STATELESS PALESTINIAN YOUTH IN JORDAN: NEGOTIATING POVERTY AND
DURABLE SOLUTIONS BEYOND LEGAL STATUS

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ABSTRACT

A significant body of research focuses on understanding 'refugee agency' beyond the legal frameworks institutionalized by the global refugee regime and hosting states. Situated within a critical approach, this thesis bridges displacement and development studies so as to expand our understanding of refugee agency. The study examines how the legal status of *de jure* stateless Palestinian refugee youth informs their negotiation of poverty-related constraints to enhance their livelihood. The research consists of a comparative approach that juxtaposes two groups of Palestinian refugees —stateless (Gazans) and naturalized— living in Amman, Jordan. A multidisciplinary analysis reveals that both groups exercise similar forms of agency interlinked to meanings they give to their lives' trajectories to i) capture ontological security, and ii) challenge accumulative disadvantage. Hence, 'refugee agency' needs to be reconceptualized to reflect its evolving and interchangeable nature, embedded in the interplay between subjectively produced meanings and livelihood outcomes in urban settings.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARDD   Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development

ATC   Amman Training Centre

CDO   Community Development Organization

Fafo   Fafo Research Foundation

ID   National Identification Number

JOD   Jordanian Dinar

PLO   Palestine Liberation Organization

TVET   Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme

UN   United Nations

UNCCP   United Nations Conciliation Commission on Palestine

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA   United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

WSTC   Wadi Seer Training Centre

CHAPTER 1: FRAMING STATELESS PALESTINIAN YOUTH IN PROTRACTED EXILE

1.1 Introduction

Many scholars challenge the international refugee regime's[1] discursive representation of refugees as passive victims, objects to be saved (for example, Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Malkki, 1995, 1996; Zetter, 2007, and Chatty 2007, 2010 in the context of refugee youth) and static in a state of limbo (Brun, 2015; Brun and Fábos, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2011). Malkki (1995, 1996) argues that the nature of humanitarian interventions and long-term assistance often silences refugees and universalizes their experiences while delimiting differences in their historical and political conditions. These arguments continue to resonate with scholars working in Refugee Studies. Refugees continue to cease being 'persons', instead portrayed as needy objects of humanitarian aid (Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Turton, 2003). Simultaneously, the 'refugee label' provokes homogeneous discourses to victimize (at its best) or securitize (at its worst) involuntary migration (Hyndman and Giles, 2007; Sajjad, 2018; Zetter, 2007). These understandings are crucial in redirecting solutions in protracted refugee situations[2] (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Hyndman and Giles, 2007).

Although refugee labels constantly evolve and transform while following change in politicization trends in migration and displacement (Vigil and Abidi, 2018; Zetter, 2007),

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[1] Defined by Van Hear as "the national and international body of institutions, law, policy and practice that exist to deal with refugees and with forced migration" (cited in Horst, 2006:14).

[2] The official UNHCR definition for protracted refugee situations (or protracted displacement) is "…when 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five or more years in a given asylum country". They also describe refugees who are in protracted refugee situations as "…those in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile" (retrieved from UNHCR). Although this research critiques this definition of refugee in protracted situation, nonetheless, based on this definition Palestinian refugees are considered in protracted displacement.

eligibility to refugee legal status continues to rely on conforming with the 'refugee' definition provided by the 1951 Refugee Convention (Kyriakides et al., 2018b; Malkki, 1996; Zetter, 2007) which essentially render refugees as *involuntarily* displaced victims (Bakewell, 2010; Kyriakides et al., 2018b; Zetter, 2007). Moreover, refugees are inherently assumed *stateless*, whether *de facto* or *de jure,* hence unprotected (Blitz, 2009; Massey, 2010) and have lost the *capacity* and *authority* to act (Kyriakides et al., 2018b; Malkki, 1996).

Many scholars challenge the assumptions entrenched in the refugee label (for example, Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Brun and Fábos, 2015; Clark-Kazak, 2014; Grayson-Courtemanche, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Landau and Duponchel, 2011, among many others). Scholars assert that refugees claim authority that is normally ascribed to citizens (Kyriakides et al., 2018b:3) through taking control of their lives and negotiate the traditional 'durable solutions'[3] prescribed by the international refugee regime (Clark-Kazak, 2014; Grayson-Courtemanche, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Landau and Duponchel, 2011) which fail to address their protracted displacement (Horst, 2006; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Long, 2011; Milner and Loescher 2011). Consequently, many have urgently encouraged the refugee regime to reshape its state-centric elusive solutions and instead focus on understanding the lives and experiences of refugees in order to expand their agency and survival strategies in protracted exile (see for example Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Long, 2011; Milner and Loescher, 2011).

In order to understand how refugees negotiate the refugee label and challenge the dissonance between humanitarian interventions and their own realities, a wide range of scholars have conceptualized and situated 'agency' within forced migration studies (for example Bradley,

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[3] The three traditional durable solutions promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are: voluntary repatriation, resettlement and integration (https://www.unhcr.org/solutions.html).

2014; Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Brun, 2015; Coffie, 2019; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Landau and Duponchel, 2011; Mohamed, 2006; Squire, 2017; Utas, 2019). Some critically unravel theoretical premises that conceptualize agency, such as Giddens' structuration theory (Bakewell, 2010; Hitlin and Elder, 2007; Squire, 2017). Others conduct ethnographic examinations of refugee agency in exile (Chatty, 2010) or adopt analytical frameworks borrowed from different disciplines rather than drawing on theory (Clark-Kazak, 2014; Clark-Kazak and Thomson, 2019).

This research builds on such theoretical and empirical premises that conceptualize refugee agency and further expands the discussion into two areas of inquiry. The first area engages with scholarship that demonstrates how refugees seek long-term sustainable livelihoods (Horst, 2006; Hyndman and Giles, 2017) and manage to become significant actors in shaping their own durable solutions outside the spaces of humanitarian assistance (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019). Most importantly, these solutions have to be discussed in avenues beyond the realm of legal status alone (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019; Kihato and Landau, 2016; Landau and Duponchel, 2011). Consequently, acknowledging and understanding *de facto* local integration, particularly in urban host settings, is crucial to any long-term durable solution (Hyndman and Gile, 2017; Landau and Duponchel, 2011).

The second area of inquiry intends to complement the first through engaging with the revived call for bridging between displacement and development studies in order to expand the spaces within which refugees can exercise agency and lead their own durable solutions. Clearly, it is more challenging to address the absence of rights of refugees when the majority of them live in impoverished countries (Brun and Fábos, 2015; Malkki, 1996). In these countries depriving stateless persons' rights and nationality has a 'poverty-generating function' (Blitz, 2009:35).

Thus, addressing refugee rights and seeking solutions for their protracted displacement is a matter to be discussed in avenues within which displacement and development merge in research and policymaking (Blitz, 2009; Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Malkki, 1996; Zetter, 2019). Although a unified approach to bridging displacement and development cannot be applied in different contexts, any development-led response is characterized as a multi-sectoral approach that aims for "…coherence between short-term emergency assistance and sustainable, resilience-building development for refugees and their host communities" (Zetter, 2019:4). One pathway adopted in this research to understand how displacement and development studies can be bridged is addressing sustainable livelihood needs of refugees (Zetter, 2019) and the ways in which they negotiate poverty.

Nonetheless, bridging protracted displacement and development studies requires adopting a multidisciplinary research methodology (Chatty, 2007; Malkki, 1995). This process begins through engaging with multidisciplinary perspectives on i) understanding the concept of agency and how it informs the solutions developed by refugees in protracted exile and ii) merging this discussion with an outlook on poverty and economic development. Therefore, notwithstanding the wide range of profound methods to examine agency, this thesis builds on Clark-Kazak's (2014) analysis of agency of Congolese refugee youth. Clark-Kazak borrows Jones and Sumner's (2011:15) three well-being domains: material, relational and subjective, within which Lister's (2004) conceptualization and types of agency, in both every-day and long-term strategic issues, are exercised by poor children and young persons.

To conclude, this thesis builds on the profound work of scholars who recognize the active and significant roles of refugees in shaping durable solutions to establish prominent livelihoods in protracted displacement in spite of institutional and social constraints. This thesis also aims to

expand these discussions beyond the limitations of legal status while bridging between refugee-led solutions and development studies. By doing this, I do not attempt to generate generalizable empirical findings on agency of refugees in protracted situations, but rather to problematize inherent assumptions of *de jure* statelessness such as the presumed absence of resourcefulness and resiliency of refugees. In the remainder of this chapter, I contextualize the debate outlined above by framing the argument within the context of the longest protracted displacement event: *de jure* stateless Palestinian refugee youth living in Jordan. I present my research question, aims and objectives, and finally a brief history of the Palestinian displacement into Jordan and how this history manifests in their current legal statuses.

1.2 Contextualizing the Debate: *De Jure* Stateless Palestinian Refugee Youth in Jordan

Palestinian refugees represent the most protracted situation in the world (Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Milner and Loescher, 2011; Ramadan, 2012). But the complexities of their refugee label continue to unravel both internationally and locally in Jordan (Akram, 2002). Palestinian refugees are entitled a legal refugee status through the definition of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (see section 2.2.1). However, they remain unprotected under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Article 1D of the 1951 Refugees Convention that provides protection to all other refugees, on the basis that they already receive assistance from UNRWA (Akram, 2002; Clemens, 2007; El Abed, 2006; Pavanello and Haysom, 2012; Perez, 2011; Shiblak, 2006). However, it is noteworthy that UNRWA does not have any local or international protection mandate (Akram, 2002; Perez, 2011). Neither is Jordan a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, nor does it have national legislations pertaining to the status and treatment of refugees (Akram, 2002).

Locally, *de jure* stateless Palestinians' legal status in Jordan as 'Arab foreign residents' denies them access to education, employment, healthcare, ownership, travel and other basic rights, leaving them in a state of extreme vulnerability and precarity (Akram, 2002; El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018; Shiblak, 2006). Chatty (2010:326) argues that the absence of basic rights to create livelihoods make "…many of the numerically predominant Palestinian refugee youth in the Middle East survive in conditions of abject poverty". Moreover, a Fafo Research Foundation (Fafo) report states that stateless Palestinian refugees in Jordan are three times more likely to live in poverty than naturalized Palestinian refugees (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013:8). Simultaneously, however, recent scholarship demonstrates how constraints experienced by displaced persons may be closely related to those faced by other vulnerable groups (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019). Therefore, drawing on Chatty's (2007) argument that comparative research on refugee youth reveals concealed similarities among groups as well as it "…identifies what is *sui generis* and what is generalizable" (p.266), the research juxtaposes the agency exercised by two groups of poor Palestinian refugee youth with different legal statuses; stateless (non-citizens) and naturalized (citizens). Through this approach, the impact of the different legal statuses on agency exercised to negotiate poverty-related constraints can be captured.

Moreover, this thesis aims to problematize assumptions of precarity and vulnerability by identifying ways in which youth exercise agency to negotiate state-exclusionary policies in the only home[4] they have ever known. While this research does not ignore the impact of their legal status on the experiences they live and the challenges they face to bring about meanings of certainty and security in their livelihoods, it acknowledges that other factors, yet to be identified,

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[4] I adopt the definition of home proposed by Brun and Fábos (2015:6): "[a] place [that] encompasses physical, social, economic, and cultural realities" within which we have experiences of social, psychological and emotional attachments.

can possibly inform their negotiation processes and acts of agency. Through problematizing assumptions rather than generalizing findings, the thesis evades homogenizing the experiences of refugees. Yet, it is crucial to acknowledge that investigating intersectionality and intra-group differences is not within the scope of this research due to limited fieldwork duration and sample-size of participants. However, throughout data analysis, I have engaged with some prevalent gendered differences within each group of Palestinian refugee youth.

To conclude, this research interrogates *how the legal status of de jure stateless Palestinian youth in Jordan informs their negotiation processes of poverty-related constraints to enhance their livelihoods*. Negotiating poverty-related constraints is conceptualized through the exercise of agency in three well-being domains: material, relational and subjective. The research then examines how forms of agency in the well-being domains interact to generate livelihood enhancing strategies. The objectives of the research are i) to understand how the specific histories and politics of *de jure* stateless Palestinians have shaped state exclusionary policies entrenched in their current legal status in Jordan as stateless 'Arab foreign residents'; ii) to examine how these state exclusionary policies inform their negotiation processes of poverty-related constraints; iii) to examine how the legal statuses of two groups of poor Palestinian refugee youth (stateless Palestinian-Gazans and naturalized Palestinian-Jordanians) inform *similar and/or different* forms of agency exercised in the subjective, material and relational well-being domains; and lastly iv) to understand how forms of agency of both groups in the well-being domains interact to generate *similar and/or different* livelihood enhancing strategies.

In order to concretely situate the theoretical and empirical approaches operationalized by this study, it is essential that we have a clear understanding of the historical background which conditions the *de jure statelessness* of certain groups of Palestinians in Jordan, but not others.

After all, acknowledging these historical moments will allow us to re-historicize the state exclusionary policies that shape the day-to-day experiences of *de jure* stateless Palestinian youth. I address those histories and their underlying politics in the following section.

1.3 The Historical Background and Status Quo of Palestinians in Jordan

This section briefly describes the histories of forced migration into Jordan followed by a focus on the Palestinian displacement starting from 1948 till this day. Most importantly, the section demonstrates why and how different groups of Palestinian refugees in Jordan have different legal statuses: *de jure* stateless and naturalized.

1.3.1 Forced Migration into Jordan

Historically, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Jordan) has been a hosting country for refugees fleeing wars or persecution. The first group of refugees arriving into 'Transjordan' at that time consisted of Circassians and Chechens displaced from their homeland in the Balkans in the late nineteenth century (El Abed, 2014). This was shortly followed by Christian Armenians fleeing Ottoman oppression in the early twentieth century (ibid.). Afterward, a succession of refugees sought Jordan for refuge arriving from, most notably, Palestine, Iraq and most recently Syria. Other smaller prominence groups include Lebanese, Sudanese, Somalians and Yemenis. As of September 2019, 747,080 refugees are registered with UNHCR in Jordan holding 57 nationalities (UNHCR, 2019). This figure does not include the 2,175,491 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA (figures as of December 1, 2016).

1.3.2 Palestinian Refugees in Jordan

The arrival of Palestinians into Jordan commenced in the early twentieth century. Some Palestinian nationalists —aligned with Prince Abdullah's efforts to reunify Greater Syria through the Great Arab Revolt— escaping French persecutions sought Amman as a base (Kassay, 2011).

After the end of the Word War I and the evacuation of Ottoman and German troops from Amman and its surroundings, it was transformed into a commercial center attracting migrants from all around (Mackey, 1979). Many prominent Palestinian families migrated into Transjordan as a result and so are called Palestinian-Transjordanians (Brand, 1995; Reiter, 2004). Some Palestinian-Transjordanian families do not self-identify with their Palestinian origin.

Jordan witnessed four major forced displacements of Palestinians as a result to the Israeli occupation that remains to-date. The first and second groups arrived into Jordan in 1948 and 1967. The third displacement of Palestinians was caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the Gulf Crisis between 1990 and 1991 (Al Asad, 1997; Hanania, 2010). Over 300,000 Palestinian refugees who initially fled to Jordan in 1948 or 1967, but were living in Gulf countries at the time, returned back to Jordan (Kossaifi cited in Hejoj, 2007:121). The recent and ongoing war in Syria has led to a fourth displacement of around 16,000 Palestinian refugees into Jordan (figures as of January 9, 2017). However, this thesis focuses on individuals displaced in 1948 and 1967 and their descendants. They will be referred to as 'Palestinian-Jordanians' and 'stateless Gazans' respectively (see below).

Understanding the historical moments in Palestine and the region is central to understanding the current legal statuses of Palestinian groups in Jordan. Depending on when Palestinians took refuge in Jordan and arriving from where, they were granted different legal statuses. Drawing on the extensive literature on these historical displacements and the relationship between Jordan and Palestine (see for example Brand, 1995; Feldman, 2012; Al-Husseini, 2000), the following section describes how these histories manifest in legal status.

1.3.3 Who are Naturalized Palestinian-Jordanians?

The end of the British Mandate in 1946 led to the establishment of the independent 'Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan' (ARDD, 2015). Meanwhile, Balfour's Declaration in 1917 promised the Jewish people a national state in Palestine (Schiocchet, 2012). As a result, the UN declared a Partition Plan in 1947 dividing Palestine between Palestinians and Jews. Shortly in 1948, David Ben-Gurion finally declared the establishment of the State of Israel. Consequently, the Arab League and Israel entered a war—The Arab Israeli War also called *Al Nakba*; the catastrophe—in 1948 that ended in favour of the latter (El Abed, 2006; Perez, 2011).

About 450,000 Palestinian refugees from the West Bank arrived into Jordan (ARDD, 2015; El Abed, 2014). By 1950, around 500,000 Palestinian refugees were living in Jordan (Hanania, 2010). The Jordanian Government responded by granting Palestinians full and permanent citizenship (ARDD, 2015; El Abed, 2006), based on Article 3(B) of the 1954 Nationality Law which states that: "[a]ny person with previous Palestinian Nationality except Jews before the date of May 15 1948 residing in the Kingdom during the period from December 20 1949 and February 16 1954 is considered a Jordanian citizen" (Hejoj cited in ARDD, 2015:3).

This group of Palestinians did not have to give up their refugee status and they are still registered with UNRWA up to this day (ARDD, 2015). Other Arab countries did not respond in the same way. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Syria hold permanent residencies only based on the agreement in the 1965 Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States (the Casablanca Protocol) to preserve the right to return of Palestinians to their homeland (Perez, 2011; Shiblak, 1996). Four refugee camps accommodated refugees in Jordan from 1940s to 1950s (UNRWA). As Jordanian citizens, holding national identification numbers (ID), Palestinians of 1948 enjoy full citizenship rights without compromising their rights to UNRWA

services. However, to this day they remain facing implicit discrimination. For example, Palestinian-Jordanians' employment in the public sector remains at a lower administrative hierarchy (ARDD, 2015; Shiblak, 1996).

The Armistice Agreements of 1949, between Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria to end the war, were declared in the aftermath of Israel's occupation of West Jerusalem and part of the West Bank (Schiocchet, 2012; Perez, 2018). As a result, "Jordan annexed East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, Egypt annexed the Gaza Strip and Syria incorporated a small part of the northeast of the partitioned territory" (Schiocchet, 2012:326). Thereafter, Palestinians who remained in the annexed West Bank were also issued Jordanian citizenship.

