CHAPTER 11

From Refuge the Ghetto Is Born: Contemporary Figures of Heterotopias

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In this chapter, I propose to de-center the way we look at the central question that has been asked—that of the ghetto—and change the way we think about it. On the one hand, I will not talk about ghettos in their most established and recognized forms; the American ghetto or the French "ghettoized" suburbs, for example, will only be brought up by way of comparison in the analysis. I will change our perspective by turning toward spaces set apart and separated, precarious places to which populations with uncertain futures are relegated. More generally, we will turn toward spaces I call *heterotopian*, according to the concept launched by Foucault; we usually find these spaces "somewhere else"—such as in southern countries, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, or Latin America—but they are also found nearby, for example, in the encampments of foreigners in Europe. I have studied these places in my fieldwork investigations and am striving to construct an integrated description of them.

In anchoring my reflection on these spaces that are set apart, I will not speak about ghettos themselves, since ghettos are already part of a visible—albeit marginal—urban structure; rather, I will speak of the original process of urban formation that takes root in camps, informal encampments, and all sorts of off-places that have a role as places of refuge. The empirical starting point of my reflection is therefore *refuge*, which is, first of all, a shelter created

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in a hostile context (war, violence, xenophobic or racist rejection) and whose permanence, under certain conditions, brings about the ghetto. It is *contemporary* logic about the ghetto that is the object of my reflection here. I am describing and analyzing this logic of a place in the making—*in process*—as *urban* logic, before considering the aspects of identity and, most of all, politics that contribute to the sedimentation and fixation of the ghetto.

The possible descriptions of this contemporary and urban logic of the ghetto in process are uncertain, as is the future of the places themselves. The specter of the place's disappearance combines with the technical precariousness of its facilities to determine the occupants' daily lives and make the atmosphere of the refuge one full of anxiety and paranoia, which give rise to a permanent tension in the occupants as they face the surrounding risks of violence, destruction, and expulsion. However, while acknowledging these characteristics of uncertainty, I will try to convey from my personal experience in refugee camps and self-settled migrant camps the conviction that I formed there: Reusing and updating the old phrase (dating from 1831) credited to the historian Jules Michelet, "the city begins with asylum"—and reciprocally, but without seeing any rigid determinism in it, "from asylum the city is born"—I set forth here the hypothesis that the ghetto begins with refuge. Thus, from the viewpoint of the empirical anchoring of my analysis, this hypothesis implies that *from refuge the ghetto is born*. For its part, *asylum* (as much as we can say that it still exists today, for example, in public immigration policies conceived as institutional hospitality resources) would be what gets refugees out of the refuge and makes the refuge itself disappear (by abandonment or transformation) by eliminating what made it necessary, whether hostility, war, or xenophobia.[1] *Hospitality* favors sharing the city as common space, whereas refuge is a shelter that one creates for oneself in the absence of hospitality. Later, in the conclusion, we will see how refuge, asylum (whose double-sidedness as an immigration policy and as a confining institution is considered in this chapter), and *confinement*—of which prison is the paragon—make up the three principal figures of heterotopia today.

I proceed according to an inductive method. Starting from a statement of fact that is indisputable in both its specific materiality and its globalization—the multiplicity and variety of the forms of encampments worldwide—I consider the transformation of these refuges (the variable of the duration is

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essential here) and the birth of new ghettos. This analysis illuminates a logic that is both urban and political—that is to say, I look at the ghetto from the point of view of its relationship to the city and its distance from the state, and not from an aprioristic ethnic or religious point of view.

LIVING IN REFUGE

A first observation concerns the existence today of the relatively stable and vast network of camps, waiting zones, detention centers, and encampments found along the routes of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. I would like to clarify this observation by drawing a quick picture of the types of encampments found around the world today.[2]

In 2008 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ran more than 300 refugee camps in the world. Dozens had more than 25,000 inhabitants, and some had up to 100,000. About 6 million statutory refugees (recognized as such by the UNHCR) were held in these camps, close to half of which were in Africa and a third in Asia. One and a half million people lived in the 60 Palestinian refugee camps in Middle Eastern countries run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN agency created for Palestinians after the 1948 exodus. Lastly, camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs)—people who have fled their region but remain in their country—are the most numerous as well as the most informal. Their number is constantly fluctuating, and they are difficult to keep track of because they often come into being as self-settled camps. There are an estimated 600 such camps in the world: In the region of Darfur in Sudan alone, there were 65 camps where close to 2 million displaced persons were living in 2008. In that same year, the camp in Gereida, known for being the largest camp for displaced persons in the world, sheltered 120,000 people. In 2008–2009, aside from Sudan, four other countries—Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, and Iraq—were the main countries with a high concentration of internally displaced persons in dozens if not hundreds of camps. In total, there are now over 1,000 camps in the world where at least 12 million refugees or displaced people live.[3] This figure does not include the numerous self-settled encampments, which are the most ephemeral and least visible among all of these facilities; nor does it include

the 250 detainment or detention centers and waiting zones in Europe where several tens of thousands of individuals are held each year in endlessly fluctuating numbers. It is important to note that in December 2008 the European Union (EU) authorized the extension of the length of detainment to eighteen months (instead of the policy of thirty or sixty days that had been in force up until then, depending on the country). This is a radical change: It not only implies but ratifies the logistical strategy of building more centers and waiting zones, as well as taking advantage of guarantees of humanitarian aid.

Among all of the camps created today, the informal, self-settled encampment occupies a separate place. It is first a hideout on a dangerous journey, a place of refuge set up on an emergency basis in a hostile environment lacking hospitality or a refugee policy. The self-settled encampment is also often the first stop on a long exile route that can include several more stops, depending on the migratory journey. For example, if an army here, a militia there, or the police elsewhere have not yet chased off the undesirables, it is once they have established themselves in self-settled camps that humanitarian interventions usually arrive. In Africa in particular, if the people on the move remain close to a national border without crossing it, the informal encampment may progressively be transformed into a camp for internally displaced persons by humanitarian organizations with sanitary facilities, infrastructures, or medical care. Or if a border has been crossed, the camp's occupants may be rounded up and driven by truck to an older existing camp farther away that has already been set up by the UNHCR. Later in the chapter, I return to the urban transformations of the refugee camps that settled in for the long run and have remained in place for several decades. First, however, I look at the evolution of one encampment in particular: The one that remains informal, possibly illegal, and yet tolerated.

