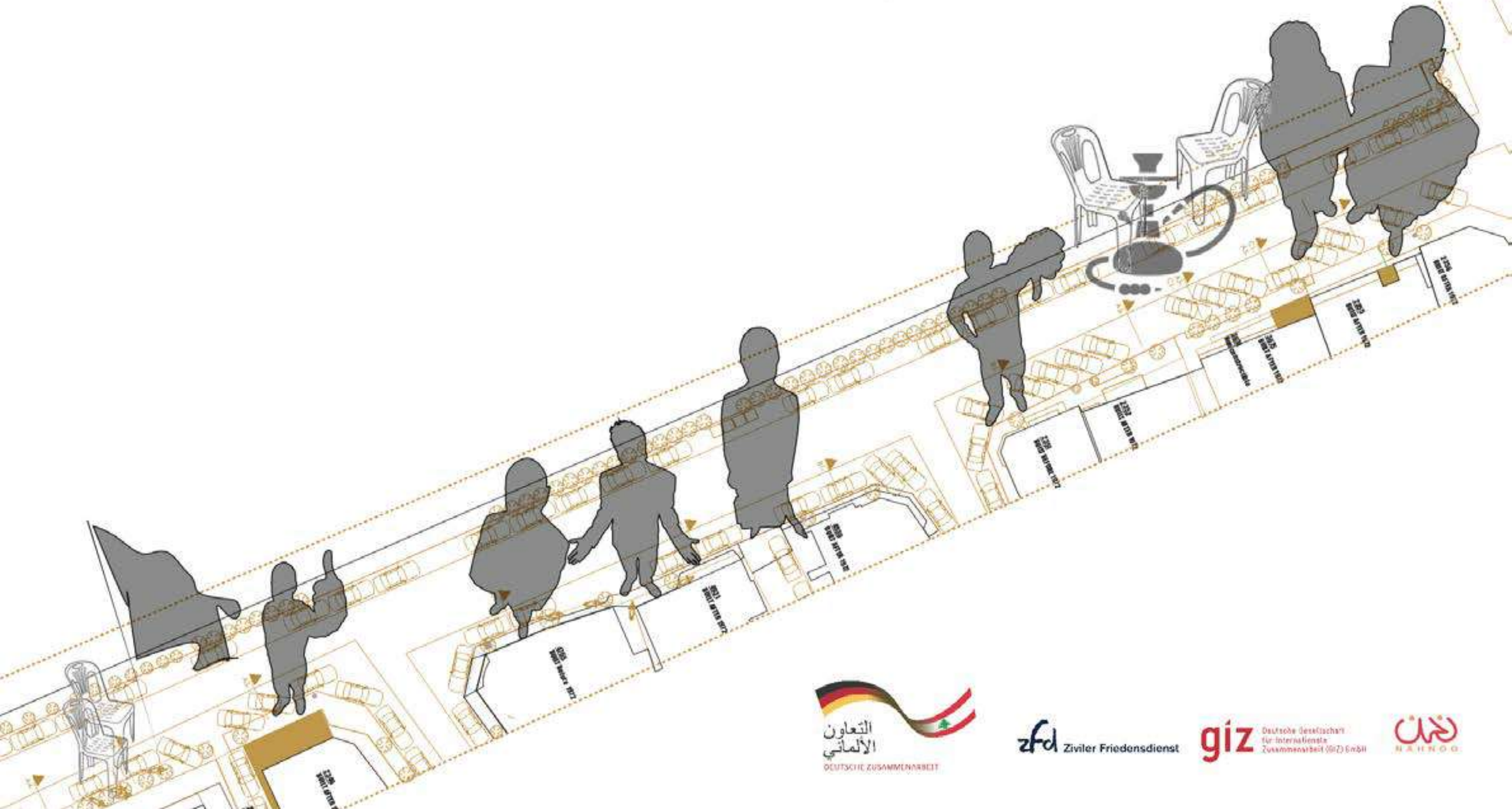# From the Common to the Public; From the Public to the Common

The socio-spatial production of public spaces in Tariq el Jdideh

From the Common to the Public; From the Public to the Common

The socio-spatial production of public space in Tariq el Jdideh

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NAHNOO

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

While the question of public space appears as the main concern of urban planners, designers and architects, it is also of ideological and theoretical interest to researchers from social science disciplines like urban sociology, geography and political science (Bordes, 2006; Bess, 2006). Public space is an integral part of any city or neighborhood's urban tissue and is often seen as the correlation between, on the one hand, a physically-defined space (e.g. garden, corniche, street, etc.), and, on the other hand, the social practices occurring in, beside or in relation to this space. However, this framework takes broader dimensions, since public space is a part of the political sphere through which citizens negotiate and exercise their civic rights, guaranteed and protected by national and local laws (Hulbert, 2009).

Much of the literature in western schools of thought defines public space according to its officially denominated status (e.g. public, private, sacred, secular, natural, artificial, etc.). This is contested by scholars working on Mediterranean contexts, who stress the need to focus on social practices, rather than status, when defining public space[1] (Davie, 2007, Fuccaro, 2016).

The context of Beirut, a city of dichotomies and dualities (Mermier, 2015), further complicates the existing public space framework.

The first dichotomy is at the level of the social understanding of the concept of citadinity: Part of Beirut's residents consider themselves as "the real urban folk", the descendants of the seven families of the Medina[2]. That said, the majority of the city's residents are descendants of waves of rural migration[3] and remain stigmatized despite their longstanding presence in the capital. They are described as "those who cannot adapt to urban life" (Harb, 2006; Rustom, 2013; Picard, 2014; Mermier, 2015) or to public space (Kastrissianakis, 2015). The second dichotomy lies in the numerous communal and cultural segregations that consider the city as a succession of territorialities and socio-political fiefs, separated either by relatively mixed neighborhoods or

heavy urban infrastructure like roads or main public spaces, thus affecting the unanimity and the identity of the latter spaces (Wehbe, Forthcoming 2018, Kastrissianakis, 2015). This dichotomy affects the way inhabitants portray their city in general, fostering imaginary beliefs and prejudice that become part of the popular discourse, which, in turn, creates a large gap between urban reality and urban representation (Davie, 2007, Kastrissianakis, 2015).
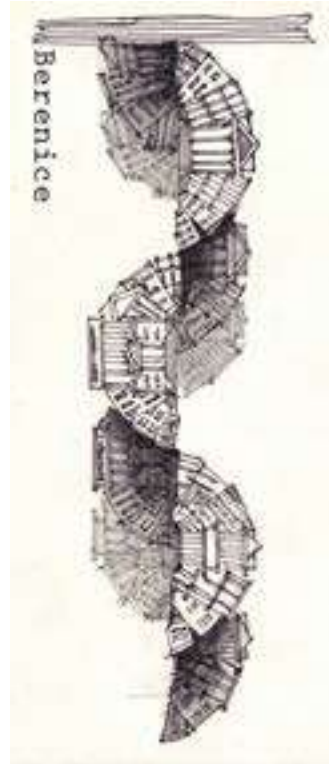

Figure00- Anastasia, Cities and Desire, the invisible Cities. Source: https://karlomongaya.wordpress.com/2014/08/02/exploring-calvinos-invisible-cities/

The third dichotomy is at the level of urban governance. On the one hand, formality and informality coexist in all aspects of urban life, especially in the provision of public and infrastructural services (Verdeil, 2017). On the other hand, the local government electoral system, not only in Beirut but throughout Lebanon, divides the city dwellers between those who vote and those who cannot vote for their daily urban context of living, compromising the ability of most inhabitants to influence the main aspects of their daily urban life[4].