1.3.4 Who are De Jure Stateless Palestinians?

The second group of Palestinians were displaced from Gaza in 1967 after their expulsion in the aftermath of Israel's War on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (also called *Al Naksa*; the setback) (Akram, 2002; Clemens, 2007; El-Abed, 2006; Perez, 2011, 2018). This group is categorized as 'refugees' or as 'displaced people'. 'Gazan refugees' fled the Gaza Strip in 1967 to Egypt first then again to Jordan. Since between 1948 and 1967 Egypt was administering the Gaza Strip, upon their displacement to the East Bank, the Jordanian government decided to treat them as Egyptians. Hence, they have the legal status as 'Arab foreigners' in Jordan. 'Displaced Gazan refugees', however, were displaced twice. Their first displacement to the Gaza Strip took place after the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 from different areas in Palestine. The second displacement from the Gaza Strip to Jordan was in the aftermath of the Israeli War in 1967 (El Abed, 2006; Perez, 2018). Each of these two groups is categorized differently by UNRWA and hence have different access levels to its services.

The Casablanca Protocol obliges Arab hosting countries to provide Palestinian refugees rights to employment, residency, and travel similar to what citizens are granted (Perez 2011, 2018; Shiblak, 2006). Naturalization was not included in this agreement in order to preserve Palestinians' status as refugees and their right to return to Palestine. Thus, Jordan issued Gazans one-year temporary passports in 1968 (El-Abed, 2006:85), which was extended to two years in the 1980s (Perez, 2011:1034). Consequently, national identification numbers are not issued to Gazans. Moreover, Gazans are denied citizenship in Jordan, albeit that Article 4 of the Jordanian nationality law entitles citizenship to any Arab who resides in Jordan for more than 15 years (Perez, 2011, 2018). This law does not recognize the principle of *jus soli* and neither does it allow Jordanian women to pass on citizenship to their children or spouses (El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018). Hence, it ensures that Gazan men and their children remain stateless. An estimated 118,000 to 250,000 Gazans are stateless (ARDD, 2015; El Abed, 2006; Perez, 2011). Table 1 lists the different legal statuses categories of Palestinians residing in Jordan, their date and place of arrival and their access rights to services provided by the Jordanian government and UNRWA.

Table 1. Categories of Palestinians in Jordan according to their different legal statuses[5]

Category	Date and Place of Arrival	Status	Access to Rights and Services in Jordan	Access to UNRWA Services
Transjordanians/ Palestinian origins	Migrated into Transjordan in the early twentieth century	Five-year passport with ID	Full access	No access
Jordanians/ Palestinian origin	Displaced from Palestine to Jordan in 1948	Five-year passport with ID	Full access	Full access
West Bankers	Displaced from Palestine to Jordan in 1967 and were residing in the East Bank during the disengagement in 1988	Five-year passport with ID	Full access	Full access
Gazans (refugees)	Displaced from the Gaza Strip to Egypt first then again to Jordan	Two-year temporary passport without ID. Minor figure holds Egyptian travel document	No access	Full access
Gazans (displaced)	Their first displacement to the Gaza Strip took in 1948, whereas the second displacement from the Gaza Strip to Jordan was in 1967		No access	Partial access

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[5] This table represents an oversimplification of Palestinian categories in Jordan and elsewhere and their access to legal status, rights and services. For a more elaborate and detailed description, see El Abed (2014).

1.4 Outline of Thesis

In this chapter I have introduced the research rationale, aims and objectives. I also outlined a relevant historical background that shape the current political avenue related to various groups of Palestinian refugees in Jordan while displaying an understanding of the difference between the various labels and legal statuses. In chapter 2, I review the research methodology and methods while focusing on the epistemological considerations, and processes of positionality and reflexivity throughout fieldwork and data analysis. In chapter 3, I examine the relevant literature in three main areas: the 'othering' discourse embedded in the 'refugee label'; understanding the notion of 'refugee agency' in protracted displacement; and lastly, bridging agency, protracted displacement and development. I finally situate these theoretical premises within the context of *de jure* stateless Palestinian youth in Jordan. Chapter 4 first demonstrates the meanings of state exclusionary policies targeting different areas of rights of stateless Palestinians, i.e. Gazans. Second, it addresses what is *similar* and what is *different* about forms of agency exercised by the two groups of poor Palestinian youth. Finally, it analyzes how the interrelations between the forms of agency exercised in the well-being domains generate *similar* and *different* livelihood strategies for both groups. I conclude the thesis, in chapter 5, by revisiting two areas: the livelihood strategies of the stateless Palestinian group participating in this research; and the multidisciplinary bridging between protracted displacement, poverty and development. By re-centering the discussions, I refer to policy-oriented response to protracted displacement and future considerations in similar research.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND THE FIELD

In this chapter, I begin by delimiting the scope of the research to poor Palestinian youth living in urban Amman seeking livelihoods. Following, I engage with my epistemological approaches and hence the research methodology. I then frame this discussion in relation to reflexivity, my own positionality and power dynamics. Finally, I explain the methods utilized in data collection and analysis that eventually establish rigour in the research.

2.1 Delimiting the Research Scope: The Livelihood of the Urban, the Young and the Poor Palestinian Refugee

This section delimits the scope of the research by explaining the adopted meanings of five key characterisations/concepts: refugee, poor, young, urban and livelihood.

2.1.1 The Refugee

While this term is used throughout this thesis to refer to displaced Palestinians and their descendants (fourth and fifth generations), I also critique its use since it strips the youth from the lives they have created outside the homeland of their parents and grandparents before them. However, for the purpose of this research, I describe what this term means in the Palestinian context. UNRWA defines Palestine refugees as "…persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict" (retrieved from UNRWA website). This definition continues to include the descendants of Palestinian refugee men including adopted children. This group is eligible for refugee registration and have access to services provided by UNRWA. For the purpose of this thesis, the official Palestinian refugee definition will not be adopted since UNRWA and The Jordanian Government have different categories for Palestinians depending on

their date of arrival in Jordan and the most recent country from which they have fled (IRBC, 2014).

Thus, the term will be primarily used to describe any Palestinian who fled Palestine in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 and arrived in Jordan as a first or second country of asylum. This includes fourth and fifth generations of Palestinians born and living in Jordan and are registered with UNRWA. This excludes Palestinians who migrated to Transjordan prior to this date. I draw on Malkki's argument that "…the term refugee has analytical usefulness not as a label for a special, generalizable 'kind' or 'type' of person or situation, but only as a broad legal or descriptive rubric that includes within it a world of different socioeconomic statuses, personal histories, and psychological or spiritual situations" (1995b:496).

2.1.2 The Poor

Moreover, in 2014, the Jordanian Government announced the figures for the abject (extreme) and absolute poverty lines (Khaberni, 2019b). The abject (extreme) poverty line (one's inability to meet basic needs like food, shelter, safe drinking water, education, healthcare, etc.) was determined at 336 Jordanian Dinar (JOD) (474 USD) per person/ yearly. The absolute poverty line (one's ability to meet basic needs but nothing beyond this) was drawn at 813.7 JOD (1148 USD) per person/ yearly. For minimum risk ethics considerations, subjects under abject poverty were not studied. All participants are earning above 336 and under 814 JOD.

2.1.3 The Young

The term 'youth' is looked at differently in the diverse fields of inquiry. The United Nations (UN) defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, as a statistical definition. However, they also recognize that the meaning of the term varies in different societies. Hence, UN apparatus entities have different definitions of 'youth' which the

UN secretariat recognizes. Clark-Kazak (cited in Clark-Kazak, 2014) developed the concept of social age which complements chronological age. She argues that youth has a socially constructed meaning which varies across time, place and space. Drawing from this analysis, this research defines youth as those who have finished their high-school and are single or married with very young children. Chronologically this means ages from 18 to 35 years.

2.1.4 The Urban

There is a total of thirteen Palestinian refugee camps established in Jordan in response to their displacement in both 1948 and 1967 (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013). Only ten are recognized as official camps by UNRWA, which accommodate nearly 370,000 Palestine refugees — 18 per cent of the total number of 2,950,529 registered refugees (UNRWA website as of December 2018). Among those, three camps are located within the Greater Amman Municipality: two constructed after the 1948 crisis (Amman New Camp or Wihdat camp and Jabal Al Hussein), and one after 1967 (Marka camp). Today, more than 80 per cent of Palestinian refugees live outside camps (Dumper, 2008:200). A survey conducted by Fafo in 2013 found that the current nature of Palestinian refugee camps is complex. Most historical camps located in urban settings have "…adjacent neighbourhoods that *de facto* form part of the camps today" (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013:24). Thus, statistics are hard to get since the new demarcations of these extensions are not defined. However, the UNRWA, the Department for Palestinian Affairs and other scholars argue that living conditions for refugees living within historical borders or adjacent areas are not significantly different (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013:25).

Since refugee/non-refugee and in-camp/outside-camp compositions are interwoven, inaccurate and differ from one place to another (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013), this research uses an oversimplified definition of the urban Palestinian refugee: any Palestinian refugee living in an

urban setting within the Greater Amman Municipality (whether in a camp or not) and excludes the ones living in rural areas. Figure 2.1 shows the current demarcations of the Greater Amman Municipality.
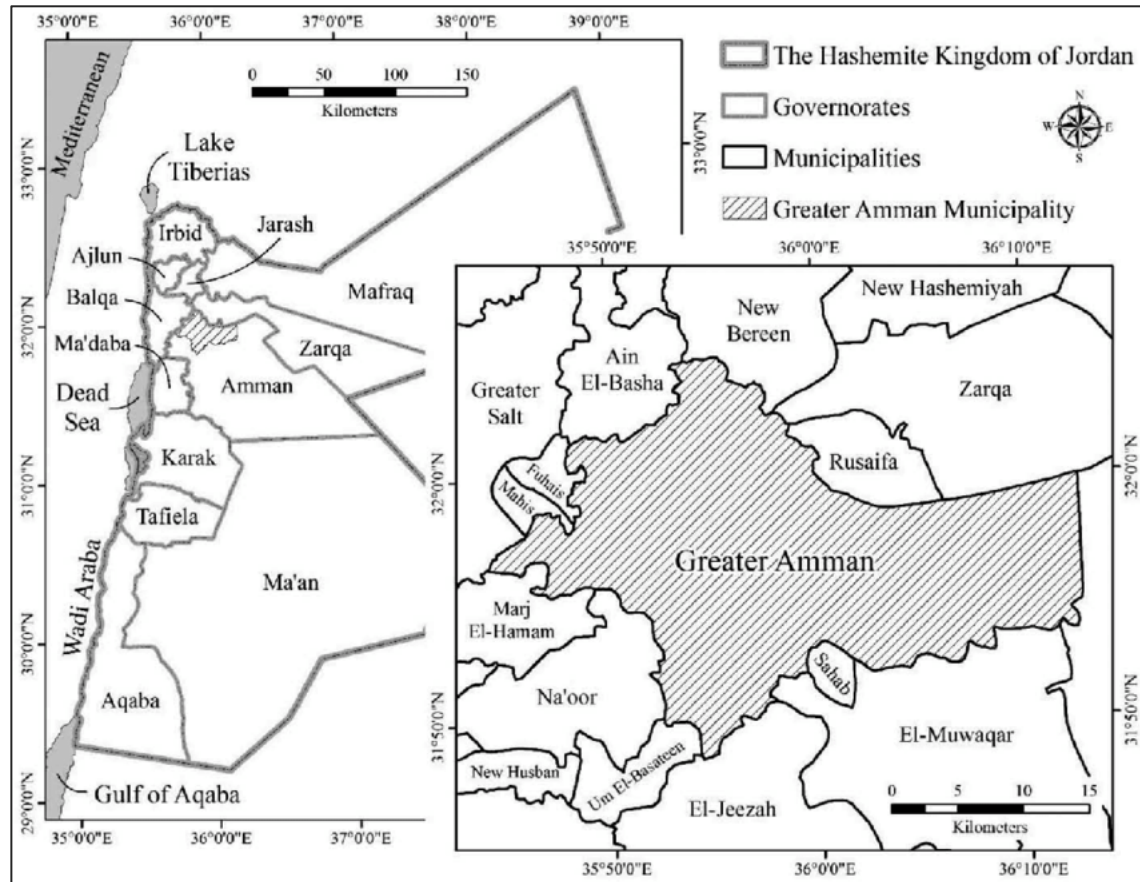
Figure 1. The demarcations of Greater Amman Municipality in Jordan.
Retrieved from www.researchgate.net on November 12, 2019.

2.1.5 Livelihood

Livelihood is a multifaceted concept studied in many fields such as social sciences, development studies and economic science. The current understanding has developed in the 1980s and early 1990s (Horst, 2006). Horst draws on Chambers and Conway's definition which entails that

> a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable which can cope with

and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation (p.9).

The recent increased interest in refugee livelihoods was embodied in UNHCR's Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018. The strategy envisioned all persons of concern "…be[ing] able to make a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs, contributes to their dignity, and provides for the full enjoyment of human rights" (UNHCR, 2014:2). Livelihoods are defined by UNHCR as

> …activities that allow people to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Engaging in livelihoods activities means acquiring the knowledge, skills, social network, raw materials, and other resources to meet individual or collective needs on a sustainable basis with dignity. Livelihoods activities are usually carried out repeatedly within an income stream such as agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, employment within a market sector, or as an entrepreneur (p.7).

This research adopts all these different forms of livelihoods which entail material, personal and social resources and skills.

2.2 Epistemological Considerations in This Research

The research question, aims and design are informed by my own ontological and epistemological approaches as a researcher through constructionist interpretivism (Bryman, 2004; Epstein, 2012; Silverman, 2012). My research question is informed by qualitative social research which is concerned with questions on "…*how* (process of constructing reality) and *what* (reality as a substantive truth)" (Epstein, 2012:34. Italic in original document). My research proposes that agency is a capacity inherent in all humankind. Nevertheless, since refugee agency is essentially more constrained than the normal population (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019), the constructivist framework proposes that agency is the individual's own construction and is highly influenced by one's subjective meanings of reality. Also, as a researcher, I acknowledge my own positionality and involvement in constructing the interpretations and inferences

generated from in-depth subjective accounts of a small sample of participants. These considerations align with the interpretivist approach that views the phenomena under study and the social relationships as social constructs of both the researcher and the researched (Bryman, 2004).

Bryman (2004) suggests that the relationship between the research strategy and its ontological and epistemological approach is not deterministic. Therefore, the research can have a qualitative or a quantitative *tendency* since this connection is not perfect (Brynam, 2004:442. Italic from original document). This research has a qualitative tendency in which it is exploratory and inductive in nature. While some scholars believe that qualitative data has a limited ability to generalize conclusions, "…some insist that generation of well-grounded understandings of particular cases is a prerequisite for any grand theorizing" (Kapiszewski et al., 2015:12). Nevertheless, this research does not look for generalizable inferences, nor does it attempt to present theoretical premises. Rather, its overarching aim is to unravel meanings and interpretations that translate into agency and action in processes that require the acknowledgment of the subjectivity of the researcher and that she is inseparable from the realities of the autonomous participants. The research eventually aims to problematize assumptions related to agency of stateless refugee youth in this context.

2.3 Positionality and Reflexivity

As researchers, our positionality influences the research we produce through the biases and presumptions we bring into it (Merriam et al., 2001; Momsen, 2011; Stanley and Slattery, 2003). Hence, it is significant to delineate those issues in relation to our research question and context through engaging with reflexivity processes. In this section, I intend to do this by

discussing issues of representations and negotiating power relations and biases (Finlay, 2002; Funder, 2005).

My biases and assumptions are generated from a threefold realization. First, my Arab (Syrian) background has engraved certain forms of biases and presumptions within my positionality that essentially render the Palestinian cause the most unjust in the world. Although I did not live in Syria, my parents' education in Syrian schools focused on the nobility of the Palestinian cause. In the words of the late President Hafez Al Assad, the Palestinian cause is "…the most dignified cause of the Arab nation…the mother cause" (Speech of President Hafez Al Assad in opening the 15th session of the Palestinian National Council in Damascus on April 11, 1981[6]). Second, being educated in Canada has created different western biases which are generated from, first, an inherent legitimization to the right of studying the 'unprivileged other' who needs to be voiced through researchers like me. Funder (2005) argues that although you try to address power relations during fieldwork, we *de facto* legitimize our "…right to be there in the first place- to access certain information, to ask questions about people's lives, to pursue intimacy" (p.5).

Third, being subjected to leftist education made me subconsciously adopt a '*conflict perspective*' (Funder, 2005:7) in addressing and interpreting agency of refugees in exile. Lastly, my research aligns itself with literature that acknowledges refugees' agency and their authority as persons to negotiate deprivation of rights (for example Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Clark-Kazak, 2014; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018; Long, 2011 among many others). Nevertheless, I recognize that this discourse is inherently 'essentializing' (Kobayashi, 1994:77). Kobayashi states that "[t]o refer uncritically, therefore, to attributes…that have been

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[6] Retrieved from http://www.presidentassad.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=671:11-4-1981&catid=214&Itemid=476

used as means of marginalization as criteria of legitimacy, is to empower those social constructions as continuing means establishing deference" (p.77). Following Kobayashi's logic of thinking, while some refugees are unable to take control of their lives and thus fall victim to abject poverty, substance abuse and/or even crime, my research aims to move beyond such delineations and assumes that refugee exercise some form of agency to eventually enhance their livelihoods. For an example, what could be perceived as an act of agency from my end could simply mean nothing but attempting to survive from the point of view of vulnerable people. Thus, the question remains, whom am I speaking for (to borrow Kobayashi's terms, 1994:75)? Am I considered an insider or an outsider? These are questions I attempt to answer in the next section.

2.3.1 The Insider-Outsider Dichotomy and Power Dynamics

Representation speaks to how truthful your findings are and the extent to which your participants have been voiced and heard (Merriam et al., 2001). Hence, addressing representation also engages with the insider/outsider dichotomy. Villenas (cited in Merriam et al., 2001:411) argues that "…as researchers, we can be insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times". During my fieldwork, I observed that my positionality took on this alternating nature between being an outsider and an insider in different incidences. For many reasons, I expected to be perceived as an outsider by my participants. After all, I am neither a Palestinian nor a refugee thus my knowledge on the Palestinian plight is assumed to be limited. I also do not share their socio-economic status. Lastly, my insider status as someone who has lived in Jordan for almost her whole life could be compromised by living in Canada for the past year (at the time when I conducted fieldwork) and the western education I am receiving.

A few factors, however, might have placed me as an insider. The first is that I have demonstrated my acquaintance with the history and the present of the Palestinian cause. Second, I am married to a Jordanian from Palestinian origins. Third, Syrians are currently suffering from the same western and Zionist imperialist ambitions in the region that both our people are resisting. Hence, I found myself frequently emphasizing these affiliations throughout the interviews to reinforce my position as an insider. Through aligning my interests with those of research participants, I hoped to bring some sort of validation, trust and familiarity into our conversations and to potentially deconstruct power dynamics.

