

**Al Nakbaa and Collective memory of the Palestinian refugees Madaba Refugee
Camp as a case study**

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<https://jasps.com>**Abstract**

1948 is a turning point in the life of Palestinian people life,1948 War left memories of struggle, loss and the human crises that happened during the war. In this paper I will examine 1948 refugees and discuss their collective memory of the Palestinian refugees (Madaba Refugee camp as a case study) and the methods they use in the Camp to document and transmit the memory, the theory of the localism in dealing with the collective memory as the hometown or village is the origin of the collective memory and the identity of the Palestinian refugees

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Introduction

In 1948 the Palestinian-Israeli war also known as (Al-Nakba) “catastrophe” more than 400 villages were destructed and about 700,000 Palestinian were expelled from their homes and towns as refugees, as a result of the (Nakba) 10 Percent of the Palestinian refugees went to Jordan Around (70,000) Palestinian. (1)

According to UNRWA “Palestine refugees are defined 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”

All of the refugees have memories of their home land, the life before the war and the living in peace memories. Then the memories of struggle, loss and the human crises that happened during the war (killing, imprisonment, stealing the land and the expulsion).

Between 1949 and May 1950, the Kingdom of Jordan was home to five of the Refugee camps; two in urban areas (Irbid and Zarqa) and three in rural areas (Sukhna, Shuna and Karama.



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Between 1949 and 1957 five temporary Refugee camps were constructed Al Zraqa Camp 1949, Irbid Camp 1950, Al Hussain Camp 1952, Al Wehdat Camp 1955 and Madaba Camp 1957.

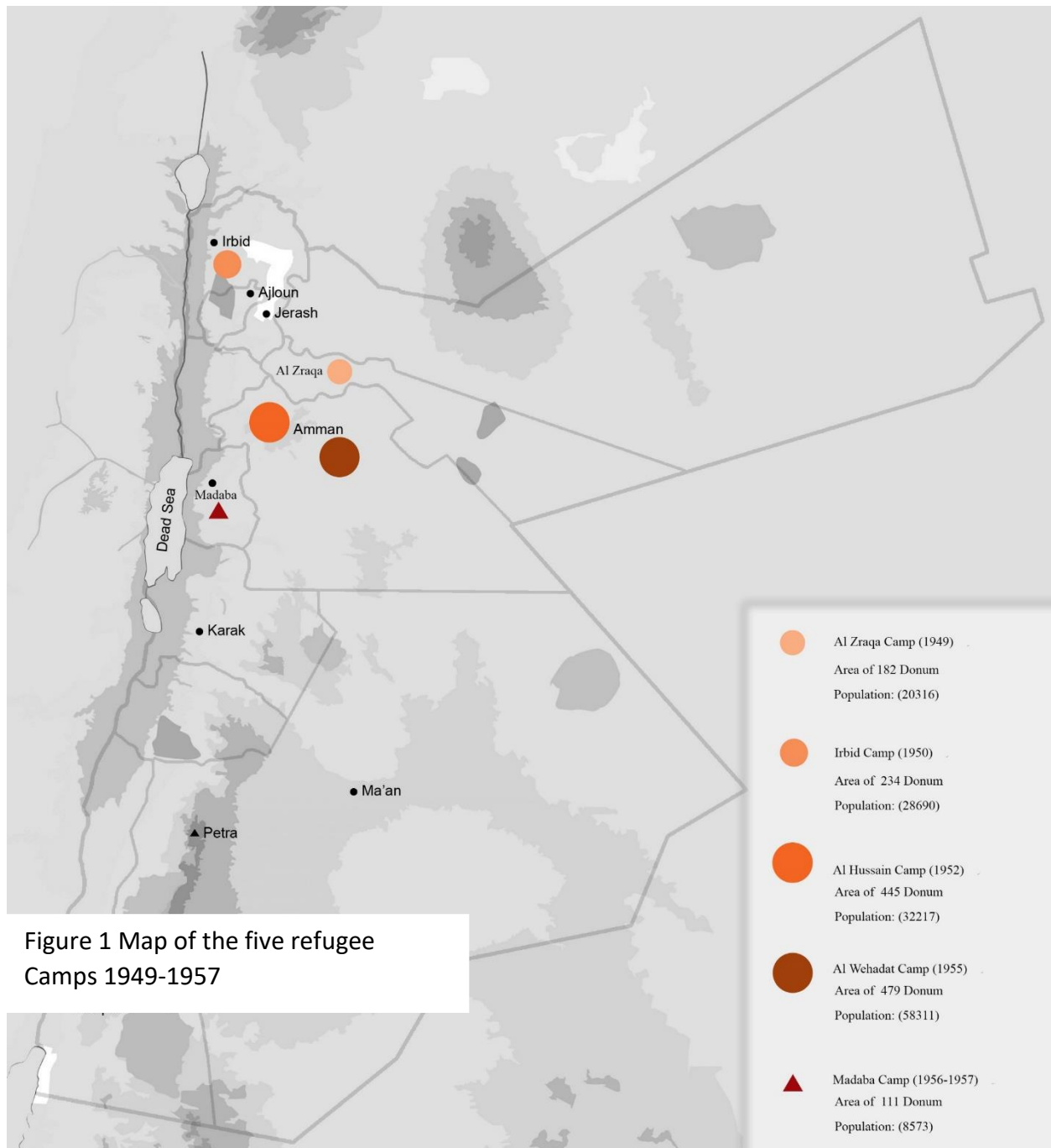


Figure 1 Map of the five refugee Camps 1949-1957

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Living conditions in refugee camp

There are surveys that indicate that camp refugee households are on average poorer than non-camp refugees or than the Jordanian population as a whole

This liberal attitude of the Department of the Palestinian Refugees has accelerated the urbanization of camps located within large city boundaries.

The examples of the Wihdat and the al-Hussein camps in Amman.