One additional factor that further complicates not only the definition of public space but also ways to address it in Beirut, is that of existing urban dualities (Mermier, 2015). Following the Civil War, Beirut's urban expansion transformed from monocentric (around the traditional city-center), to polycentric, where each new center had its own facilities and infrastructure in the form of re-

peated malls and popular souks. This metamorphosis affected the unanimity of public space.

This study aims to speak to the following questions:
1. How are our behaviors, conceptions and attachments towards certain public spaces built?
2. How and why have main public spaces been marginalized and compromised by the "artisanal" form of public spaces, which are interrelated and pivot around sidewalk, and how have such spaces been spatially produced?
3. How is the general public's rhetoric or discourse with regard to public space shaped? And how can we understand the inner dynamics between citizens and socio-political stakeholders with regard to the decision-making process and to discourse-shaping?
4. What kind of change should be sought and how can said change be achieved?

In this study, the scope of places designated as 'public space' is wide. This includes the infrastructural public spaces governed by local government such as parks, gardens, sports facilities and, most importantly, the public domain (streets and sidewalks), considered the main feature of the city's livability. The study also examines third spaces, including coffee shops, bookshops, meeting halls and educational and sacred spaces, which are completely private (Mehta & Jennifer, 2010).

Taking into consideration the complexity of Beirut's context, this study will adopt a multi-disciplinary, trifold approach: first, apprehending the social construction of public space using urban sociology concepts and tools; second, understanding how public space is spatially and morphologically socialized by adopting urban regulations and urban design tools as a prism of analysis; and, finally, addressing public space governance, collaboration and the power balance between stakeholders, while employing the implements of political sociology.

This study will focus on Tariq el-Jdideh area, which is an important case study that can shed light on the aforementioned questions: First, main public spaces exist within and along its urban fabric (such as Horsh Beirut and the Beirut municipal stadium). Second, Tariq el-Jdideh has a high urban density with a relatively poor and vulnerable population, whose environment and livability conditions require improvement. Third, Tariq el Jdideh is perceived as a fief for one community in Beirut and is thus an ideal case study to observe the impact of territorialization on the use and the production of public space. Simultaneously, Tariq el-Jdideh has the highest percentage of voters in local government elections, making it a highly important region for most stakeholders. Fourth, its diverse urban fabric is composed of a

mosaic of buildings from different eras, which are crucial to study the impact of urban mutation on the creation and function of public spaces. Finally, this neighborhood has recently been under the spotlight, due to a planned major urban intervention by the Municipality that might affect one of its most important landmarks, the Municipal Stadium (figure 04). Other interventions are also currently underway in the park to the neighborhood's east (figure, 04).

After giving a brief historical overview on Tariq el-Jdideh and breaking down the methodology employed, this study will be divided into three main chapters, each featuring a conclusion and a set of recommendations. The Municipal Stadium is reviewed at the end as a comprehensive case study using all three research axes. The first chapter will tackle the social dimension of the use of public space, addressing behaviors, reflections and concerns of Tariq el-Jdideh's residents. The second chapter will tackle the spatial construction of public space, presenting the findings of the mapping exercise that was conducted, while highlighting the different categories of public space. Finally, the third chapter will address the que stion of decision-making, while developing a multi-scalar stakeholders' cartography showing collaboration and subordination relations between them.

The recommendations of this study revolve around one central idea: How can we initiate change regarding the access to public space? A three-pillars strategy is proposed: first, investing in social potential, especially the youth's capacities; second, learning from socio-spatial practices in view of proposing appropriate spatial interventions; and, finally, proposing steps that influence the urban agenda of uninvested stakeholders, while empowering invested but weak ones.

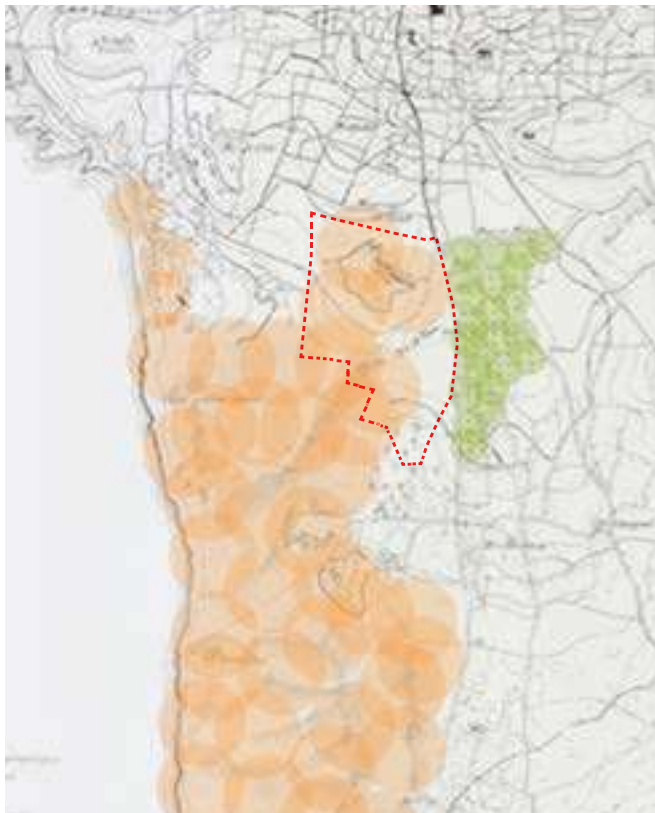Figure 01- Map of tariq el Jdideh localisation in Beirut

Figure 02-Map of Beirut in 1920 showing the implementation of the actual Tariq el-Jdideh limit in the natural landscape of that time. ©IFPO cartography as Base plus author interpretations

Tariq el Jdideh

Tariq el Jdideh (TEJ) forms part of the final urban expansion belt around municipal Beirut. Despite early records of construction dating back to the 20s and 30s, the very first important construction wave occurred in the 40s, when a large number of families left the first expansion belt, notably from Bachoura and Basta (figure 01), and settled in the area known at the time as the Horch, near the pine forest (CDR, 2005) (figure02). The second important construction wave was triggered by the foundation of the Beirut Arab University (BAU) in the late 60s, along with a high concentration of Palestinians who left the adjacent refugee camps (CDR,

2005). According to an interviewed elderly person from the neighborhood, Palestinians at that time were mostly investing what is now known as the Fekhani area in Tariq el Jdideh (figure04).

The neighborhood takes its name, which literally translates to "the new road", from the Tariq el Jdideh road (figure, 04) that was executed in the 40s, linking the Sand (Raml) Prison (now the parking lot of the BAU) and the Jewish neighborhood (now the school of Aicha Om Al Moueminin) (CDR, 2005). Elders describe how the neighborhood was a part of the city's landscape, with the sand dunes located to its west (figure, 02) and the pine forest to its east (figure, 02). This relationship with nature has forged traditional social practices that are inseparable from the surroundings in which they occurred. These practices are performed in special occasions like religious and cultural meetings, or weekly occasions like the Thïran[5].

Today, this neighborhood is among the densest in the city, with a high rate of poverty and a vulnerable population. Despite its clear physical delimitations by heavy road infrastructure (figure, 04), its urban fabric is segregated into sub-neighborhoods of varying social status: poor, enclosed neighborhoods like the Tamliss; middle-class areas like the one to the west of the Municipal Stadium (MS); and students' compounds concentrated around the BAU. Sabra Street is a commercial hub for extremely poor inhabitants, Afif el Tibeh Street is a hub for textile commerce and Soleimani Street is seen as the core of Tariq el Jdideh's urban and commercial dynamic (figure, 04).

