

## Floating Populations, Rooted Networks Tracing the Evolution of Russeifa City in Relation to Marka Refugee Camp

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**Abstract :** Refugee camps are habitually defined as receptive sites, transient spaces of exile and nondescript depoliticized places of exception. However, such arguments form partial sides of reality, especially in countries that are geopolitically challenged and rely immensely on international aid. In Jordan, the dynamics brought with the floating population of refugees (Palestinian amongst others) have resulted in spatial after-effects that cannot be easily overlooked. For instance, Palestine refugee camps have turned by time into socioeconomic centers of gravity and cores of spatial evolution. Yet, such a position is not instantaneous. Amongst various reasons, it can be related, according to this paper, to a distinctive institutional climate that has been co-produced by the refugees, host community and the state. This paper aims to investigate the evolution of urban and spatial regulations in Jordan between 1948 and 1995, more specifically, state regulations, community regulations and refugee-self-regulation that all dynamically interacted that period. The paper aims to unpack the relations between refugee camps and their environs to further explore the agency of such floating populations in establishing rooted networks that extended the time and place boundaries. The paper's argument stems from the fact that the spatial configuration of urban systems is not only an outcome of a historical evolutionary process but is also a result of interactions between the actors. The research operationalizes Marka camp in Jordan as a case study. Marka Camp is one of the six "emergency" camps erected in 1968 to shelter 15,000 Palestine refugees and displaced persons who left the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Nowadays, camp shelters more than 50,000 refugees in the same area of land. The camp is located in Russeifa, a city in Zarqa Governorate in Jordan. Together with Amman and Zarqa, Russeifa is part of a larger metropolitan area that acts as a home to more than half of Jordan's businesses. The paper aspires to further understand the post-conflict strategies which were historically applied in Jordan and can be employed to handle more recent geopolitical challenges such as the Syrian refugee crisis. Methodological framework: The paper traces the evolution of the refugee-camp regulating norms in Jordan, parallel with the horizontal and vertical evolution of the Marka camp and its surroundings. Consequently, the main methods employed are historical and mental tracing, Interviews, in addition to using available Aerial and archival photos of the Marka camp and its surrounding.

**Keywords :** forced migration, Palestine refugee camps, spatial agency, urban regulations

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