Most shelters have two floors (i.e. one floor on top of the original shelter) and the number of commercial buildings with three floors has mushroomed. traditional small and family businesses (grocers and jewelers for instance

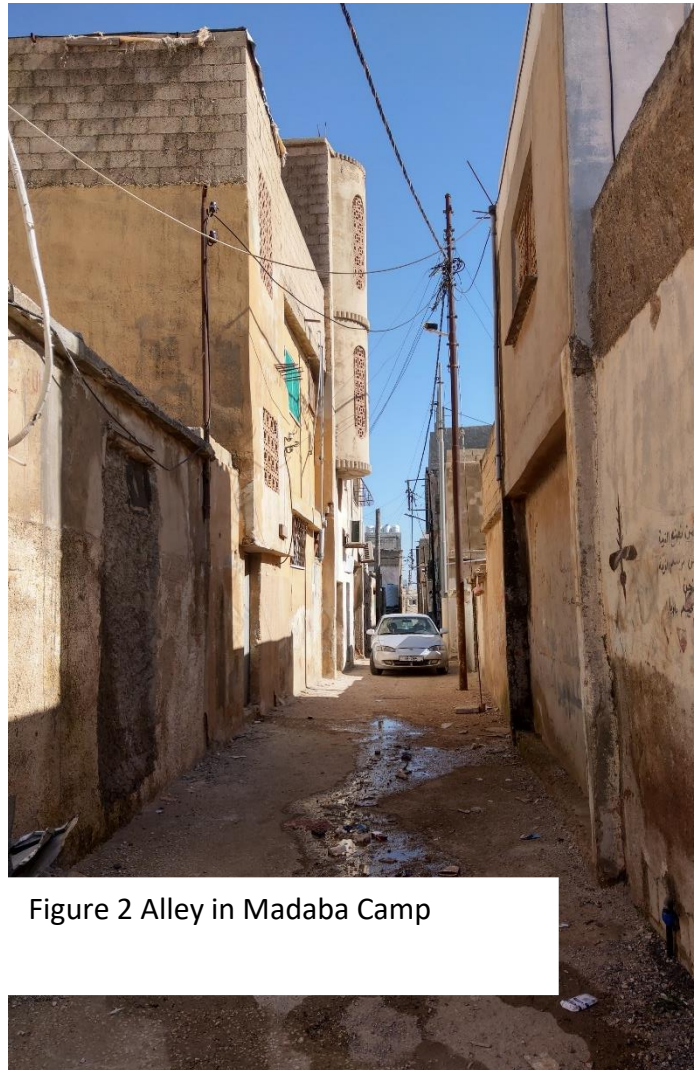


Figure 2 Alley in Madaba Camp

new commercial ventures comprising banks, electronics shops, taxi agencies, fast food outlets and pharmacies have opened in the past two decades, turning these camps into relatively affluent commercial areas

In contrast, refugee camps located outside the cities have been deprived of such developments. For instance, Madaba refugee camp (2).

Collective Memory of the Palestinian Refugees

Collective memory refers to the shared pool of memories, knowledge and information of a social group that is significantly associated with the group's identity

“Palestinian social history and refugee experience and stories about places from their past that appear in oral history collections, autobiographies, novels, poetry collections and memorial books focus on both the symbolic and the emotional connections of Palestinians to their former homes and villages.” Nur Masalha (2)

Totems

Durkheim believed that Totems, natural items that have been deemed sacred held immense power and suggested that they provided individuals with a device to individually remember the unity of the effervescent group experience.

Halbwachs expanded the idea of totems to include commemorative events that serve as reminders of a collective memory.

Site of Memory/Pierre Nora

Site of Memory "Some lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community



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Site of Memory of Palestinian refugee

It may refer to any place, object or concept vested with historical significance in the popular collective memory, such as a monument, a museum, an event, a symbol

Site of Memory signifies the cultural landmarks, places, practices and expressions stemming from a shared past, whether material (monuments) or intangible (language and traditions).

There Were individualized symbolic “sites of memory” commemorating

- 1) The House Key: Symbol of home, Return and a symbol of life the Nakba
- 2) The Rural image

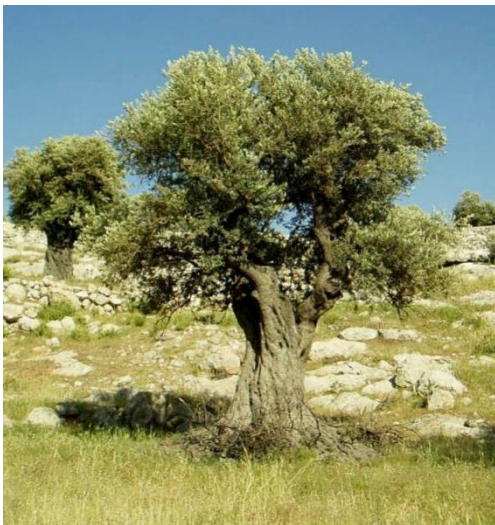


Figure 3, 4, 5 Sites of Memory of Palestinian

Collective Memory Localism/Ahmad H. Sa'di

Following the pioneering works of Anderson, Said, and Hobsbawm and Ranger, social scientists have begun locating identity in the inter-subjective realm, where belonging to an imagined community is constantly reproduced and bolstered through invented traditions, commemorations, the construction of national museums, and the creation of national cultural canons and national heroes.

I suggest that, in addition to these top-down processes, which aim at the nationalization of the mass of a population, there are bottom-up processes, which are generated through localized experiences and sentiments. Dispersed and lacking national institutions, archives, and documents, Palestinians have had to resort to different venues of identity reconstruction. Similar to various Third World peoples who have experienced centuries of colonization, the question of identity among Palestinians has become intimately connected to the “restoration of the individual’s subjectivity”; that is, a national narrative has been constructed through life stories, documents, and viewpoints of individuals

Spencer Rangitsch stated on the Palestinian memory that an event was remembered and recounted was often depicted as singular (something that happened in town villages) devoid of the wider context (3).

Collective Memory Localism/ Nur Msalha

Since 1948 the “villages of origin” have been the center of memory accounts and the important provider of “legitimacy” for the internally displaced persons and for their struggle for return.