Team and Methodology

The research was conducted by a team of ten volunteers, one research assistant, and the main researcher, who is the author of this study (annex, 01). The volunteers were divided into three main subgroups, tackling the three previously highlighted thematics. A total of two two-day workshops and numerous work meetings were conducted to initiate volunteers on research methodology and work with them on establishing research objectives, questions and a methodology specific for each group. All three groups adopted purposive sampling in data collection, with each group selecting their own sampling criteria[6]. The first group, tackled the social construction of public space (Chapter01), and conducted two surveys entitled "Using Public Space" and "Not Using Public Space" respectively (Pasaogullar, N.& Doratli, 2004). This separation was crucial, as the two concepts are not classical oppositions in social behaviors, but rath-

er conceived through different social and cultural mechanisms, which requires differentiation for better understanding. The surveys included closed-ended questions and a list of open-ended questions in order to conduct engaging, semi-structured interviews. The second group looked at the spatial construction of public space (Chapter02), conducting detailed field observations to produce a complete mapping of two streets in Tariq el-Jdideh: the Municipal Stadium Street and el Birr wal Ihssan Street (figure, 04). This choice was motivated, at first, by the intention of tackling part of the core of what is recognized as Tariq el-Jdideh (figure, 04, cognitive delimitations in the neighborhood); and second, by the desire to tackle an adjacent part of a main public space, which is the Municipal Stadium. Detailed field observations were conducted, in addition to cartography consultation and construction.

The team conducted semi-structured interviews with most of the merchants, workers of various existing facilities and local figures in both streets.

The third group, tackling stakeholders' coordination and subordination (Chapter 03), started their field work by surveying the inhabitants in order to, first, investigate the relationship between the local population and existing stakeholders and, second, set a consolidated list of stakeholders to interview at a later stage. A deep, semi-structured interview was conducted with a number of stakeholders, in addition to field observations during activities or events organized by stakeholders relevant to the research. During such events, interviews were conducted with both participants and organizers. Finally, it is worth noting that the data collected by the three groups was systematically and constantly passed from one group to another.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Overall, the teams conducted 187 surveys with passers-by, 10 semi-structured interviews with local merchants and occupants of ground floors of the two studied streets and 12 deep semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders (annex ,02)[7]. Starting with the different surveys, the majority of respondents were middle-aged (40%) to young (33%), whereas people above 55 years old constituted 22% of the sample. Despite the effort to find a balance between genders, the percentage of females interviewed

(37%) remained fewer than males. The latter point indicates the lack of female presence in public spaces, which is further analyzed in the study. Most of the interviewees were related to current activities in TEJ, mostly the commercial ones. However, there was a high presence of students (22%), both from high schools and the BAU, and workers (14%), either in the construction field and they were mostly Syrians or working in different low remunerated jobs like cleaning services or other occupations.

Housewives also represented an important category of the interviewees, reaching about 22%. The extreme majority were Lebanese, with a slight presence of Syrians (8%) and Palestinians (4%)[8].

Figure 03- Sample characteristics: Gender, Age Range, Occupation and Nationality

Figure 04-Mapping of Tariq el-Jdideh public spaces, facilities and infrastructure

CONSTRUCTIONS OF BEHAVIORS, REFLECTIONS AND CONCERNS

« Comprendre [les espaces publics] comme relevant d'une architecture sensible dans laquelle se déroulent circulation, communication, animation faites de rituels d'accueil, de contrôle, de rencontre, c'est les voir comme la coproduction d'un bien commun public, en théorie accessible et praticable par tous. » (Sigaud, 2009, p. 273)

Henry Lefebvre (2000a) refers to the production of space as the spatialization of social activities and practices. He adds that the social space is a pure product of the society in which the space remains the objectification of the social and, subsequently, of the mental. In his famous book, The Production of Space (1974), Lefebvre described space on three conceptual levels: the perceived space (l'espace perçu); the lived space (l'espace vécu) and the conceived space (l'espace conçu) (Lefebvre, 2000b). This triplicity is reflected in the relationship between inhabitants, different stakeholders, and the space they inhabit (Lefebvre, 2000b, p.40), which, in turn, affects how the relationship with public spaces is established and defined. (Sigaud, 2009). The perceived space is related to how citizens interact

with the space in their daily lives (e.g. space of work, of recreation, etc.) and is reflected in their social practices, behaviors and habits. The lived space, refers to the "space of representation" (Lefebvre, 2000b, p.41), the space that is lived by citizens through images and representations that are interpreted through a cultural and societal lens (e.g. a space associated with stigma). And finally, conceived space refers to how the space is imagined and interpreted by urban planners, architects and public stakeholders. This chapter focuses on the parallels between perceived space, i.e. the perceived public space, exploring why and how and which public space residents of TEJ use; and the lived public space, where the focus is on understanding how prejudice, popular discourse and socio-political segregation influence the use of public space, pushing some residents of TEJ out of certain areas. Before proceeding to the findings regarding the perceived and lived public spaces in TEJ, it was first important to obtain a general overview on how TEJ's geographic boundaries are imagined by its residents, in order to grasp the various understandings of space that exist among the population in question.

During the surveys, residents were asked to define the spatial limits[9] of TEJ, which resulted in three cognitive delimitations (figure, 04). The first delimitation does not include the BAU nor the Cola Intersection. The second delimitation takes into consideration the heavy road infrastructure around that area, but with some overflow at the park side, considering the Kasskass Fields[10] as part of TEJ. The third cognitive limit, meanwhile, includes Sabra Street and Ared Jaloul along the Chatila Palestinian Camp (figure, 04).
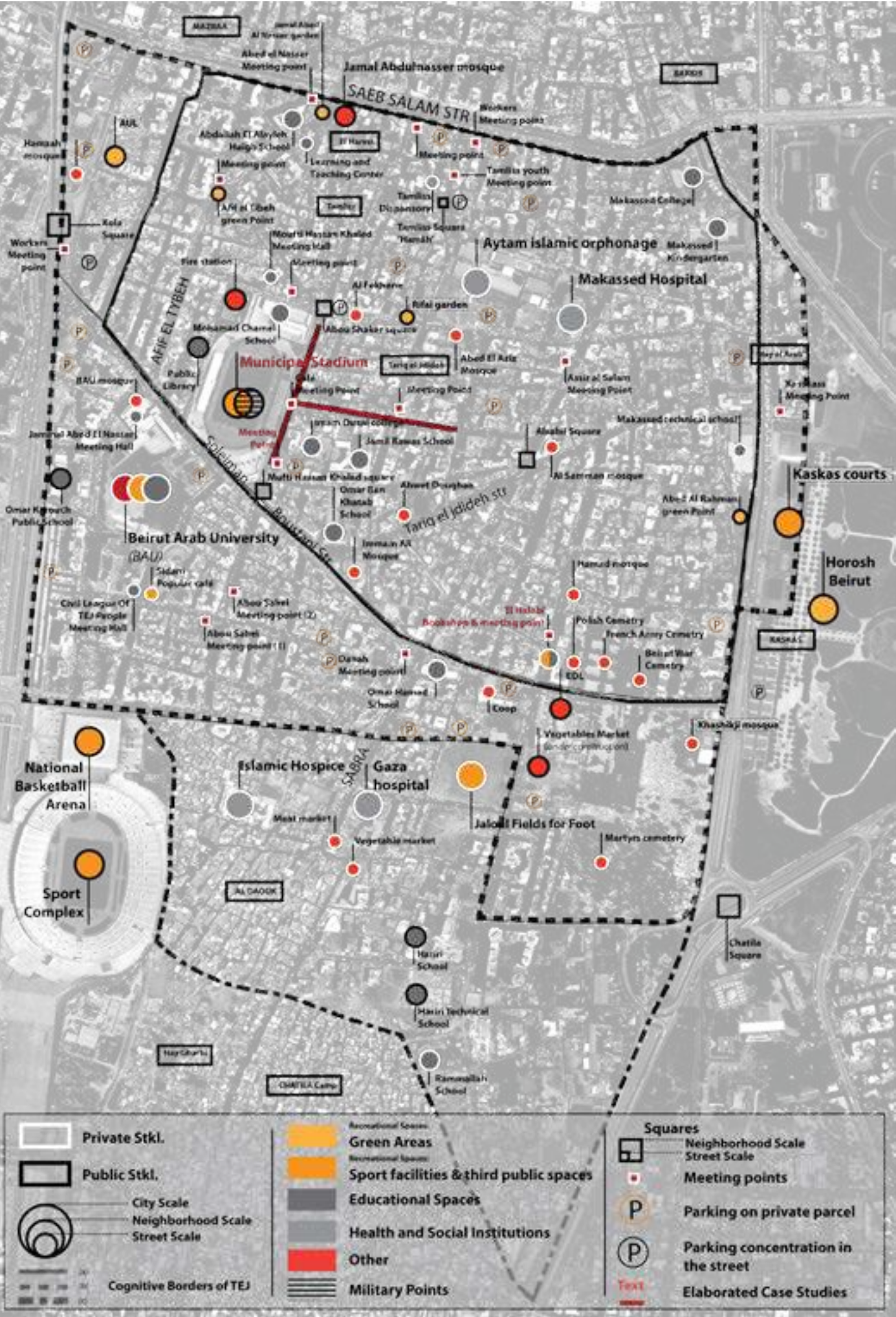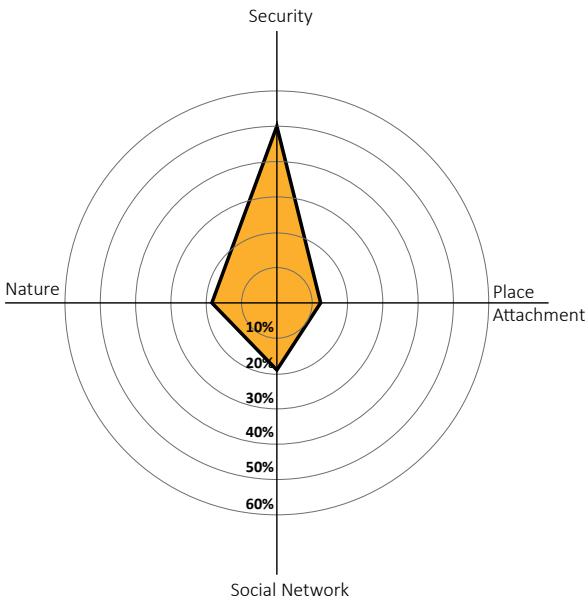