Before conducting fieldwork, my assumptions regarding the impact of my socio-economic status, Western education and gender on the research processes, have led me to believe that I would be instantly seen as unworthy or/and untruthful and probably in a position of power. However, I observed in my participants full openness and excitement to take part in this study. Many of them thanked me for asking them to be part of my study because it makes them feel like they are contributing to the Palestinian struggle for justice. Nevertheless, one of my participants said to me: "I have helped you with your research, can you now help with immigration?" (Saeed[7], June 28, 2019). This statement made me realize that some interactions with research participants were transactional. Therefore, I intentionally made sure to implicitly clarify that I do not have the power to help them with any immigration processes.

2.4 Establishing Rigour

In this research, selecting data collection and analysis methods was conditioned by the limited time and resources for conducting fieldwork in Jordan. For example, random sampling, prolonged engagement and negative case analysis (Krefting, 1991) could not be deployed in this

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[7] Pseudonyms have been used for participants names.

research. However, many strategies were adopted to establish rigour in light of these limitations. The following section discusses these strategies.

2.4.1 Interviews with Palestinian Refugee Youth

Although questionnaires and social surveys can be utilized to ascertain attitudes and meanings (Bryman, 2004), this research is more interested in in-depth narratives of life trajectories that can only be obtained through methods like semi- and unstructured interviews with Palestinian refugee youth (Kapiszewski et al., 2015). My decision to pursue a qualitative strategy for this research is also due to the lack of reliable and truthful official statistics (El Abed, 2014). El Abed argues that the Government uses manipulation of figures as a mechanism to manage migration and refugees in Jordan. However, some official statistics from UNHCR, UNRWA and literature were used in this research to assist in unravelling some "…generality of the phenomena being described" (Bryman, 2004:445) but not to draw inferences.

Qualitative research also has its limits in this thesis. Lately, in light of the Palestinian-Israeli political impasse, the President of the United States has exerted substantial pressure on the Jordanian monarchy to accept that Jordan becomes either 'the alternative homeland for Palestinians', or a 'federation for Jordanians and Palestinians' (Luck, 2019). The Jordanian government has repeatedly rejected both solutions. Hence, addressing issues associated with naturalization and the rights of stateless Palestinians in Jordan has become extremely sensitive. Thus, interviewing representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations was impossible.

In light of this limitation on sources of data, this thesis adopts a comparative approach as a 'source triangulation' to achieve convergence through similar confirmations from multiple data sources (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Krefting, 1991). This research deployed one-to-one in-depth

semi-structured interviews with poor Palestinian refugee youth as the primary source of data (Kapiszewski et al., 2015). Importantly, a comparative approach was utilized to reveal what is *general* and what is *specific* about agency exercised by stateless Gazan youth (Chatty, 2007). Since this thesis does not aim to generalize findings but rather to problematize assumptions, by 'general' I do not mean findings that can be drawn upon to the rest of the population. Hence, to comply with this nature of my inquiry, I instead use the terms *similar* and *common* interchangeably to indicate the same forms of agency derived from the narrations of both groups of poor Palestinian refugee youth holding different legal statuses (stateless/ non-citizens and naturalized/ citizens). Therefore, the research juxtaposes the agency exercised by these two groups to capture the impact of legal status on their acts of agency to negotiate poverty-related constraints.

Since this research does not aim to generalize findings and due to time and resource limitations in fieldwork, purposive sampling as a non-random sampling technique was deployed (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). Purposive sampling (or judgement sampling) is the deliberate choice of participants that carry certain qualities that can make them capable of providing the information required to answer the research question (Bernard, 2006; Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). All participants are in the age range of 18 to 35, holding either a temporary Jordanian passport without an ID or a Jordanian citizenship and ID. Participants have to be registered with UNRWA to ensure that they can access its services. Building on this, the first few participants were recruited through acquaintances who had access to persons with these predetermined qualities. Through snowball sampling, more participants were recruited by asking the initial participants to identify other persons with the same qualities that might be interested in participating in this study. All interviews were arranged over the phone and conducted in public

spaces. Eventually, five stateless Gazans and another five naturalized Palestinian-Jordanians were interviewed (see Table 2). Pseudonyms have been used for participants names.

Table 2. List of Palestinian refugee youth participants

Legal status	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Marital status and children	Occupation	Date conducted
Gazan (two-years temporary passport without ID)	Dalia	Woman	28	Married/ one child	Pharmacist (Front desk)	June 18, 2019
	Saeed	Man	35	Married/ two children	Salesman in small boutique	June 26, 2019
	Ayman	Man	27	Single	Journalist	June 29, 2019
	Mahd	Man	24	Single	Coordinator/ enterprise project for refugees	July 7, 2019
	Samar	Woman	19	Single	Hairdresser	August 7, 2019
Palestinian-Jordanian (five-years permanent passport with ID)	Ronwa	Woman	22	Single	Psychologist	July 6, 2019
	Aysar	Man	35	Married/ two children	Accountant	July 9, 2019
	Yasar	Woman	25	Single	Student (bachelors)	July 10, 2019
	Hafez	Man	27	Engaged	Entrepreneur (application for parents)	July 14, 2019
	Faris	Man	32	Married/ two children	Puppeteer	July 21, 2019

For ethical considerations, written consent was obtained from research participants for conducting the interviews and for voice recording. I explained the research topic, its objectives and any potential risks. I also asserted that personal data and information are completely confidential. Lastly, I stressed their right to end the interview anytime they request and that no monetary compensation is offered in this research. Interviews were finally translated and transcribed.

2.4.2 Analyzing Meanings and Interpretations

Qualitative analysis methods will be deployed in this research to infer meanings and interpretations from interviews with participants beneath superficial information. In this research, 'latent content analysis' is the aim to derive subjective interpretations of text data (Bryman, 2004; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017). The process entails transforming raw data from

transcribed interviews into categories or themes; "…from the manifest and literal content to meanings" (Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017:94).

Coding is the primary data analysis technique deployed in this research to breakdown raw data into meaningful and organized categories and themes (Bryman, 2004; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017; Kapiszewski et al., 2015). The first level of coding in this research, *open coding*, was conducted to extract excerpts from participants' narrations of their life trajectories that translate into meanings of agency exercised to negotiate poverty-related constraints. These meanings of forms of agency draw on Lister's (2004) types of agency. Lister developed a method to analyse how poor people make decisions and act in both every-day and strategic issues. Her approach consists of four types of agency: 'getting by', 'getting (back) at', 'getting out' and 'getting organized' (refer to section 3.3 for detailed description of each). The second level of coding, *axial coding*, consists situating Lister's four types of agency into Jones and Sumner's (2011) well-being domains: material, relational and subjective (refer to section 3.3). The third level of coding, *thematic coding*, will be utilized to compile different forms of agency in each well-being domain into overarching themes of agency forms, i.e. agency themes.

This thesis draws on the analytical framework of Lister (2004) and Jones and Sumner (2011) and builds on Clark-Kazak's (2014) work that situates this framework within displacement studies. However, the research aims to further expand this analytical framework through proposing that forms of agency do not remain confined in one well-being domain. Rather, agency themes in the material and relational well-being domains, on the one hand, and agency themes in the subjective domain on the other, interact to generate livelihood strategies that are derived from the participants' subjective meanings of the state exclusionary policies. Finally, through revisiting scholarship the thesis has previously engaged with, these livelihood

strategies are situated within theoretical premises to derive further interpretations. Most importantly, the above analytical process is conducted for each group of poor Palestinian youth (stateless Gazans and Palestinian-Jordanians) separately to derive *similar* and *different* forms of agency, agency themes and livelihood strategies. However, investigating intra-group similarities and differences alongside issues of intersectionality is beyond the scope of this research due to limitations in fieldwork time and resources. Nonetheless, few prevalent gendered differences within each group were discussed throughout processes of data analysis.

2.4.3 Pursuing Trustworthiness

In addition to engaging with reflexivity and adopting a comparative approach, trustworthiness was further pursued throughout the analysis process by other tools. First, a dense description of the collected data and analysis processes is a significant element in writing up this research (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Since the researcher is subjectively involved in all these decisions, the research densely describes the processes of extracting excerpts, coding and interpretation. Second, structural coherence is deployed to ensure "…that there are no unexplained inconsistencies between the data and their interpretations" (Guba cited in Krefting, 1991:220). Structural coherence is achieved in this research through not only looking at similar and different forms of agency, but also describing the relation of each to legal status through referring back to the state exclusionary policies each time. Lastly, the transcripts were coded and recoded multiple times to ensure that the meanings and interpretations of the researcher are consistent throughout the analysis process (Krefting,1991).

CHAPTER 3: BRIDGING AGENCY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF PALESTINIAN PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT

This chapter foregrounds debates on the agency of stateless refugees and their roles in creating livelihoods in protracted exile. I begin with describing the discourse of 'othering' that reinforces refugee labels such as victims, helpless and passive. Second, I engage with theoretical premises and conceptual frameworks to understanding agency as an inherited capacity of humankind. Third, I present foregrounding scholarly work that demonstrate how refugees in protracted situations challenge these labels through taking control of their lives, making decisions and acting to develop alternative means to livelihoods. Fourth, I engage with literature that bridges between displacement and development as one pathway to expanding agency of refugees while reducing their vulnerability. Lastly, this chapter contextualizes the previous debates through merging it with literature on agency of stateless Palestinians in the Middle East.

3.1 The Refugee Label and the 'Othering' Discourse

A number of scholars have challenged the international refugee regime's discursive representation of refugees as a homogenous group of objects who have been forcibly displaced and thus are helpless, passive, unprotected (for example, Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Chatty 2007, 2010; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Malkki, 1995, 1996; Turton, 2003; Zetter, 2007) and live in a static state of limbo while stuck in the present unable to build lives into the future (Brun, 2015; Brun and Fábos, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2011).

The refugee label and its characterizations are entrenched in the widely used legal definition provided by the 1951 Refugee Convention (Kyriakides et al., 2018b, Malkki, 1995; Zetter, 2007) that states

…owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Article A(2)).

This definition implicitly incites at least three preconditions to refugee status eligibility (see Zetter 2007 for full account of Convention definition analysis). The first assumes that crossing borders beyond one's country is an involuntary (forced) process. Intuitively, these persons are victims who have lost their "…normative agentive capacities" (Kyriakides et al., 2018b:3) that voluntary migrants would have otherwise (Bakewell, 2010, Kyriakides et al., 2018b; Zetter, 2007). Kyriakides et al. also argue that although forced migration studies sociologists challenge these non-agentive ascriptions to refugees based on voluntary/involuntary premises, this condition is necessary in eligibility determination (p.13). Richmond (cited in Bakewell, 2010) rejects the dichotomy between voluntary/involuntary migrant and instead recognizes that refugees have a degree of agency that allow them to strategize fleeing even the worst life-threatening situations. He instead considers migration as a "…continuum between 'proactive' and 'reactive' migration" (p.1699).

Second, refugees are assumed to be unprotected and rightless (Blitz, 2009; Massey, 2010). This is due the fact that by the time individuals leave their country of nationality, they are either *de facto* stateless since they "…are unable or, for valid reasons, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country" (Blitz, 2009; Massey, 2010:61), or *de jure* stateless and do not hold nationality from any state under its law. Thus, while not all refugees are *de jure* stateless, UNHCR considers all refugees to be at least *de facto* stateless (unprotected persons) (Massey, 2010). Third, they are imagined as persons who have lost their capacity and autonomy to act since their "…judgment and reason had been compromised by his or her experiences"

(Malkki, 1996:384) and thus cannot claim "…normative authority of citizens" (Kyriakides et al., 2018b:3).

In light of these characterizations, Edward Said's Orientalism (Said, 1979) offers one way to understand how refugee label tends to pervade the discourse of 'otherness' (Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Sajjad, 2018). The 'non-western' and 'not-us' global North ascriptions to 'unfamiliar' refugees exemplify them as passive, silent and in need for help from the developed world (at their best) and as threats to security and the western way of living (at their worst), or both (Hyndman, 2000; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Sajjad, 2018; Zetter, 2007). It is noteworthy, however, that this othering discourse has been used in other contexts of marginalization. Lister explains that the poor are reduced to passive victims and socially distant 'others' from 'us' (2004:124).

A number of scholars argue that academia also contributes to the essentializing and homogenizing 'othering' discourse of the international refugee regime (Bradley, 2014; Malkki, 1996; Oskay, 2016; Ramadan, 2012). The profound premises discussed in this thesis are presented by Hannah Arendt (1996) and Agamben (1998). Oskay (2016) argues that Hannah Arendt's (1996:267) description of refugees as the 'scum of the earth' and Agamben's (1998) reductionist visualization of life in camps as 'bare life' has falsely represented refugees as a homogenous group of rightless persons. Bradley (2014) asserts that Arendt's characterization of refugees as rightless and stateless no longer resonates with the current challenges faced by refugees. Moreover, Ramadan (2012) challenges Agamben's 'space of exception' which describes refugees in camps as a population of reduced 'bare life' in a space of exclusion from the nation-state's conventional and political order of things.

3.2 Understanding the 'Refugee Agency' in Protracted Displacement

In the previous section I demonstrate how the 'othering' discourse entrenched in refugee label characterization of victimhood and helplessness essentially portray refugees as persons with compromised autonomy and capacity to act. Many scholars in refugee studies challenge refugee labelling and its underlying assumptions (for example, Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Brun and Fábos, 2015; Clark-Kazak, 2014; Grayson-Courtemanche, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Landau and Duponchel, 2011, among many others). Scholars assert that refugees claim authority that is normally ascribed to citizens (Kyriakides et al., 2018b:3) through taking control of their lives and negotiating interventions and the traditional durable solutions prescribed by the international refugee regime (Clark-Kazak, 2014; Grayson-Courtemanche, 2015; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Landau and Duponchel, 2011) which fail to address their protracted displacement (Horst, 2006; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Long, 2011; Milner and Loescher 2011).

In order to understand how refugees negotiate the refugee label and challenge the dissonance between humanitarian interventions and their own realities, a wide range of scholars have engaged with agency conceptualization and situated it into the forced migration studies (for example Bradley, 2014; Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Brun, 2015; Coffie, 2019; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Landau and Duponchel, 2011; Mohamed, 2006; Squire, 2017; Utas, 2019). The following section aims to engage with some of this scholarship.

3.2.1 Theorizing and Conceptualizing 'Refugee Agency'

Existing scholarship provides different perspectives on the definition and conceptualization of 'human agency'. There is no one universally accepted definition of agency in academia nor in practice. Bradley, Milner and Peruniak (2019) argue that "…in much of the

field, agency arguably remains something of a theoretical "black box" (p.7). However, most definitions suggested by scholars define agency as an act that reflects the person's ability to influence her/his life to achieve future goals and aspirations (Chatty, 2010; Coffey and Farrugia, 2014; White and Wyn, 1998). Hence, agency tries to capture the idea of freedom to make choices and how resources are being used to make actions (Hitlin and Elder, 2007). Lister (2004) explains that "[t]he idea of agency is typically used to characterize individuals as autonomous, purposive and creative actors, capable of a degree of choice" (p.125). She also adds that oppression and deprivation are survived through one's belief in her/his ability to exercise control over her own life (p.126). In Bakewell's (2010) terms, "…agency is taken to refer to the capacity for social actors to reflect on their position, devise strategies and take action to achieve their desires" (p.1694). Whether it is an ability, capability, autonomy, free-will or resistance, it can all be summed up into Kristiansen's (2014) wider definition: *the individual's belief in his or her ability to influence his or her life over the life course*" (p.15). Kristiansen adds that

> [t]his definition is intentionally broad, allowing for both a multidimensional operationalization and a general, rather than domain-specific, measure, but, arguably, still empirically tangible. It entails both an individual self-belief, which individuals may vary in, and the individual's temporal perspective. This temporal perspective may be either retrospective or prospective, and concerns a belief in whether a person's life course has been or will be influenced in the future (p.15).

Some theoretically bound definitions of agency do exist. Disciplinary debates over the understanding of agency emerge from differences in conceptualizing and operationalizing agency within frameworks that situate individuals into social structures which have been often discussed in two theoretical premises: Giddens' structuration theory (1984) and Bourdieu's habitus (1977) (Hitlin and Elder, 2007). Giddens' structuration theory argues that an individual's autonomy to make decisions and act is influenced by structures (rules and resources), and structures are partially maintained by these acts of agency (Giddens, 1984). Giddens

conceptualizes "…agency as an individual's (sub)conscious and purpose-driven choice to act in a certain manner in taking into account his/her structural context" (Oskay, 2016:38). Moreover, Giddens (1984) identifies two characteristics associated with agency (cited in Redmond, 2009:544). The first, is that individuals have a choice to act. Second, is that individuals engage in 'reflexive monitoring' (p.544). This entails one's awareness of her/his actions and their explanations through interpretation of surrounding structures. Simultaneously, Bourdieu offers an account for pathways "…in which individual actions, tastes and behaviors serve to reproduce social structures that in turn shape individuals" (Hitlin and Elder, 2007:35).

Both Giddens and Bourdieu have been criticized for misunderstanding the nature of human agency by Migration Studies scholars (Bakewell, 2010; Hitlin and Elder, 2007; Squire, 2017). Giddens' structuration theory has been repeatedly situated into migration studies in order to understand agency of migrants. Bakewell (2010) presents a critical realist critique of this middle ground understanding of how agency and structure interplay in migration theory. He argues that this is especially because there is a wide distinction between voluntary and forced (involuntary) migration which denies forced migrants the capacity and agency to act, while persons fleeing life-threats have enough agency to make decisions to either stay or leave. Bakewell, following critics like Archer, states that his argument is reinforced by the fact that social structures pre-exist before social actors, hence, are present at any time regardless of the agency of individuals. Citing Parker (2000), Bakewell adds that social structures are the outcome of agency of individuals until they pass a developmental threshold, beyond which they become independent of the agency that once produced them (p.1696). Hitlin and Elder, argue that "…our very human desires, wants, and needs are either under-explored (Giddens) or over-determined (Bourdieu)" (p.36, brackets from original document). Ahearn states that Bourdieu "…allows for

the reproduction of social structures through individual action, but moves far from the concept of free will" (p.35) while Giddens disassociates individuals from their wider social realities (Hitlin and Elder, 2007:35).

Squire (2017) presents a more recent critique of the structure/agency duality. Squire argues that the structure/agency analytical framework is reductive in unauthorized migration studies. It can contribute to processes of criminalization (when unauthorized migrants have excessive agency) or victimization (when they have reduced agency). Instead, Squire asserts that we should focus on the autonomy of migrants and the effect of their sovereign power rather than emphasizing the structure/agency duality. Migrants exercise "…strategic action in a strategically selective context" (Squire, 2017:269).

