, with a different group of friends.

Moayid, also in his twenties, runs a small fruit and vegetable shop on Stadium Road, having taken over the family business after the death of both of his parents. He has close relationships with some of the shopkeepers around him; particularly Abu Ghassan across the street. But he finds his work tedious - it involves long hours sitting behind the counter, with infrequent customer visits. He had left

school before his *tawjīhī*[29] exams and partially trained as a mechanic, but what he really wanted to do was to move to Amman or, if there was ever the opportunity, Canada. "It's a good neighbourhood Jana'a, but life is difficult", he explained. For Laith, Atef and Moayid, the aspiration to move or emigrate is closely connected to the material conditions in Jana'a. While each of them articulated a fondness for different aspects of neighbourhood life, the limited possibilities for them remaining in Jana'a were enough to direct their attention elsewhere.

Should Ali or Mursil have the chance to move to the West, there was no doubt they would take it. Ali was Laith's nephew, and Abu Ali's oldest son. He worked in the bakery, and at the age of eighteen had already become proficient in the skills his father had taught him. Mursil, 25, worked as a delivery and removals driver, and had his own truck. Before I moved to Jana'a, I posted to the community Jana'a Facebook page to introduce myself and my project, and Mursil responded by asking me how he could help. Having got to know each other a little, I paid Mursil to help me move from my temporary accommodation in new Zarqa, where I had been staying for a few days while plumbing work was being carried out in my apartment in Jana'a. Mursil helped carry my belongings and some furniture I had recently purchased down the four flights of stairs, loaded them into his truck, and then moved them up to my first floor Jana'a apartment. Both Ali and Mursil were fitness fanatics; Ali was a keen kickboxer, while Mursil spent much of his time in the gym. On the way to Jana'a, I asked Mursil about life for young people in Jana'a, and in Zarqa and Jordan more broadly. "Every young guy in Jordan wants to move to Europe in order to work, there is no work here".

During one of our conversations on Facebook, I asked Ali how he was finding his work in the bakery. He sent me a long message, which he had copied and pasted directly from an article published on *The New Arab* website (Tawfiq, 2015) about the life of Egyptian bakers. It describes the intense heat, the attention to detail,

[29] Students sit the *tawjīhī* exams aged eighteen, which constitute the end of high school education

the risk of fires and skin sores from the temperature and pressure of the oven, and the inability to run a fan or air conditioning to help alleviate the discomfort. The salary is only around $10 per day, but neither the oven nor the baker can function every day of the week. Ali wanted to pursue a career in MMA (Mixed Martial Arts), but was only in the early stages of his training and did not yet know what opportunities there may be for him in the future. He didn't know what would happen to his father's bakery in the future, either; "perhaps it will close, perhaps it will develop into a larger bakery". Ali was not turning his back on the family business, after all his father had not inherited it but had learned his trade independently. Ali recognised the importance of the work but, given the lack of certainty concerning its future, and the tough working conditions, he had his sights on a line of work with greater personal fulfilment.

Mursil hoped to continue his work as a driver in Europe. Not because he had a particularly romanticised view of Western countries, but because he believed the chances of a decent life were that much higher elsewhere than in Jordan.

> "If we had work and a decent salary, we live the best life here in Jordan. It is without war, it's safe, but there is no work. Even if you have it, the salaries are poor."

He had tried several times to obtain a visa to the United States and to the Netherlands, and despite meeting the requirements, all his applications had been turned down. He tried to make sense of it:

> "It's because we are single men and they think we will arrive and never leave. This is what they think. We need a huge amount of luck."

In 2019, Mursil found work on a solar energy project in Jordan, and received a diploma for his participation, but this had not helped further his career prospects. After all, he said, there were plenty of fully qualified engineers in Jordan who couldn't find work. He told me that what he wanted more than anything was the freedom to live a mobile life - to work and to travel. Having helped me settle in

Jana'a, and having given his account of life for young men today, Mursil asked whether there was anything I could do to help him obtain a visa. I promised to search online for schemes or opportunities that might be available to him. It was an entirely unsatisfactory response, and I couldn't help but feel guilty given how much he had already helped me.

Alongside the efforts of the young men's elders to organise and influence formal politics in the city, these stories are important in our attempts to establish what it means to aspire *in* the diaspora and *as part* of a diaspora. For all of the younger men, their lives in Jana'a had created a sense of belonging and even a pride for their neighbourhood and for their country, but they have also created a sense of limited possibility. The five men are enduring the present, and see little prospect for future improvement if they remain in the area much longer. It is not a kind of transiency or temporariness that defines their current existence. It is the trappings of emplacement and intransience that have come to define the scope of what is possible. Here, urban life is not volatile, although it often is for urban majorities (Simone, 2016), and this lack of volatility brings with it its own dilemmas. It requires the men to carefully assess their possibilities, and construct their own particular itineraries for the future.

They do not perceive the present as static, necessarily; they are conscious that these present conditions have been in the making for quite some time, and that there has been little improvement and therefore little can be expected to change in the near future. All five men are third-generation Palestinian refugees and Jordanian citizens, and, crucially, it is a diasporic life elsewhere that they all seek.

It is remarkable how similar these future-orientated narratives are to the ones found in Diana Allan's (2014) work, which focuses on youth aspirations among Palestinians in Shatila Camp in Lebanon. Dedicating an entire chapter to 'Futures Elsewhere', Allan explains how her interlocutors were sceptical towards and disillusioned by the formal political aspirations of the older generations in the Camp. For Shatila's youth, migration had become "existentially imperative at precisely the moment it has become virtually impossible" (ibid., p.170). Allan

observes that the desire to relocate derives from a kind of "existential impasse" (ibid., p.174), as young Palestinians in the diaspora seek to regain some form of agency and control over their lives. Rather than emphasising the discontinuity of the present, Allan writes that there is a desirability about the very prospect of discontinuity, precisely when this means that present circumstances no longer have to be endured (ibid., p.167). Allan perceptively views these articulated aspirations not just as practices of imagination and fantasy, but as embedded within a specific and local historical context; desires to migrate tend to reflect the fact that family members, friends and neighbours have successfully migrated in the past, thus casting migration as a viable alternative.

It is interesting, though, that this viability is not always expressed in academic literature. The celebratory discourse associated with diaspora and transnational movement is often downplayed as scholars focus on the risks and impossibilities of migration. If the literature does not assume a subject position of victimhood, it often focuses on the impact of asylum regimes and immigration systems on migrant subjectivities (Tazzioli et al, 2018). In terms of pre-migration geographies, Allan herself notes that the "hardship, loneliness, disorientation, and homesickness many emigrants experience" are simply not discussed among youth in Shatila. Similarly, in Jana'a, aspirations to emigrate rarely engaged with these potential issues, not out of naivety, it seemed, but due to the fact that they knew people who were making a success of their lives in Europe, the Gulf, and elsewhere. These destinations themselves evoke powerful imageries. Among my interlocutors, the Gulf was a place with high salaries and plentiful employment opportunities; and Europe was a place where welfare states would remove the threat of poverty and insecurity.