Figure 05-Socio-spatial features encouraging the interviewee to use public spaces
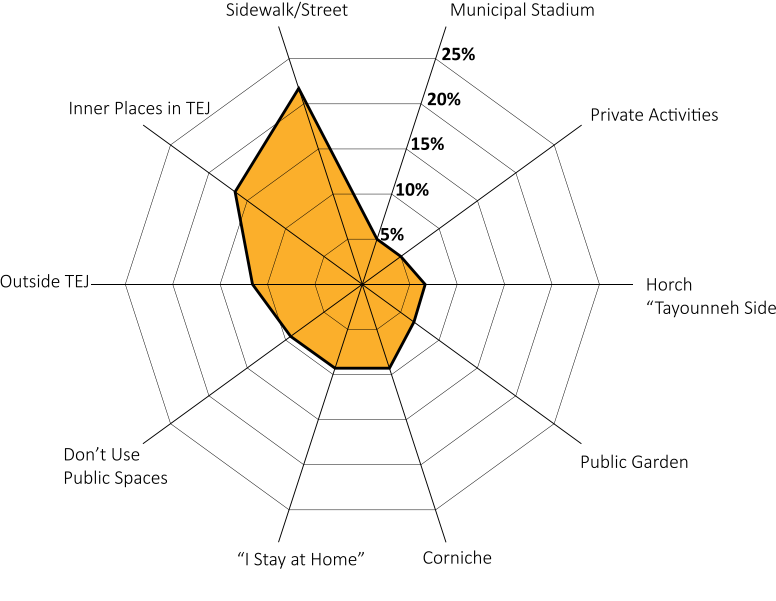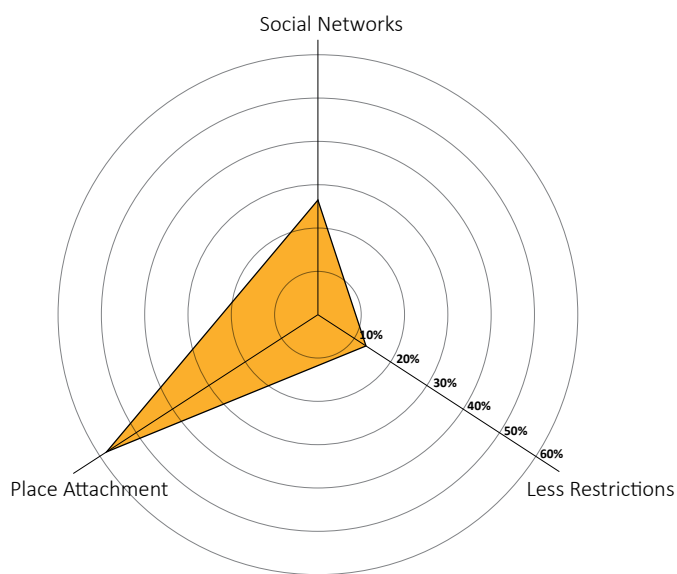

Figure 06- Used public spaces

Figure 07- Why interviewees favored sidewalk as public space

The analysis began with the following questions: First, what spatial or social factors encourage inhabitants to use public space and which is the most used public space and why?

Safety was the most important reason encouraging interviewees to use a public space (figure, 05)[11]. When asked to define further "the safety" that encourages them to be in a public space, most of the answers were framed in a social and cultural reading of the city in which a safe place is a place "I am attached to", "a place I'm used to", a place within "our neighborhood" and belongs to "our" social and cultural identity". A minority of interviewees defined safety in terms of physical measures such as lighting or a place where kids can play, as is the case in the corniche for some, or the Beirut Waterfront open area that is kid and bike friendly. (figure, 05). Nature was the second incentive to use a public space. The majority of respondents mentioned by way of example places outside TEJ, like the corniche, or locations outside Beirut they consider "public-space friendly, like Tyre in the south, or the Lebanese mountains. (figure, 05). When it comes to the most used public space, it is by far the sidewalk (figure, 06). For the interviewees, it is a polyvalent space par excellence. It is "our daily place to meet", "the extension of my business", the place where "I can have spatial control" or simply the place where "I play all the time". In other words, sidewalks are the core of daily life in TEJ.

However, some interviewees prefer to go outside TEJ, seeking places with perceived "social standing" to escape "the image of the neighborhood" (Atherson, 2012); "I would rather go to a more appropriate space than TEJ", was a response that one interviewee gave. Others invoked the gender dimension as an obstacle: for a girl hanging out, "it is more acceptable to move

within the corniche, for instance, rather than within TEJ". In other words, the urban stigmatization discourse about TEJ, describing it as a "degraded, closed popular area", whether this viewpoint is adopted by residents of the neighborhood or by outsiders, is in reality affecting the level of "place attachment" in residents, who look to leave TEJ in search of a space deemed more appropriate in public discourse (Wacquant, et al,2014). We then focused on the reasons pushing residents away from public spaces: Three main reasons were given as to why families make the decision to not use a public space (figure, 08): the socio-spatial features of the public space (40%), social factors (31%) and institutional/structural factors (31%).