Amartya Sen's (1985) 'capabilities approach' is another pathway to understanding the human agency. This approach defines agency within a conceptual framework that abandons income as a measurement to well-being and instead focuses on freedoms within which persons can use their capabilities to make choices. Sen defines agency freedom as "…what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important" (p.203). Thus, agency is concerned with the "…ability to define one's goals and act on them" (Donald et al., 2017) when the freedom to do so is present. Sen's capabilities approach has also been criticized. Stewart (2016) challenges Sen by arguing that his conceptualization presumes equality of opportunities which dismisses the inherited disadvantages, poverty and lack of human and social capital that poor persons usually face.

In addition to the different ways in which agency has been conceptualized and operationalized, scholars have been measuring it through various indicators. For example, Alkire (2007) uses an adaptation to the concept of autonomy, developed by psychologists working in

Self Determination Theory, as an indicator to measure agency. Adopting a positivist approach, Alkine statistically developed an autonomy index to measure agency, through asking respondents about their engagement in many life-related issues and decision-making processes. Kristiansen (2014), on the other hand, measures agency through developing scales that measure different constructs of control: self-efficacy, locus of control, mastery and personal control. Another method is presented by Hitlin and Elder (2007) who empirically measure agency through a model that contains three components (constructs): self-efficacy, planfulness and optimism. Generating validity in this model is statistically acheived through two additional constructs, self-esteem and social support. Moreover, Donald et al. (2017) developed a framework to measure women's agency through three dimensions: goal-setting, perceived control and ability (sense of agency), and acting on goals. Thereafter, a set of constructs were measured through different borrowed theoretical indices and scales for each of those dimensions.

To conclude, after engaging with these multidisciplinary debates, this thesis draws on Kristiansen's (2014) concluding remarks which "…underscores the importance of a clear and explicit link between the definition of agency and the measure(s) used to operationalize it. Rather than converging on a specific definition, the approach suggested here recognizes that agency may be defined in different ways" (p.24). Thus, this research aims to find the link between agency definition and measures within the context of protracted forced migration. The following section begins this process by engaging with scholarship that situates the concept of agency into forced migration studies.

3.2.2 Situating 'Refugee Agency' within Forced Migration Studies

A rich literature has focused on situating agency, explicitly or implicitly, in forced migration studies to challenge the typical characterizations of refugees as helpless victims

(Bradley, 2014; Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Brun, 2015; Clark-Kazak, 2014; Clark-Kazak and Thomson, 2019; Coffie, 2019; Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b; Landau and Duponchel, 2011; Mohamed, 2006; Utas, 2019). In this section, I engage with some profound studies from this extensive literature to understand what is specific about 'refugee agency'.

Kyriakides et al. (2018a, 2018b) in two separate accounts examine the meaning agency of refugees in private sponsorship contexts in Canada. They argue that refugees contest the 'non-person' assumption to refugee label by asserting their eligibilities to exist during displacement —through narratives of self-rescue and pre-conflict social roles— and after resettlement. In one account, Kyriakides et al. (2018a), examine how refugees contest ascriptions that render them as involuntarily displaced passive victims by asserting authority to act beyond their status eligibilities of refuge. This is achieved through noncompliance with sponsors' expectations of refugee behaviour and demanding recognition of their pre-conflict identities.

Landau and Duponchel (2011) investigate determinants of urban refugees' protection in four African cities. Through examining the indicators of urban protection: physical security; access to housing and security of tenure; economic security; and predictions of future movement, they find that legal status of refugees/asylum seekers is not a main determinant in their welfare and protection. Instead, refugees gain protection and access services in their hosting countries by making choices and taking positions in social and institutional networks. Legal status was however correlated with improved access to the labour market and hence better employment status. Therefore, Landau and Duponchel argue that refugees should be considered as active agents who are also a vulnerable group and hence need assistance to overcome limitations to their capabilities and expand their freedoms to make choices.

Similarly, Kihato and Landau (2016) present a different account that builds on fieldwork in three African cities. Like Landau and Duponchel (2011), they assert that humanitarians should focus on 'back routes to rights' (p.2) to ensure refugee protection without abandoning the call for legal status and rights embedded in refugee laws and conventions. These routes incorporate locally appropriate language of rights informed by particular political and social interests and through building solidarity with local officials, citizens and other non-state actors. Other scholars might not frame their work within the issue of legal status but also discuss in their work similar alternatives to traditional solutions. For example, Mohamed (2006) asserts in his study that Somali women in diaspora utilize social spaces and networks to survive exclusion. Mohamed adds that these women use community activism to create opportunities for social, economic and political engagement.

From a feminist perspective, Brun and Fábos (2015) challenge the assumption that refugees are waiting in a state of static 'immobilized temporariness'. Brun and Fábos conceptualizes home and homemaking for refugees in protracted displacement. Through adopting an approach that examines the relationship between mobility and stasis and the material and symbolic, they propose a conceptual framework to analyze home in different contexts of protracted displacement. They distinguish three element to homemaking i) 'home', the day- to-day practices of homemaking, ii) 'Home', the representation of values, traditions, memories, and feelings of home, and iii) 'HOME', as the broader political and historical meaning understood within the current global order and entrenched in institutions.

Sometimes, however, agency could be exercised through confinement to refugee labels rather than through challenging them. For example, Utas (2019) describes how Liberian women deploy 'victimcy' — "…to describe the agency of self-staging as victim of war" —…as one

tactic —amongst others— in women's "social navigation" of war zones" (p.408). In this instance, women in Liberia chose to confine to the victim label to access resources. In other instances, displaced persons exercise agency to negotiate UN traditional solutions rather than reject them, particularly in processes of repatriation and resettlement. For example, Clark-Kazak and Thomson (2019) attempt to give voices to two Congolese women living in Uganda and Tanzania who were actively involved in resettlement efforts beyond UNHCR's framework and processes which normally ignore the refugees' roles, choices and decisions in shaping solutions. Bradley (2014), on the other hand, draws from the repatriation experience of Guatemalans to argue that refugees are bearer of rights as citizens and hence are constantly negotiating their relationship with their state of origins. Moreover, Coffie (2019) demonstrates how Liberian refugees protested against UNHCR processes of repatriation. Coffie further explains how protests empowered refugees through unpacking agency that was manifested in strategizing the protests, accessing various resources and highlighting their achievements.

To conclude, refugees challenge labels and power dynamics in different ways: exercising agency to retain their pre-conflict roles and identities (Kyriakides et al., 2018a, 2018b); resisting the international order of movement through unauthorized migration (Squire, 2017); taking up arms alongside the army (Utas, 2019); negotiating UNHCR's normalized processes of repatriation or resettlement (Coffie, 2019; Clark-Kazak and Thomson, 2019); and utilizing survival strategies to respond to structural constraints and violence (Clark-Kazak, 2014). Moreover, agency can be temporally embodied in the hopes and aspirations for a better future (see 'agency-in-waiting' in Brun, 2015) while making homes in the day-to-day living, values, traditions and memories, and in political and historical contexts.

Most importantly, no matter what form agency takes, it cannot be examined in isolation from the wider social, economic and political power relations (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Lister, 2004). Acknowledging the various forms of agency exercised by refugees in protracted displacement does not mean that refugees are persons with full autonomy, neither does this realization assume that refugees do not normally end up being among the most vulnerable. Bradley, Milner and Peruniak (2019) states that

> [w]e note that we use the term "refugee agency" as an "imperfect shorthand for the ability of displaced individuals (and, in some cases, communities) to make and enact choices that potentially affect outcomes, particularly of resolution processes, recognizing that the extent to which displaced persons can exercise agency generally and in certain circumstances will depend on complex, shifting political, socioeconomic, cultural, historical, and institutional structures (p.272).

Therefore, recognizing the agency of refugees alongside their vulnerability is key to understanding how humanitarian response and assistance can expand spaces of freedoms, opportunities and capacity. In the words of Brun and Fábos (2015), refugees normally end up in liminal spaces; "between vulnerability and agential power" (p.11). The question that this research raises is how can policy expand the space for agency while reducing refugee vulnerability? After all, 86 percent of refugees are hosted by global South countries (Hyndman and Giles, 2017) which means that the majority of refugees in protracted displacement are located in already impoverished states (Brun and Fábos, 2015). One way to face such challenge, as will be discussed in the following section, is through bridging the two disciplines of displacement and development.

3.3 Bridging Agency, Protracted Displacement and Development

Displacement and development studies are continuously interlinked in literature. Bradley, Milner and Peruniak (2019) state that: "[t]he complex relationship between forced migration, durable solutions, conflict and development has been a long-standing concern for researchers,

policymakers and practitioners" (p.7). For many decades, this relationship has also been an

enduring goal of the international donors due to the escalating costs of humanitarian aid (Zetter,

2019). The recent growing rates of protracted displacement, however, have led to revived interest

in addressing this relationship (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Zetter, 2019). Moreover,

addressing sustainable solutions for refugees in protracted situations and their hosting countries

requires the search for new approaches such as development-led responses to displacement

(Zetter, 2019). This discussion reminds us, following Malkki's arguments in 1995, that

promoting long-term development instead of the immediate emergency relief is a more sound

approach. Malkki explains that this approach aims to improve the lives of both refugees and the

impoverished in the Third World.

However, Malkki (1995) also warns against the development discourse's tendency to

facilitate the continued depoliticization of refugee displacement. While Zetter (2019) argues that

this development-led response to protracted refugee crises is largely paralleled with development

theory of the 1970s to 1990s, i.e. the model of economic dualism and the core-

periphery/metropole-dependency. Zetter argues that the current refugee-response regime

"…subordinates impacted countries to an economic-development and containment model

applied by the advanced 'imperial' donor countries of the Global North" (p.2).

The most recent international effort to promote a development-led approach to refugee

displacement is embodied in the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. According to Zetter (2019),

this approach aims to address three enduring challenges in responding to refugee crises.

> "The first is to mediate the impacts of protracted forced displacement on receiving
> countries and communities; the second is to address the longer- term livelihood needs of
> the displaced themselves in sustainable ways. The third, although understated, is
> particularly relevant in contemporary political rhetoric—the containment of refugees and
> other forcibly displaced people in their regions of origin" (p.4).

In line with the second challenge addressed by Zetter, this research investigates how refugees create their own durable solutions and livelihoods to understand how displacement and development can be bridged. The global refugee regime addresses development-led and longer-term strategies to enhance the livelihoods of refugees through the underpinned concepts of resilience-building and self-reliance (Betts and Collier, 2017; Zetter, 2019). Adopting a critical approach to understanding these two concepts in the context of Palestinian refugees, this thesis follows Zetter's argument that development-led approach should recognize that refugees have "…resources and skills, as well as their economic demand and supply functions that, if effectively managed, could boost aggregate productive capacity and the development trajectory of impacted countries. It is also the case that development-led responses that support resilience and self-sufficiency better respect and foster the dignity of forcibly displaced people" (p.5). Although a unified approach to bridging displacement and development cannot be applied in different contexts, one pathway adopted in this research to understand how displacement and development can be bridged is addressing sustainable livelihoods of refugees (Zetter, 2019) and the ways in which they negotiate poverty.

Addressing poverty to bridge displacement and development particularly in protracted situations requires a deep understanding of the meaningful, effective and durable livelihoods created by refugees in exile. Rein argues that "[e]conomic development and assistance to refugees are inseparable issues...because the 'refugee' is an indicator of world system dynamics" (cited in Malkki 1995:506). From the perspective of statelessness, Blitz (2009) argues that in developing countries, denying stateless persons rights and depriving them nationality has a 'poverty-generating function', hence, "[t]he persistent problems associated with statelessness noted above are equally a matter for development agencies" (Blitz, 2009:35). However, the

relationship between poverty, displacement and development intervention is complex and intertwined. Sometimes, the effectiveness of development programmes that target the poor can be challenged by the power dynamics inherent in *de facto* and *de jure* statelessness since it evokes discrimination and inequality (Blitz, 2009) in a contemporary world where human rights are the inherited privilege of citizenship (Perez, 2011).

While the argument raised by Blitz (2009) —among others who focus on legal status as a major determinant to well-being— is valid and important, addressing *de facto* or *de jure* statelessness should not be the only focus in seeking solutions. In order to bridge protracted displacement and development, researchers and policymakers have to explore and understand the different factors (other than legal status) that shape and condition the lives of refugees in displacement contexts. After all, recent scholarship explores situations in which constraints experienced by displaced persons may be closely related to those faced by other vulnerable groups (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019) who in some urban settings might be even less protected than refugees (Landau and Duponchel, 2011). Hence, solutions should recognize displaced persons' ability to control their own environment in the broader urban community (Kihato and Landau, 2016; Landau and Duponchel, 2011), and "…enable refugees to negotiate and manage constantly evolving disequilibrium rather than as events or statuses to be resolutely achieved" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019:249).

Bridging protracted displacement and development also requires adopting a multidisciplinary research methodology (Chatty, 2007; Malkki, 1995). This process begins by bringing together the various disciplinary perspectives on understanding the concept of agency (as was demonstrated previously in section 3.2) and adopting analytical frameworks from different disciplines into displacement and forced migration studies. Since this research is

focused on economic development and livelihoods of refugees, notwithstanding the wide range

of distinctive methodologies to examine agency, the thesis adopts Christina Clark-Kazak's

(2014) approach that draws on Ruth Lister's (2004) conceptual approach to agency of poor

persons and Jones and Sumner's (2011) well-being domains of poor children and young persons,

to understand how Congolese young people in Uganda exercise agency as self-survival strategies

in every-day and long-term strategies.

Lister (2004) argues that one sociological debate about agency is related to its types. She

developed a method to analyse how poor people make decisions and act in both every-day and

strategic issues. Her approach consists of four types of agency. 'Getting by' is an *every-day*

personal form of agency and entails the small actions and decisions poor people make to cope

with daily challenges (p.130). 'Getting (back) at' refers to an *every-day political* action taken as

a response to unjust circumstances encountered in every-day interactions and considered a form

of resistance (p.140). 'Getting out' is a longer-term *personal-strategic* form of agency aimed at

using every mean to transform their lives' circumstances (p.144). 'Getting organized' also refers

to *political-strategic* form of agency but a collective one to undertake, with other people,

structural changes.

Jones and Sumner (2011) situate Lister's types of agency into the three well-being

domains: material, relational and subjective, to analyse and understand how agency is exercised

by poor children and young people. The material well-being domain is where agency is related to

needs, resources, and observable outcomes. The relational well-being domain is in which agency

is related to connections to others, including both networks of support and obligation. Lastly, the

subjective well-being domain relates to "meanings people give to the goals they achieve and the

processes they engage in" (2011:14–15). Table 3 describes dimensions, areas of study, indicators and key determinants of each well-being domain.

Table 3. The dimensions, areas of study, indicators and key determinants of each well-being domain

Dimensions of well-being	Material	Relational	Subjective
What is to be Studied	Objectively Observable Outcomes people are able to achieve	The extent to which people are able to engage with others in order to achieve particular needs and goals, and the nature of these engagements	The meanings that people give to the goals they achieve and the process they engage in
Indicators	• Needs satisfaction indicators • Material asset indicators	• Multidimensional resource indicators • Human agency indicators	• Quality of life indicators
Key Determinants	• Income, wealth, and assets • Employment and livelihood activities • Education and skills • Physical health and (dis)ability • Access to services and amenities • Environmental quality	• Relationships, love, and care • Networks of support and obligation • Relations with the state: law, politics, and welfare • Social, political, and cultural identities and inequalities • Violence, conflict, and (in)security • Scope for personal and collective action and influence	• Understanding of the sacred and moral order • Self-concept and personality • Hopes, fears, and aspirations • Sense of meaning/ meaninglessness • Levels of (dis)satisfaction • Trust and confidence

Source: Jones and Sumner (2011)

To conclude, this thesis attempts to bridge displacement and development studies by acknowledging that one pathway is to address how refugees create durable solutions and sustainable livelihoods while negotiating poverty. But importantly, the research undertakes this process while exploring and understanding the different factors that shape and condition the lives' trajectories in education and livelihood of Palestinian refugee youth. This involves investigating how youth achieve *de facto* integration within the wider urban setting they live in despite the limitations of their legal statuses. Finally, the thesis adopts a multidisciplinary approach to bridging protracted displacement and development in understanding and conceptualizing refugee agency.

3.4 Contextualizing the Debate: The Case of Stateless Palestinian Youth in Jordan

After decades of displacement, fourth and fifth generations of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East remain portrayed as passive victims (Chatty, 2010). Scholarship also contributes to this labeling by focusing on examining the impact of *de jure* statelessness and lack of international human rights protection on Palestinian refugees and their experiences. For example, Takkenberg argues that the situation of Palestinians is determined by the element of their statelessness which is more significant than the refugee aspect (cited in Shiblak, 2006). He states that

> …being a refugee, stateless, dispossessed, lacking the passport of a state, not having even the theoretical option of returning to one's country – in other words, not having even the right to have rights – has been at the very heart of the Palestinian refugee problem (cited in Shiblak, 2006:9).

Shiblak (2006) argues that Palestinians' non-citizen status generates insecurity, psychological and social problems. He also adds that lack of access to education and employment "…exposes them to political manipulation, exploitation and poverty" (2006:9). Other scholars focus on the Palestinian refugees' exclusion from the 1951 Refugees Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol (Akram, 2002; Clemens, 2007; El Abed, 2006; Perez, 2011; Shiblak, 2006). For stateless Gazans in Jordan, most literature focus on their legal status in Jordan as 'Arab foreign' residents, and on how this status excludes them from political representation, educational and economic opportunities as well as access to basic rights like rights to property, travelling, identity papers and health care insurance (Clemens, 2007; El Abed, 2006; Loizos and Kelly, 2010; Perez, 2011, 2018).

Nevertheless, a number of scholars challenge this homogenizing and essentially victimizing discourse by acknowledging that stateless Palestinians create lives beyond their legal status and the exclusionary policies they experience (Chatty, 2010; Clemens, 2007; Fiddian-

Qasmiyeh, 2019; Finchman, 2012; Perez, 2018; Ramadan, 2012). This entails acknowledging

that statelessness does not affect every Palestinian refugee in the same way (Perez, 2018), and

that solving the problems of stateless refugees in the Middle East cannot advance before

understanding their exceptional circumstances and experiences (Clemens, 2007).