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the village of origin also provides a collective identity for the internally displaced within the host village. The village of origin shapes the perception of both the past and the future, and more specifically the collective memory, refugee identity and desire to return.

there is an overriding sense of localism. What happened then is seen as having happened to this town or village in isolation from the onslaught that affected Palestine as a whole. While the narrators recognize that the Nakba happened across the country, this is not reflected in the protocols of narration - nor in the stories retold. There is an astounding absence of an overall picture and of the interconnection that affected the lives and behavior of combatants and onlookers alike. Thus in these narratives, the siege of Jaffa and Lydda, the massacres of Deir Yasin and Dawaiymeh, and the exodus from Safad and Haifa - they happened as disparate incidents, unconnected to the general saga of war (4).

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Madaba Refugee Camp

Madaba camp was established in 1957 on the south of the center of Madaba on an area of 111 dunums, 325 residential units were constructed by the UNRWA each unit had an area of 90 sqm. Figure 3

The residents of Madaba camp came mainly from three cities (Jerusalem, be'er shebe and Hebron) Figure 4

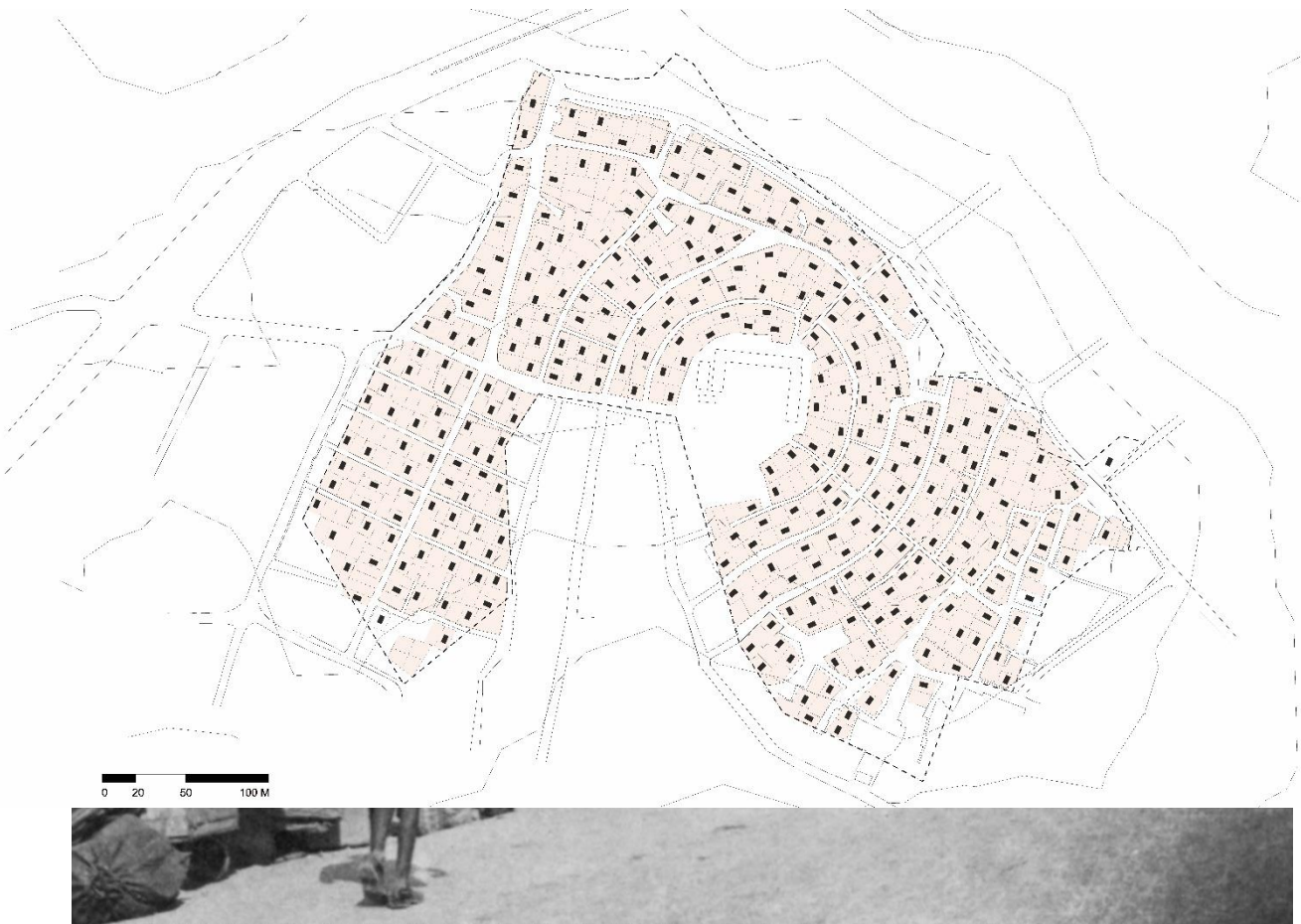


Figure 6: Imagined Master Plan of the 325 units in 1957.