Traffic and noise pushed users away from spaces, especially main public spaces like gardens and squares. This was systematically repeated by the interviewees, even by those emphasizing the importance of sidewalks (where there is no insulation from noise at all), who preferred to use the ones in secondary and tertiary streets to avoid noise and circulation density (pedestrian and cars). This argument was also used by people in enclosed sub-neighborhoods like Tamliss, which looks more like a village within the city. The residents of this neighborhood consider the relative quiet of their street as an asset, which, in turn, enables them to use nearby public spaces – namely the harâh (main unplanned square) – to a greater extent than res-

Figure 08- "Doughan" Coffe Shop © The author, May 2018

idents in neighboring, noisy streets. (Salomon, 2007). The second element that dissuaded respondents from using a public space is its reputation and any social stigmas that surround it. Most of those who adopted this point of view described certain public spaces as "no-go zones" like Ramlet el Baydah (the public beach of Beirut) or the park, which are described by some as places where "immoral activities" can occur, and it would be "improper for me, as a woman, to go

there" (Shaw and Hudson, 2009). When asked to provide a concrete example, interviewees often lacked any, which reveals the impact of prejudice and the imaginary popular discourse on the use of public space.

The second group of reasons (figure,08) that impact the use of public space are social factors, which segregate the space along cultural and political lines. The public space, in this case, becomes the platform on which segregation, xenophobia or minority exclusion are crystalized (Wacquant, et al, 2009; Kastrissianakis, 2012; Wehbe, forthcoming 2019). For instance, the prejudice and preconceived notions regarding the "other" that might be encountered in main public spaces like the park and gardens, and discourse of "the different other", "the threatening other" or "the immoral other", were the most recurrent arguments employed by interviewees (Delage, 2009; Fuccaro, 2016; Kastrissianakis, 2015). This "other" is perceived as a

member of the lower social class, the delinquent class or simply a stranger, based on his/her ethnicity or nationality (figure, 08). For instance, for most of the interviewees, and following the mass influx of refugees into Lebanon, the presence of Syrians in public spaces is seen as a sort of "expropriation of these spaces". One resident defined the space's "legitimate users" as Lebanese, noting: "these spaces are no longer for us". The third group of factors is an institutional and structural one (figure,08). This category affects the daily decisions of citizens of using or not using public spaces. For instance, military presence for security reasons in and around public spaces constituted the second most important reason for not frequenting said areas (figure, 08). Respondents confirmed that military presence affects the image of the space, transforming it into a closed space, rather than being an open and welcoming one. This viewpoint was adopted by respondents regardless of their nationality or social standing.
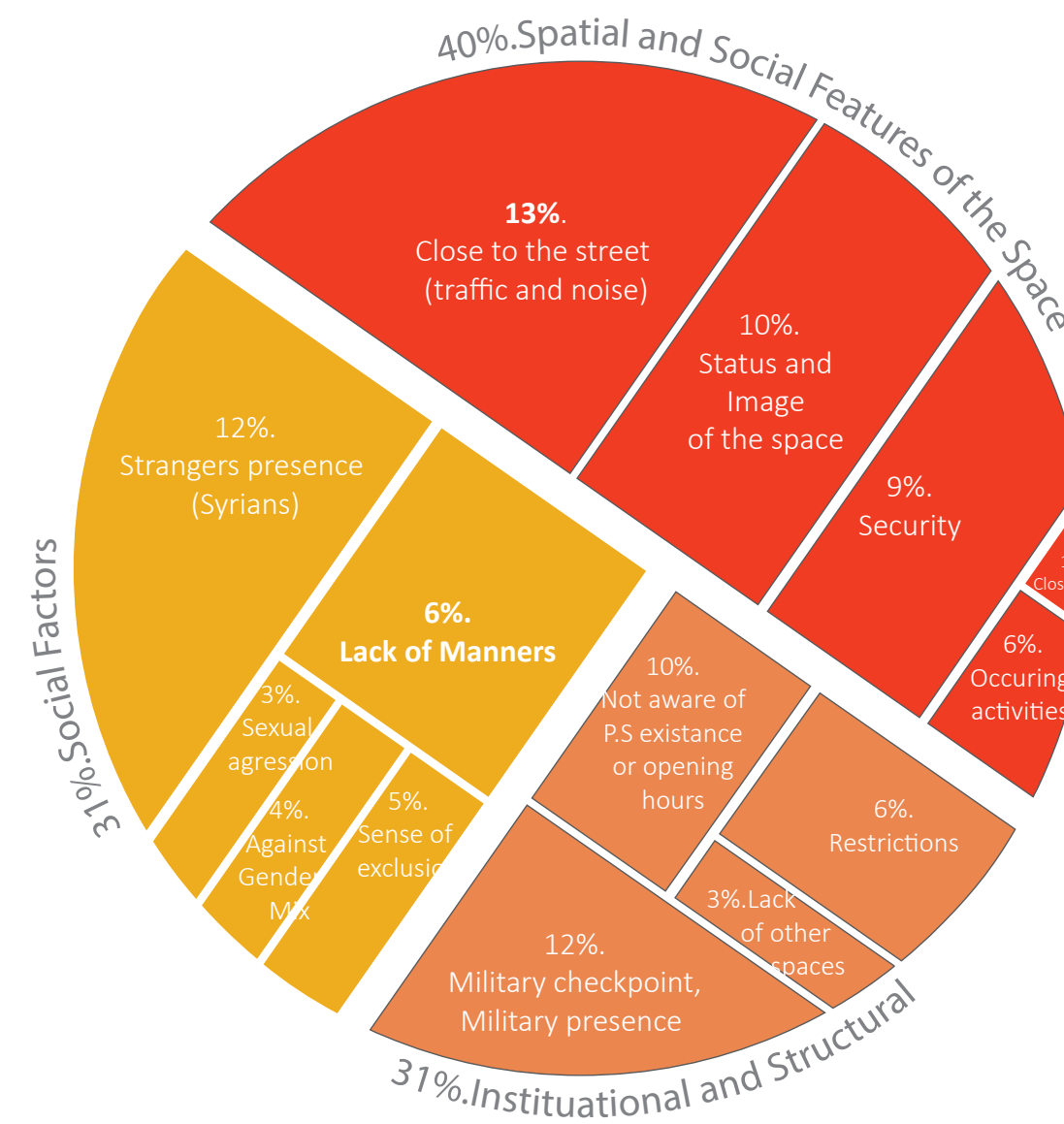