My impression is that the 'impossibility' of the present is often overplayed in diaspora scholarship, even when individuals may express the desire to leave and never return to their present circumstances. Allan (2014) draws on Bourdieu (*Pascalian Meditations*, 2000) to suggest that there is something intrinsically human about holding aspirations for elsewhere, given the natural desire to

maximise potential through the navigation of possibility. Instead, we associate the desire to leave the present with an overwhelming sense of alienation, and desperation, reminiscent of the three Palestinian men in Ghassan Kanafani's tragic novel first published in 1962, *Men in the Sun* (1999). The book follows the precarious and ultimately fatal attempt to smuggle the three men across the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, in search of work in the Kuwaiti oil fields. Abu Qais, the main protagonist, is driven to undertake the journey by the total dehumanisation he has suffered living in the diaspora. Before making his decision to leave, his wife says to him:

> "Do you like this life here? Ten years have passed and you live like a beggar. It's disgraceful. Your son, Qais, when will he go back to school? Soon the other one will grow up. How will you be able to look at him when you haven't…?"
>
> (ibid., p.26)

The present in Jana'a did not present itself as unworkable. Even among the would-be-emigrants, Jana'a was a place that reinforced family ties and fostered a strong sense of community. The desire to emigrate did not come from a 'diasporic' sense of mobility and de-territorialised being, but from first- and second-hand experiences, both at home and abroad, in the past and the present. Aspirations for elsewhere must also be understood in relation to the more localised aspirations discussed above, for one is no more 'diasporic' than the other. This analysis, alongside Allan's work, shows the need to understand diasporic futures on terms that are meaningful to individual communities and relate to localised histories and place-based dynamics.

Return

What is undoubtedly the most remarkable aspect of my investigation of futurity with Jana'a residents is that the prospect of, or desire for, the right of return (hereafter 'Return') was never raised. When I began to map out the contents of this chapter, I searched through my fieldnotes from visits in 2017, 2018 and 2019, assuming that somewhere, someone would have broached the subject. Early in my

fieldwork, I had stumbled upon a building in Zarqa Camp with the sign '*Nadi Shabab al-'Auda*' ['The Return Youth Club'], which had been formed in 1954 and was affiliated to UNRWA. But that was all - I did not find anything in my conversations and from my observations in Jana'a. Perhaps the prospect of Return has become so diminished, 70 years after the *Nakba* and 25 years after the Oslo Accords, that it no longer registers in the way that more immediate and localised issues and concerns do. Or perhaps it reflects the fact that, for the vast majority of those I spoke to, Jordan was their place of birth and had always been home. When I met Tariq Khoury, the MP who had always been a vocal proponent of Palestinian rights in Parliament, I asked him, "what does the right of return mean to Palestinians today?"

> "The time for the right of return has passed. People are stable, they won't return. People won't feel Palestinian when Palestine is no longer occupied."

The issue of Return marks an important point of difference between this research and Allan's work in Shatila Camp in Lebanon. Allan (2014, p.173) points to a clear tension at the heart of aspirations to emigrate from Lebanon, namely, the political cost of appearing to abandon the promise of, or hope for, Return:

> "Debates over emigration versus return put two forms of futurity against one another: one rooted in a vision of nationalist yearning and endlessly deferred return; the other, in personal, familial types of futurity and future planning."
>
> (ibid.)

These tensions suggest the importance of the geography of the refugee camp itself and perhaps even of Lebanon more broadly, where a lack of settled status for long-term Palestinian communities continues to reinforce their refugee status. Arguably, the concerns over emigration point to a fundamental shift in the meaning of Palestinian identity, as 'the refugee' seemingly becomes 'diasporic'. Crucially, Allan explains that Return "denies dynamically evolving identity and the cumulative experience of exile", due to its fixed territorial assumptions about home (ibid., p.191). Aspirations in Jana'a seem to reflect the strength of diasporic identity and belonging, as highlighted throughout this research. The idea of Return becomes less conceivable and more complicated as life in the diaspora continues to evolve.

In May 2019, Amnesty International launched a 'dedicated *Nakba* website' titled "70+ Years of Suffocation", to highlight the suffering endured by Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, Lebanon and Jordan, as a direct result of Israel's refusal to grant the right of return. Chapter 3 of the website turns its attention to Palestinian experiences in Jordan, specifically in UNRWA's Jerash Refugee Camp. Whereas the majority of Palestinians in Jordan - including in Jana'a - were given full citizenship rights upon arrival, residents of the Jerash Camp and others arriving in the second wave of Palestinian displacement (1967-8) were refused these rights. But despite this point of difference, the stories shared with Amnesty International still say little about Return as a desire or demand for the future. Instead, Return is displaced by localised concerns about the future:

> "I grew up in the hope that tomorrow we will return to Palestine, but instead we stayed in houses made of asbestos sheets […] I don't want a national [identity] number; I want my human rights. I want to live like other human beings. I want health care, proper education and infrastructure. I want equality."
> (Jundia, 48)

> "I wear this white coat so I feel like a doctor and I become a doctor. I want to treat the people of the camp. I will open a clinic for the poor people of the camp who cannot afford to pay.
> […]
> I want playgrounds in the camp […]. I wish we had clean streets and proper houses that do not leak water when it rains. I wish we had a fire station or that it doesn't take firefighters forever to put out a fire in the camp."
> (Mohammad, 10)

> "One time at school, the sole of my shoe broke. Water and cold found their way in. I asked my father for new shoes so he cut a piece of cardboard and put it in my shoe. When the cardboard got wet he replaced it with a new one. I had to wait a month until he was able to buy me new shoes. I will never forget this. Since then, all I've wanted to do is to study hard and find a job that allows me to buy decent shoes."
> (Busaina, 42)

The stories continue in a similar vein. Heba speaks of her sadness about the future, but hopes that Jordan will one day stop restricting the lives of undocumented Palestinians. Others write of aspirations for fairer access to employment

opportunities, healthcare, adequate schooling, and social security. While the legacies of the past help to explain present day concerns and future anxieties, a return (or a Return) to the past is not the future these interviewees hope for. Rather, it is hoped that in the future these problems will be acknowledged and their lives in the diaspora will be treated with the respect and dignity they desire.

Despite the absence of Return in articulations of future aspiration in Jana'a the concept of 'return' is itself useful in two specific ways, both related to the future. The first ties in with the analysis in Chapter Five, in which residents expressed a desire for parts of the neighbourhood to be rehabilitated to resemble their former glory. The river, the railway, public parks, and the roads are all sources of frustration in Jana'a, and provide the Lejneh and other community groups the impetus to seek development and change. A second way in which 'return' cropped up during my time in Jana'a, time and time again, was in the following phrase:

> "*Inna lillāhi wa inna ilayhi rāji'ūn*"
>
> "To Allah we belong and to Allah we shall return"

Every death in the community was announced on Facebook, often by Akram, and this phrase was always in white writing on a black background, underlined and heading a post that explained who had passed away, their family members, and details of the funeral. There would be a new post every few days, on average, sometimes announcing the passing of a relative of a Jana'a resident living elsewhere. The frequent recital of this phrase - and its reference to returning to Allah - serves as a reminder of the ways in which religiosity cuts through the diasporic experience in places like Jana'a. Life does not end with death on earth; people return to Allah to face judgement, to be held accountable for their beliefs and actions in life. When we consider the formative role of religion on diasporic subjectivity, we must consider a form of belief that challenges national, secular, and material notions of temporality and futurity. In many respects, everyday life consists of a series of anticipatory actions orientated around a future after death. The prospect of return, in this sense, encourages believers to lead a diasporic life that is faithful to Islam above all else, and that follows a distinct set of ethics and

morals. How can we write diaspora in a way that prioritises an ethno-nationalist politics over all other forms of life, belief and being? Who can claim that Return is a more central belief among Palestinians in diaspora than return in the most final sense of the term?