القدس : ديربان, بيت نثيف , عرتوف
بيت محسير , بيت عذاب

الخليل: الفالوجي , بيت جبرين , دير الدبان

بيت لحم: بيت فجار, حوسان, العبيدي

غزة : بيت جسير , حتا , بربره

الرملة : زرنوقه

بئر السبع

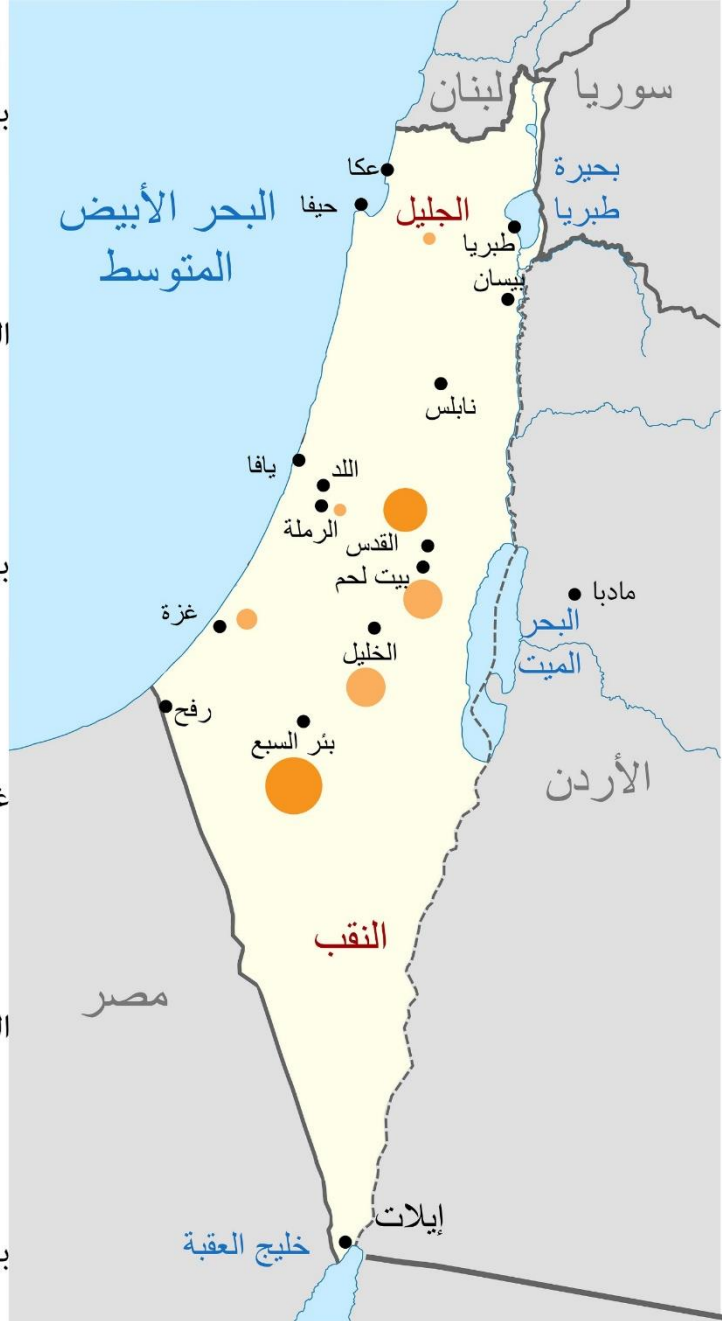


Figure 7: Map Shows the Families of Madaba Refugee Camp and their origins

Social Fabric

in 1948 the first group of refugees arrived to Madaba

after the exodus. The refugee lived in Madaba from 1948-1956 before establishing the camp. They were working mainly on agriculture and sheep grazing.

In 1957 the UNRWA constructed the camp, small concrete units were constructed, then the refugees moved to the camp and the public figures of the refugees (shoyukh) distributed the units to the refugees.

The distribution of the units was based on two factors,

- 1- based on the city or the village that the came from.
- 2- based on their families

This distribution system made Madaba Camp different from other refugee camps, where in Madaba camp the refugees have a strong relationships with each other's which create an identity to the camp which unites the resident of the

Timeline

1948
Exodus



1948-1956
Life In Madaba



1956
Establishing the Camp
(UN Units)



1978
Camp 1978






Figure 8: Historic timeline of Madaba Camp

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camp under the umbrella of the camp, as opposed to the other camps in which the distribution of the units were random without looking on the refugees origins and family names and that destroyed the social fabrics of the camps