Specifically, I examine the encampments established along the route of Afghan migrants in Europe, whether in the Greek town of Patras near its harbor or in the forest near Calais in the north of France. Places of survival, of hiding, of urban invasion—that is to say, places of refuge in the true sense of the word—become part of different forms of settlements even if they are only tolerated for several years before being destroyed and evacuated by the police. This was the case for the camp in Patras, which was created in late 1996: After having sheltered up to two thousand occupants—Iraqi Kurds first, then

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Afghans (Pashtuns and Hazara)—it was destroyed in July 2009 by police bulldozers and the fires that broke out at the same time. This was also the fate a few months later of the more than sixty barracks and shacks at an Afghan refugee camp in Calais. Called "the jungle" by its occupants, a term reused pejoratively by the press, this camp was destroyed in September 2009 by the French police. It had been set up at the end of 2002 after the evacuation and dismantling of the Sangatte refugee camp, which had existed for three years.[4]

It was in a national and European context of a "war on migrants" (Blanchard and Wender 2007) that these refuges were created. They remained in place for many years because of a power struggle between national and local authorities, on the one hand, and organizations working to protect foreigners' rights and humanitarian agencies working in them, on the other. They also endured, in part, because of the insistence, resistance, and even resiliency of their occupants, who fixed them up and settled into the urban cityscape. The idea of tolerance corresponds to this unstable product of the power struggles over the existence of these places—unwelcome, and thus not met with hospitality, the occupants are merely tolerated.[5] In Patras, over the twelve-year period from 1996 to 2009, more than one hundred shacks were constructed (and frequently rebuilt after partial destruction by the neighborhood or the police). The occupants also took over a building under construction that had been abandoned and stood vacant. This space was anchored on a vacant lot surrounded by the buildings and residences of the middle-class inhabitants of Patras. It was also located a mere twenty meters or so from the entrance to the harbor in Patras (where cargo ships leave for Italy).

Over time, after the first emergency tents and plastic tarps go up, what emerges from these precarious places are portions of cities made out of canvas and cardboard, scrap metal and plastic. Planks of wood and wire mesh stolen near the docks are used to build frames for shacks. Warehouse pallets are put on the ground to serve as insulated flooring, while the "walls" are insulated with salvaged Styrofoam boards that have been reassembled. The rest of these "walls" are made from plastic sheeting and cardboard. Bits of scavenged carpet become rugs for the floors and patchworks of material and blankets make curtains.

In the self-settled camp in Patras that lasted for twelve years, a certain "model" habitat developed: In one day a "house" (consisting of a single room of about twelve square meters) could be built by a group of workers who

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seemed to have been there for as long as the camp itself. (In reality, the turnover of people was very high. People generally stayed for only a couple of months, although the obstacles to travel forced a small number of migrants to remain for more than a year or two.) The shelters were often destroyed, however, and had to be rebuilt quickly: A dozen stakes became fifty-centimeter-high piles, a floor made of salvaged boards was put down, and walls were made out of cardboard covered with plastic sheeting (Agier and Prestianni 2011).

This "architecture" resembles that of refugee camps that have remained in place for several years. In these refugee camps, large tin cans are unrolled and assembled into shutters for windows, rice or bulgur sacks are transformed into curtains for doors, and branches are used to make frames for individual huts, which little by little replace the big collective tents from the first months. We return to this subject later.

In the clandestine camps in the forests of Bel Younech and Gourougou in northern Morocco, a few kilometers from the border crossing into the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Moroccan territory, the occupants call their camps "the ghetto." Other such self-settled camps appeared in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the Mano River War (1989–2004). For example, Liberian exiles gathered in a self-settled camp near the village of Buedu in Sierra Leone, about fifteen kilometers from the Liberian border, before there was any UNHCR acknowledgment or control. A large number of Liberian refugees had arrived in the region in 2001, after fighting had broken out again in Liberia. More than thirty-five thousand Liberians arrived in the district of Buedu alone from towns and villages located just on the other side of the border. Even though they arrived from nearby places belonging to allied lineages, their arrival overextended the village's available residential possibilities and, to a large extent, its food supplies. The inhabitants thus asked their refugee "relatives" to settle in an empty space on the outskirts of Buedu. This turned into a self-settled camp in 2001. After two years, it had up to four thousand occupants when the UNHCR completely evacuated it by force, arguing that the camp was too close to the border and that all of the refugees had to be relocated to UNHCR camps in the center of the country (a set of seven camps between the cities of Bo and Kenma).

The Buedu camp had been strictly organized, with a camp chairman and a secretary who kept very detailed records of the arrivals and departures of

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the Liberians, the makeup of their families, and so on. Two years later, the secretary and the former chairman, who refused a further displacement to the UNHCR camps, had kept the record of the camp's inhabitants and still remembered them.[6] A similar type of social organization was observed by Smaïn Laacher (2007, 92–147) in the self-described "ghettos" in northern Morocco. Even though turnover is high in all of these places, the establishment of certain hierarchical responsibilities ensures their continuity and internal organization. Even if these encampments take on names like "jungle" or "ghetto," it should also be noted that they sometimes take on other kinds of names. For instance, at the end of the war in Sierra Leone a group of Liberian migrants who were not recognized as statutory "refugees" by the UNHCR named their neighborhood in the town of Kailahun "Kula camp": The neighborhood was transformed into a settlement or encampment for the last waves of migrants, displaced persons, and "returnees."[7]

These are the "city planners" who appear in the refuges, shelters, and hideouts in the heart of Europe or in Africa. What they do is similar to what we call "self-building districts" in the outlying areas of towns in Africa, Asia, or Latin America: The practices and knowledge learned and experimented with in precarious social situations are comparable. With the available natural resources (dried mud, water, wood from the forest) or residual matter from manufactured products (boards, plastic sheeting, canvas bags, sheets of metal packaging, Styrofoam), a camp architecture is developed, just as favelas or slums have an architecture. In this world constructed from scraps and waste (for a good analysis, see Bauman 2004), a new technical and social framework arises in the margins and in the shadows—because life in such a place is most of all about being invisible, or at least as discreet as possible. The place finds itself cornered, even confined, in these marginal areas, stigmatized by the prejudice and stigma associated with the physical border between a fantasized interior and exterior, between "us" and "them" (Douglas 1971).