Conclusion

Why is it that Return is not at the forefront of people's minds, in Jana'a neighbourhood or Jerash Camp? Because life simply goes on; perspectives and frames of reference change, the political shifts registers, new meanings come to the fore, and time refracts upon itself. It may seem ironic that aforementioned Amnesty International project - about the suffocating present and failed prospects of Return - was assisted by a non-governmental organisation named '*Bidaya Jadida'* ['A New Beginning']. Diaspora scholarship has a habit of denying diasporas the fullness and the diverse, organic nature of their futures and new beginnings. But as this research has shown, diasporic life and subjectivity tend to be about new beginnings to a much greater extent than this scholarship is willing to acknowledge.

Too readily, the concept of diaspora draws attention away from such specific aspirations and engagements related to the place of settlement. The politics associated with displaced populations in general provide a distraction from the grounded, local and material issues around which diasporic life may be organised. What characterises aspirations in Jana'a are not the grand geopolitical or existential anxieties for the future that the diasporic scholar may expect among a Palestinian diasporic community. This chapter reveals collectively held aspirations that are specific, pragmatic and formed around the desire to see tangible improvement in their lives and if possible their localities. Even the aspirations to escape and to travel are rooted in the lack of opportunities at home, and in the accounts of those who have already made it.

Parallels can be drawn between the articulated aspirations in Jana'a and the cultural project of Arabfuturism. While the latter may seem too abstract for this exercise, both approaches to diasporic futurity have common ground in displacing certain assumptions about the so-called diasporic condition. Both highlight the limitations of defining diaspora in relation to the territorial homeland, and challenge the coherency and relevance of a shared mythologised past in diasporic communities of the present. Diaspora, then, as a social category or social condition, has little to say about the nature of either the present or the future that diasporic communities experience and imagine. But by paying attention to the geographical subtleties that the diaspora concept represents, it is clear how a multiplicity of aspirations relate back to the conditions of diasporic life.

IX: Conclusion

Conditions of Diaspora

In his new film *It Must Be Heaven* (2019), filmmaker Elia Suleiman travels from Nazareth to New York via Paris, as he tries to secure funding for a new film. *It Must Be Heaven* revolves around his encounters with film industry executives and producers - who do not seem to share his 'story' of Palestine and Palestinians - as well as his charming, open-ended encounters with the cities already familiar to him. Eve Jackson, host of France24's English-language culture show *Encore!,* interviewed Suleiman on 3rd December 2019:

> **Jackson:** As a Palestinian filmmaker, there is this attempt - as you go around the world giving your interviews - to interpret every scene as a kind of allegory for Middle Eastern politics. Like the sparrow, for example, flies through the window [referring to a segment of the film], I've seen articles written like: 'Is the sparrow Israel?', 'Is the sparrow a question of your Palestinian identity?', or 'Is it just a sparrow?'.
>
> **Suleiman:** I think the world, a lot of people - especially in the press - sometimes tend to over-analyse. […] We still live in this post-colonial discourse, being Palestinian is always attached to my filmmaking. […] I think there is still something gheottoising about the categorisation of race, colour and gender, which, also I happen to be in that category.
>
> […]
>
> **Jackson:** You're asked by a New York taxi driver what country you hail from. You reply, "Nazareth", then, "I'm Palestinian." There's also this warning from a tarot card reader that a Palestinian state will not be seen in your lifetime. Are you pressing this fact that your national identity exists only as an adjective, and not as a noun?
>
> **Suleiman:** I mean the whole film, you know, raises and banalises identities. […] the thing is you shouldn't take it too literally, the story of Palestine being

established in my time or not. The fact is that I don't believe in states, I have absolutely no identifications with Statehood. I feel that what's really essential - politically, morally, and ethically - is justice. And I always say that I will fight for Palestine, for the Palestinian flag to be raised, but when it is raised I'm gunna fight for it to be lowered down. Simply because my issue is not about borders, my issue is about people having - simply - equality; [that] they are living in a secular society, that they choose whatever they want to do, in a democratic state of being.

[…]

Jackson: The character in the film, Elia Suleiman, is kind of searching for a home, a place to be, I wanted to ask you, where is your home?

Suleiman: I'm still looking. Actually. I don't know. I'm considering my home wherever I am. I would say New York is… was… maybe is, spiritually, because from Nazareth and New York is how I became a filmmaker actually. I would say then Paris becomes [home]… I was living in Beirut for a little while… London… you know, feeling at home is also something to do with emancipating and feeling a kind of identification with the culture that you live, it's not just the concept of a physical home. I don't know if I found that place. You know for a while, I used to think the only alternative place would have been Beirut, because of its cultural proximity actually, and because I'm married to a Lebanese woman. Well, we know what's happening in Lebanon at the moment, let's wait and see.

(*Encore!,* 2019)

These excerpts offer extraordinary insight into how a 'Palestinian filmmaker' navigates the kinds of questions that have been raised and explored throughout this entire project. What is home? What is identity? What is politics? And what happens to these signifiers in diasporic settings? In many respects, Suleiman's own politics reflect various positions of exilic privilege, touching on sentiments of ambivalence, of a symbolic, nationalist ethos, and of a fluid conception of home. But when speaking about the broader sense of Palestinian being, Suleiman exemplifies the themes that have emerged within this research.

Suleiman also resents the ways in which he is 'ghettoised' by the film industry on the basis of his Palestinian identity. He introduces us to a form of Palestinian consciousness that does not subscribe to the idea of statehood, and seeks to move beyond the constricted categories of race and gender. Suleiman's remarks

articulate a wider confirmation, distinct from the research conclusions from Jana'a, that diaspora is limited in its explanatory value when it is thought as a kind of social condition. It seems impossible to ascribe a particular form of subjective experience - based on a particular set of experiences of the past, of movement or of time - to a population category that can include radically opposing visions of nationalist politics and discourse, and can inhabit radically different geographies.

This research has sought to move beyond diaspora as a social condition and towards an examination of the conditions of diasporic communities in relation to particular places. This marks a distinctive shift in the way we approach life in the diaspora, both from a conceptual and a methodological point of view. Diaspora is just as much about place as it is about the continuous negotiation of different scales and temporalities. For decades, diaspora scholarship has continued to fall into a several traps, caused by an over-reliance on various presuppositions about the diasporic condition, and an under-appreciation for the nuances of diasporic life. It is this compromised approach that is responsible for the discipline's enduring conceptual crisis. Too often, home is understood as a distant and lost place, while politics is restricted to national and transnational sentiments, events and practices. Particular elements of the past engulf and compromise the present, while diasporic futures are invariably curtailed. But when we approach these geographies and temporalities through place-based, ethnographic research, these presuppositions quickly break down. We begin to get a sense of what diasporic life entails for particular communities. In Jana'a, for example, we see how the neighbourhood, the city, and the country of residence become important centres of gravity in the diaspora, and we see how politics is defined more by developments in Zarqa's City Hall than in Ramallah or Jerusalem. Through place-based research, we become attuned to local, emergent conditions that disrupt any notion of a diasporic subjective condition.

Following the specific ways in which time is refracted in diasporic communities, we come to see how temporality can provide an important qualifier to the concept's spatial assumptions. This research challenges the assumption that

temporality in the diaspora is in some way suspended, as implied through notions of limbo, waiting, presentlessness, and temporariness. This is resisted through a research process that examines which histories are recalled by interlocutors, and in relation to which spaces, materialities, and places. The same process is followed in relation to future orientations within diasporic communities, which destabilises the grip of the homeland on our understandings of diasporic subjectivity as we follow the specific aspirations and future concerns of individuals within these communities.