Housing

Unemployment Rate

	Jordan	Madaba	Madaba Camp
Year			
2011	12.9%	20.9%	13%
2019	19.2%	25.6%	--

Madaba Camp 2011



Figure 9: Living conditions Statistics

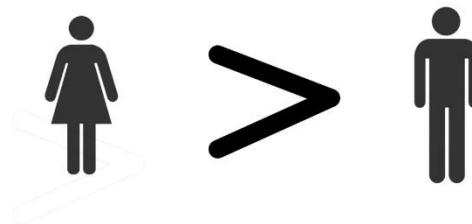


Figure 10: Unemployment Rate Statistics

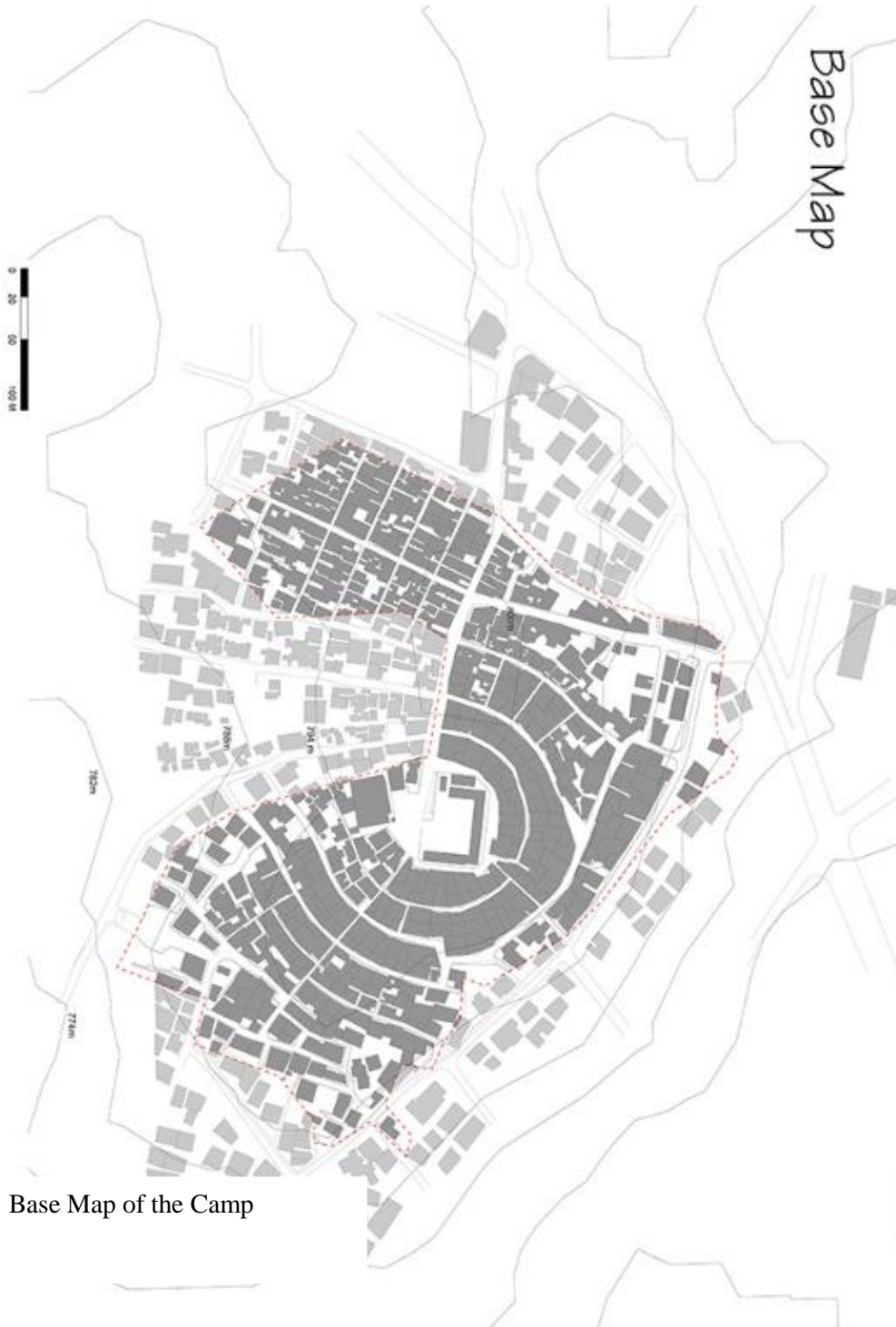
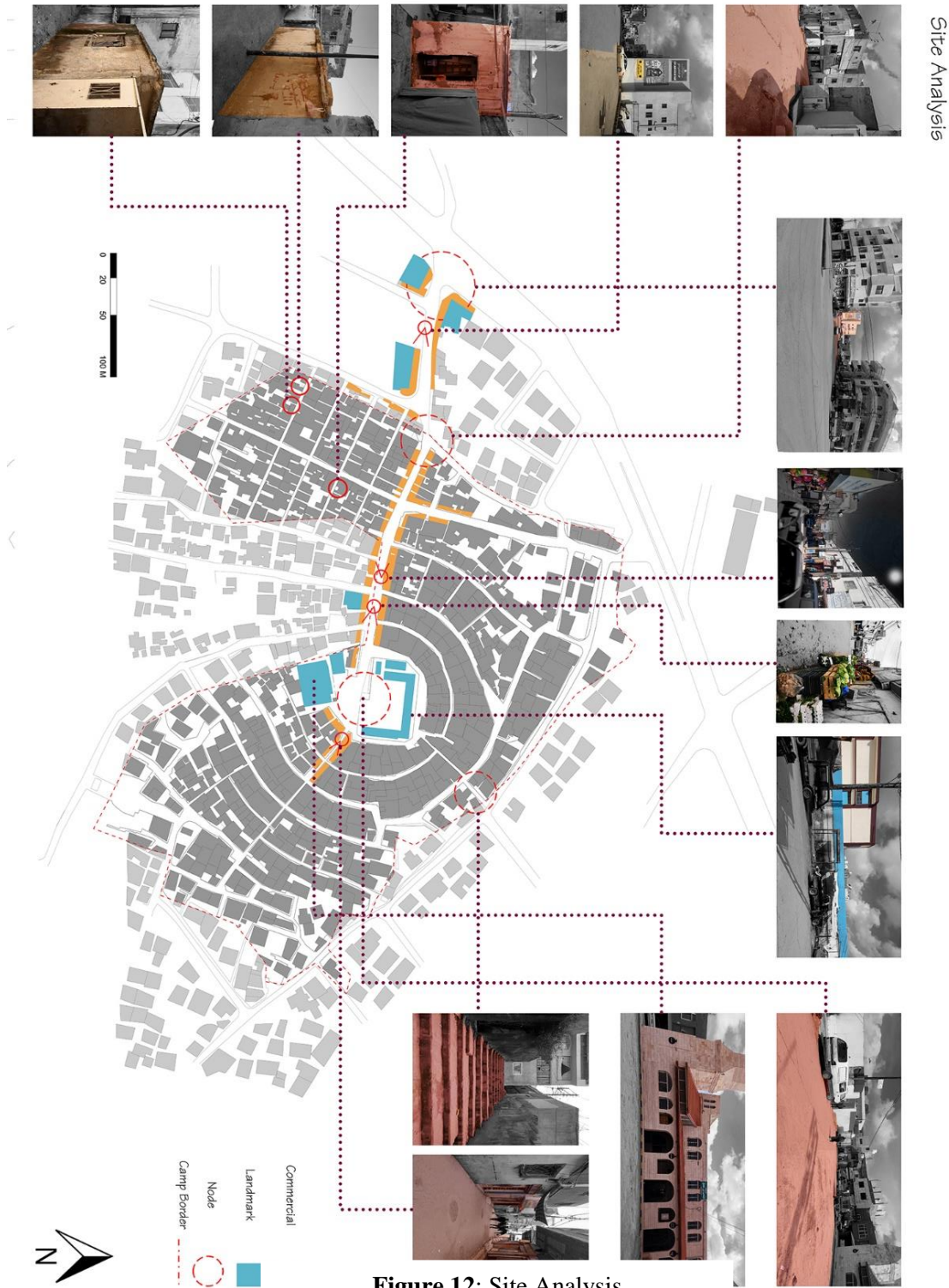