Figure 09- Socio-spatial features discouraging interviewees from using public spaces
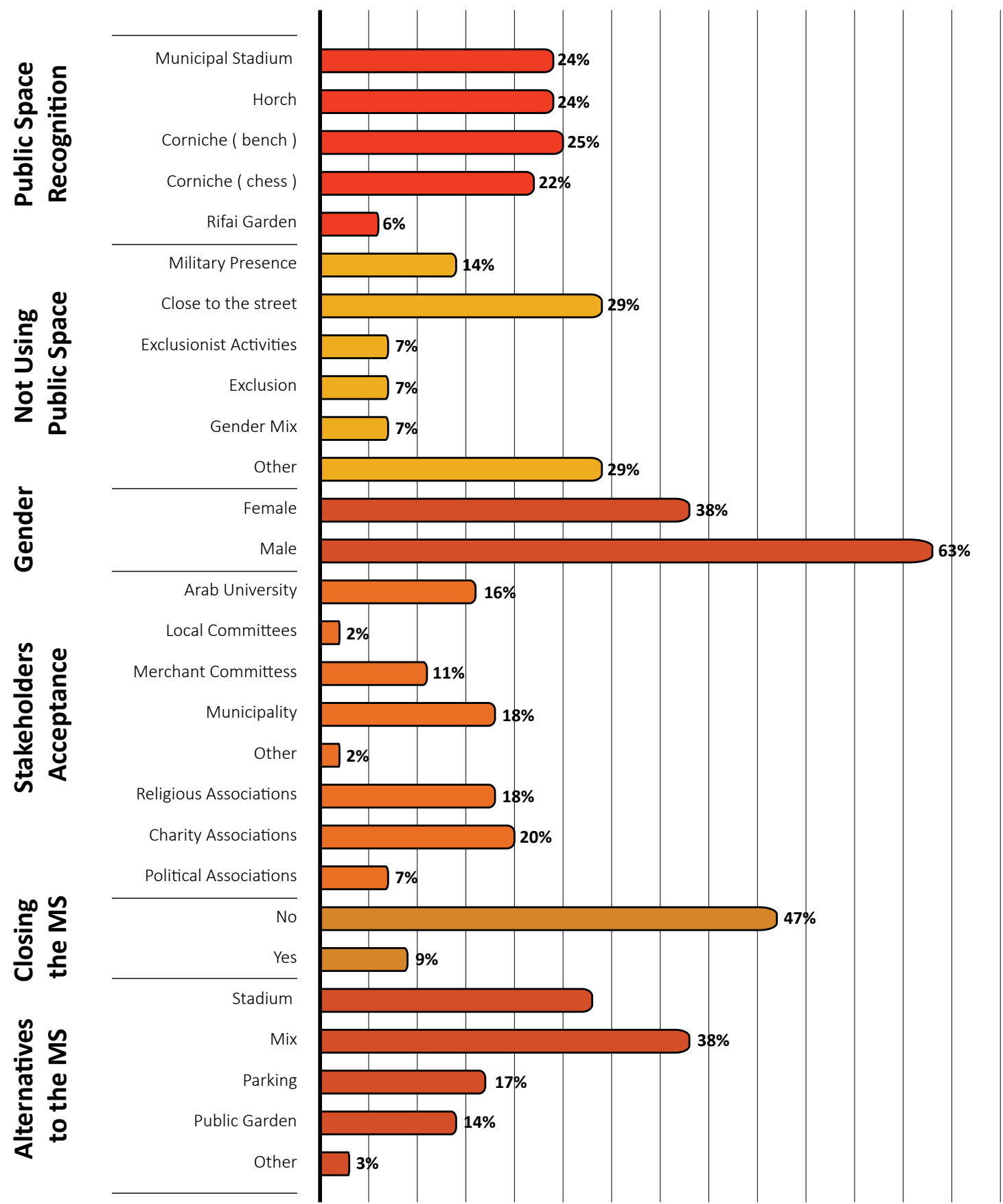
Figure 10- How the youth of Tariq el Jdideh perceive issues related to public spaces

Conclusion & Recommendations

 In conclusion, the choice to use or not use a public space is not always a needs-based decision. It is highly correlated to more complicated social dynamics like existing sociopolitical segregation and social and urban stigmatization (Davie, 2007, Fuccaro, 2016; Harb, 2006). A public space is an inherent part of the public sphere where citizenship, the right to the city, belonging and spatial identity are negotiated on a daily basis. Based on the aforementioned findings, four main axes of interventions can be recommended: first, have the municipality of Beirut implement a wide communication campaign to inform the public about the availability of public spaces as well as their opening hours, etc.; second, decrease the visibility of military and armed presence around public spaces; Counter the stigmatizing discourse of certain public spaces; Implement activities that attract people to public spaces.

The importance of stereotypes and common discourses was very clear, oftentimes preventing inhabitants from using public spaces (Niksic, 2006). In order to provide more in-depth recommendations in this regard and the kind of activities that would attract people to public spaces, it was important to understand how inhabitants define a public space. Participants were asked the question, "what is a public space for you?" and were given a set of answers to choose from. The reason for this close-ended question was to consolidate choices, in order to identify the strategies that could be proposed, which should be applied in the short term and which should be implemented in the long run. The below list represents the proposed choices. What is a public space for you?

a) Space of sharing;
b) A space representing the image of the local governance;
c) A facility for the adjacent neighborhood;
d) A place where services can be found.

The majority of respondents defined public space as a space where they can find services. For them, it is not a space to sit, but rather to eat, to find entertainment and activities for kids or sport activities for adults (Davie, 2007). Others mentioned that modern technologies should also be available in public spaces – e.g. free Wi-Fi access, open-air cinema or other forms of media. The provision of said services reflect a short-term measure that would not only improve the image of certain public spaces but would also introduce other practices and behaviors. The final recommendation is based on the second most popular definition of public space that respon-

dents selected, which defined it as a " space of sharing". The potentiality of a shared space remains highly compromised by the aforementioned social criteria that see inhabitants trying to segregate spaces. It is therefore recommended to work on education and communication programs that change existing perceptions of public spaces in TEJ and encourage the intermingling of its residents. A possible long-term measure would be to partner with schools and sports clubs in order to equip the youth with the necessary skills and know-how to become drivers of change.

Part of the respondents pointed to lack of communication as a reason for not going to certain public spaces. The simple fact that they are not aware of the opening hours or even about the existence of certain places is an important reason for not using them. They placed the blame largely on the Municipality of Beirut, noting that its urban management and public policies do not prioritize taking care of public spaces. Others stated, for example, that "if the Municipality stops managing the [Municipal] Stadium, the latter will become a welcoming place for everyone".
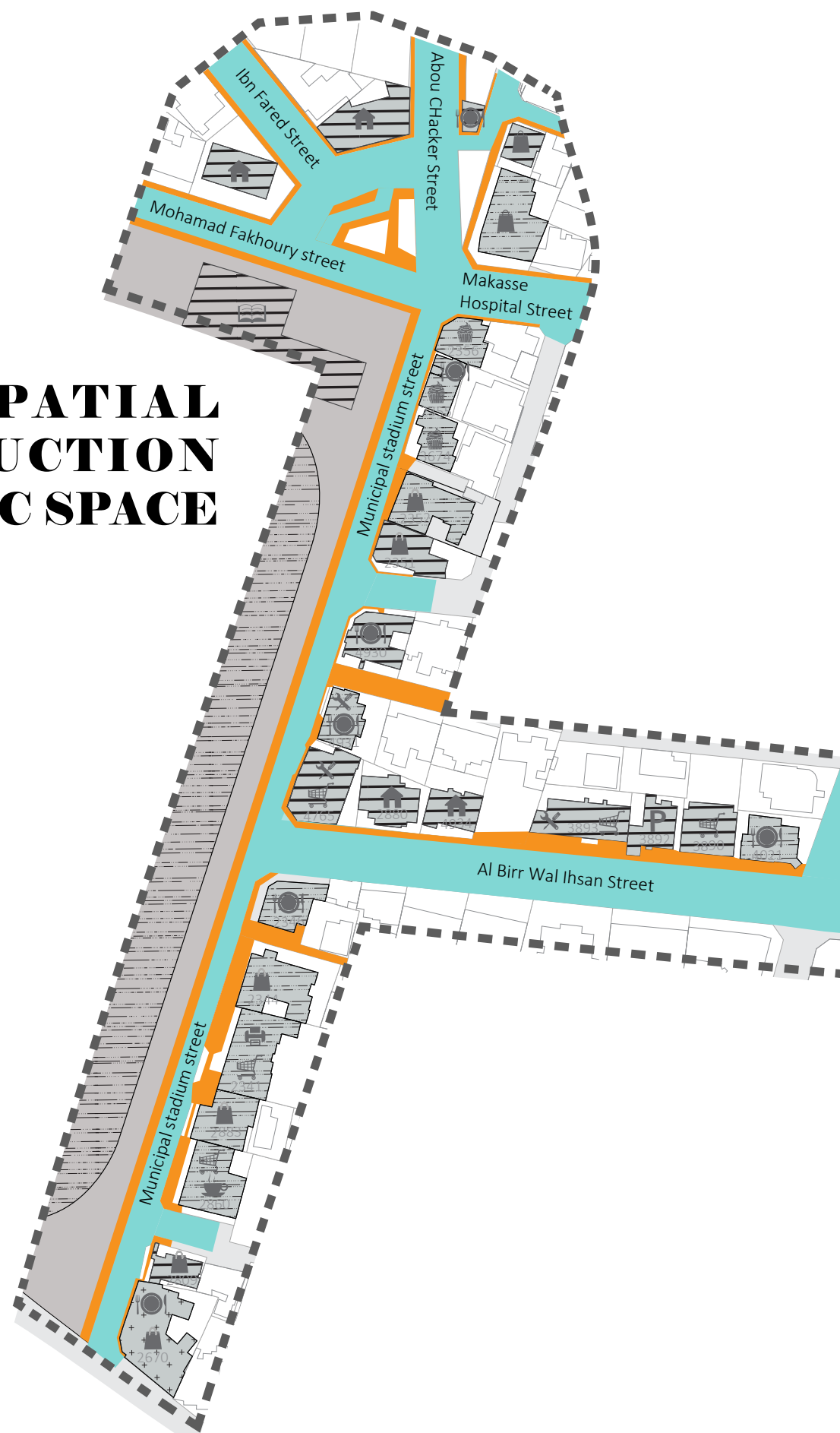
Figure 11- Mapping of public domain activities in a secondary str. (Municipal Stadium Str.) and a tertiary str. (Al Birr Wal lhssan str.), in relation to the activities occurring on the ground floor.