　　Few scholars demonstrate profound insights into how Palestinian refugees in the Middle

East negotiate refugee labelling and characterizations (Chatty, 2010; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019;

Finchman, 2012; Ramadan, 2012). While acknowledging that similar studies have not been

found in Jordan particularly, the following available studies provide profound insight for this

research. Ramadan (2012) sets out to spatialize refugee camps of Palestinians in Lebanon based

on their exceptional situation that challenges common understandings of refugee and camp.

Departing from the presumed 'permanent-temporary reality' (p.66) of Palestinians in camp, the

author argues that politics and material practices of Palestinians should be understood as

'political agency'. Through criticizing Agamben's 'space of exception' —which describes the

refugee in camp as a population of reduced 'bare life' in a space of exclusion from the nation-

state order of things— Ramadan refers to the camps in Lebanon where both international

humanitarian organizations and Palestinian political movements "coexist and cooperate in

governing camps" (p.69) beyond the control of the Lebanese Government. After all, "[i]f the

sovereign state is the sole source of political life and legitimacy, then this is something

Palestinians and other stateless peoples must always lack" (p.71). Instead, Palestinian camps in

Lebanon demonstrate cultural and political mobilizations that challenge liminality. Hence,

Ramada argues that Palestinianess is exercised in camps through material and

symbolic/traditional ways that empower Palestinians to become active instead of passive.

Another account that examines ways in which 'Palestine' and 'Palestinianess' are culturally, socially and symbolically produced by youth in Palestinian camps in Lebanon is Finchman (2012). Finchman investigates the formal and informal sites and processes in which agency of youth is exercised to produce shared notions of identities and belonging. She finds that schools and civil society institutions are the primary learning sites. However, other sites such as electronic media and mosques also have a role in constructing this shared notion of Palestinianess. In each site, an interplay between institutional power, processes and outcomes constructs these identities.

In a recent account, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019) deploys a rhizomatic analysis to understand and map rhizomatic strategies of Palestinian and Sahrawi refugees. She deploys the South-South educational migration programs to investigate how such strategies facilitate building meaningful lives in exile. Nevertheless, she asserts that although these strategies are not solutions, they present "…modes of adaptability and flexibility in diverse "shattering" processes" (p.250). She adds that educational access is increasingly recognized as a pathway to development and self-reliance. Refugees eventually go back to their hosting countries and create livelihoods using the education they received through these programs.

Lastly, Chatty's (2010) research focuses on third generation Palestinians living in five UNRWA field sites: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. Chatty argues that, until recently, research on refugee and forced migrant youth as a social group has been largely ignored; the focus is usually on adults and young children (Chatty, 2010). Chatty explains that the 'sense of agency' Palestinian youth utilized to seek alternative means to challenge the extreme limitations on their rights and opportunities is remarkable. She adds that Palestinian refugee youth maintain the ability to defy appalling poverty and to hold on to aspirations for a

better future. The study frames these aspirations and sense of agency within multidimensional aspects related to i) their gendered identity, life experiences and agency, and ii) educational constraints and aspirations. Nevertheless, she addresses the historical and contemporary social and political conditions that shape the way in which Palestinian refugee youth form and maintain their identities.

All those four accounts provide profound insights into understanding the agency of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. Ramadan (2012) seeks this through a political lens to agency, both Finchman (2012) and Chatty (2010) through focusing on processes of constructing identities and belonging beyond their grandparents' homeland, and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019) through investigating access to education via South-South programs. Drawing on all these accounts, this research adopts a comprehensive approach to investigating stateless Palestinians' negotiation of poverty-related constraints that aims to derive forms of agency from three well-being domains: material, relational and subjective.

3.5 Concluding Remarks: Implications on Research and Policy

This chapter has discussed the multiple ways in which agency can be conceptualized and therefore measured within forced migration studies. It is also important to acknowledge the theoretical and empirical challenges to understanding agency that often interweave with the complex realities and the experiences of refugees themselves. Nonetheless, the one general and concrete consensus among scholars is the need to challenge the stereotypical characterisations of the refugee as someone who is oppressed, silent and in need of help. However, it is not enough to acknowledge refugee agency by simply granting them voice to narrate their experiences (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019). Rather, it is necessary to translate these voices and experiences into autonomous spaces of opportunities and freedoms to act.

In addition, it is necessary to acknowledge that any form of intervention has to abandon the normalized one-fits-all nature and instead examine. Turton (2003) asserts that "[t]he truth is that there is no such thing as the 'Refugee Experience'…, and there is therefore no such thing as 'the refugee voice': there are only the experiences, and the voices, of refugees" (p.7). Therefore, the only possible way forward is for policy-oriented refugee programs to focus on expanding refugees' freedoms and opportunities to exercise agency in order to make effective choices and decisions about their own lives (see for example Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Landau and Duponchel, 2011 among others). Hence, it is important to reshape state-centric solutions and instead empower refugee-led ones. This entails both investigating the avenues within which refugees exercise agency beyond state-controlled factors (such as legal status) and examining refugee-led solutions beyond the UN traditional ones. This research draws on these conclusions by i) problematizing assumptions on agency of *de jure* stateless Palestinian youth; ii) demonstrating how their agency can be expanded and their vulnerability reduced if research focuses on refugees' meanings of their exceptional experiences and circumstances; and iii) establishing theoretical understanding to these meanings that can possibly be transformed into policy. In the remainder of this research, I attempt to do this.

CHAPTER 4: THE SUBJECTIVE MEANINGS OF NEGOTIATING POVERTY-RELATED CONSTRAINTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the data collected from the research participants and to draw findings that crosslink with previously visited theoretical premises on understanding agency. I begin by demonstrating the exclusionary policies of the Jordanian state that are embedded in rights of stateless Palestinians to education, employment, healthcare, ownership and travel. The second part of the chapter addresses what is *similar* and what is *specific* about forms of agency exercised by stateless Gazan participants. This is achieved through analyzing *similar* and *different* forms of agency exercised by stateless Gazan and Jordanian-Palestinian youths in the three well-being domains: material, relational and subjective. Meanwhile, the analysis is framed within the parameters of the state exclusionary policies to understand the correlation between the observed forms of agency and the legal statuses of both groups. In the final part of this chapter, I analyze how the interrelations between the forms of agency exercised in the subjective well-being domain on the one hand, and those exercised in the material and relational domains on the other, generate *similar* or *different* livelihood strategies for the two groups of youth.

4.2 Meanings of State Exclusionary Policies

Unlike other stateless refugees around the world, the absence of a permanent legal status for Palestinian refugees in Jordan is not the issue per se, but rather the existence of one that excludes them from access to a many rights, i.e. the status of 'Arab foreigners' (Clemens, 2007; El Abed, 2006; Loizos and Kelly, 2010; Perez, 2011, 2018). This section describes how the legal status of Palestinians as 'Arab foreigner' residents induces state exclusionary policies embedded in rights to education, employment and livelihood, health care and other civil rights. This section

represents a backbone to understanding and analyzing the connection between the forms of agency exercised by all participants in this research and their legal status. Through this, what is *similar* and what is *specific* about stateless Gazans is acknowledged.

4.2.1 Education

As non-citizens, Gazan youth normally receive elementary and preparatory education (grades 1 to 10) through UNRWA schools (El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018). UNRWA currently operates 171 schools servicing 122,194 students in Jordan (UNRWA). Among those, 18,947 are distributed in 27 schools located in three official camps in the Greater Amman Municipality district: Amman New Camp or Wihdat, Jabal Al Hussein, and Marka (retrieved from UNRWA camps profile sheets, April 2019). UNRWA schools exempt all registered refugee students from fees (stated in information billboard in UNRWA headquarter in Amman, June 2019). However, only beneficiaries in the Social Safety Net Programme are provided with basic school supplies. After grade 10, students are transferred to a Jordanian public school to complete the last two years of secondary education. However, Gazans can access public schools throughout elementary and secondary education if their guardians wish to do so. One Gazan participant, Dalia (woman, 28), attended a public school all her school years. She says attending public schools has its own obstacles and troubles. Buying books and uniforms is a problem at the beginning of every year due to the ever-changing rules and regulations related to non-citizens. She also added that books are very expensive.

In post-secondary level, The UNRWA Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme (TVET) offered in two centres located in Amman: the Amman Training Centre (ATC) and the Wadi Seer Training Centre (WSTC), has graduated approximately 100,000 trainees since 2006 (UNRWA Education Department Fact Sheet, 2016). During the 2018-2019

school year, approximately 2,800 students were enrolled at both centres[8]. UNRWA claims that

TVETs' graduates enjoy high employment rates, in which "[m]ore than 78% of the 2014

graduates were employed within one year of graduation" (UNRWA Education Department Fact

Sheet, 2016). UNRWA states that these two centres

> …target the most vulnerable Palestine refugee students and offer training courses at
> different levels to match with the regional and local labour market needs. The quality of
> the UNRWA Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme is
> reflected in the results of its students in the National Comprehensive Examination in
> Jordan. In 2018, UNRWA TVET graduates performed better than graduates of local
> institutions, with a success rate of 92.3 per cent for ATC graduates, and 77 per cent for
> WSTC graduates, compared to a national success rate of 61.2 per cent (UNRWA website
> accessed on November 1, 2019).

The duration of the vocational programs range between 1 and 2 years and can be joined

after completing grade 10, whereas the technical programs are two years long and cannot be

joined without completing high school/ secondary education. After completing UNRWA

technical programs, Palestinian refugees can sit for the Jordanian comprehensive exams to be

able to bridge into a bachelor's program in public or private universities.

Moreover, UNRWA provides university-level 'teacher education' in the teaching of

Arabic, English, Geography through the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA)

established in 1971 (FESA). Nevertheless, attending any of UNRWA's post-secondary regular

programs is based on competitive criteria. Students that do not receive scholarships can join the

'parallel (regular) system' in exchange for fees.

Gazan youth are generally unable to attend public or private post-secondary educational

institutions because of the high fees they have to pay to receive a university degree (ARDD,

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[8] This shows a drop in enrollment of approximately 27 percent in comparison with 2014 where 3,868 trainees have graduated from these two centres (UNRWA education department fact sheet, 2016).

2015; Perez, 2011). Private universities can be four times more expensive than public universities (ARDD, 2015). In the latter, Gazans cannot compete for scholarships allocated to citizens only and normally pay international tuitions as Arab foreigner residents. Hence, they are left with one of these three options. First, to compete in the camp resident quota which allocates 350 seats (scholarships) in public universities for Palestinian refugees living in camps.[9] Gazans' access to this quota is very limited since these scholarships are offered to refugees in all thirteen official and three unofficial camps (ARDD, 2015; Perez, 2011). Perez adds that "[t]he larger camps thus receive the greatest number of seats in Jordanian universities. Gazans, given their comparatively smaller population, receive a total of 26 seats per year" (2011:1039).

Second, Gazans can also apply to the Palestine Embassy quota which entails competing against Palestinians inside and outside the country. Dalia (Gazan, woman) received a scholarship through the embassy but she had to turn it down since because it was offered in the city of Ma'an, which is a driving distance of 226 km from Amman. Dalia's parents resented the idea of their daughter travelling this far to university. Dalia also explains that scholarships offered through the embassy are limited in terms of programs and locations.

The third option is acquiring a two-year diploma from UNRWA education programmes then bridging into a private university to pursue a bachelor's degree. The reason why some Gazans, like Dalia, end up taking this path is because UNRWA programmes are normally much cheaper than private universities or the international tuitions in the public ones. Dalia describes that even this option is receiving a backlash from some officials in the pharmaceutical association. Dalia describes

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[9] In the latest new general policy for admission to public and private universities for undergraduate students for the academic year 2019/2020 approved by the Higher Education Council, 350 seats were allocated to the 'camp residents' in which the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Department of Palestinian Affairs coordinate for the placement of the candidates (Khaberni, 2019a).

Some people are raising concerns in regard to bridging. They claim that we do not have the right to compete against students that were granted seats for their high grades. That we should not be in the same class because we do not have the capacity as diploma graduates. They accuse us that we are deceiving the law and that we are only seeking bachelor's degrees no matter what the cost is. But this is wrong, and we do have the capacity. Some people demand that bridging should become illegal but do these people know how they will be affecting the livelihood of so many people who get a second chance [through bridging]? How many Gazans dream about this chance?

Therefore, all these obstacles to attend university eventually prohibit many Gazan youth from receiving post-secondary education. It either discourages Gazan youth to complete their secondary education, leading to high rates of school dropout or "…leads to a *de facto* prohibition to attending universities and, consequently, bars almost an entire population from accessing an economically significant life opportunity" (Perez, 2011:1040). In the following I discuss that restricted access to education is not the only factor that delimits economic opportunities but rather the followed exclusive policies in employment and livelihood.

4.2.2 Employment and Livelihood

Chatty (2007) states that Palestinian refugee youth in the Middle East suffer from high levels of unemployment. A Fafo report (2013) asserts that Gazans in Jordan "…are not only much more likely to be poor but also more than three times as likely to be amongst the very poorest and most destitute, living on less than 1.25 USD a day" (p.8). This is due a number of reasons which will be discussed below.

Gazans' economic vulnerability begins when they are either pressed into dropping-out school or are placed at an educational disadvantage which affects their ability to compete in the workforce (Perez, 2011). For those who manage to graduate, another set of challenges is constantly facing them. First, many UNRWA jobs within camp premises that should be offered to Palestinians are given to Jordanians and foreign labourers instead (Perez, 2011). Second, Gazans are denied access to governmental employment allocated only for citizens (ARDD, 2015;

Perez 2011, 2018). Third, they are not allowed to become members in professional associations (El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018). Perez (2011) adds that this exposes them to vulnerabilities in the workforce and forbids them from organising around common economic interests.

Fourth, the private sector requires work permits obtained from the Ministry of Labour and security clearance from the Intelligence Department which these entities issue to very few Gazans under special circumstances (El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018). Fifth, based on a recent amendment to Labour Law No. 8 of 1996 issued in October 2019, Gazans are denied access to more than 14 professions and allowed another 13 under very special circumstances and conditions (Decision No. (19/2019) retrieved from Ministry of Labour). Moreover, they are strictly denied the ones that require memberships in associations (such as and *inter alia* medicine, engineering and law) (Palestinian Return Center, 2018). Lastly, and according to Regulation No. 104 of 2008 on the Registration and Licensing of Vehicles, Gazans need security clearance and permission from the minister to get a personal car driving licence (ARDD, 2015). Other licences for driving a public vehicle including taxis, buses and heavy machinery are not permitted, clearly excluding Gazans from various employment sectors. Thus, the majority of the working-age Gazans find themselves subject to the vulnerabilities of informal labour (El Abed, 2006; Perez, 2018). Some may attempt migration through human traffickers to work and send back remittances (Chatty, 2007).

4.2.3 Health care

Most Palestinians in Jordan rely on UNRWA's effective but basic healthcare services (Perez, 2011). Treatments for serious illnesses is primarily provided by the Jordanian public healthcare system. Gazan refugees, as foreigners with temporary passports, have access to these services at rates subsidized by the government. They pay 40 per cent of the costs while the

government covers 60 per cent. Perez (2011) argues that most Gazans cannot even afford the percentage they have to bear. They also have no access social security or any government insurance, neither can they afford private insurance. This leaves many Gazans with vulnerable health status and little access to services. One example is Saeed (Gazan, man, 35) who has a child diagnosed with autism. Saeed could not access services provided by the government for autistic children since he does not have a national identification number. He applied for assistance in the Ministry of Social Development and other governmental medical centres but was rejected for not being a citizen. Saeed eventually had to compromise his child's treatments and provide only that which he can afford in a private centre.

4.2.4 Ownership

Gazans at first were denied any form of ownership, whether for business purposes or individual property (El Abed, 2006; Perez 2011, 2018), during which time many registered their possessions in the names of Jordanian citizens. This left Gazans legally vulnerable and subjected to fraud if dispute rises over ownership, since their arrival into Jordan more than 50 years ago. Only recently, in January 2019 were Gazans finally permitted to own property under specific conditions (Issawi, 2019). According to Issawi, these are i) the property to be owned by the head of household only (or a widower if proved to be the provider in the family), and not by children of Gazans; ii) land cannot exceed one dunum (1000 square metres-sqm); iii) Detached houses on a land that does not exceed one dunum (1000 sqm); and iv) One residential apartment only. From January to September 2019, only 568 applications have been submitted by Gazans to the Department of Land and Survey (Issawi, 2019).

4.2.5 Travel

Gazans in Jordan are rarely granted the right to travel abroad, even though they have temporary passports, as many states do not recognize their validity and deny them visas (Perez, 2011). Perez adds that even for the few countries that do recognize their passports, the economic situation in Jordan compels them to do so out of concerns related to illegal resettlement. However, many Palestinians seize economic opportunities in the Gulf States. In other instances, they would grant Gazans visas but deny them entry. Ayman (Gazan, man, 27), for an example, describes his experience with obtaining visas and travelling. Ayman explains that he had to split up with his fiancé who lives in Lebanon because he could not obtain visas to visit her regularly. He describes his experience with the Saudi Embassy who at first invited him to cover the pilgrimage season as a journalist but then cancelled his visa after issuing it. They informed him then that Gazans are no longer allowed to go to Saudi Arabia if they do not hold Jordanian IDs.

To conclude, it is clear that Gazans in Jordan find themselves in day-to-day and long-term situations where they have to navigate many state exclusionary policies in education, employment, healthcare and others. Nevertheless, in the following section I demonstrate how Gazans constantly negotiate these policies.

4.3 What is *Specific* about Poor Stateless Gazan Youth's Agency?

In this section, I conduct the first, second and third levels of coding; *open*, *axial* and *thematic*. Drawing on Lister's (2005) types of agency, open coding is used to derive *similar* and *different* forms of agency from participants' narrations of their lives' trajectories throughout interviews. Drawing on Jones and Sumner's (2011) well-being domains, axial coding is used to categorize forms of agency into material, relational or subjective well-being domain. Lastly, using thematic coding, groups of forms of agency in each well-being domain are further

categorized into overarching *similar* or *different* themes of agency. Most importantly, throughout this process of coding I explore the connection between forms and themes of agency and the legal status of each group.

Finally, by engaging with this process of identifying and analyzing agency forms and themes, I do not deny the structural constraints that continue to shape and condition the choices, decisions and actions of refugee youth. In fact, the concept of agency has been utilized in this research to understand the subjective meanings associated with the lives' trajectories refugees take to move from education to employment and the interplay between these meanings and livelihood outcomes. Thus, referring in the following tables to choices, decisions and actions as an explicit categorization of agency does not intend to deny the other possibilities associated with structural constraints in the form of state exclusionary policies.