The transformation of precarious settlements takes place over time. This is particularly clear in the case of *favelas*—mentioned here briefly because favelas are spaces that were created by migrants seeking to establish a place in the margins of a city and thus anchor themselves in the city. Through local conflicts and new intra-urban displacements and returns, stability emerged on the thresholds of the city when the fragile shelters set up in the *bush* (the

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meaning of the word *favela*) on the outer limit of the urban perimeter were transformed on the spot. The shelters were turned into shacks just as the housing became denser and the layout of the place (streets, stairs, a tangle of lodgings) more complex. Finally, things are built with permanent materials, and multi-story houses and buildings emerge.[8] Moreover, after the architectural evolution and the urban evolution, the political struggle of the *favelados* allowed a third evolution to take place and to consolidate the first two: an administrative and political consolidation when the human world residing in the favela was acknowledged. Then the favela finally gained the status of a *bairro* (a district), official access to the city's network and grid (water, electricity, sewers, garbage collection, transportation), and municipal political recognition, including even the deliverance of urban title deeds to the residents.[9]

Each transformation of a precarious shelter into a town district (favela-bairro) is obviously much more complex than is conveyed in this brief summary; usually the process is spread out over several decades. However, it was observed as a strong urban trend in numerous Latin American countries between 1940 and 2000. At first the urban "invasions" of migrants from 1940 to 1960 were followed by their violent expulsion from the "legal" intra-muros city, which was itself increasing in population and extending geographically toward the exterior outskirts. These violent expulsions often expressed social rejection of the poor and undesirable migrants and political determination to keep them at a distance. The failure of these urban cleanup strategies combined in the 1990s with their political and economic costs to bring on a policy change: From then on, progressive and on-site transformations of these precarious urban zones were negotiated.

These different observations of the urban logic of encampments and favelas as self-settled and transformed places of refuge show the need for a decentering, not only a geographical one (from north to south) or an analytical one (from a built ghetto to the building of a ghetto), but also an epistemological one. It is about putting "the structure" back in its place: that of a rational construction striving to put meaning and order in a world that runs its course chaotically, or to be more specific, in the chaos of the world (in a completely undramatized sense). Structural anthropology certainly gives us the pleasant intellectual exercise of discovering the "underlying structures" in myths or social relations that, at first glance, seem disorderly (Lévi-Strauss 1958/2003);

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the description of order thus produces its "reality." But when the very reality of this social order is challenged by the vitality of these spaces of disorder and spaces in the margins, not only does "the order" come into question, but so does the very reality defined by the thought of this order.[10] There is thus a transparency between, on the one hand, the theory of the relationships between order and disorder, between structure and anti-structure, and on the other hand, the politics of order and of the margins.

Thus confronted with its unplanned and even unthinkable social nature and vitality, the structural analysis takes up another role, a political one: that of an instrument of control when it has to do with founding a sovereign power and the encompassing knowledge that accompanies and legitimizes it. In this scenario, which associates structure and function, it is always necessary to flush out and expose the inevitable intrusion of "disorder" into an intellectually prestructured whole in order to firmly reestablish order—through endless programs, projects, and master plans, drawing borders and limits while the wastefulness of this policy to establish order is haphazardly confined to the margins. Then the "disorder" in the margins is exposed as a piling up of rubbish, with its repulsive stain. This *radically "other" space* and its inhabitants are then rejected as the foreigners' world that must be evacuated and removed. Thus, the most widespread images of "the jungle" in Calais in the French press a couple of days before it was razed by the police in September 2009 showed heaps of garbage and dirty people in a subhuman state.

Conversely, a de-centering allows us to imagine the transformation within the disorder. When we observe the logic of human survival amid the chaos of the facilities in modern places of refuge in the form of self-organized camps, we can describe a contemporary logic of urbanization of the margins within the space of refuge that moves toward the form of the urban ghetto.

TRANSFORMING THE CAMP AND FOUNDING THE GHETTO

If we can establish a direct analytical relation between the self-settled camp—whose essential purpose is to serve as a place of refuge in a context that, owing either to hostility or to saturation, excludes the "refugees," pushing them toward the margins that at the same time it creates—and an urban evolution that takes on the form of a ghetto, this relation can also take a detour. It often includes

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the establishment of a plan of control and humanitarian assistance in the margins—what I call a humanitarian government of the undesirables.

To better understand this detour I examine the refugee camps in sub-Saharan Africa from the perspective of urban ethnology. My inquiry has no normative or evolutionist content. I am not examining the camps with any pre-defined goals for them—for example, to function as an organization of space with normative architectural forms and institutional structures. I am looking to give an account of the social creations, cultural changes, and possibly new political forms that appear when people gather together for an indefinite time in a given space, no matter what it is or whether it can be considered "a relatively permanent and dense settlement of heterogeneous individuals," according to Louis Wirth's (1938/1984, 260) definition of a city. I am also interested in understanding the transformations of space that this type of situation implies. A five-year-old camp is no longer a row of tents. It can look like a huge slum, or it can resemble an ethnographic museum where everyone tries with the resources found in the camp to reconstruct their native habitat as best as possible. The result is sometimes a colorful landscape, a hybrid formation, the blue and white UNHCR tarps covering fragile structures of branches or dried mud, canvas sacks stamped with "European Union" or "USA" used as curtains for the doors to the huts.

In northeast Kenya, around the village of Dadaab, more than 170,000 people live in a humanitarian zone formed by three nearby camps.[11] The camps, which have been in place since 1991, shelter mostly Somali refugees but also Sudanese and Ethiopians. Although the camps' total population is greater than that of the administrative district they are located in, the camps do not appear on the map of Kenya because, as spaces conceded to the UNHCR by Kenya, they are not under the country's control. Therefore, officially they do not exist, and it can be said that everything in the camps reflects this image of apparent nonexistence and lack of recognition. The lives of the refugees in the camps are lives of waiting—up to twenty years for the occupants who have been there the longest. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are responsible for their food supplies, their sanitary security, and their bits of social activity. Theoretically the refugees do not even have the right to work or to move about the country. Their presence in the humanitarian space is considered a transitional stop before returning "home," a return that is largely uncertain. Whether they

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have gotten used to living in a corner of the camp or whether they move about the country illegally (secretly paying the police who control their passes), the refugees in Dadaab seem to have integrated the camp's space into their present living environments as the prospects of returning home decrease from year to year.