Residents of Jana'a are no more representative of Palestinian life or the 'diasporic condition' than those who reside in the refugee camps of Wihdat or Shatila, in Jordan and Lebanon respectively, or than those who have set up life in cities across Europe, the United States, or the Gulf. To speak of a 'diasporic condition' is to do a disservice to the lives and experiences of each of these communities, even before we begin to explore the ways in which these communities are gendered, racialised, and situated in their own particular historical, political and developmental trajectories. This is not to say that research cannot or should not highlight how the Palestinian diaspora is organised on a transnational scale, or investigate the saliency of ethno-nationalist Palestinian politics in today's world. Rather, these particular issues must be viewed as mere fragments of what it means to be Palestinian (or male/female, urban/rural) in the diaspora, fragments that can be challenged through qualitative, place-based research in individual communities. This research argues that a more nuanced concept of diaspora provides a way of understanding how individuals and communities come to terms with their existence beyond the physical space invariably referred to as 'the homeland', as well as beyond the transnational, collective whole. Focusing on the singularity of diaspora only homogenises and flattens out the different forms of diasporic life that exist in different places, and proves susceptible to the political and paradigmatic leanings of the researcher. Any given diaspora, then, constitutes a multiplicity of diasporas, in which different sensibilities emerge in relation to place and temporality.

Diasporic Urbanism

Diasporic urbanism unlocks the enormous analytical potential of diaspora, by challenging the spatial assumptions we commonly associate with the concept. It directs our attention towards the emerging, urban dynamics of time spent in the diaspora, and towards the places that become meaningful to individual communities. Its contribution lies not in its ability to define diasporic life *a priori*, but in directing our attention to a) the places of diasporic life in the city, b) the co-constitutive relationship between place and subjectivity, and c) the emplaced diasporic experiences that emerge over time. Diasporic urbanism, then, is a unique opportunity to think critically about the concepts we have at our disposal as urban and political geographers, transnational scholars, or area studies scholars.

The framework is as much a methodological intervention as it is a conceptual provocation. In making the case for a reorientation of diaspora studies towards the concept of place, diasporic urbanism necessitates the deployment of grounded, detailed, and patient forms of ethnographic enquiry. It strategically positions itself around specific communities within the diaspora, and organises the research around the lived realities of these communities, rather than around the ideas and concepts continually floated within diaspora scholarship. Diasporic urbanism resists the temptation of writing diaspora in the terms that derive from the epistemological sources of diasporic knowledge - the Jewish and African traditions - or derive from the political and paradigmatic positions currently in vogue. Diasporic urbanism encourages us to think critically about life, politics and development in the city, in this age of ever-increasing diversity and interconnectedness, and without necessarily assuming this diversity and interconnectedness in the lives of those whose experience we are researching. Instead, the framework provides a window into how these urban realities are negotiated, by populations that have been exposed to disruptions to scale, place, and temporality.

This research has also paid careful attention to the ways in which diaspora studies has been influenced by the cultural, spatial, and emotional turns in the critical social sciences, and has deployed diasporic urbanism as a way of resisting the assumptions that lie behind these paradigmatic shifts. The framework calls for further research that is willing to place these assumptions to one side, along with the conventional politics associated with displaced populations, in order to examine the ways in which life in the places of diasporic settlement emerge over time, and in relation to specific, often localised contexts. In many respects, diasporic urbanism is defined by the questions it does and does not ask of the interlocutors in the community under study. Too often, diaspora scholarship seems driven by questions relating to what may be regarded as overtly 'diasporic' concerns. For example: how do individuals in the diaspora preserve their Palestinian identity? What cultural practices and home-making practices do those in the diaspora undertake? These are certainly interesting areas of enquiry, but they become misleading if used to think conceptually about diasporic life and the so-called diasporic condition. Instead, diasporic urbanism seeks to explore what it is that defines everyday life in these diasporic communities. How is community life organised? And how do individuals articulate their past, present and future? The strength of diasporic urbanism is that it offers these open questions, through which diaspora and the 'diasporic' emerge and reveal themselves. Diasporic life is specific, contingent, and contextualised by the places in which these communities live.

Having set out the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the project, this research has moved incrementally through different elements of what is commonly referred to as the diasporic condition, in order to examine how these elements relate to life in Jana'a. Chapter Four sought to re-establish the conditions of Palestinian settlement in the neighbourhood, in order to chart the emergence of new forms of identity and community in the city and the neighbourhood, and in parallel to enduring attachments to Palestine. Chapter five similarly reflected on past experiences within the diasporic community, challenging the essentialising notions of memory, trauma and loss by mobilising the concept of nostalgia to

navigate the relationship between past and present. By doing so, this research revealed the benefits of examining diasporic life through the materiality of the present, as it shone a light on aspects of the past that are meaningful to a particular diasporic community.

In the same vein, Chapter Six provided a critical examination of political life in a diasporic context. The chapter distanced the analysis from formal political representation at the national and transnational levels, and instead focused on the ways in which Jana'a residents articulate a more localised set of political contestations and forms of political agency. And while residents in Jana'a are agents of political change, they are also the ambivalent recipients of external developmental interventions. Chapter Seven explored how this diasporic community is viewed according to different developmental imaginaries. Here, diaspora proves an important conceptual intervention in a developmental context, exposing how various and 'progressive' ideas of development are intricately tied to external anxieties over a potentially disruptive, oppositional Palestinian population.

The penultimate chapter, 'Diasporic Futures', covers the kind of empirical ground that needs to be more explicitly emphasised within diaspora studies. It is difficult not to be frequently reminded by the interlocutors in Diana Allan's (2014) research as well as my own, who would question the relevance of our enquiries. "Why Zarqa?" "Why Jana'a?" "Why do you care about these things?" "Why are you interested in this history?" "How will your research help us?" I was repeatedly asked these kinds of questions, by many different residents and interlocutors. And while my answers to these questions may have been unsatisfactory to many, they seemed to suggest the community's desire to engage in future matters, rather than matters of the past. This in itself is an important lesson for diaspora studies. In the context of Jana'a, future-orientated conversations revealed significant internal differences in terms of the kinds of future people desired, and the places they imagined their future selves living. What brought these diverging aspirations together was a shared hope for a secure future, and not necessarily achieved by a return to their former homes in Palestine.

On one level, diasporic urbanism continues in the tradition of diaspora scholarship in bringing these nation- and territory-based political discourses into question. On a deeper level, however, diasporic urbanism recognises that these communities are not simply 'out of place', but are in fact emplaced in a wide range of contexts. By engaging in the places in which specific diasporic communities are situated, we are exposed to the limitations of a conceptual discourse that remains rooted in the idea that diaspora represents a relatively homogenised subjective condition. 'The diaspora' constitutes a large number of diasporic communities. Diasporic scholarship has an obligation to take each of these communities seriously as sources of knowledge production, in order to write the story of diaspora as well as the story of the places these communities inhabit.

Palestinian Political Discourse

In the introduction to this project, I explained that applying the term diaspora to the case of Palestinians excites significant controversy. In contrast to the terms 'exile' and 'refugee', diaspora tends to be seen as a concept that de-politicises, normalises, or even celebrates the presence of ethnic or national communities outside of the homeland (Hanafi, 2000). While 'exile' and 'refugee' are literally defined by forced displacement, diaspora is defined by its spatial scattering and is thus devoid of the same political connotations. This project must therefore consider whether diasporic urbanism is also guilty of de-politicising the 'Palestinian cause'. But also, and more broadly, we must explore the kind of challenge that this project poses to conventional Palestinian politics.