4.3.1   *The Material Well-being Domain*

A total of 26 forms of agency were categorized into the material well-being domain. Among those, 17 similar (Table 4) and 9 different (Tables 6 and 7) forms of agency are categorized into 4 common themes of agency. These themes are i) *using Palestinian refugees' and/or citizens' privileges to build educational capacity; ii) individual and collective long-term strategies; iii) increasing employability; and iv) individual and collective coping strategies* (refer to Table 4). There are no different themes of agency exercised by either group in this domain. Following, I describe each theme separately.

Table 4. Similar forms and themes of agency in the material well-being domain

Theme of agency	Forms of agency
Using Palestinian refugees' and/or citizens' privileges to build educational capacity	Public schools (grades 1-12)
	UNRWA schools (grades 1-10), then public-school (11-12)
Individual and collective long-term strategies	Importance of working as a woman to defeat poverty
	Increasing day/week workload
	Family planning to avoid more child expenses
	Picked up a major based on available scholarships
	Studying and working in shifts
	Worked in so many things/ "anything"
	Started working at a young age
Increasing employability	Used online websites to find a job/ Facebook
	Self-learning (computer, language, other skills)
	YouTube/ online videos to learn
	Getting equipped with languages
	Diversify their own skills and learn new things
Individual and collective coping strategies	Lives in poorer district in West Amman
	Expenditure management and minimization
	Lives in East Amman

i) *Theme 1: Using refugees and/or citizens privileges to build educational capacity*

This theme of agency is exercised by both groups to 'get out' of poverty to use Lister's (2004) terms. Chatty (2010) asserts that education is an important theme that dominates young Palestinians' thoughts. She explains that "[e]ducation is an important issue for Palestinian society in general. It is considered a tool to overcome many of the barriers faced in refugee camp life, but it is also a source of despair" (p.334). Education is also a common theme in this research whereby all participants have described the importance of accessing education in defeating precarity and poverty. Even for those who dropped-out of school or did not pursue a post-secondary degree, education was a predominant goal for their children and younger siblings. The

following section discusses three levels of education acquired by some of the participants: elementary, secondary and post-secondary education (see Table 5).

a. *Elementary and secondary education*

As discussed earlier, both groups as registered refugees are beneficiaries of UNRWA educational programmes. Thus, equally 2 out of 5 from each group have acquired education to grade 10 from UNRWA. Only one Gazan woman (Dalia) attended a public school throughout her elementary and secondary education. The other three Palestinian-Jordanians completed their secondary education in public schools.

The other two remaining Gazans (Saeed and Samar) dropped-out from elementary school to financially support their families. Saeed's father abandoned him, so he had to leave school to support himself and his mother. Samar, also, has an unreliable father so she also left school to provide for her mother and siblings. Mahd could not pursue post-secondary education because he had to work to provide for his siblings since their father abandoned them and got married to a different woman. These observations complement and extend Chatty's (2007, 2010) argument that Palestinian youth in the Middle East in many cases sacrifice education to seek economic opportunities to help their families. In addition, Perez (2011) asserts that difficulties to attend university discourage Gazan youth from completing their secondary education, leading to high rates of school dropout. Lastly, it is noteworthy that gender discrimination in early years of education has not been observed in this sample.

b. *Post-secondary education*

Table 5 illustrates participants' trajectories in post-secondary education. In this level of education, differences between the two groups are more salient as shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Participants' trajectories throughout education

Legal status	Participant name	Elementary and secondary education	Post-secondary education
Stateless Gazans	Dalia	Public school (grades 1 to 12)	UNRWA colleges then bridging into a university
	Saeed	Dropped-out	-
	Ayman	UNRWA school (till grade 10) then public school	Public university/ 'camp residents' scholarship
	Mahd	UNRWA school (till grade 10) then public school	Dropped-out
	Samar	Dropped-out	-
Naturalized Palestinian-Jordanians	Ronwa	Public school (grades 1 to 12)	Public university/ scholarship (Jordanians only)
	Aysar	Public school (grades 1 to 12)	Public university/ scholarship (Jordanians only)
	Yasar	UNRWA school (till grade 10) then public school	Private university
	Hafez	UNRWA school (till grade 10) then public school	Private university
	Faris	Public school (grades 1 to 12)	Private university

Table 6. Different post-secondary education trajectories

Forms of agency
For Gazan participants only
UNRWA colleges then bridging into a university
Public university/ 'camp residents' scholarship
For Palestinian-Jordanians only
Entry fees in private university is a grant from CDO
The cheapest possible private university
Public university/ scholarship (Jordanians only)

For Gazans, utilizing their privileges as Palestinian refugees was an overarching theme in negotiating policies that deny them access to scholarships in public universities. Only two Gazans pursued post-secondary education and currently hold bachelor's degrees. Dalia, could not afford a private university and neither did her average allow her to apply for the 'camp residents' scholarship. Thus, she utilized a scholarship she received in one of UNRWA's colleges to get her diploma while saving money for university. After graduation, she bridged into a private university to obtain a bachelor's degree in pharmaceutical sciences. Dalia said that

education was so important to her even if it took more time than it would in normal

circumstances. In the following, the excerpt describes the processes of her decision-making:

> I got 82%, and at that time, with the regular parallel system, receiving an average equivalent to 82% could get you into pharmaceutical majors; but because I'm from Gaza, the chances of me getting into the majors were very low, so I applied via the [Palestinian] Embassy. When you apply via the Embassy, you get a list of majors and the locations of where these majors are provided. I got English literature in Ma'an. So, I had to go from Amman to Ma'an. My mother did not like the idea of an education for her daughter, she would have preferred if I stayed at home. I was exploring my options and whether or not I should accommodate there, and my parents discouraged me to go. As a young girl, I was very eager to get an education, so I kept researching other options with lower transportation costs and I would not need to bother anyone, even if it was time consuming, I had to arrive with all the resources I had. When I was earning my diploma, I told myself that I did not want to go to a private university, because as an 18-year-old I could not afford it, neither did my parents and I could go to a public university. I ended up applying to 'Wadi El Seir' for civil engineering and 'Na'ur' for pharmaceutical sciences [UNRWA colleges]. I got my acceptances during the same time period; I had to pay a 50 JOD registration fee for pharmacy when Wadi El Seir called me and asked whether or not I am coming, and that they will give my seat away if I did not confirm. My heart was set on Pharmaceuticals, so I said no without a second thought, especially since I was not good at mathematics either.

However, bridging as a pathway to education is also challenged. Dalia adds that

> [s]ome people are raising concerns in regard to bridging. They claim that we do not have the right to compete against students that were granted seats for their high grades. That we should not be in the same class because we do not have the capacity as diploma graduates. They accuse us that we are deceiving the law but that we are seeking bachelor's degrees no matter what. But this is wrong, and we do have the capacity. Some people demand that bridging should become illegal but do these people know how they will be affecting the livelihood of so many people who get a second chance. How many Gazans dream about this chance?

Ayman, on the other hand, rejected the few limited majors offered to him by UNRWA

colleges and instead he chose to study journalism which he could compete for in public

universities as part of the 'camp residents' scholarship. Ayman describes the meanings he

derives from state exclusionary educational policies through choices he attempted to pursue. The

following narrates how Ayman made his decision:

> When I went to university, the first problem I faced was that I was from Gaza, I was competing against all camps refugees for a single seat in every major. Competition was

dependent on High School GPA. All refugees were stressing over who has the higher GPA and who was going to get that one seat we all want for that major. So, I did what every person from Gaza would do, apply for the UNRWA colleges which were the ones in 'Wadi El Seir' and 'Na'ur', but they didn't have the majors I was looking forward for; they were mostly engineering, medical services, education major. But I applied for architecture and medical services, so I can keep my options open and I applied to Journalism at the university I graduated from – I got accepted into both majors but I decided not to go, Journalism was my 6th option, but I went because I got a scholarship – not a full one but I pay the same amount of money as a Jordanian would.

For both Dalia and Ayman, using their agency to make choices and decisions despite, the limited opportunities, is one pathway to negotiating state exclusionary policies. This negotiation has been informed by the meanings they have constructed on the importance of education in defeating precarity and poverty. All Gazan participants, including the ones that are not married, stated that the most important thing to provide to their children is good quality education. Importantly, all participants from the naturalized group have implied the same aspiration for their children.

In the Palestinian-Jordanian group, two forms of agency independent from legal status were exclusively exercised to build educational capacity. Hafez and Faris used grants from a non-profit CDO for their university entry fees. This CDO provides grants to Jordanians and non-Jordanians alike. After this, they paid their fees through part-time jobs. Yasar, could not compete for a scholarship in public universities due to her low school average. Instead, she enrolled in the cheapest private university in Amman. Her aunt paid her first tuition and her father supports her financially since. She is uncertain if her father can sustain this. These two forms of agency, however, are not exclusive to citizens and can be exercised by Gazans as well. Obtaining a scholarship in a public university allocated to citizens only is the only form of agency exercised solely by two of the Palestinian-Jordanians.

To conclude, all participants from both groups believed access to education and achieving credentials was the way out of precarity. Both groups utilized different privileges to achieve this goal. What Gazans had access to (camp residents scholarship), Palestinian-Jordanians did not and vice versa (Jordanian citizens only scholarships). Both groups, however, chose university majors that are offered through scholarships. Crucially, though, drop-out in school or post-secondary education was clearly a strategy deployed by Gazans only in this sample. Those Gazans who did, also talked about having to work to fill in their fathers' roles to provide for their families. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that one Palestinian-Jordanian woman (Ronwa) also had to fill in her father's financial roles and yet did not drop-out of school or university and neither did any of her siblings.

ii)   *Theme 2: Individual and collective long-term strategies*

Exercising agency as a long-term strategy to 'get-out' of poverty was similarly exercised by both groups. All similar forms of agency are not informed by their different legal statuses and instead are exercised individually or collectively to negotiate their economic status (refer to Table 4). The forms of agency exercised by Gazans only (as shown in Table 7) are also not informed by their legal status. The forms of agency 'dropping-out from school or not pursuing a post-secondary degree' to financially support their families, are strategies usually deployed by poor persons anywhere in the world.

Table 7. Different individual and collective long-term strategies

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
Dropped school to work
Did not pursue post-secondary education to work
Exercised by Palestinian-Jordanians
Mortgaging an apartment
Owns a car through loans/ budgeting

Two forms of agency exclusively exercised by Palestinian-Jordanians are related to accessing banks' financing services. Faris is mortgaging his apartment whereas Hafez is financing his car. Regulations in banks do not discriminate against non-Jordanians; anyone can get a mortgage or a loan if stable and long-term employment is proved through monthly pay slips. However, Gazans remain in vulnerable situations that condition their access to such resources. None of this researcher's Gazan participants could access such banking services.

iii)   Theme 3: Increasing employability

The majority of forms of agency exercised by both groups to increase their employability, whether in formal or informal markets, are similar (refer to Table 4). All these forms of agency represent the shifts in market skills and deploying accessible online tools to enhance their qualifications and to diversify their skills. These are forms of agency exercised by anyone in today's markets like using YouTube to learn a new skill. A Pew Research Centre study conducted in 2018 found that 51 per cent of Americans use YouTube to learn how to do new things (Smith, Toor and Kessel, 2018). Generally, participants believed in the importance of skills diversification as a pathway to better employment. Importantly, none of these forms of agency is informed by the legal status of either group.

iv)   Theme 4: Individual and collective coping strategies

Individual and collective coping strategies are deployed to 'get-by' daily challenges. These are rather invisible and minor acts that allow individuals to cope with daily obstacles. In this research, 3 out of 6 forms of agency are common between the two groups (refer to Table 4). Whether living in east Amman (the poor district); in poorer areas in west Amman (the upper-class district); or/and managing and minimizing expenses, these are all forms of agency exercised by poor people regardless of their legal status. The remaining three forms, however,

are solely exercised by Gazans. First, three Gazans save money through walking instead of using

the public transportation. Second, Dalia stated that she uses her knowledge and skills in

pharmaceutical sciences when her daughter gets sick to avoid doctors' expenses, albeit that her

husband is Jordanian, hence, her child can access state subsidized medical services and

treatments. For both her husband and herself, even the smallest percentage of healthcare

expenses can be a burden. She explains

> I am a pharmacist. If my daughter got sick, I have the knowledge and expertise to give her medicine that will help her but taking her to the doctor is my last option. I can get medicine at cost price... [t]hat is why I am investing in my daughter now; I want her to become a pharmacist. I am giving her everything I can to raise her awareness about these issues.

Third, Dalia also mentions that she avoids membership fees in the Jordan Pharmacists

Association because she does not receive privileges and services as a Gazan anyway.

4.3.2   The Relational Well-being Domain

A total of 16 forms of agency were categorized into the relational well-being domain.

Equally, 9 similar (Table 8) and 7 different (Tables 9 and 10) forms of agency are categorized

into 3 common and 1 different themes of agency. The common themes are *i) utilizing social*

networks for long-term strategies to get-out of poverty; ii) utilizing networks for coping

strategies to get-by every-day challenges; and iii) building social capital and support networks

(refer to Table 8). The only theme attributed solely to Gazans is *bypassing state exclusionary*

policies. Following, I describe each theme separately.

Table 8. Similar forms and themes of agency in the relational well-being domain

Theme of agency	Forms of Agency
Utilizing social networks for long-term strategies to get out of poverty	Use social circle to access job opportunities
Utilizing networks for coping strategies to get-by every-day challenges	Ask family for financial help
	Use family for emotional support
	Use close friends in times of trouble
	Lives with parents/ family
	Avoid day care expenses through family help or wife staying at home
Building social capital and support network	Build a great relationship with employers
	Selective in picking friends (class and origins)
	Use support and help from employers

i)   *Theme 1: Utilizing social networks for long-term strategies to 'get-out' of poverty*

This theme entails a common form of agency which aims to access job opportunities through youth's social circles (refer to Table 8). Ayman, for an example, accessed a job opportunity in Abu Dhabi through some colleagues in journalism. At the time of his interview he was preparing to move to Abu Dhabi in a couple of months. Mahd used some connections he built up in Jerash camp CDO to access a job opportunity in one of Amman's reputable hotels. Aysar learnt about his current job as an accountant from common friends with his employer.

Two different forms of agency that utilize social networks for long-term strategies to get-out of poverty were derived (Table 9). In the case of Gazans, Aysar stated that he worked with his uncle (also Gazan) in small-scale construction projects while studying in university. This demonstrates using familial bonds to access income opportunities. However, I asked Aysar if his decision to work with family was informed by his legal status. He said that it was not and that he just seized an opportunity provided to him to generate income with flexible working hours.

For Palestinian-Jordanians, Hafez and Faris received entry fees grants from Ruwwad (CDO located in a historical Palestinian refugee camp) to enroll in private universities. Ruwwad does not condition its grants to Jordanians only. Ronwa received two grants to launch her mental health support initiative. The first grant was received from INJAZ, a non-profit Jordanian organization funded by Save the Children to bridge the skills gap between the educational system and the labor market (INJAZ). The other was granted by King Abdullah II Fund, a non-governmental organization that aims through its development projects to help alleviate poverty and unemployment in partnership with both the private and public sector (King Abdullah II Fund). INJAZ provides its services to everyone living on Jordanian soil. The King Abdullah II Fund, however, restricts application to Jordanians (or children of Jordanian women married to foreigners) only.

Table 9. Different forms of agency to utilize social networks for long-term strategies to get-out of poverty

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
Work with family while studying
Exercised by Palestinian-Jordanians
Education and project grants from community development organizations

ii)   Theme 2: Utilizing networks for coping strategies to 'get-by' every-day challenges

This theme constitutes the majority of forms of agency exercised by Gazans particularly in the relational well-being domain (refer to Table 4). Whether it is asking family and friends for financial or emotional support; living with parents to save rental expenses; or avoiding day care expenses through asking a family member to baby-sit or the mother staying at home, all are strategies and resources deployed by poor persons everywhere. The different forms of agency exercised by Gazan participants of this research in this well-being domain are not informed by

their legal status (as shown in Table 10). Dalia uses her good relations with admission officers at university to delay incurred tuition payments. She also borrows money from her employer, which she has a very good relationship with, to pay her university fees. Samar also borrows money from work to pay bills. She also accessed women's microloans services through her Gazan aunt which she still pays off. Saeed uses his good relationship with the principal of his children's school to delay fee payments. He also receives food aid from a non-governmental organization that non-citizens can access.

The only different form of agency exercised by Ronwa and her family (Palestinian-Jordanians) is receiving financial support from the governmental National Aid Fund (NAF). This fund is a local national fund allocated for vulnerable Jordanians.

Table 10. Different forms of agency to utilize social networks for coping strategies to get-by every-day challenges

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
Food aid non-governmental organization
Use networks to delay a payment
Use social circle to borrow money
Used family members to access micro funds/ loans
Exercised by Palestinian-Jordanians
Financial aid from governmental entities (National Aid Fund)

iii)   Theme 3: Building social capital and support networks

This theme of agency is a common one between the two groups. However, it is prominent that it includes forms of agency exercised by the majority of Gazans. As described in Table 8, building a great relationship with employers and receiving support and financial help from them are common forms of agency to all Gazans. For example, Dalia faced financial challenges throughout her university years. To be able to pay her fees, she used to borrow money from her employer and pay it back in installments. She explains

[h]e [her employer] is such a great person. Because of God's blessings, my mom's prayers and my good intention, I am also surrounded by good people that make my life easier… [i]n some months I even ask Mohammad [her employer] if I can skip this month's payment because I am very tight on money and he would easily accept.

When I asked her about who she would partner-up with when she hopefully opens her own pharmacy one day, she said, "Mohammad my boss. He is the only person I trust with everything in the world".

The situation is not any different for Saeed, also a Gazan. When asked the same question he said, "from the people I know and that I have worked with, around three people, but mostly this person would be the owner of a store I used to work in. He is the only one I would trust that will not rip me off". Ayman also explains that his Palestinian employer, who understands his special circumstances as a Gazan, supports him in any way possible. Also, when Samar was asked about whether the lack of legal status was an issue for her and her brothers in accessing jobs, she said: "I personally never faced that issue, generally I usually befriend the shops' owners so that they have my back". Palestinian-Jordanians have displayed similar exercise of social networking and support. Arqam, for an example, explains that his employer has become a friend he relies on if he is ever in trouble.

Being selective in picking friends and networks is another interesting form of agency. Three out of five Gazans deployed this form of agency for different purposes. Mahd said that

I am very selective with what I do and where I am and who I know, and I know many people and I have a strong network. I do not just do things as a trend…. also, working with hotels helped me a lot, my network is strong, and it just takes me a phone call or a text to get an approval or a license for something I want to do.