The UNHCR organized the camps' space according to a preestablished regimen. The agency built fences from prickly shrubs and barbed wire to enclose the camps and close off the "blocks" on the inside. (About 300 to 500 refugees occupy each block.) The refugees were grouped according to where they came from, by their ethnic group, or even by their clan; most were sorted by ethnic or national origin. In the beginning they all received the same plastic tarps from the HCR, a mattress, and some kitchen utensils, and they found wood around the camp to build huts using the UNHCR tarps. They salvaged tin cans donated by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP): By unfolding and assembling the tin cans, they could make gates, windows, and tables.

The fences sometimes erected between the different blocks are responses to past or potential ethnic conflicts. Certain ethnic minorities within the camp—for example, the Sudanese, the Ugandans, and some Ethiopians—tend to close their spaces off from the Somali majority. This insularity expresses fear, rejection, withdrawal, or self-defense. For example, one block is made up of Christian Sudanese from urban areas in the south, mostly young men who fled their region when they were still children or teenagers. Having traveled from one camp to another for almost ten years, they created their own space by closing off their block with high hedges and barbed wire. In this space, they re-created a micro-urban space, with everything built out of dried mud. There is a main street with a Catholic church at one end and a Protestant church for several evangelical religions at the other end. Rows of housing line the two sides of the main road; there is an area for the latrines and even a volleyball court. All of this creates an image of a miniature city neighborhood. "Equatoria Gate" is written on the entrance gate; Equatoria is the name of the Sudanese district they came from. Every night young men take turns patrolling the block's perimeter. They fear in particular their direct neighbors, who are Bantu Somalis; especially when children go from one block to the other, conflicts sometimes arise between the Christian Sudanese and this group of outcaste Somalis (who are recognized as a minority by the camp administration).

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Although certain spaces are closed off and protected, inhabitants can go to other places that are more open and mixed. This can be seen in the growing number of coffee shops and video stores located away from the residential areas, along the roads and markets near the camp entrance. Here interethnic meetings take place, to the dismay of the elders from certain superior Somali clans. Other important changes include work for international organizations or in association with them. People employed by NGOs as "volunteer community workers" and those who are considered the most vulnerable in the population (widows, handicapped people, or those from the lowest castes) receive credits to undertake projects called "revenue-generating activities." All of these people, along with those who are appointed leaders of a sector,[12] create a category of refugees who may compete with or challenge the power of the ethnic elders and the values on which their power is based.

Attempts to symbolically appropriate spaces are also reflected in the names that the inhabitants have given to completely anonymous and insignificant places. In one of the three camps, for example, two little dirt alleys, each fifty meters long, are lined with stalls where certain refugees have set up micro-retail businesses selling portions of WFP food rations, vegetables (rations do not include tomatoes and onions, which are grown in plots in the blocks), and basic necessities. The refugees call this place "the town," or *magalo* in the Somali language. Leaving this "town," a stretch of sand leads toward the zones where the refugees' huts are; at least a kilometer long, this very wide lane is called "the highway."

Observation of the camps shows an emerging space that is completely unknown to researchers, as well as to new occupants upon their arrival. In a certain way, an urban ethnography of humanitarian sites can go further than is possible with a philosophy of the camps, in that it is a critical philosophy with no *subject*. Thus, Giorgio Agamben's (1997) analyses, in an exemplary manner, came to the conclusion that the camp had led to "the end of the city." However, for Agamben, policy is completely merged with the exercise of biopower (a savant technology of power acting over global "populations," in Foucaldian conception) in the spaces of exception, and the question of political subjects remains unexplored (Rancière 1995, 2000). It is precisely this critique and theoretical question that forms the foundation of the urban ethnography of the camps. They give us a glimpse of the city and policy at work in the heart

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of exceptional and extraterritorial spaces, which is what humanitarian sites are. The investigation of social changes, the undertaking of initiatives, and the voicing of opinions on the appropriations and transformations of a space that was initially empty—all of this reveals a transformation at work in the camps that is both urban and political and whose analysis will guide our attempts to understand the ghetto-form.

I end this survey of the camps with one last example: The Palestinian camp is the model on the horizon for research on present-day camps, and in particular all the camps that have existed for several decades in Africa and Asia.

In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories themselves (Gaza and the West Bank), refugee camps have existed for more than fifty years. They offer the most convincing examples from an urban logic point of view of the slow but inevitable transition from the precarious and temporary encampment (tents in a sandy desert at the end of the 1940s while waiting for the promised return to lost lands) to today's political and urban ghetto. Throughout modern Palestinian history—from the 1948 exodus to the stabilizing of the camps during the 1950s and 1960s, the hard-line politics of the 1980s and 2000s, and the sixty or so camps and their 1.5 million inhabitants in 2010—the housing became denser and denser and was progressively built as permanent structures. As an informal economy developed, the housing was completely transformed: The basic twelve-square-meter unit built under the aegis of the UNRWA in the 1950s became structures with more and more stories piled up, since the strict and definitive perimeter prevented any horizontal expansion. Today the camps have even become a place of marginal urban polarity. In addition to the initial 1.5 million occupants (the Palestinian refugees) and their descendants, other exiles—Iraqis and Africans with no refugee status—have come to the camps in the last couple of years seeking asylum. Thus, for example, in the Chatila camp in Beirut, fewer than half of the residents today come from the original Palestinian families, and the camp has the city's highest population density.

These camps were not initially planned to last any longer than the others were. Over time, they gradually became places with a strong local identity and a hard-core political Palestinian identity. Maintaining the camps in a political and legal "place-out-of-place" has fueled the justification felt by Palestinians that returning to their land is the only solution for recognition. The camps

pay a heavy tribute to the Palestinian cause. At the same time, however, the inhabitants reorganized their lives a long time ago in the interior of these spaces. A gap is continually widening between the theoretical "camp" as a spatial exception and legal and political waiting zone, on the one hand, and the continually changing urban and social realities of the Palestinian camps, on the other.[13] The camps are changing: They have been experiencing over the years an urbanization process that is similar—in its social organization, economic, and material aspects—to that seen in other urban outskirts in the world. The distinction between city-dwellers and refugees is being completely blurred by the confrontation with an urban integration that is as real as that observed in numerous urban invasions and in the Latin American favelas. All that remains unchanged is the legal status of refugees, who remain noncitizens and city-dwellers without a city. It is at this moment of being unbearably maintained apart that the ghetto becomes political and a question of identity.