Diasporic urbanism does not necessarily provide a de-politicised account of Palestinian life. Rather, the framework explores the realm of 'the political' as it is articulated and practiced in particular diasporic communities. In Jana'a, politics tended to emerge - most often and most intensely - in a highly localised context, in relation to the workings of the municipality, in the presence of various development actors, and in relation to contestations taking place within the neighbourhood itself. And while residents by no means renounced or turned their

backs on their Palestinian heritage, I did not witness any longing for the homeland, nor a collective aspiration of Return. Many remembered the divisive and violent nature of Palestinian nationalism in Jordan in 1970, and had a natural distrust of political elites regardless of their nationality. These are all highly significant aspects of life in this specific, Palestinian, diasporic community, and have important implications for how diasporic scholarship should be conducted.

The stakes are undoubtedly high when thinking diaspora not in terms of homeland and Return, but in terms of settled status and a settled subjective condition. It would be irresponsible to ignore the fact that the question of settled status has been hijacked by the Israeli right for decades, in an attempt to make the territorial expansion of the Jewish state irreversible. The so-called 'Jordan option' has long been floated as a potential solution. Remarkably, Bender (2019) writes in *The Times of Israel* "it is not the fault of the Jews that Palestinian Arabs aren't in charge of what they believe to be their majority land and population in Jordan". In stark contrast to such a view, this research has sought to explore diasporic life in a way that is both attentive and sensitive to the dynamics of individual communities. It does not make sweeping assertions about the state of nationalist politics. Rather, it tests and lays bare the assumptions that dominate political discourse in the context of the diaspora, and advocates for deep engagement with individual communities in order to better understand, respect, and respond to the conditions of diaspora that emerge in specific places.

The traditional view from the diaspora is that a Palestinian homeland and the right of return are indispensable conditions for any lasting, meaningful peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis. Sari Nusseibeh (2011) recalls the impact of Walid Khalidi's 1978 article 'Thinking the Unthinkable', in which the 'two-state solution' was first articulated. Nusseibeh, a Palestinian academic born in Syria and educated in the West, returned to occupied Jerusalem on a permanent basis in 1978, where his family had lived for centuries (Nusseibeh, 2007). Not long after Khalidi's proposal, Nusseibeh (2011, p.2) came to realise that his own "lack of interest in a separate Palestinian state" - as an end rather than a means to achieving security and well-being of Palestinians - was based on a problematic

assumption. In contrast to Khalidi, he had not been taking the needs of the Palestinian diaspora into account. Nusseibeh had been committed to securing rights for “us”, referring to the Palestinians living across Israel and the Occupied Territories, rather than the “us” that included the diaspora.

> “I too came to believe that a Palestinian state embodying our national identity on a part of our homeland would be an optimum solution, or a maximum denominator, for all of us - enabling those in the diaspora to return to the homeland, those under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza to become free, and those within Israel to gain full equality with their Jewish fellow citizens”
>
> (Nusseibeh 2011, p.6)

“However”, Nusseibeh continues, “that belief did not last”.

Nusseibeh temporarily came round to Khalidi’s position that a two-state solution was necessary, based on the existential necessity for the diaspora to return home. But what if this mis-represented the fundamental aspirations of the Palestinian diaspora, in its entirety and its diversity? Or what if the desire for Return is no longer as prominent as it may have been at the time when Khalidi made his proposal? And, as Nusseibeh himself points out, what can be done when there is no longer the land available for a state to be established? At the centre of Nusseibeh’s deeply insightful and thought-provoking book is the question: “what would the State be for?” (ibid., p.10). We must also ask this question in light of Elia Suleiman’s comment, promising to fight for the creation of a Palestinian state and, once achieved, fight to bring down the newly-created and institutionalised borders and boundaries. Nusseibeh sees the state only as a means to an end:

> “The question of what states are for is ultimately about what it is to feel at home, about our inner emotions and aspirations, about who we are as human beings and how we can best live together.”
>
> (ibid., p.85)

Nusseibeh's musings on the future of Israel/Palestine were problematic to many, not just for questioning both the desirability and feasibility of a Palestinian state, but also for entertaining the possibility of 'second-class citizenship" for Palestinians in Israel, consisting of civil rights without political rights (ibid., p.148). Abunimah

(2013) provides a particularly scathing account of Nusseibeh's text, criticising the author's lack of scholarly engagement, his tendency to apportion blame to Palestinians by omitting key historical facts, and, shockingly, his view of Palestinian resistance as a reflection on an 'Arab mind-set' prone to violence. He ends his review with the following statement:

> "This book adds little to our knowledge about Palestine, offers no new general insights or critiques of current literature, and seems quite detached from the urgent questions facing Palestinians that it promises, but ultimately fails, to tackle" (ibid., p.107)

Criticism of Nusseibeh's book is important to note, given the potential implications of diasporic urbanism for unearthing inconvenient and counter-intuitive perspectives on politically sensitive issues. Nusseibeh struck a nerve, and while Abunimah's critique is well-founded, the question remains whether the two fundamental objectives of Palestinian nationalism - a) establishing an independent, Palestinian state and b) securing the right of return for the Palestinian diaspora - are realistic, desirable, and sufficient, in securing the improvements that Palestinian populations seek.

Abunimah is right to point out Nusseibeh's detachment from the lives of most Palestinians, but it is important for us to question whether his provocations would be accepted under different circumstances. Diasporic urbanism, for instance, may raise similar questions about Palestinian nationalism and the right of return, but from a perspective of careful, patient, and grounded research in individual Palestinian communities. Whereas Nusseibeh is perhaps afforded a platform due to his status in Palestinian society as well as for the content of his views, my positionality has at times been brought into question because of the stories I have told about life in the Palestinian diaspora. Some residents in Jana'a were initially sceptical of my presence in the neighbourhood, and they asked questions of me that were also asked at a policy workshop in Alexandria and an academic conference in London, shortly after presenting my work on diasporic urbanism in Jana'a. "So, what's your connection to Palestine?", and, "why Jordan?" - these are questions I have become accustomed to answering. But what does this line of

questioning imply about my personal positionality and by extension, that of any scholar engaged in this area of study? That I would come to alternative conclusions if I were Palestinian? Or if I did better quality research?

In fact, these questions and the suspicions behind them, illustrate precisely what is at stake in thinking about diaspora politics through the framework of diasporic urbanism. Given the opportunity to expand on the research objectives and findings, focusing on the merits of deep ethnography and attention to the lived realities of diasporic communities, the questioning I received in these three contexts soon led to engaged and constructive conversation. Further, the questioning suggested that the methodological rigour that diasporic urbanism represents is vitally important to the discipline, for it allows us to move beyond questions of character and positionality, and to engage directly in the politics, aspirations, and perspectives of these individual communities. This is the key point of difference that distinguishes diasporic urbanism from the writings of those diasporic intellectuals who, like Nusseibeh, can more glibly advocate for a political position without reflecting the views and needs of the populations they claim to represent.

Turning our attention back to Jana'a, we see how a strong sense of belonging and identity has developed in relation to the neighbourhood and the city. We see how Palestinians live in peaceful co-existence with their fellow Jordanian citizens, and with the newly-arrived refugees from Syria. We also see how the neighbourhood itself conjures a number of different emotions, not just in relation to home and settlement but also in relation to the slow erosion of living standards and conditions in Jana'a. On the subject of aspirations, we see residents imagine futures being lived in other parts of the diaspora, or an improved version of Jana'a. Both the right of return and the protracted crisis of Palestinian refugees may be continuously emphasised by UNRWA, but they do not reflect the perspectives I discovered in Jana'a.