Figure 11: Base Map of the Camp



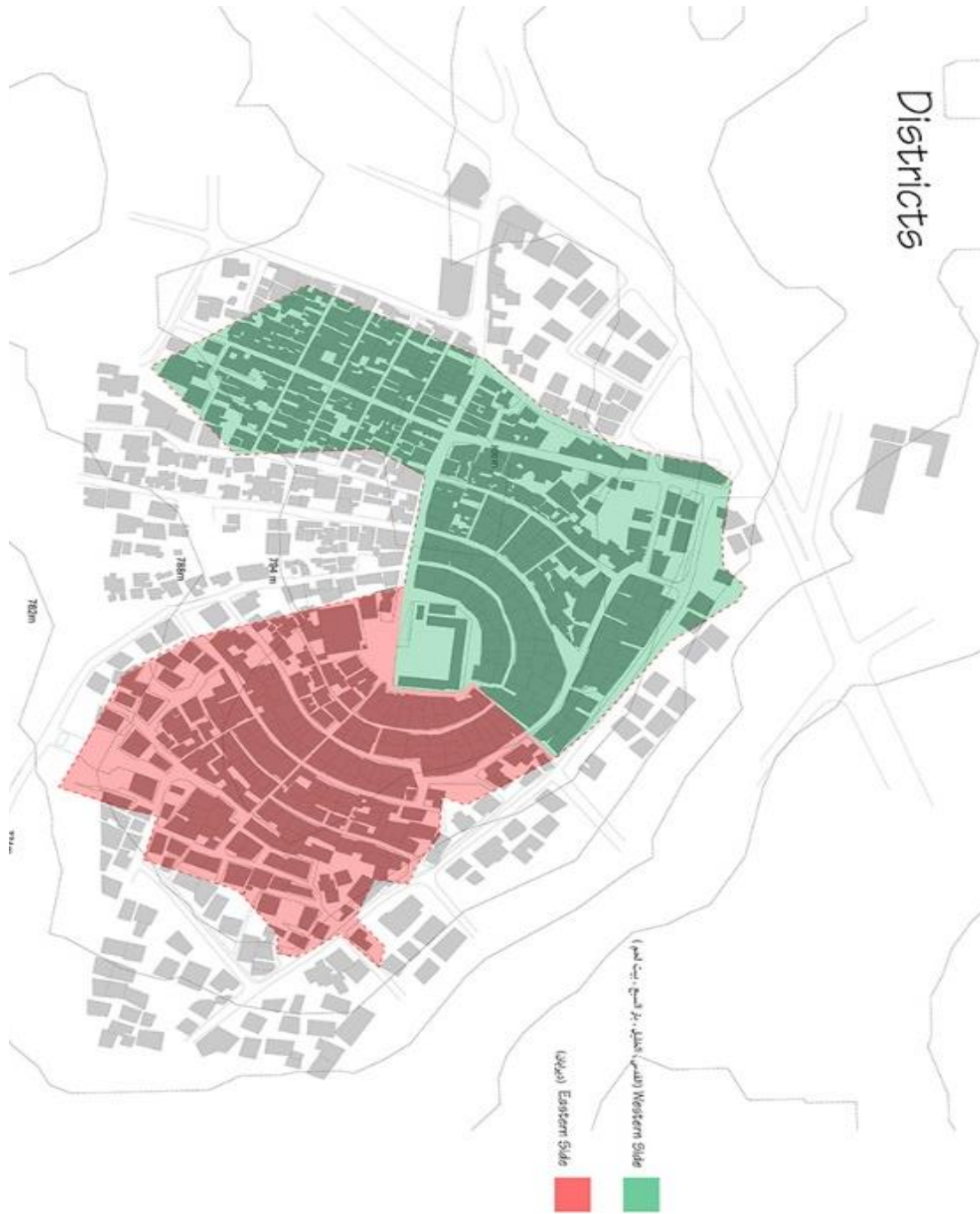


Figure 14: Districts

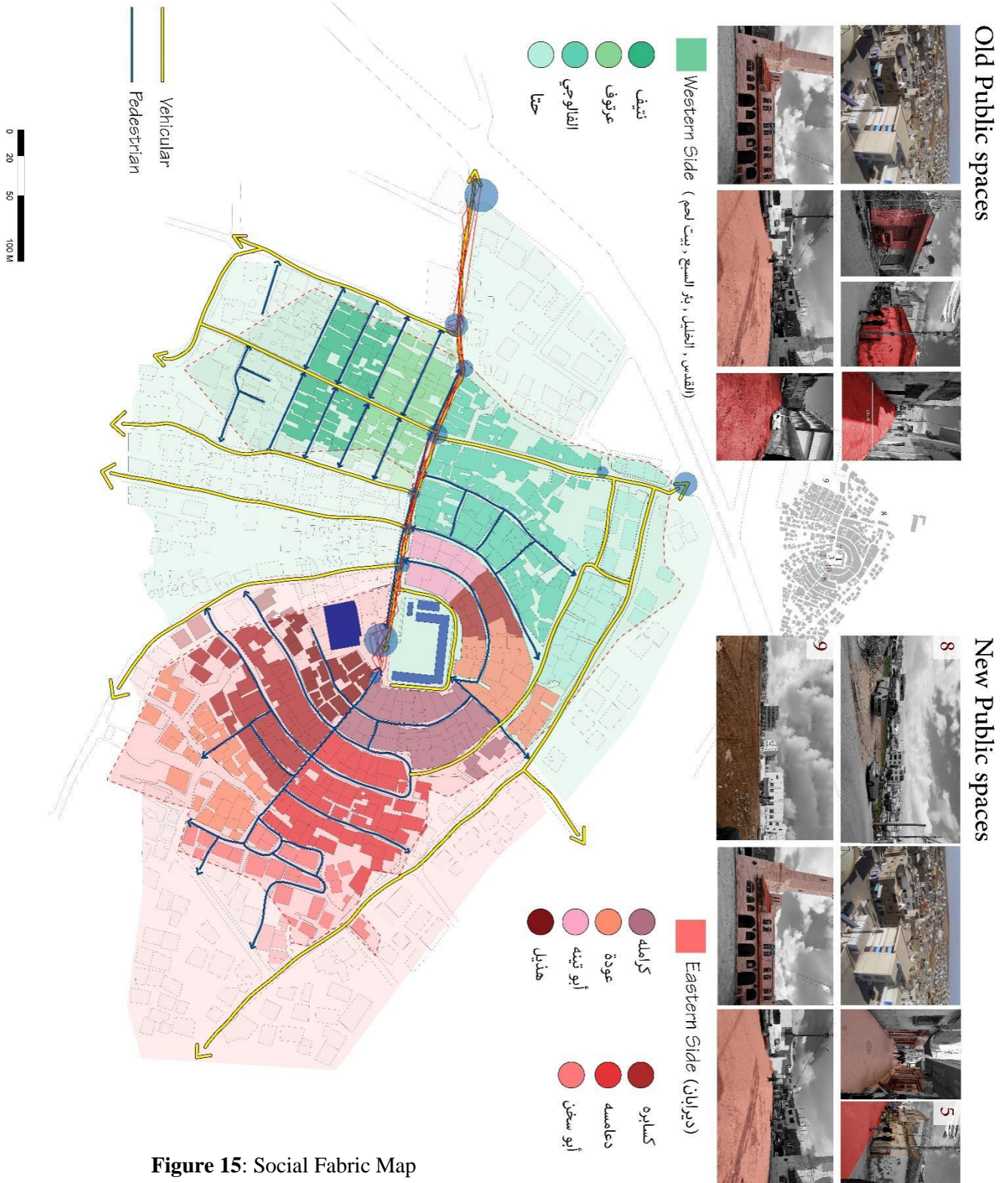


