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Abstract:

*Humanitarian aid, socio-spatial dynamics, and the evolution of refugee camps in the Gaza Strip*

My PhD research aims to understand the evolution process of the urban refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. My research questions are: -What socio-spatial dynamics have influenced the evolution of the urban refugee camps? -How do these dynamics shape the governance and the living conditions in the studied refugee camps? -How does the prolonged provision of humanitarian aid affect and get affected by the socio-spatial dynamics of the urban refugee camps? I employ Critical Realism to underpin my methodological and theoretical approaches. The research also investigates the assemblage of camp formation. I borrowed from Agamben to study the refugee subject. I adopt the notion of “city-like” camps, engaging with the contemporary work of scholars such as Agier and Sanyal. I used mixed qualitative methods, including documentary review, field observation, and semi-structured interviews, during my fieldwork, comparing the two camps, Deir Al Balah and Jabalia in Gaza. In my findings, I define the “state of paradox” as a new shift for camps from the “state of exception”. The findings highlight the temporary-permanent socio-spatial conditions that link the current shape of the camp space, the living conditions, and the governance practices.