CONTEMPORARY FIGURES OF HETEROTOPIAS

A specific reflection and conceptualization provides a generic description of the spaces produced by this worldwide, multiform exclusion: "Heterotopian" spaces are those "other" places, according to Foucault (1984, 752), "that are outside of all places even though it is possible to indicate their location." The fact that they can be located allows us to observe them, to spend time in them and to understand, through ethnographic investigation, their inner experience. Then, describing them according to the de-centering approach mentioned earlier, we can grasp the transformative power that emanates from them. These "off-places"—which I call *hors-lieux* in French (Agier 2008)—form first as places "outside," locations on the edges or limits of the normal order of things. This characteristic confinement gives them a certain *extraterritoriality*.[14] This extraterritoriality takes shape for refugees and displaced persons in the experience of a double locality exclusion: They are excluded from the native places that they lost through displacement, and they are excluded from the space of the "local population" where the camps or other transit zones are located. Another notion from Foucault, that of being "confined outside," is also related to heterotopia. Speaking about the "boat people" from Vietnam—the boats full of refugees from Vietnam drifting on the seas at the beginning of the 1980s—

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Michel Foucault declared in a militant speech that "refugees are the first to be confined outside." And a couple of years earlier, he had said: "The ship is the heterotopia par excellence."[15] It is possible to make an inventory of "pieces of floating space" (Foucault 2009, 35) . The small Nauru and Christmas Islands in the Pacific should be included in this inventory. These islands are used by the Australian government as vast detainment centers for Afghan and Sri Lankan exiles.[16] They are thus prevented from entering Australian territory in order to request asylum. Boats, islands, harbor waiting zones, detainment centers, and refugee camps—the fact that all of these off-places make up real "pieces of space" indicates the possibility of a lasting and confined settlement that is kept apart.

A certain *exception* is associated with this extraterritoriality. From the point of view of the sovereign power that creates the heterotopia, the fiction of the outside is a pure mirage with no distinctive thought or identity. Its real space is occupied by the "inside" of another state. To put it another way, those confined outside are people who are "cast out inside" within the state-space. The extraterritoriality of *outcasts* is thus defined by this constant tension between an inaccessible inside, in regard to the categories of national citizens, and the experience outside as a form of assisted and constrained living. It is through this tension or double constraint that the heterotopia builds its artifact—boat, island, or camp—into a place of confinement and a place to live that seems to be in the middle of a void but is actually always on the border of a social or national order. No matter who the actual administrators are (humanitarian, administrative, or community organizations), the spaces put into heterotopia have the shared trait of removing, delaying, or suspending any recognition of political equality between the occupants of these other spaces and ordinary citizens. There is indeed a treatment of exception associated with these spaces that is permitted by the fiction of extraterritoriality. The exception can be declared in order to confine a "crisis" or a "deviation"—for example, such declarations are the basis of psychiatric clinics, prisons, and retirement homes (Foucault 1984, 756). Yet, by settling them and grouping them collectively, these other spaces turn their occupants into lasting pariahs.

Thus, an *exclusion* from the social structure is associated with legal and political exception and with extraterritoriality in regard to the organization of space and borders. Lives thus excluded carry risks, and it must be acknowledged

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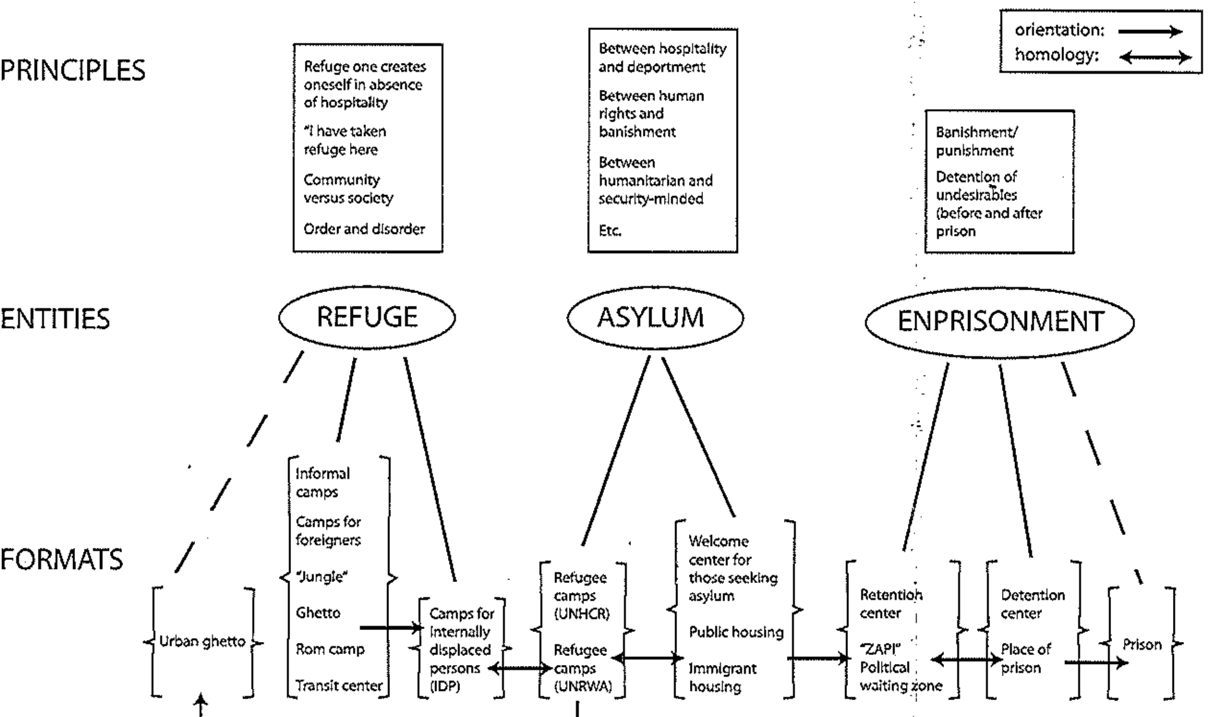
that those who live in these spaces are not surprised by the police harassment they experience on a daily basis. We should hear the occupants' use of terms like *ghetto* or *jungle* or *outlaw town* as a form of objectification and self-assertiveness. These terms give a specific and accepted meaning (if not precisely "positive" in the sense that they would be desirable) to the places they occupy and live in. The first spaces used as places of refuge are abandoned buildings, vacant lots, forests (or fragments of forests in urban settings), and docks. The state of abandonment of these places confirms and intensifies the absence of territorial citizenship among those living there: Neither their country of national origin nor the one they are exiled in guarantees them the local exercise of citizenship in these marginal spaces. The occupants are excluded socially; however, their social exclusion does not prevent them from being occasionally and unofficially used as a workforce in the margins in certain sectors, such as in shop work, housework, construction work, and farm work.