At many points during this research I have been reminded of Achilli's (2014) work in Wihdat refugee camp, widely known to be the centre of Palestinian nationalism

in Jordan and less than an hour's drive from Jana'a. Among the camp's young male population, Achilli charts how a Palestinian nationalist ideology has transformed into a kind of ethos, as these diasporic Palestinians seek a non-political, 'ordinary' life:

> "…owning a flat, getting married, gaining a decent professional status, but also being able to fulfil other desires, such as having fun or being free to choose a specific dress code. […] People do not have time to waste on politics, as they have to cope with other more urgent matters, such as working to maintain their families"
>
> (ibid., pp.244-5)

While there are clear similarities between Achilli's findings and my own, in relation to the young men I spoke to in Jana'a about their future prospects, our research diverges over the question of political presence. Jana'a is by no means a de-politicised place, nor is it a place in which politics is considered counterproductive to the pursuit of better lives and improvements to the neighbourhood. Achilli situates the pursuit of ordinary lives in the intersection of two familiar binaries associated with the Palestinian diasporic condition. Wihdat residents must negotiate their dual status as Palestinian refugees and Jordanian citizens, and must reconcile the temporary space of the refugee camp with its near-total integration into the wider city. Achilli presents de-politicisation and ordinariness not as part of a process of assimilation, but rather as "an opportunity to enact these simultaneously constitutive but apparently contradictory forces rather than acting against them" (ibid., p.244). By taking this stance, Achilli seems to distance himself from the sensitive issue of bringing Palestinian identity and politics into question. It is of paramount importance that the concept of diaspora is used to interrogate these assumptions, and engage in the difficult political questions that come with the existence of communities in the diaspora.

Future Avenues

To bring this project to a close, it is worth reflecting on the potential of diasporic urbanism beyond Jana'a. How does this framework travel within different parts of

the Palestinian diaspora? For instance, what does diasporic urbanism look like in Amman, Beirut, in Santiago, Chile, or Paterson, New Jersey?[30] This is not just a question of each city's identity and characteristics, for how does diasporic urbanism travel to places within each of these cities, to residential neighbourhoods, or specific city districts?

This research has focused on a single neighbourhood for two important reasons. Firstly, the ongoing eviction dispute taking place in Jana'a provided an important and logical entry point to exploring the pressing issues of the day, without relying on the tropes associated with either the diasporic experience or Palestinian politics. Secondly, the neighbourhood soon emerged as playing a significant role in defining community life and in shaping a wide range of diasporic experiences. Diasporic urbanism makes no presuppositions about the types of places that matter in the context of diaspora, just that certain places *do* matter, and that diaspora scholarship needs to discover which places these may be.

Ananya Roy (2009, p.820) has argued "that theories have to be produced *in* place (and it matters *where* they are produced)", reflecting a well-established view within critical urban studies that cities traditionally understood as 'off the map' are nevertheless important sources of urban knowledge production and theorisation (Robinson, 2008). This perspective understands not only the problem of transposing theories from one empirical context to another, but also the fact that this imbalance in urban theory means that 'off the map' geographies come to be Otherised, through problematic and loaded lenses such as 'third world' and 'underdevelopment' (ibid.). The empirical focus of my research reflects the critical perspective of which Robinson is such a passionate advocate, as places like Jana'a are arguably 'off the map' in diasporic, urban as well as a developmental contexts (Alexander et al, 2017; Roy, 2009; Power, 2003). This empirical approach should remain an explicit focus of diasporic urbanism moving forward, given the

[30] Chile has the largest population of Palestinians outside the Middle East. Paterson, NJ has the largest population of Palestinians of any US city

framework's clear potential to re-write the more established narratives of diasporic life lived in the global North.

At the heart of the framework is the simple but indispensable argument that diasporic scholarship needs to explore individual communities through the dynamics of place. It must also commit to immersive, ethnographic methods, in order to decipher the relationship between people and place, and to better understand the lived realities of individual communities. The framework offers an enormous opportunity to seek out the vastly different places inhabited by diasporic communities in vastly different cities, in both the North and South. But what happens when we move away from neighbourhoods like Jana'a to radically different contexts, to the bustling, inner-city districts of megacities in other parts of the global South, for example? These districts and neighbourhoods may be much faster-paced; characterised by continuous movement, uncertainty and possibility; and requiring constant adaptation and negotiation on the part of individuals moving in, out, and through these spaces. Here, disorientation derives not from the event of displacement and the so-called diasporic condition, but from the frenetic nature of the megacity. There is almost a sense that these urban dynamics may consume and overwhelm the diasporic sensibilities we are familiar with, or perhaps these dynamics *define* diasporic sensibilities in this context. What does diasporic urbanism bring to our understanding of these places?

Diasporic urbanism should seek out the specific diasporic communities and the places they inhabit and coalesce, in amongst the chaos of the megacity. The objective remains the same as in Jana'a, to understand community dynamics, urban identities, political dispositions, and future orientations, that all co-exist alongside the constant negotiations the city demands. This would require a deliberate, methodological slowing down of the research, in order to understand how individuals articulate their relationship to these places, however slight or temporary. There must also be a recognition of the possibility that life works according to rhythms and temporalities that are different to those symbolised by the city itself. Diasporic urbanism would attempt to test and qualify the extent to which the highly-mobile, transient, and adaptable city dweller translates this

mode of being into their life more generally. For life is not reduced to these actions alone, and the question we must ask is: how do the lives of these diasporic communities cut through the urban dynamics of the megacity? When we are attentive to diasporic livelihoods, community formations, residence, and subjectivities, does the city become more than a means to an end? Despite the chaos and constant movement, does the megacity become an end in itself?