Mahd invests in a reliable network to be able to get things done. While Samar surrounds herself with friends that come from her socio-economic class. She said that "hanging out with people that are better-off will make you want to spend money that you do not have". Ayman has also been selective in picking his friends. When asked about his experience in moving from a camp to

a university dorm in Irbid (a city dominated by native Jordanian tribes), he said: "[i]n university I felt the difference. Irbid has mostly Jordanians and some other nationalities. They would make you feel like you are different and not welcomed". When asked about how people would recognize his Gazan origin, he said that his family name and accent reveal it. Thus, to avoid discrimination, Ayman explains that he is "…picky with who I wanted to have around as my friends, they were a group of people with different nationalities some were Yemeni, Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian".

Being selective in picking friends and networks as a form of agency was also observed in two interviews with Palestinian-Jordanians. When Yasar was asked about her social life in university, she said

> My family is my social life. My immediate and my cousins. I have a couple of friends in university…[a]nd there is also segregation in university. Jordanians from Jordanian origins gang up together. They do not include us.

When also asked about how people would know she has Palestinian origins, she said: "[m]y accent, I guess. And also, my family name. Professors look at family names and give grades accordingly. Of course, Jordanians get the highest marks. They are racists". Yasar managed to cope with this segregation, but Faris could not. He experienced similar racism in a university dominated by native tribal-Jordanians. He was harassed by a professor who asked him not to attend seminars in exchange for passing the course. The professor explicitly declared that he had problems with Faisal's Palestinian origins. Faisal was also threatened few times by a group of young Jordanian men because he was having a conversation with a girl that belongs to their tribe. Once he was about to be assaulted before a group of people with Palestinian origin protected him. He explains

> I suddenly found people from my [former] camp and from Nazzal [another area in east Amman dominated by Palestinians] standing behind me. Then I became aware that all the

Palestinians were in one group and Jordanians were in another and if anyone messed with one of their people, they would all fight for him.

Faris then decided to leave this university and enroll in a different one owned by a Palestinian-Jordanian person. In this university, a different kind of discrimination prevailed. He explains

[a]t that time, they [the university] have been recently opened and they had discounts. I thought I will join a place dominated with my own people [with Palestinian origins]. But here is another form of racism because they had a 25 per cent discount for people from 'Jabal al Khalil Association' [an association for people originating back to Jabal al Khalil in Palestine] so I went and registered in this association and that is a kind of racism that no one was addressing. This is because the owner of the university is from Jabal al Khalil. I knew about this and I knew about the discount, so I thought I will just go where my people are.

Lastly, the different form of agency solely exercised by one Gazan woman (Samar) is satisfying customers in the hair salon she works in so they would leave good tips and come back again. She achieved this through being very friendly while smiling all the time and chatting to them about their interests.

iv) *Theme 4: Bypassing state exclusionary policies*

This theme of agency is the only different theme exercised exclusively by Gazans in the relational well-being domain. As discussed earlier, since employment in the formal market is restricted, Gazans choose jobs that do not require a work permit or try to negotiate processes of acquiring one through their connections. Dalia is a Gazan woman married to a Palestinian-Jordanian. She is not entitled to a Jordanian citizenship yet because she has not been married for more than three years. When Dalia was asked about whether she has a work permit she said:

Yes, I get it from the Ministry of Health. Work permits are usually given to Syrians and Egyptians. I strongly believe that with the people from Gaza, it is either a yes or a no decision [to be made by the government]. Some people do not look into it that much, for example, my situation, they see that it is just a front desk position, so they do not make a big deal out of it. Another thing to take into consideration is that I could work in a position that require a diploma only and no membership in the association [Jordanian Pharmaceutical Association]. But from what I see is that mostly Iraqis, Syrians, and Egyptians find it difficult to get a job here without work permits and the necessary

paperwork and I feel blessed that it was not that hard for me because of my husband's citizenship.

For so many years, Saeed worked in hotels until the bombing incidences in Amman in 2005[10]. He said

> When I first started working, I was in the hotel field. A while after the hotel bombings in Jordan, it became a law that only citizens with national numbers were allowed to work in that field and that negatively affected me, and I applied to other hotels, but they turned me down, even though I speak proper English and I have experience in housekeeping. After that I started applying to companies in different fields such as restaurants that I might be able to work with without a national identification number.

Saeed for the past years has been working as a salesman in a boutique shop in east Amman. The relatively small operation ensures him a low-profile job that does not require a work permit.

After graduation, Ayman was rejected in many job applications because he does not hold an ID. The television channel he works for is owned by an affluent Palestinian-Jordanian family. Thus, the understanding of his employers allows him to work without a permit. However, he is not allowed to report news that are politically volatile or sensitive. Mahd faced similar challenges related to work permits. He explains

> I then started having issues with them [his employers] because I needed a work permit and that situation was very complicated. I told them to let me handle the situation, I felt like the lawyers kept taking advantage of them because he was getting paid by the hour. When they let me handle the situation, I went to the Social Security Office and I went to several ministries. I used to go and tell them [officials in the Ministry of Labour] the details of my situation, with no lies and exaggerations, just the truth with no connections. I would go directly to the director. I will not talk to employees because they just apply rules and regulations without taking into consideration individual cases.

Samar, as mentioned earlier, never faced an issue with working in salons without a work permit because of her great relationship with her employers. In exchange for their support, she

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[10] November 2019 marked the 14th anniversary of the Amman hotels bombing where terrorists' attacks targeting three locations in Amman on November 9, 2005, killing 60 people and injuring 200 (Jordan Times, November 9, 2019).

constantly works on her skills and enhances her capacity by trying and learning new things. She learnt to do everything in the hair salon.

4.3.3 The Subjective Well-being Domain

A total of 26 forms of agency were categorized into the subjective well-being domain. Among these, 17 similar (Table 11) and 9 different (Tables 12 to 15) forms of agency are categorized into 4 common and 1 different themes of agency. The common themes are i) *meanings of certainty; ii) Meanings of aspirations; and iii) meanings of social roles* (refer to Table 11). The different theme of agency attributed exclusively to Jordanian-Palestinians is the *meanings of hybrid identities*. Following, I describe each theme separately.

Table 11. Similar forms and themes of agency in the subjective well-being domain

Theme of agency	Forms of Agency
Meanings of certainty	Meaning of citizenship and security
	Not ashamed to work in anything
	Minimizing risks and losses through avoiding owning a business
	Migration
	Will not start a family before he/she can secure their children
	Belief in Allah's (God) will and power
Meanings of aspirations	Dreams and ambitions need time to happen
	Dreams and hopes for a better future
	Aspiration for more education
	Passion for what they do as a driver
Meanings of social roles	Defying social norms and expectations
	Importance of private schools for children' education
	Collaborating with researchers for change
	Volunteering in civil society
	Compromises on educational opportunities for family
	Taking responsibility to financially support the family
	Take the role of their fathers

i)　　　**Theme 1: Meanings of certainty**

Participants in this research exercised forms of agency in attempt to secure some sort of certainty in their future. For both groups, not being ashamed to work in anything; considering migration; minimizing risks and losses through avoiding launching their own businesses; and believing in Allah's will and power to plan their future, are all forms of agency exercised in relation to the meaning of certainty. Moreover, some participants expressed their refusal to start a family until they can secure good living conditions for their children first. While for all participants, good living conditions means providing good quality of education for their children. For two Gazans (Ayman and Mahd), however, certainty also means securing a permanent legal status. Nevertheless, a Palestinian-Jordanian woman (Ronwa) broke up with her Syrian boyfriend because she was worried about her future children's legal status in Jordan. She explains: "I do not want my children to grow up without having a national identification number and not be able to travel, both [her boyfriend and herself] our situations are not stable, I have financial issues and he has legal issues. Why should we make it worse?". Thus, planning for the future of their children against the uncertainties of legal status is a profound form of agency exercised by both groups.

In this theme of agency, two forms of agency related to meaning of certainty were solely derived from interviews with Gazans (Table 12). The first is believing in UNRWA's role in defeating Palestinian refugees' precarity and the certainty they bring into the lives of refugees. While the majority of the participants insinuated that UNRWA does not have any role in their lives, Ayman was the only Gazan who described UNRWA's role when asked about its benefits. He explains:

> I was educated in their [UNRWA] schools and when I was a child and got sick, I used UNRWA medical centers. But I do not benefit from it anymore…[but] no matter what it

provides and why and how and what for, it is still the sole entity that provides what we need and if it goes nothing can replace it.

The second form of agency related to meaning of certainty is 'believing in the power of the prayers of their mothers'. Dalia and Saeed both stated that any good thing that happens to them and all the good people God sends into their lives are because of their mothers' prayers. Hence, both were certain that their mothers' prayers will keep protecting them.

Table 12. Different forms of agency related to meanings of certainty

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
UNRWA's role in Palestinian refugees' precarity is crucial
Their blessings are because of their mothers' prayers

ii)   *Theme 2: Meanings of aspirations*

All participants hoped for a better future. Whether a future with more legal certainty; income generating opportunities; and/or raising their children in better circumstances, they all believed in doing everything they can to achieve their aspirations. Achieving their aspirations unravelled in different forms of agency. Some, particularly Gazans, talked about how they continue to envision their dreams and hopes in the future. Others believed that the only way to a better future is more education. Three out of all participants believed in providing private school education for their children. Few talked about how much they love their jobs and how this makes them constantly eager to learn more and excel. Nevertheless, one Gazan versus three Palestinian-Jordanians have mentioned that the way to a better future needs time and patience as a prerequisite. It is noteworthy that this one Gazan is Dalia who is also married to a Jordanian and soon to acquire the Jordanian citizenship.

Two forms of agency were solely exercised by Gazans (Table 13) in relation to meaning of aspirations. First, Dalia is the only participant who mentioned that she faces precarity with

positive energy and hopes. Second, both Saeed and Dalia mentioned that they utilize their strong will to conquer precarity. Lastly, all these meanings of aspirations did not stem from the legal status of either group. Both groups, generally, derived meanings of a better future through hopes, dreams, strong will, passion and patience. However, these meanings were clearly observed more in the Gazan group.

Table 13. Different forms of agency related to meanings of aspirations

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
Facing precarity with positive energies to change their realities
Sustaining strong will to conquer precarity

iii)   *Theme 3: Meanings of social roles*

The meaning of social roles is equally prominent for both groups. First, both Gazans and Palestinian-Jordanians aspired to provide their children or younger siblings with high quality education in private schools. Saeed's (Gazan) child is enrolled in a cheap private school in east Amman. Comparing to UNRWA and public schools, Saeed believes that this is the best and safest option for his child. Ayman's (Palestinian-Jordanian) children are also enrolled in a cheap private school in east Amman. He explains

> I put them in private schools, and I pay 1000 [JOD] a year for my first grader, it is not the best school, but it is what I can do…[t]he issue here in Jordan is that every area has its prices. A kilogram of tomatoes can be 0.25 JOD in one area, and 1 JOD in another. I am so lucky to be living in east Amman because I would not be able to afford private schools. Everything is cheaper in east Amman including produce.

Yasar, who is single, said that she will not get married or start a family until she can first afford private schools for her children. She said

> I love them, but I will not have them if I cannot provide them with things we did not have. We are good but we are struggling. I was taught in UNRWA schools and my English language turned out to be weak. I want to educate my children in private schools. If I cannot afford this then I do not want to bring them into this world. We live in Wihdat

Camp. I hate it over there. It does not represent us because we are not refugees anymore. and we cannot afford to live anywhere else so I will not have children until I can move to somewhere better first.

Second, their roles in the community were also important for them. Equally, two from each group engaged with volunteering work in civil society. Few also mentioned that they participated in this research because they believe they have a responsibility to address their precarities and struggles. For Gazans, it meant advocating the Palestinian cause. For the one Palestinian-Jordanian, it meant being part of a research that looks into youth poverty. As Aysar describes it: "anything that voice our struggles is very good, why not?".

Third, social roles in this research also entailed taking responsibility and offering sacrifices. Both Dalia and Faris sacrificed educational opportunities for their families. Dalia turned down a scholarship offered in a university far away from Amman because her parents did not like the idea of her living alone. Faris received a university entry fee grant to study in Egypt, but he had to come back home because his parents needed him around. Few individuals from both groups found themselves taking responsibility to financially support their parents and siblings. Samar, Mahd, Saeed and Ronwa, all had to take the role of their fathers.

And finally, social roles were also manifested in defying social norms and expectations. Samar, Yasar and Ronwa have challenged gendered social norms and expectations. All three decided to take control of their lives and become independent instead of looking for a husband who can support them financially while they stay at home. All three experienced failed relationships with young men that made them realize the importance of their financial independency, ambitions and dreams. Faris also challenged social norms and expectations related to academic achievements. He fulfilled his father's dream by acquiring a bachelor's degree but then pursued what he really wanted to become, a puppeteer. He said:

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I framed the certificate and hung it on the wall for my father and I asked my father then: are you happy now? And then he said he wants to find a job for me. I refused and I told him that I got them what they want and now it's about what I want. But my parents were and still are against my job. They do not take it seriously, but my argument is always that it is fun and it is what I enjoy doing and when he [his father] sees a show or if he saw me on television, he is instantly proud of me but he does not like to show me that.

Only two different forms of agency were solely exercised by Gazans in this theme of agency (Table 14). First, one Gazan stated that he does everything to be a role model for his siblings in the absence of their father. Second, predominantly for Gazans, sacrificing education, school or post-secondary education, to support their families in the absence of their father is important. Although Ronwa (Palestinian-Jordanian) also experienced similar circumstances, she managed to balance between pursuing a university degree and providing for her mother and siblings. Unlike the three Gazans, Ronwa's familial social role did not jeopardize her educational opportunities.

Table 14. Different forms of agency related to meanings of social roles

Forms of agency
Exercised by Gazans
Wants to be a role model for his/her younger siblings
Sacrificed school to support his/her family

### iv)	*Theme 4: Meanings of hybrid identities*

This meaning is unique to the Palestinian-Jordanian group. It stems from their negotiation processes that deploy different identities —Palestinian origins and Jordanian citizenship— to achieve a certain outcome (Table 15). As discussed earlier, Faris manipulated his Palestinian origins to get access to the scholarship allocated to students affiliated with the Jabal Al Khalil Association. But at the same time, he explains:

Palestine to me is the land that I belong to – not only as roots but also as a humanitarian cause…Palestine is home, the place that can gather people…[but] I belong to Amman. I love Amman, I miss it when I travel. I would love to go to Palestine, but I am not going

to miss it the same way I miss Amman. Everything I know is here. I do not have the intentions to visit Palestine…[because] first of all I have a problem with acquiring a permit to go visit my own country [Palestine].

Ronwa's family manipulated their family name to make it seem like a tribal Jordanian one.

When asked about whether Palestine means anything to her, she said:

I would be lying to you if I tell you that it does. I did not live there, I did not work there, I was not raised there, I do not know anything about it or its culture, not even their accents…I remember when I was in school in 'Madaba', whenever I would mention it [her Palestinian origin], people will look and talk to me with disgust, so I would not tell anyone. I would just say I was from 'Irbid'. I was the same way in university too…I never admitted I was from there [Palestine] or anything because my surname helped a lot. Some people can be identified from where they are from just their last name. I remember my father once applied on behalf of my brother for a Royal Court scholarship. One person called us back to let us know that his [her brother] application was accepted only because we are native Jordanians. They could not even tell that we are Jordanian-Palestinians. Some people used to change a letter in their last names to sound Jordanian, we did that, and nobody could tell we were Palestinians…because you are discriminated against if you are not Jordanian from Jordanian origins.

Yasar emphasized her rights as a citizen. when asked about what Palestine means to her, she said: "[i]t is the country of my father and grandfather. But I was born here, and I live here so as much as I relate to it, I am still from here. I am Jordanian". Yet, Yasar also feels discriminated against: "I wanted to study law but here in Jordan if you do not have a Jordanian origin you cannot succeed. You have to be from a tribal family". Sameera and Mahd, both Gazans, had different answers to the same question of what Palestine means to them:

Sameera: I love Jordan…there is no way I would ever consider migrating. I might be from Gaza, but Jordan is the place I feel is for me, even though I am not treated as a Jordanian I had some instances at work, when some women find out I am from Gaza, they will not let me dye their hair…I am not ashamed of being from Gaza, at some point you learn to not care about how people will react to knowing where you are from, you adjust to it and life goes on.

Mahd: One of my friends asked me where I thought my home was, I am a guy that slept on the floor and slept on different kinds of mattresses. I know I am comfortable when I start thinking to myself at night about the good things I will be doing the next day. Not how many years I spent in an area. It is about how people see me and if I see myself as a good person, I want to be in the place that will allow me to be my best self and I am entitled enough and privileged enough to have rights and I need to practice them.

Breathing is a right we all have. I am a stateless Gazan, but I cannot live the struggles of my father and grandfather.

Although Gazans' identities held different meanings related to homeland of their grandfathers, unlike Palestinian-Jordanians, using the Jordanian identity as citizens is not possible.

Table 15. Different forms of agency related to meanings of hybrid identities

Forms of agency
Exercised by Palestinian-Jordanians
Manipulated Palestinian origin to access privileges
Manipulated family name to seem like a tribal one to access opportunities
I belong in Jordan

4.4 Engendered Livelihood Strategies

The work of Lister (2004), Jones and Sumner (2011) and Clark-Kazak (2014) have provided the paving stones for this research whereby the definitions of types of agency exercised by poor young people in the three well-being domains and processes of situating these into displacement studies were adopted to achieve this research's aims and objectives. However, throughout the data collection and later confirmed in the preliminary stages of analysis, I noticed that forms of agency exercised by the participants of this study are rather fluid. This means that *each form of agency is deployed in relation to different subjective meaning to achieve different livelihood outcome utilizing different strategy*. Similar to the notion of agency, strategies can be personal and/or collective and its temporality varies by being short- or long-term.

Therefore, in this last stage of analysis, I transition from the analytical framework proposed by Lister (2004), Jones and Sumner (2011) and Clark-Kazak (2014) which confines each form of agency to a certain type and a specific well-being domain. Instead, I propose a different understanding of the interplay between agency and the subjective meanings which eventually lead to different outcomes. Consequently, I argue that some facets in the profound

work of those scholars remain unexplored, and that their work should further be expanded to investigate the interrelation between the forms of agency in the material and relational well-being domains on the one hand, and agency in the form of meanings embedded in the subjective well-being domain on the other.

Accordingly, in this section I demonstrate how the themes of agency in the material and relational well-being domains engender different livelihood strategies when interlinked with different meanings generated in the subjective well-being domain (Table 16). These subjective *meanings are of i) certainty; ii) aspirations; iii) social roles; and iv) hybrid identities*. In this last stage of analysis, the research borrows multidisciplinary scholarly premises from scholars like Hyndman and Giles (2017), Kyriakides et al. (2018a, b) and Stewart (2016, 2017) to explain the three engendered livelihood strategies individually discussed in the below section. These scholarly premises are i) *ontological insecurity; ii) status eligibilities through personhood; and iii) accumulative disadvantage*, respectively. Whereas the engendered livelihood strategies from this analytical process are *i) capturing ontological security; and ii) challenging accumulative disadvantage* (Table 16). Following, each livelihood strategy is discussed individually.