CHAPTER 02

# SOCIO-SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE

"la ville est faite d'espaces publics et d'espaces privés qui hiérarchisent à la fois les formes et les conduits. Cette distinction est culturelle parce qu'elle ne déploie pas de la même manière dans toutes les sociétés" (Sigaud, 2009, p. 272)

Despite the fact that TEJ's residents do not frequent main public spaces such as the park, the Municipal Stadium and the several existing gardens regularly, they invent alternative spaces for recreational or commercial use on a daily basis. These informal forms of public space (Benfeil, 2016; Nicc &Bridges, N.D) are not specific to TEJ or to Beirut, but are part of a broader set of practices that are found in most Middle-Eastern cities (Mady, 2012). These alternative spaces are mainly created on and along the sidewalk (Nyassogo, 2011), profiting, on the one hand, from the lax implementation of urban and architectural laws, and, on the other hand, from a blurred distinction in local urban culture between the notions of 'public realm' and 'private realm' (Segaud, 2009). This section first elaborates on the typologies and main functions of these spaces, tackling their spatial construction and revealing the impact of the area's urban morphology and various architectural laws on said construction. Finally, this section explores the privatization process that impacted alternative spaces, underscoring its various typologies and mechanisms.

Informal Public Spaces: Mapping and Categorization

A detailed field survey was conducted on two streets in the neighborhood: the Municipal Stadium Street and el Birr wal Ihssan Street (Figure, 04; 11). The aim of this exercise was to understand how the public domain (road and sidewalk) is used and exploited by residents and users of the space. These two streets were selected based on several criteria:

Figure 11-a
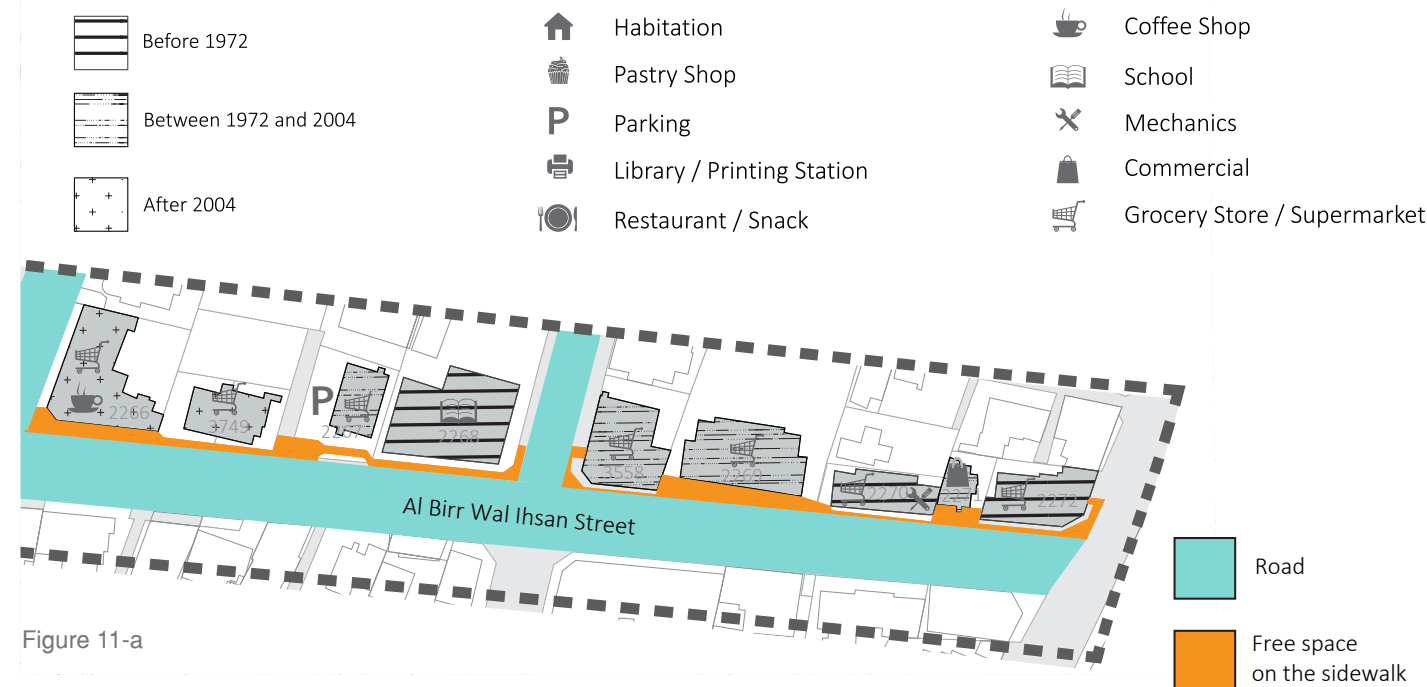
DEFINITIONS & RE-DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS A MEETING POINT?

As their name suggests, meeting points are places for gathering, sitting and discussion. They are polyvalent platforms on the sidewalk that change in form and function as the day progresses, depending on the activity of the street and the residents' lifestyle. Each point is occupied by a certain age group, whether elders, young people or kids. While the main function of meeting points is sitting, other functions include maintaining a shop or guarding the neighborhood. It is worth adding that sitting on the sidewalk is widely practiced in Beirut. That said, not all the sitting points are considered meeting points. To be considered as such, they must be adopted by the population as a reference point and must be well-known as a gathering place for a specific group. The highlighted meeting points in TEJ in this study are: al-Dannah, Abou Sahel (1, 2), the Municipal Stadium Street, Kasskass, Abed el Nasser or Tamliss meeting points (figure, 04).

- The Municipal Stadium Street is adjacent to the Municipal Stadium, and is therefore essential to gain a general understanding of the interaction between a publicly-defined structural space, its direct surroundings and the overall neighborhood.
- The streets link two main squares, Abou Shaker Square to the north and Mufti Khaled Square to the south (figure, 04);
- Along these two streets exists a mix of architectural stock, which enables further understanding of the impact of construction laws and architecture typologies in general on the street and the sidewalk life.
- The streets represent a sample of TEJ's diverse urban tissue where both residential and commercial functions are practiced
- They are situated at the heart of what is imagined and recognized as TEJ by residents (figure, 04).