Figure 15: Social Fabric Map

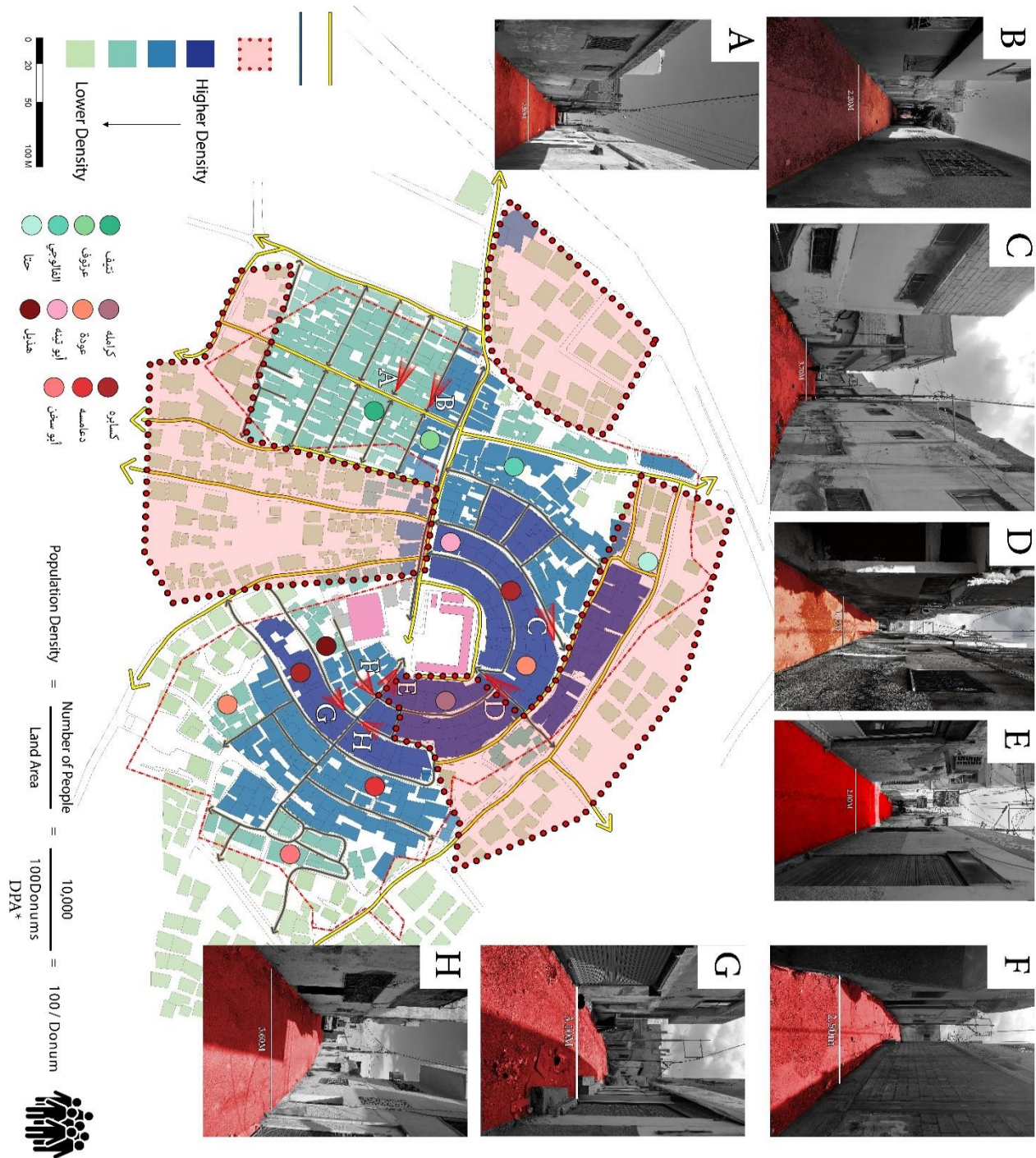


Figure 16: Socio-economic Map

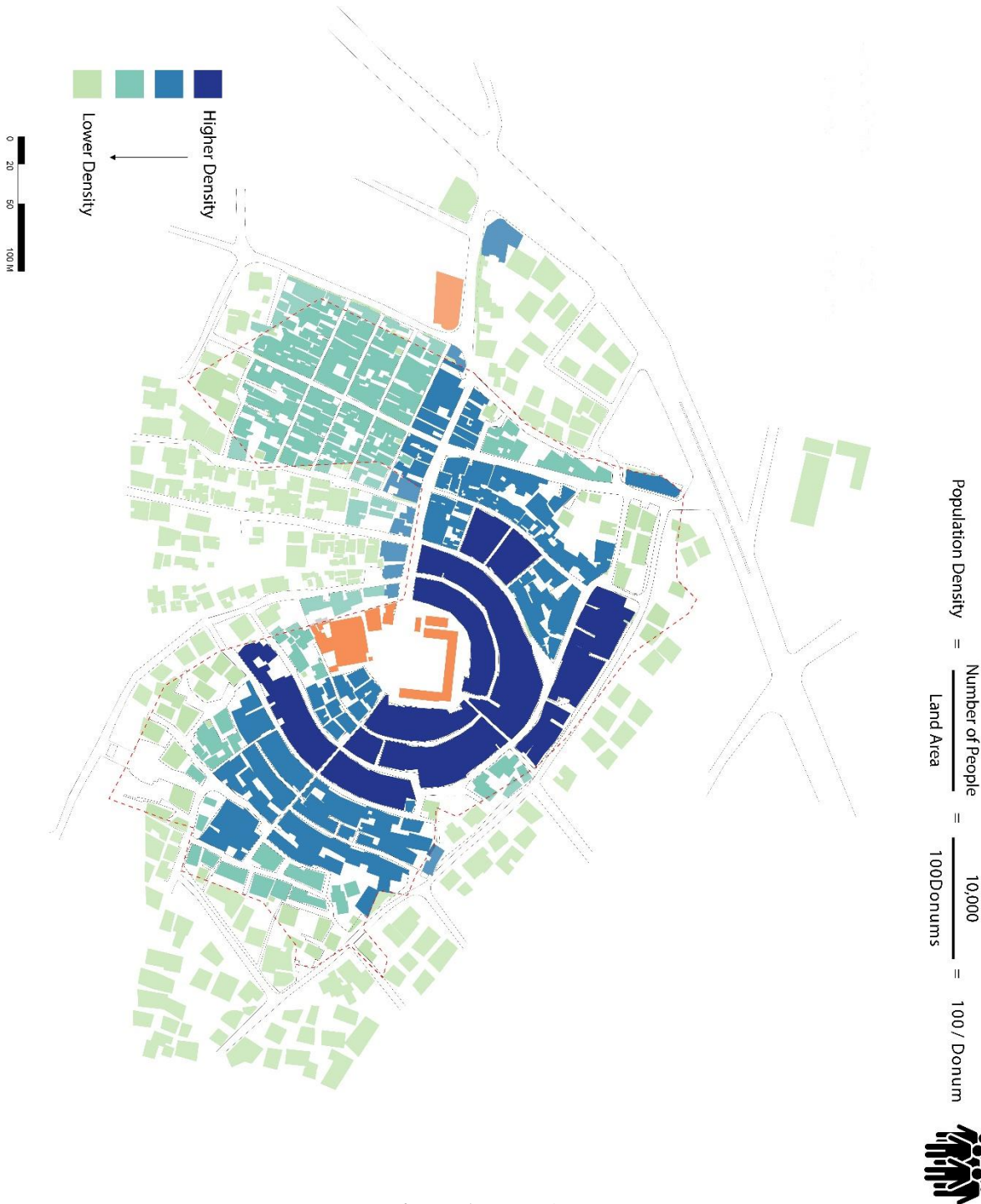