Table 16. The livelihood strategies as an outcome to the interrelation between the three well-being domains

Well-being domain	Well-being domain		Subjective well-being			
	Well-being domain					
			1	2	3	4
	Theme of agency		Meanings of certainty	Meanings of aspirations	Meanings of social roles	Meanings of hybrid identities
Material well-being	1	Using Palestinian refugees and/or citizens privileges to build educational capacity	**Capturing ontological security**	**Challenging accumulative disadvantage**	**Capturing ontological security**	**Challenging accumulative disadvantage**
	2	Individual and collective long-term strategies to get out of poverty				
	3	Increase employability				
	4	Individual and collective coping strategies to get-by every-day challenges				
Relational well-being	1	Utilize social networks for long-term strategies to get out of poverty				
	2	Utilize networks for coping strategies to get-by every-day challenges				
	3	Building social capital and support network				
	4	Bypassing state exclusionary policies				

i)   *Livelihood strategy 1: Capturing ontological security*

This section discusses how forms of agency in the material and relational well-being domains engender livelihood strategy to *capture ontological security* when interlinked with the subjective meanings of both *certainty and social roles*. I begin this process with revisiting Anthony Giddens' (1991) conceptualization of 'ontological security'. Giddens (1991) conceptualizes 'ontological security' in the social sciences as the experience of having a sense of order and continuity in one's life which is "…predicated on people's ability to give meaning to their lives and avoid chaos or anxiety" (Hyndman and Giles, 2017:16)[11]. Following scholars such

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[11] Hyndman and Giles, (2017:18) explains the difference between ontological security and human security. They describe that "[h]uman security represents a people-centered concept of safety and well-being that places human needs alongside state security concerns, but it is still part of a state-sponsored, geopolitical approach to managing people's well-being that is framed in the language of international relations…[o]ntological security goes beyond human security's freedom from fear and want. It queries people's subjectivity and lived existence, rather than the role of states in managing people's most basic security".

as Botterill et al. (2015), Conlon (2015), and Narotsky (2010), Hyndman and Giles draw on differences between Giddens's conception of 'ontological security' and '*in*security' in conditions of long-term displacement. They argue that refugees living in protracted situations experience 'ontological *in*security' instead,

> …we characterize ontological security as a lived sense of safety with a degree of certainty underwriting it. It is demarcated as much by its absence as its presence among people caught in conditions of extended exile. The ongoing search for belonging, livelihoods and a place to call home in conditions of protracted displacement produces conditions of insecurity (p.17).

They add that this conceptualization entails contesting the dominant understanding of security in displacement normally scaled down to settlement and safe households. Thus, Hyndman and Giles contend that protracted displacement is a state of ongoing anxiety despite long-term settlement and livelihood in exile.

Moreover, the more people live in uncertainty, the less likely they are able to think about reasonable future expectations and aspirations (Narotsky, 2010 in Hyndman and Giles, 2017). These limitations instill a state of 'permanent temporariness' in exile "…without certainty about one's future status and protection for years at a time" (Bailey et al., 2002 cited in Hyndman and Giles, p.3). Long (2011) describes long term displacement as a state of 'permanent crises' which has become the 'new normal'. However, as I have discussed earlier, scholars like Hyndman and Giles (2017), Landau and Duponchel (2011), and Long (2011) have examined accounts of *de facto* integration in protracted displacement when permanent legal status is not possible. This also entails acquiring protection through employment, housing and education (Landau and Duponchel, 2011) or social and local networks (Kihato and Landau, 2016) and can also involve informal and uncertain jobs (Hyndman and Giles, 2017).

Ontological security also pertains to meanings related to one's position in the social world which secures certainty and safety. Edkins (2003) states: "[o]ur existence relies not only

on our personal survival as individual beings but also, in a very profound sense, on the continuance of the social order that gives our existence meaning and dignity: family, friends, political community, beliefs" (cited in Hyndman and Giles, p.16). For Conlon (2015), "…ontological insecurity describes a condition that is relational and linked to an individual's place in their social world" (cited in Hyndman and Giles, p.17). Bradley, Milner and Peruniak (2019:5 emphasis from original document) state that for refugees born in exile, "…in many ways experiences of exile constitute their 'social world'".

Moreover, grasping ontological security requires the individuals' ability to generate meanings to their existence and in their social world. Brun and Fábos (2015) argue that the vulnerability of displaced persons can be alleviated through generating meanings in exile. These meanings are partly constructed through status eligibilities of the self. Kyriakides et al. (2018a, 2018b) investigate how resettled refugees affirm their eligibility to exist through drawing on pre-conflict social roles and statuses and self-rescue identity while also demanding normative authority to self-determination after refuge. This also entitles them post-refuge status eligibilities to act beyond the refugee label. As Kyriakides et al. (2018b:11) explains that "[s]elf-rescue is a social orientation for anticipating, preventing and protecting against uncertainty—a means through which pre-conflict status eligibilities are sustained". Thereafter, embodied within these status eligibilities, individuals can position themselves in the 'social order' that gives meaning to their lives and generates certainty and safety.

For the participants of this study, certainty, order and safety are generated through different means. Order and continuity were associated with minimizing financial risks; migration; avoiding starting a family; not having children or not having more; and believing in God's will and power to help them out of precarity. For Gazans, contrary to what would be

normally presumed, securing citizenship is not a prevalent topic. Instead, education and access to livelihood opportunities are apparently more significant and meaningful to them.

The participants of this research who are fourth and fifth generations of Palestinian refugees, did not relate to pre-conflict and rescue identities since they were born and live in the only place they know as home (Jordan). Yet, status eligibilities are generated from other social roles and self-identifications that emerge from their autonomous personhoods. As illustrated in Table 11, status eligibility is embedded in their familial and communal social roles. For Gazans particularly, being a main provider (to fill in the role of their fathers) for their mothers and siblings was a predominant social role in this group. Another striking finding in the Gazan group is that educational sacrifices are considered "…an honourable act in order to support their family" (Chatty, 2010). From a gendered perspective, three out of the four women who participated in this study (both Gazan and Palestinian-Jordanian) mentioned that they defied social norms through financial independence rather than waiting for a husband to support them.

When forms of agency in the material and relational well-being domains are exercised to reinforce and sustain these social roles, then the strategy would be to capture ontological security through generating certainty and safety in their social world. For example, when Dalia uses her pharmaceutical knowledge to treat her child to avoid doctors' expenses, and when Sayed and Samar walk back home to save money they can instead spend on their families, all three Gazans exercise forms of agency in relation to meanings associated with their responsibilities as a mother, a father and an elder sister respectively.

ii) *Livelihood strategy 2: Challenging accumulative disadvantage*

This section discusses how forms of agency in the material and relational well-being domains engender livelihood strategy to *challenge accumulative disadvantage* when interlinked with the subjective meanings of *hybrid identities* and *aspirations* for a better future. I begin this process with discussing Frances Stewart's (1991) premises of *horizontal inequalities and accumulative disadvantage.* Until recently, inequality was initially viewed as a unidimensional measurement of income variances among individuals and households. Now, international development actors recognize another type of inequality among groups of people that is multidimensional and horizontal, and concerned with justice, human rights and social stability (Stewart 2016, 2017). Stewart adds that horizontal inequality considers socio-economic and political factors to analyse inequality among different group categories —race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender and age. Moreover, the connections across social, economic, political and cultural dimensions reinforce the *initial inequality* experienced by any specific group (Stewart, 2017). With time these *initial inequalities* cause further inequalities, and over a long period become persistent leading to *accumulative disadvantage*.

Mainstream poverty and development studies are embedded within natural sciences that ignore horizontal inequalities that limit one's capability to defeat poverty and focus only on measurable indicators like income (Harriss, 2009; Stewart, 2016). Harriss adds that natural science depoliticizes poverty research and disregards its contextuality and the related causes and effects of it. Chambers (1992) argues that poverty research focuses on income and ignores aspects of poverty that relate to vulnerability and powerlessness (cited in Harriss, 2009). Through challenging Sen's 'capability approach', Stewart (2016) argues that focusing on

freedoms and capacities alongside presumed equal opportunities dismisses the inherited

disadvantages, poverty and lack of human and social capital by ruling out horizontal inequalities.

In line with this conceptualization, both groups of Palestinian refugee youth experience

horizontal inequalities that keep them in poverty. Perez (2018) argues that the uncertainty in

Gazans livelihoods is the outcome of structural limits created by the unpredictable cumulative

effects of statelessness. Yet, the initial inequalities of each group and the extent of its

accumulative effect might vary. For Gazans, their initial inequality in Jordan lies in their legal

status as 'Arab foreigner residents' which deprive them access to rights that assist them defeat

poverty. For Palestinian-Jordanians, having a legal status as citizens might have allowed them

access to rights but this did not assist them or their parents before them in fighting poverty. It is

noteworthy that Palestinian-Jordanian participants mentioned experiencing forms of

discrimination that they constantly negotiate. For example, Faris changed his tribal-dominant

university to one owned by Palestinians. Yasar, however, makes sure that all her friends are from

Palestinian origins. She also avoided studying law since this discipline is dominated by native-

Jordanian men.

For both groups, challenging accumulative disadvantages —such as Palestinian 'non-

local' origins and poverty— was achieved through aspirations and hope that the future would be

better. This entails deploying all forms of agency in both the material and relational well-being

domains in relation to subjective meanings of aspirations. With patience, hope, more education

and following their dreams, both groups are able to create meanings of aspirations for a better

future beyond the constraints of poverty (see Table 11). These visualizations of a better future

give meaning to challenging accumulative disadvantages that so far have retained them in

poverty. Nevertheless, my argument still acknowledges Perez's (2018) remark that in the case of

Gazans in Jordan, "…survival also entails endurance or, more precisely, a capacity to endure" (p.286) while waiting for a better future.

Crucially, for Palestinian-Jordanian youth, meanings of hybrid identities have been deployed as forms of agency to negotiate subtle exclusionary practices that favour Transjordanians (or tribal Jordanians). Whether it is manipulating their Palestinian origin to access privileges allocated to a certain group of people or changing their family name to make it seem like a Transjordanian one, both forms of agency were exercised by Faris and Ronwa respectively to access educational opportunities. In other instances, Palestinian-Jordanians negotiate discriminatory practices by emphasising their Jordanian citizenship. Both Yasar and Faris have negotiated discrimination in university through self-identification as Jordanian and belonging in Jordan, but not elsewhere including Palestine. To conclude, for all participants, Palestine is a place they relate to, though feelings of belonging are very much rooted in Jordan. Nevertheless, while Palestinian-Jordanians participants could actually draw meanings from being citizens in Jordan that were translated into forms of agency, Gazan youth could not.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have examined *how the legal status of de jure stateless Palestinian youth in Jordan informs their negotiation processes of poverty-related constraints to enhance their livelihoods*. The research conceptualizes negotiation processes through the concept of agency. Through examining the exercise of agency in three well-being domains; material, relational and subjective, this research problematizes assumptions of precarity and vulnerability associated with refugees in protracted situations. Most importantly, the research undertakes these analytical processes within and beyond the legal status of *de jure* stateless refugees. Lastly, the research investigates the livelihood strategies of stateless refugees in protracted displacement through exploring the interrelation between the forms of agency exercised in the well-being domains. Crucially, utilizing the concept of agency as a pathway to understanding how refugees negotiate poverty-related constraints does not intend to deny how structural limitations in the forms of state exclusionary policies continue to shape and condition the experiences of refugees.

Through adopting a comparative approach, choices, decisions and actions taken throughout the life's trajectories of two different groups of poor Palestinian refugee youth living in Amman —one stateless (Gazans) and the other naturalized— were collected and analyzed. This aims to identify the relationship between each legal status and the forms of agency, i.e. what is common between the two groups and what is specific to stateless Gazans. One significant finding generated from this process is that that differences between the two groups are not considerable but rather allusive. Predominantly, the common forms of agency exercised by both groups are informed by factors such as their socio-economic status, social networks, familial bonds, education, language, aspirations, beliefs and more. Thus, I propose that the legal status of

Gazan participants in this research has only and partly informed their negotiation of employment constraints in the form of bypassing governmental processes to obtain work permits. Hence, Gazans in this research either work in informal jobs that do not require a work permit or negotiate the terms to obtain one. This finding complies with Landau and Duponchel's (2011) study which demonstrated that legal status of refugees in four African countries was only correlated with improved employment status, but not well-being or protection.

Gazan youth were found to be constantly expanding and opening-up new avenues for exercising forms of agency to compensate for the limitations and exclusions in others. Such forms of agency are pursuing education; increasing their employability through skills and competitiveness; building on social capital; and creating the will and drive through meanings they give to their lives. All these forms of agency utilized in the three well-being domains to create opportunities are exercised despite the limitations of their legal status. Hence, these forms of agency were similarly exercised by the naturalized Palestinian-Jordanian group. In this chapter, I focus on three significant observations, pertaining to i) the livelihood strategies of stateless Gazan youth beyond their legal status; ii) the multidisciplinary bridging between displacement, poverty and development; and iii) policy-oriented responses to displacement and future considerations in research.

5.2 Livelihood Strategies Beyond the Legal Status of Stateless Gazan Youth

This thesis does not ignore the profound work of many scholars who argue that legal status conditions the lives and experiences of refugees in exile and creates high poverty rates among them (in the Palestinian diaspora context some examples are El Abed, 2006, Loizos and Kelly, 2010; Perez, 2011, 2018; Shiblak, 2006). However, drawing on critics of the structuration theory in migration studies like Bakewell (2010) and Squire (2017), I propose that agency of

refugees could be conditioned by exclusionary structures embodied in their legal status, but only up to a certain point. After this, since structures become independent from the agency that once produced them when they reach their developmental threshold (Archer cited in Bakewell, 2010), agency could also become independent from structures that have once conditioned it.

Meanwhile, drawing on the Foucauldian perspective on subjectivities that are formed through the dynamic relation between power and resistance that generate autonomy (Squire, 2017) and complementing this premise with Sen's (1985) capabilities approach, I propose that the agency of Gazan youth's parents and grandparents before them was probably informed by their legal status and its manifestation into exclusionary policies. For Gazan youth, however, the inherited accumulation of decades of *de facto* integration alongside the continuous enhancement of their human and social capital within a framework of constructed meanings to their lives, can possibly allow their agency to influence and drive their choices, decisions and actions beyond the limitations of their legal status.

Accordingly, exercising agency becomes a means to *i) capture ontological security, and ii) challenge accumulative disadvantage beyond legal status*. For the participants of this research, *ontological security* is captured through order and continuity generated from minimizing financial risks, seeking migration, avoiding starting a family, not having children or not having more, and believing in God's will and power to help them move out of poverty. It is also captured through meanings of status eligibilities derived from their familial and communal social roles. *Challenging accumulative disadvantages* —such as their Palestinian 'non-local' origins and poverty— was achieved through meanings of aspirations and hope that the future would be better by having patience, positivity, more education and following their passions. Nevertheless, Palestinian-Jordanian youth have solely expressed the meaning of hybrid identities

which was deployed through forms of agency exercised to negotiate subtle exclusionary practices that favour Transjordanians (native Jordanians).

To conclude, this thesis demonstrates the significance of understanding that agency in displacement studies needs to be reconceptualized to reflect the processes of multidirectional, fluid and fluctuating choice-making, decision-making and taking actions. In other words, forms of agency in the well-being domains are constantly evolving and can be exercised interchangeably in different instances in relation to diverse meanings to achieve different livelihood outcomes.

5.3 The Multidisciplinary Bridging Between Protracted Displacement, Poverty and Development

Bridging between protracted displacement, poverty and development is a multifaceted argument. First, recent scholarship has explored situations in which constraints experienced by displaced persons may be closely related to those faced by other vulnerable groups regardless of their legal status. Second, accordingly solutions in displacement contexts have to be discussed in arenas beyond the realm of legal status alone. Third, the recent growing rates of protracted displacement have led to revived interest in finding alternatives to the current solutions that adopts a multidisciplinary approach to connecting between displacement and development. This also entails approaching these questions of bridging in the avenues of poverty studies.

Thus, while bridging between protracted displacement, poverty and development requires an in-depth understanding of refugees' ability to control their own environment in the broader urban community, this approach should also expand the ontological and epistemological avenues of research within which the various disciplinary perspectives on these topics are interwoven into a totality of participatory research approach. Similar to what this research has undertaken,

participatory research should not avoid naturalizing explanations derived from theory, but simultaneously strengthens empirical realities and individual narratives by revisiting theory within a multidisciplinary framework.

5.4 Policy-Oriented Response to Displacement and Future Considerations in Research

Although this research does not intend to produce generalizable findings but rather to problematize assumptions involving the conceptualization of 'refugee agency' within and beyond the framework of legal status while adopting multidisciplinary research methodologies. The research considers the tension between methodological approaches that aim for "…empirical generalizability or normative universability" a strength (Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019:9).

Whatever the situation is, findings in research "…are rarely integrated in policy" (ibid.). Thus, this research draws attention to the necessity of reshaping the current nature of policy-oriented response. This policy response should acknowledge the importance of *de facto* integration, particularly in urban settings, as part of a long-term durable solution (Landau and Duponchel, 2011). Policy makers need constantly and consistently focus on acknowledging that refugees have long been actors in their own lives and have always rendered durable solutions that fit them best. It is also important to understand that the geopolitical context of the 'traditional' durable solutions is inherently insecure, and its ongoing changes continuously exclude refugees in national, regional and international spaces (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019:252).

Building on interdisciplinary, participatory and comparative research that does not assume homogeneity in individuals' experience and entrenched in theoretical premises, policies can then continue this research current. Most importantly, reshaping policy response cannot begin without reforming the relationship between the different stakeholders within which power is shifted into the hands of the displaced to become the main actor in this process.

This thesis also suggests three future research considerations. First, exploring intersectionality could be better investigated beyond the issues of age and socio-economic status only. Second, my thesis focuses on the differences between the two groups of poor Palestinian refugee youth but does not investigate intergroup variances. Hence, it is necessary to expand analytical frameworks that does not homogenize the experiences of refugees in any group. Third, the relatively small sample in this thesis underscores the complex and evolving choices and decision-making processes embedded in their livelihood narratives. However, it eliminates generalizability and essentially renders this research as one that problematizes assumptions rather than draws patterns that can be integrated in policy.

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