Contemporary heterotopias are recognizable by the fact that they combine these traits of extraterritoriality, exception, and exclusion. If the situations I observed during my research in camps, informal encampments, and urban invasions fit into these heterotopias, I believe it is possible to synthesize and give shared meaning to these different spaces that are apart and in the margins, in a continuous analytical sequence, through three figures that provide the model of thought and action in today's heterotopia: imprisonment, asylum, and refuge. These figures are closely related, not only because all three represent a form of confinement for their occupants, but also because they are affected by the ambivalence that links them: Imprisonment can be found to a certain extent in asylum, and likewise asylum offers, in part, refuge. Each figure is present and incarnated in different forms of the other two spaces, and all three become, at different rates, *spaces for others*. These heterotopias evolve toward the two poles represented by the form of prison at one extreme and the urban ghetto at the other. See figure 11.1 for a representation of these forms and figures.

The first model in this landscape is imprisonment, an extreme and, at the same time, ambivalent pole when it comes to the aims and practices of confining undesirables. In general, prison is a place of punishment and banishment, but contemporary prisons have also become spaces for managing undesirable populations. The length of imprisonment is increasing, especially the time before and after the actual penal sentence, just as the size of the prison population

FIGURE 11.1. Contemporary Principles, Figures, and Forms of Heterotopia



has increased in the last couple of years to such an extent that prison now appears to be one of the ways of confining undesirables—particularly in France and the United States, two countries that imprison foreigners and social outcasts.[17] Moreover, in the context of the European—and in particular the French—policy of detaining and expelling undesirable foreigners, prison has become the setting for this detainment of foreigners with no papers when there is no more room in the detention centers (Beaulieu-Garnier 2010). Waiting zones and administrative detainment centers in France (or detention centers in most of the other European countries), even if they are not part of the penal network, are in fact places of administrative confinement under police control.

The second model, asylum, is symbolically strong yet just as ambivalent. Asylum is the welcoming portal giving access to a shared world, but it is also a place of confinement itself where undesirable persons (the insane, the elderly, foreigners) are set apart. The asylum we provide has the same name as the asylum that confines. Thus, the walled asylum is the implementation of an extraterritorial fiction—a re-creation of a place-out-of-place within the shared world and even within cities. This is what unites the worlds of welcome centers for asylum-seekers in France (Kobelinsky 2010) and UNHCR refugee camps in Africa and Asia. It is also what explains the similar sense of uneasiness felt by the social workers working in these centers and the humanitarian workers in refugee camps. The welcome centers in France and similar spaces (housing shelters, migrant homes, and so on) and the camps for refugees and internally displaced people on other continents (Africa, Asia, South America) are located in the intersection between two conflicting topographies: the topography of the foreigner as an undesirable person and the topography of hospitality. The material and social forms of this ambivalent principle of asylum create places of tension, conflict, and unease because the actors—those who are housed or confined there and those who work or volunteer there—are maintained in a suspended temporality and uncertainty in regard to the common rules of their existence.

Lastly, the figure of refuge is used to justify the existence and management of refugee camps, which, as we have seen, are largely concerned with providing asylum for banished people who are kept apart, in regard to territoriality and law, from the society of nation-states. Refuge is also the essence of self-

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organized IDP camps: the places of refuge established by internally displaced persons who have left their own residences without crossing a national border. These encampments usually witness, in a second phase, the arrival of humanitarian organizations or UN agencies, either to provide aid or to regroup the residents or move them toward other camps. Finally, informal migrant camps ("jungles," "ghettos," and so on) can be likened to the older figures of self-settlements on the margins of cities that were generally tolerated, such as camps of foreigners, Roma gypsy camps in Europe, or, going even further back in history, the caravanserai in Africa and the Orient.

Thus, it is possible to look far away from the criminalization of undesirable foreigners found in the political news today around the globe and compare self-settled off-places and other historic forms of self-settlement. In modern terminology, as in the past, we find the making of "the ghetto" as a hideout and a rest area by the side of the road, a camp in the forest, a space granted in the outer margins of the city to the merchants, migrants, and travelers who stay there without completely giving up the possibility of leaving (Simmel 1908/1984).

THE GHETTO: GLOBALIZATION'S PLACE OF BANISHMENT

After following the line from the refugee camp and other camps to the possibility of the ghetto, and after sketching the heterotopian situations that give meaning to the relations between the different forms of off-places today, I conclude by examining the political and urban qualities of the ghetto.

As soon as we accept the non-essentialist definition of the making of the ghetto, it is possible to position the ghetto analytically among the forms of socialization (including urban) in heterotopian figures—as I have done in this chapter. With such an analysis, as well as an analysis of social conditions, race relations, and sociological contexts of spaces of relegation, Loïc Wacquant (2008), for example, has come to the conclusion that a ghetto exists for African Americans, but not in the multiethnic case in France. This point is indisputable from the point of view of the effects of context and the rhetoric of relegation to the margins. Moreover, Wacquant's distinction casts an important light on the public controversies (whether about urban policy, schools, nationality, or religion) that regularly break out over the question of the working-class

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suburbs in France and the off-putting ghetto imagery that the elites use in regard to them. For all that, the anthropology of "city making" that I defend here cannot avoid exploring the increasing number of situations where, as we have seen in the case of the camps, social and cultural activity develop within the very limits of the places of confinement. It is an urban process whose moral quality—I'm referring to Robert E. Park's (1926/1984) "moral regions" (ethnic, racial, religious, and so on)—is constructed in relation to this urban confinement in order to justify it, consolidate it, and adapt to it. To put it differently, the apparently radical and initial otherness that is lodged there and that seems to give it distinct or inner meaning is in reality the result of the relation of conflict, rejection, and resistance between the central power and the margins it has instituted. If there is always an *urban* ghetto, it sets itself up in a political relationship. I would like to clarify this essential point, which questions any a priori vision of identity (racial, ethnic, or religious) in the ghetto-form.