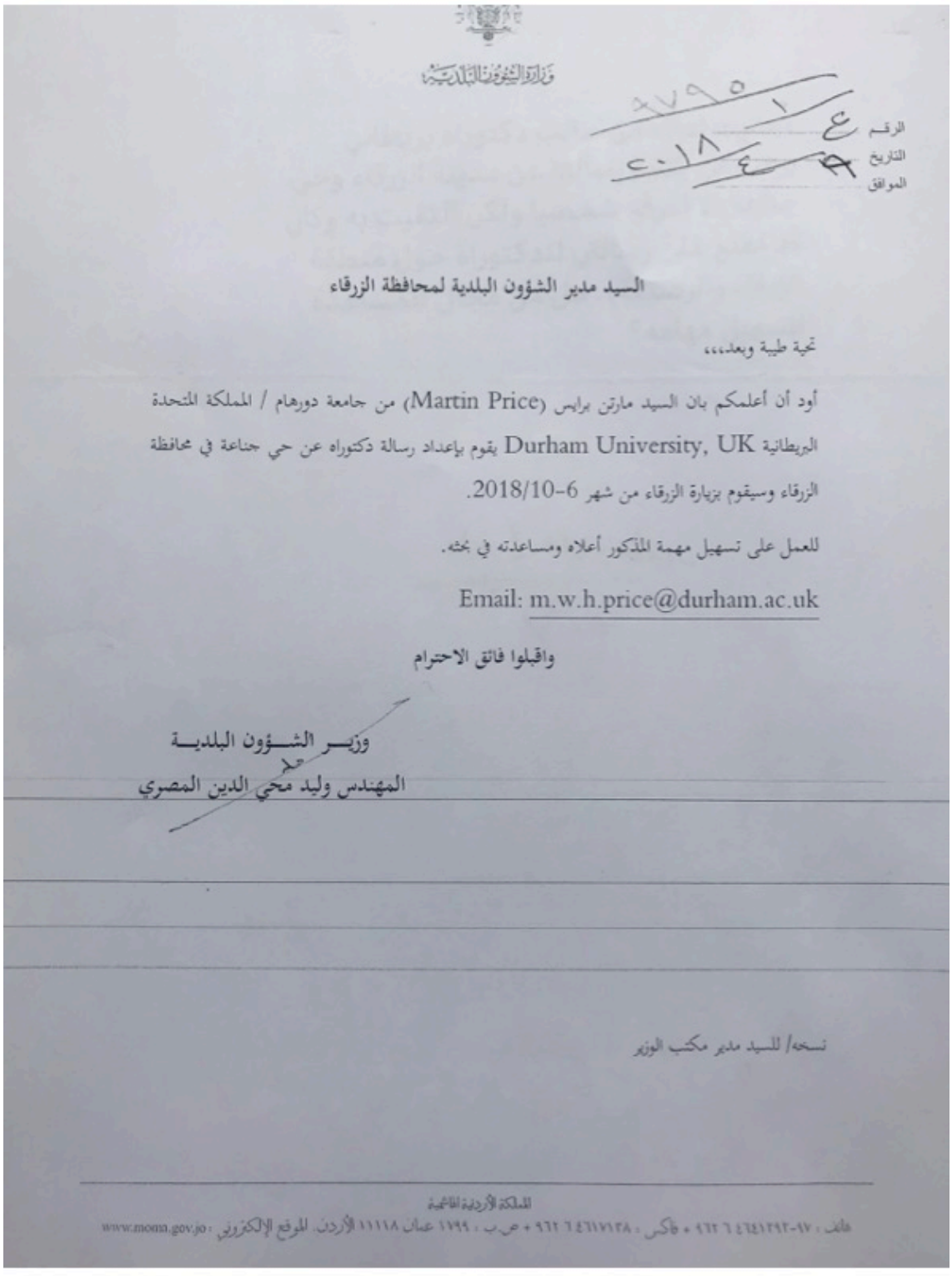
Answers to these questions can only be uncovered through immersive, community-based research, and we cannot speculate much further without this level of engagement. Already, though, we begin to see how diasporic urbanism could lead to very different insights to those presented in this research, which speak so vividly to the contemporary Palestinian predicament and the political and economic dynamics in Jordan as well as the region more broadly. There is no reason to suspect that every other diasporic formation forms a tight-knit, neighbourhood-based community like the Palestinians in Jana'a, nor that they face the same sorts of contestations over issues including political participation, eviction, and urban degradation. Diasporic urbanism has within it the potential to re-write the urban through this attentiveness to the issues that arise in place, which may diverge from the agendas set by urban theory. Diasporic urbanism goes beyond the constraints of what we claim to know about a range of urban processes. My research in Zarqa could have focused on the dynamics of post-industrialisation, or neoliberal urban governance, or other, established, well-theorised urban processes, but what exactly would this have achieved? Would it have added anything to existing urban theory? Would it have told us any more than these theories already tell us? Would it have simply reproduced the marginalised subject position we associate with certain structural and post-structural accounts of diasporic life? I do not know the answer to these questions, but I maintain that diasporic urbanism represents an important opportunity to move beyond these frameworks and refocus scholarly work on diasporas in the city. This can only be done by attending to the relationship between people and place, and following the paths opened up by inductive, ethnographic enquiry.

As scholars and as social beings, we tend to view cities as possessing a kind of character, whether it be romantic, chaotic, historical, futuristic, or problematic. The city may have personality: vibrant, cool, unforgiving. And we also see cities as embodying particular kinds of change: globalisation, modernisation, gentrification, densification, (de-)industrialisation. Diasporic urbanism places itself within these representations of the urban, between identity and change, shifting the focus of study towards the places and communities in which these identities and urban change processes manifest. But it also reconciles these aspects of urban life with the ongoing negotiations of temporality and scale that come with living in the diaspora. Above all else, diasporic urbanism maintains a commitment to McKittrick's (2006, p.20) argument that diasporic geographies must be filled with human life, and that we must "continue to insist that mapping diaspora is an ethical and unresolved politic, a really human, human geography".

Fig.19 Hijaz Railway, Jana'a (April, 2017)

Appendix

Letter of Authorisation, Minister Walid al-Musri



وزارة الشؤون البلدية

الرقم ٢٧٩٥١
التاريخ ٢٠١٨/٩/٤
الموافق

السيد مدير الشؤون البلدية لمحافظة الزرقاء

تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

أود أن أعلمكم بان السيد مارتن برايس (Martin Price) من جامعة دورهام / المملكة المتحدة البريطانية Durham University, UK يقوم بإعداد رسالة دكتوراه عن حي جناعة في محافظة الزرقاء وسيقوم بزيارة الزرقاء من شهر 6-2018/10.

للعمل على تسهيل مهمة المذكور أعلاه ومساعدته في بحثه.

Email: m.w.h.price@durham.ac.uk

واقبلوا فائق الاحترام

وزيـــر الشـــؤون البلديـــة
المهندس وليد محي الدين المصري

نسخه/ للسيد مدير مكتب الوزير

المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية
هاتف: ٩٦٢ ٦ ٤٦٤١٢٩٢ + فاكس: ٩٦٢ ٦ ٤٦١٧١٢٨ + ص.ب: ١٩٩٩ عمان ١١١١٨ الأردن. الموقع الإلكتروني: www.moma.gov.jo

Letter of Authorisation, Mohammad al-Zawahreh

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

بلدية الزرقاء/وحدة التنمية المحلية
هاتف ٣٩٨٢١٣١-٣٩٨٢١٣٢-٣٩٨٢١٣٣
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الرقم : ١٣/ و ت / ٢٠١٨

التاريخ : ٢٥ / ٤ / ٢٠١٨

لمن يهمه الأمر

تحية طيبة وبعد؛

يرجى العلم بأن السيد **مارتن برايس** من جامعة درهام في بريطانيا يقوم بعمل دراسة اجتماعية في منطقة حي جناعة كجزء من بحث شهادة الدكتوراة خلال الفترة ما بين شهر ٦ (حزيران) وشهر ١٠(تشرين أول) لعام ٢٠١٨. هذه الدراسة تأتي تعزيزا للتعاون والتشارك ما بين وزارة البلديات الأردنية وبلدية الزرقاء - وحدة التنمية المحلية مع المؤسسات العلمية والبحثية لإعداد الدراسات اللازمة للمجتمعات المحلية لتحديد احتياجاتها والتحديات التي تواجهها.

ستركز هذه الدراسة على القضايا الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لمنطقة جناعة وستكون فرصة لأهالي المنطقة للحديث عن تاريخ المنطقة الماضي والحاضر واحتياجات المنطقة المستقبلية من مشاريع ومبادرات تخدم المجتمع المحلي وكذلك إمكانية مساهمتهم في تطوير المجتمع المحلي وتبادل الخبرات مع الآخرين. علما أن المشاركة في البحث من قبل المواطنين ستكون اختيارية وتطوعية ولن يتم الإشارة أو الإفصاح عن مصدر أي معلومة وذلك حسب الأسلوب والمنهجية المتبعة في البحث العلمي.