Figure 17: Density Map

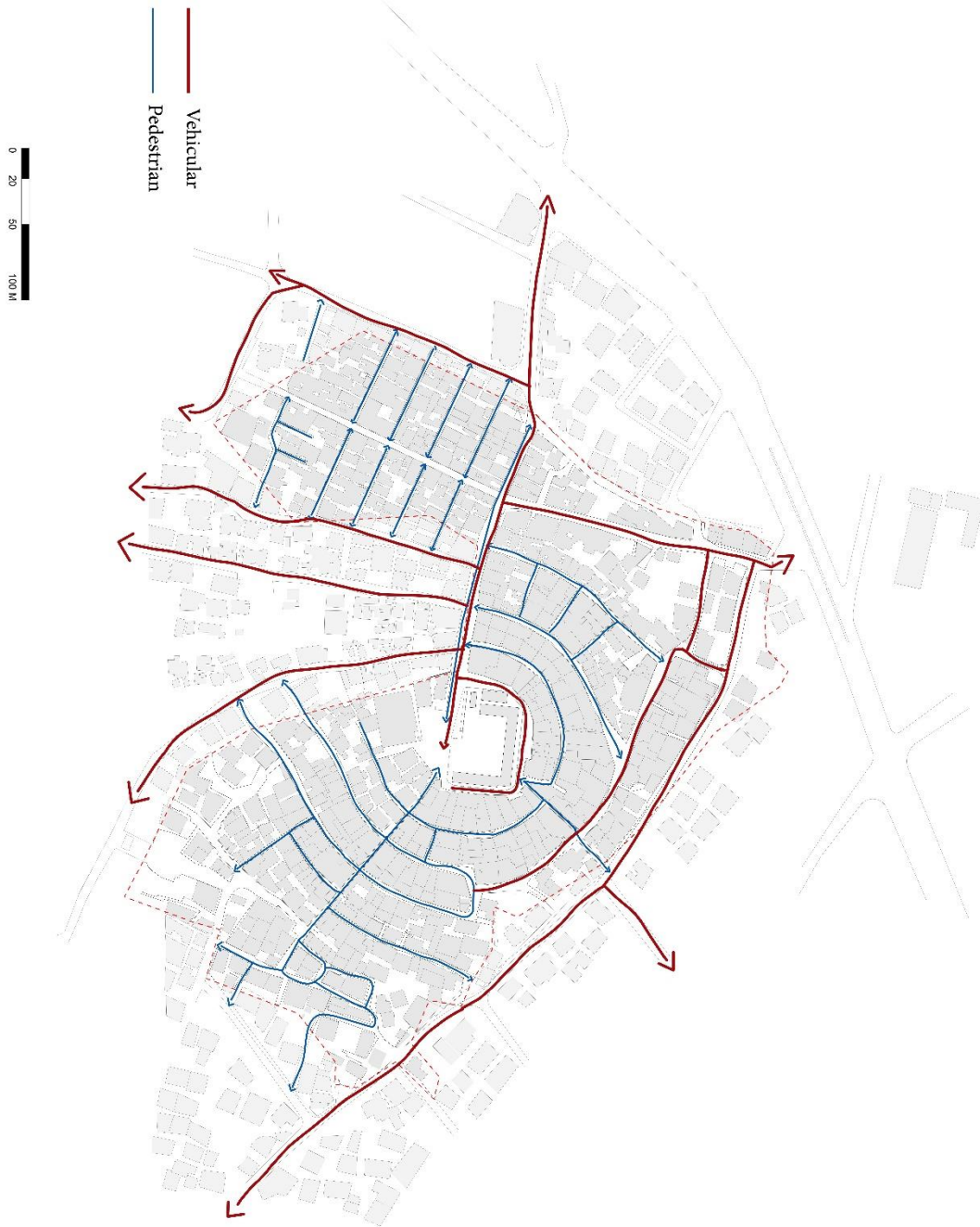


Figure 18: circulation Map

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