When we wonder what a camp can become, there is no more enlightening way to approach this inquiry than by looking at what the camps established decades ago in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa have become. No longer completely camps, they are now a kind of ghetto, or a portion of the city: Their world, which was empty at the beginning, has been transformed and has been filled up from the interior. The initial bare space has been populated, and social, cultural, and political relations have developed within a limited if not totally closed off space. Likewise in the general history of urban ghettos, the development of an "other" life inside a relative and lasting confinement leads to identity politics, no matter what the foundation (ethnic, racial, national, religious, and so on). In the camp, a *place* is formed, and the camp itself becomes the environment where an identity strategy is born, not the contrary, as is often implied. Of course, national and ethnic groups may have existed before the camp, but it is within the camp's space that they are transformed and come up against one another or even mix together; it is there that ethnopolitical forces may come into being with new contours of identity and multiple forms of expression.[18]

Moreover, territorial and social consolidation of camps has numerous consequences for the occupants, beyond the most visible political interpretations. From this point of view, a forced displacement—closing a camp and sending its occupants away—can be just as violent as the displacement that led to the refugees' arrival at the camp. In other words, when the idea of the

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"anthropological place" enters the originally empty world of the off-place, then the ghetto is the urban form that accompanies it.[19] We can then wonder if a ghetto is not better than a camp insofar as the ghetto would be the camp that developed a social and cultural life in the very space of its confinement.

The black American ghetto and the French so-called ghettoized suburbs, as well as the Palestinian refugee camps, become places that we want to leave as soon as social mobility makes it possible, even if they have become places of identity or have a social, cultural, and even possibly political anchoring. To come back to the example of the Palestinian refugee camps, it is important to underscore that to be a refugee living in a camp in the Palestinian Territories—for example, in the Balata camp (25,000 inhabitants) in the city of Naplouse (300,000 inhabitants)—is to live in a city as an inferior on a daily basis. Refugee status is the inferior status in urban Palestine. There is indeed an urban form that emerges from the history of Palestinian refugees. It is the "ghettoization" of the camps (in the sense of a relative spatial, social, legal, cultural, and political confinement) that drives the refugees to leave the camps to seek social betterment or to transform themselves by developing an informal economy, but also to "localize" in the camps their identity as victims of the Naqba (the 1948 exodus) and therefore, as Palestinians, as incarnations of the wait and the absence of the "return" (Sanbar 2004).

Before exploring the otherness of the ghetto, it is useful to evoke what an Afghan migrant and leader in the Patras camp called the "outlaw city" in reference to that camp. The material and social forms of these facilities are defined as "unauthorized or unofficial" only when they are represented in relation to a state and only the state can define the distances necessary to the limits of common order. Spaces of banishment (*ban-lieu*[20]) are kept apart and on the boundaries of the city, as well as on the boundaries of the state, and are located at a distance and in the margins decided by the state itself.[21] The state localizes its own margins, its outside and its outer border, and in this outside it contains and confines any idea of otherness defined by dissection or separation, by distance, and by opposition to the city and to the state. It is within this environment that an urban as well as political evolution then becomes apparent and that the term *ghetto* comes to designate this space set apart at this moment in the process, as if it had always been there and as if it was obvious that it would be endowed with inner, natural, and essentialist meaning. The state, in its role

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as police, will forcefully point out the dangers of essentialism in a place that it produced, including its limits and its motives. The relation between these other spaces and the state takes on the appearance of a relation of exteriority or conflict (for example, in the French republican rhetoric of the state against "communitarianism"). Furthermore, it is always a policy of rejection and separation (incarnated by the state's violence when it defines its limits and its space of banishment) that produces the real essence of the ghetto as a political and territorial separation.

Born from refuge, every ghetto is transformed according to a dynamic that is ambivalent and contradictory, especially in relations of power: In this context, the relation to "the exterior" is always present, even omnipresent, and represented by the relation to the state's public authorities, its police, its administration, its violence, and its law and order.

It is possible that at a given moment in the world different states of this urban form in the margins exist. The internal structure of the ghetto has broken down in the United States, according to Wacquant (2008, 57–76), owing to institutional processes that chained the ghetto's history to the rest of American society, which then brought on the "hyperghetto" as a "territory of abandonment," the fruit of the growing de-proletarianization process and social alienation. I wonder if today, everywhere in the world, another history has not already taken over from local and national histories that are no longer only local or national. Certainly, the hyperghetto is locally an internal transformation of the ghetto—related, in this regard, to American social and ethnic history—but it also participates in a worldwide evolution toward the harsh fragmentation of the world and the creation, as globalization progresses, of a vast space of relegation, a generalized *ban-lieu*, a place of banishment that finds something like its limit in the hyperghetto. In the context of world history, the ghetto in its traditional form has been outstripped and redefined by an excluding globalization. Bauman (2004) explores this broader phenomenon, and in particular its use of the worldwide image of the hyperghetto to describe the extraterritoriality of the supernumeraries as "human waste" on a planetary scale. A variety of limited spaces or spaces in the limits—the intermediary spaces of transit or transition—make it possible to characterize the extent to which this place of banishment (*ban-lieu*) is socialized or urbanized in the process of globalization.

