

**Physical and Planning Characteristics of Palestinian Refugee Camps
A Case Study of Jenin Camp (West Bank)**

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Abstract

The refugee camps had passed through various stage of physical development starting with the tents, then single housing units (huts) and finally the residential quarters (neighborhoods). The physical fabric of the camps in general have transferred from a fabric imposed by the UNRWA to a fabric replicating the needs of the refugees and their cultural, social and environmental features, and to a large extent it looks like the fabric of the neighborhood units in the Arabic and Islamic city.

The major aim of this thesis is studying and analyzing the physical and planning characteristics of the refugee camps in general and of Jenin camp in particular. The study concentrates on analyzing the physical fabric of the camp in terms of its architectural features, public services and facilities and the road network through the different phases of development from its establishment in 1957 until the recent time. Also, it considers the cultural and social aspects that contributed to the formation of this physical fabric.

To achieve this aim, the historical method was followed to collect the data and information about the historical and physical development of the camp. Also, the descriptive method has been used in studying the existing situation. In addition, the analytical method was used in analyzing the physical fabric and architectural elements in the camp. Moreover,

certain research tools were utilized; including the field survey of buildings and public services, interviews with residents and related institutions, and the aerial photos, maps and plans that describe the physical and planning features of the camp through various time periods.

The results of the study indicated that there is a similarity between the physical fabric of Jenin camp and that of the Arabic and Islamic city, which reflects the cultural and social aspects of the population. In addition, the study has shown the lower level of health, social and entertainment services in the camp due to the increased density of population and buildings. Consequently, the study recommended the undertaking of building measures and standards in the camp, which sustain the maintenance of the physical fabric and the provision of adequate public services and facilities that consider the needs of the population. Finally, the study emphasized the importance of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the refugee camps as being a physical environment located inside the Palestinian cities and settlements without ignoring the right of return as well as not imposing the political scenarios dealing with the refugee problem.