شاكرين ومقدرين تفهمكم وحسن تعاونكم

رئيس وحدة التنمية المحلية

م. محمد الزواهرة

المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية
بلدية الزرقاء
وحدة التنمية المحلية

Information Sheet 1/2 (Arabic)

صفحة المعلومات

عنوان المشروع	التاريخ والسياسية والحياة اليومية في حي جناعة في الزرقاء
اسم الباحث	مارتن برايس
قسم	الجغرافيا
معلومات الاتصال	+44 7535 709 233 / m.w.h.price@durham.ac.uk
التاريخ	١ حزيران/يونيه ٢٠١٨

من المهم إلك أن تفهم الغرض من المشروع وكل ما ينطوي عليه قبل أن تقرر ما اذا كنت تشارك في المشروع ام لا. الرجاء أنك قرائه المعلومات التالية جيداً و لا تتردد في الاتصال بالباحث إذا كان هناك أي شيء غير واضح او لديك أي سؤال.

قد وافقت الهيئات التالية على المشروع:

- وزارة الشؤون البلدية (الأردن)
- بلدية الزرقاء – وحدة التنمية المحلية (الأردن)
- لجنة الأخلاقيات من قسم الجغرافيا في جامعة درم (المملكة المتحدة)

نظرة عامة عن المشروع

يستكشف هذا المشروع ظاهرة الاستقرار طويلة الأجل للسكان المشردين، ويركز على مثال الفلسطينيين-الأردنيين في حي جناعة في مدينة الزرقاء. ويلمح البحث حتى الآن، كفرضية للعمل، إلى أن المنظمات الإنمائية الدولية تركز بشدة على الإغاثة قصيرة الأجل والسكان المتنقلين، وهو أمر ينطوي على مشكلتين: (١) ان المنظمات لا تدرك أن اللاجئين والسكان المشردين يبقون في أماكن استقرارهم لفترات طويلة (٢) إن وجودهم وتأثيرهم على موارد الحكومة المحلية يؤدي إلى نتائج عكسية للاحتياجات والاهتمامات التنموية لمجتمعات مثل حي جناعة

وللتحقيق في هذه القضية، يشمل المشروع فترة العمل الميداني لمدة ٥ أشهر لفهم التاريخ والسياسة والحياة اليومية لسكانها. وكيف يشعر السكان بأوضاعهم في حي جناعة ؟ وكيف أثرت تجاربهم على خيارات حياتهم ووجهات نظرهم حول العالم ، واساليب عيشهم؟ و ما مدى قدرة السلطات المحلية والمنظمات التنموية على إدراك احتياجات ورغبات المجتمع ودعمها؟

المنهجية وجمع البيانات

هذا البحث هو إثنوغرافي ، ويتكون إلى حد كبير من المقابلات غير الرسمية ، والمحادثات المتكررة ، والخبرات المشتركة بين الباحث والمشاركين. سيقوم الباحث بتجميع الملاحظات الميدانية وسيكون كل مشارك مجهولاً ، ما لم يرغب المشارك في استخدام اسمه. سيتم الحفاظ على جميع المعلومات آمنة من قبل الباحث ، وسيتم استخدامها لكتابة أطروحة في نهاية المشروع. ويأمل البحث في مشاركة وجهات نظر مجتمع صنعاء مع السلطات المعنية لأغراض تحسين عملية صنع السياسات.

يتم تمويل المشروع من قبل مجلس البحوث الاقتصادية والاجتماعية في المملكة المتحدة.

سيتم تنفيذ العمل الميداني في الفترة مابين يونيو وأكتوبر 2018.

تاريخ انتهاء المشروع في ديسمبر 2019.

Information Sheet 2/2 (English)

Durham University

Information Sheet

Project Title: History, Politics and Everyday Life in Jana'a Neighbourhood, Zarqa

Researcher: Martin Price

Department: Geography

Contact Details: m.w.h.price@durham.ac.uk / +44 7535 709 233

Date: 1 June 2018

Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what is involved as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. Please get in contact if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This research has been approved by:

- the Ministry for Municipal Affairs (Jordan)
- the Development Unit at Zarqa Municipality (Jordan)
- the Department of Geography Ethics Committee at Durham University (UK)

Overview of the Project

This project explores the phenomenon of long-term settlement in displaced communities, focusing on the example of Palestinian-Jordanians in Jana'a neighbourhood. The research hypothesis is that international development organisations focus too heavily on short-term relief and transient populations, which is problematic for two reasons: a) it fails to recognise that refugees and displaced populations often remain in cities of resettlement for long periods of time, and b) their presence and influence over local government resources is counterproductive to the developmental needs and concerns of communities like Jana'a.

To investigate this issue, this research involves five months of living and researching in Jana'a, to understand the history, politics and everyday life of its people. How do residents make sense of their situation in Jana'a? How have their experiences impacted their life choices, world views and ways of living? How capable are local authorities and developmental organisations at recognising and supporting the needs and wishes of the community?

Methodology and Data Collection

This research is ethnographic, and consists largely of informal interviews, frequent conversations, and shared experiences between the researcher and the participants. The researcher will collect field notes and each participant will be anonymised, unless the participant wants their name to be used. All information will be kept secure by the researcher, and this will be used to write a dissertation at the end of the project. The research hopes to share the perspectives of Jana'a community with the relevant authorities for the purposes of improved policy-making.

The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council in the United Kingdom.

Fieldwork will take place between June and October 2018.

The project is due for completion in December 2019.

Consent form

Durham University

استمارة الموافقة

عنوان المشروع التاريخ والسياسية والحياة اليومية في حي جناعة في الزرقاء

اسم الباحث مارتن برايس

قسم الجغرافيا

معلومات الإتصال +44 7535 709 233 / m.w.h.price@durham.ac.uk

ان الغرض من هذه الاستمارة هو لتوضيح طبيعة المشروع وما ينطوي عليه وأنك توافق على المشاركة فيه . يرجى وضع علامة عند الحاجة:

أقرّ بأنني قد أطلعت على صحيفة المعلومات (١ حزيران ٢٠١٨) وقد فهمتها بالكامل. و اقر بأن كل المقابلات والاحاديث التي ستُجرى ستكون بالطريقة التي وصفتها الوثيقة. *I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information sheet (1 June 2018). I understand that any interviews or conversations will be carried out in a manner described in the document.*	
أنا راضٍ عن المعلومات الواردة في المستندات وكل ما قاله لي الباحث. *I am satisfied with the information in the documents and everything the researcher has told me.*	
أنا افهم من سيكون لديه امكانية الوصول للمعلومات وكيف سيتم تخزين المعلومات وما الذي سيحدث لها في نهاية المشروع. *I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.*	
أنا أوافق على المشاركة في هذا المشروع *I agree to participate in this project.*	
انا أفهم أن المشاركة طوعياً وأن بإمكاني الانسحب من المشروع في أي وقت دون إبداء الأسباب *I understand that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.*	
انا أفهم أن معلوماتي ستبقى طي الكتمان وستستخدم لأغراض المشروع فقط *I understand that my data will be anonymous, and used for the purposes of this project only.*	
انا أفهم أن المشروع لا يتطلب من الباحث ان يسجل صوتي او يلتقط صورة لي . *I understand that this research does not require voice recordings or photographs to be taken.*	
أفهم انه قد يتم اقتباس كلامي في الأطروحة او في النواتج البحثية الأخرى. ولن يستخدم اسمي الحقيقي أبداً. *I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs. My real name will not be used.*	

توقيع المحاور_____ التاريخ_____

اسم المحاور (بوضوح) _____

توقيع الباحث_____ التاريخ_____

اسم الباحث (بوضوح) _____

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