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Therefore, a change of scale is necessary. In the camps and the transit zones, the "communitarian ghetto," just like the legal status of "refugee," has become a desirable possibility because it is forbidden or extremely difficult to achieve. In the meantime, their facilities are erected and perceived as spaces of rejection: It is the world of "illegal and clandestine aliens" and "nonsuit immigrants" (or "closed files," in the UNHCR term for those who no longer have the right to anything). Engin Isin and Kim Rygiel (2007, 177–209) present an inventory of a group of "abject spaces" on borders, in zones, and in camps—they lodge in an extraterritoriality, occupants who have nothing, who are indefinite individuals worthy of the greatest scorn because they are "neither subjects nor objects, but abject." Wacquant (2009a), on his side, is developing a global way of describing spaces of "seclusion" that partly intersects with my concept of the global *ban-lieu*. Wacquant's project and mine share at least two main positions: (1) I agree totally with the necessity of a global vision of the socio-spatial fragmentation of the world, although, since I think (with, for example, Lussault 2009) that today's struggles take the form of struggles of "place," I would not put in the same category *gated communities* and *refugee camps*, which are more like two symbols of a social confrontation of places on global scale; and (2) we both defend the de-essentialization of the ghetto. Further, it seems unnecessary to treat the "ethnic cluster" apart from the ghetto and as a counterpoint to it, for the concept of the refuge as the birth in conflict of the ghetto can also be applied to other confinements—such as "ethnic clusters." Ethnic clusters can also be analyzed in the framework of an anti-culturalist anthropology.

On the world scale even more than on the local scale, the problem is essentially anti-culturalist: It is a matter of understanding the formation of the new spaces that are erected at the social and national boundaries, in limbo, and in the margins. Then we may see that the globalization of the place of banishment necessarily leads to questions about the *fiction of extraterritoriality* that creates the meaning of these off-places. The fiction of extraterritoriality takes on what Didier Lapeyronnie (2008, 189) calls, in regard to the urban ghetto in France, the "two narratives of the ghetto." Moving to a global scale, these two narratives are closely linked in the same tension that characterizes the relation of the ghetto to its state. One narrative relates the stigmatized rhetoric of rejection of everything defined as "ghettoized": These are the governmental

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speeches of a political, identity, cultural, or, especially in Europe, ethno-national nature that legitimize the proliferation of walls, fences, camps, and closed-off areas by endlessly inventing new forms of foreignness.

On the other hand, another globalization of the ghetto is achieved by the spreading of the word itself. The word *ghetto* has become a rallying symbol: From the self-designation used by rap groups in the interethnic working-class suburbs of France to the urban street gangs in Abidjan and the self-settled African migrant camps in the forests of Morocco near the Spanish border, *ghetto* is the distinctive personal name of an immediate response to being cast aside, of survival that is organized on the spot.

Notes

1. Later in the chapter, I return to the ambivalence of asylum, on the one hand, as a policy of hospitality as described here and, on the other hand, as a place and institution of confinement.

2. A detailed analysis of these encampments, as well as monographs on several refugee camps and an analysis of the worldwide humanitarian network, can be found in Agier (2010).

3. See UNHCR (2007); Amnesty International (2008); Agier (2010).

4. The migrants' experience of the permanence of the Sangatte camp was the subject of an investigation by Smaïn Laacher (2002), who, among others, played an important role in disclosing the phenomenon of camps of foreigners in Europe to the world of charitable organizations as well as to social science researchers. Among the works that publicized the Sangatte camp at this time, the text and photographs of Jacqueline Salmon (2002) should be mentioned. Numerous demonstrations led by activists and intellectuals followed the public controversy around the Sangatte "camp" (in official terms it was a Red Cross "humanitarian emergency reception and housing center") and its violent closure in late 2002 by Nicolas Sarkozy, then the minister of the interior of the French government. This action underscored the government's determination to evacuate, expel, and in general render invisible exiles and potential asylum seekers and immigrant workers. During this same sequence of political events at the beginning of 2003, MIGREUROP, a network of agencies that watch migration, borders, and camps in Europe (http://www.migreurop.org/), and the scientific network TERRA (Works, Studies, and Research on Refugees and Asylum, http://www.reseau-terra.eu/) were created.

5. The term *tolerated* is the official designation for the symbolic "no-man's-land" status of the Chechen exiles in Poland, who are neither integrated nor expelled, just tolerated and held in detainment centers.

6. This case and other similar ones are described and analyzed in Agier (2010).

7. The "returnees" were refugees who had settled in Guinea during the war and were repatriated in Sierra Leone by the UNHCR, often collectively and against their will.

8. For an architectural study of the habitat of the favelas, see Drummond (1981); for a historical synthesis of the favelas and their representations in Brazil, see Valladares (2006).

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9. Our knowledge about this terrain is frequently updated by the studies of the political and social dynamics of favelas that are conducted regularly. On political forms in the favela in Recife, see Vidal (1998). Christophe Brochier (2009) addresses the relationship between school and the favelados. On the relationship between the favelados in Rio and violence, see the edited collection of works in Machado da Silva (2008).

10. For a critical analysis of "the reality of the constructed reality" through knowledge and power and its distance from the "world" as it runs its course (what I call here the chaos of the world), see Boltanski (2009).

11. My field investigations of these camps date from 2000 and were the subject of Agier (2002).

12. A "sector" is a group of several blocks or clusters. There are about ten per camp, and the administration appoints two representatives for each sector, a man and a woman.

13. On the urbanity of the Palestinian camps, see Doraï (2006), Bulle (2007) and Seren (2004).

14. Zygmunt Bauman (2002) explores an increasing extraterritoriality on a planetary scale. A discussion of the meaning of places in the context of displacement and refuge can be found in Malkki (1995).

15. See "Heterotopias," radio broadcasts on France Culture, December 7–21, 1966, reprinted in Foucault (2009, 36).

16. The center on Christmas Island opened in late 2007 and has 1,400 spots.

17. Recent research shows a rise in the use of "prison for poor people" in the United States and prison for undesirables in France; there is more and more talk in these two countries of "confining" and setting people apart outside of the penal framework strictly speaking (Wacquant 2009b; Combessie 2009).

18. Liberation movements of all different kinds have been born in camps—for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) or the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) for the Tutsi resistance in Rwanda.

19. For Marc Augé (1992), the "anthropological place" is characterized by the fact that a given space is the referent and the medium of a memory, an identity, and a group of relations.

20. *Translator's note:* The author uses the term *ban-lieu*: *lieu* means "place" and *ban* is from the word *banir* ("banish"). The term for "suburb" in French is *la banlieue*, and that is where ghetto-forms are observed in France. So the author is emphasizing the link between the origin of the word and what it has come to represent in France today.

21. For Wacquant (2008), the relation to the state must be taken into account in order to understand how the ghetto can be defined. On the *ban-lieu*, or place of banishment, see Agamben (1997). For the relation between the anthropology of the urban margins and the anthropology of the margins of the state, see Das and Pool (2004) and Agier (2009).

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