Many facilities and important nodes exist in the two streets, including schools, mosques, military points the Municipal Stadium, and BAU nearby. One of the main characteristics of middle- to low-class Beiruti neighborhoods' urban tissue is the high livability of their streets and sidewalks (Yazegi, 2007), regardless of whether services and facilities are provided by the public sector. This livability is characterized by a diverse urban fabric on numerous levels and scholars agree on four, main points that link urban diversity to livability (Unknown, N.D; Jacobs: 196):

1) Mixed land use;
2) Small blocks;
3) Buildings from different ages;
4) Sufficient building density.

These are recurrent spatial elements that characterize several neighborhoods in Beirut where livability is exercised daily by the local population enjoying commercial, recreational, educational and cultural spaces all along the streets and sidewalks of their neighborhoods. However, these spaces are also scenes upon which power relations and permanent negotiations between the various local poles, "informally governing" the street economy and the urban space more generally occur. Upon examination, the cartographic data transcription reveals the blurred limit between what is considered public and what is considered private (Segaud, 2009). Indeed, an important percentage of the public domain (i.e. sidewalks and streets) is subject to privatization for commercial, recreational and political needs. In reaction, when the sidewalk is occupied by private functions,

the functions of pedestrians migrate toward the private parcels as shown in many sequences of the streets examined (Nyassogbo, 2011). Two main categories of informal public spaces are distinguished:

a) The independent spatial entity; and
b) The dependent one, which represents the continuity of an existing function in the private domain (built or vacant lands).

The establishment of an independent spatial entity, whether for recreational or commercial use, is highly made possible by the existing urban morphology, especially the wideness of neighboring roads and the presence of surplus land within certain allotments (lôtissements) (Hanafi, et al,2013). This spatial entity often exists on non-constructible surplus land, at crossroads or on wide sidewalks, or simply by occupying part of a wide road. These spaces can take architectural forms, such as tents or single floor constructions (figure, 12, 14). However, the majority of these spaces are open surfaces with some furniture and equipment to mark off the privatization of the public domain. Examples include the basta or improvised chairs on a wide sidewalk or a road corner that represent simple meeting points for youth and elders (refer to figure 04). While both categories — independent and dependent spaces — are used for recreational or commercial use, the first one can also be used to express political and cultural identity (e.g. Sahat Abu Chaker), especially in a city shaped by socio-political segregations.

The second category, as its name indicates, is dependent on the occurring function at the ground level of the space, whether in built or vacant land and/or the building in general. This category represents the majority of these alternative or informal spaces (nearly 80%)[12]. Urban morphology, especially the road network and the cadastral fabric, are important criteria in creating these spaces (Costas, 2011). That said, the type of activity and commercial centrality of the street and the neighborhood in general are the most important factors for dependent spaces. The study revealed that the squat of the sidewalk in commercial contexts depends on the standard of the product sold (figure, 11). For instance, in areas facing food commerce (e.g. mini-market, vegetable commerce, fast food, renowned sweets or fruit and juice stores), or in mechanic shops, café(s), etc., the sidewalk is systematically squatted. Moreover, the more the

trading volume increases, the more the privatization of the public domain is permanent and fixed. However, the more expensive the sold article is, for example clothes or phones, the less likely that squatting exists for commercial use. In addition to that, squatting for commercial use is also non-existent when the commercialized articles are services, as in the case of money exchange points (Western Union…), international phone services provided for immigrants or social services like the office of the area's Mukhtar (figure, 11).

It was clear during the interviews conducted that respondents - benefitting from the use of the space for recreational or commercial purposes- favored privatization because it created alternative public spaces (Rubbin, N.D), whether dependent or independent. In fact, this act is legitimatized – often an auto-appropriated legitimacy – whether vis à vis the direct community or the urban order in general by advancing two arguments: First, "it's facing my private space, so I have the right to benefit from it"; Second, "I", as an "inhabitant" or "we" as "a group having the right to exploit", is a discourse found in the independent category of informal public space, especially in meeting points such as kiosks, tents or open-air sitting areas used for cultural and political purposes.

In both categories, privatizing the public domain serves an informal urban order (Wehbe, forthcoming 2019; Kastrissianakis, 2015), subject to permanent negotiation between the different concerned actors. It starts from pedestrians, merchants, simple inhabitants sitting at the edge of the sidewalk and guardians of buildings, and moves all the way up to local private institutions, political parties and law-enforcement agencies (Wehbe, forthcoming 2019; Kastris-

sianakis, 2015). In other words, this informal urban order occurs after a point of equilibrium is reached, one that finds balance between the local power relationships at the level of the street, sub-neighborhoods and the neighborhood in general (Nicc & Bridge, N.D; Chen, N.D).

For instance, the basta is a good example illustrating the setting of this informal urban order, which generates one type of informal public space in Beirut. Despite the fact that the basta is supposed to be a polyvalent and itinerant element, its mobility is highly limited due to the complicated negotiations that occur over the area used for parking. In practice, once a spot is found to park the basta, it remains there. In fact, the urban tissue in TEJ was mostly built between the 1950s and the 1970s, whereby the ground floor in buildings is in direct contact with the street and often serves as a commercial space. It is very difficult to park in front of these "appropriated" spaces due to merchants' severe objection.

This leaves very few spots available, and those that remain empty are mostly on street corners. The few empty lots tend to be seized and monetized by the most powerful social and political figure in the area, who regulates the existing street economy. As such, the more the exploitable surface is valuable to the street economy, the more complicated and violent the negotiation becomes. For that reason, rents generated by the basta are to be split between its owner, the worker and the dominant local social and political figure[13]. While negotiation over the surfaces exploited by the basta are quite complicated, it is not so much the case for commercial exploitation made by the owners of shops. The latter kind of behavior is well-accepted.

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IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION LAWS ON THE CREATION
OF INFORMAL PUBLIC SPACES


Beirut's urban tissue is, in general, heterogeneous,
consisting of buildings from different time periods
(Ashkar, 1998, Lamy, 2010, 2014). TEJ is no different.
The existing built fabric of this neighborhood is a
result of the many building regulations and laws that
govern/ed Beirut and Lebanon over time (1940, 1954,
1972, 1992, 2005 laws) (Lamy, 2014).

A majority of buildings dates back to the 1950s, 1960s
and 1970s.

In this study, observations were made on the evolu
tion of two legal provi
sions governing the relationship between buildings,
sidewalks and streets in general: the setback (gabar-
it) and the pilotis (l'étage pilotis)
```


Figure 12- An independent form of informal public space. The tent is part of the equipment used by the Future Movement party in its parliamentary electoral campaign. It's recycled by a local merchant to create a juice stand. ©Author, May, 2018.

Impact of Construction Laws on the Creation of Informal Public Spaces

Legend

Closed Canopy	
Building	
Road	
Free Sidewalk Space	
Trees	
Car Parking	
Motorcycle Parking	
Permanent Street Cart	
Trash Bins	
Public Equipments	
Parking Borders	
Parcel Limit	
Canopy Limit	
Used Space Under Canopy Limit	
Sidewalk Limit	
Building Limit	

Figure 13-a Mapping of public domain use (cont.)

```
IN NUMBERS:SURFACE EX-
PLOITATION IN TEJ

A secondary street in TEJ (mixed use
commercial and residential):

-Area free for pedestrian circulation:
64,4%
-Area used for commercial purposes
31,48%
-Fixed privatization of the surfaces:
4%

A tertiary street in TEJ (residential
with local commerce):

-Area free for pedestrian circulation:
89.7%
-Area used for commercial purposes
11.3%
-Fixed privatization of the surfaces
0%
```
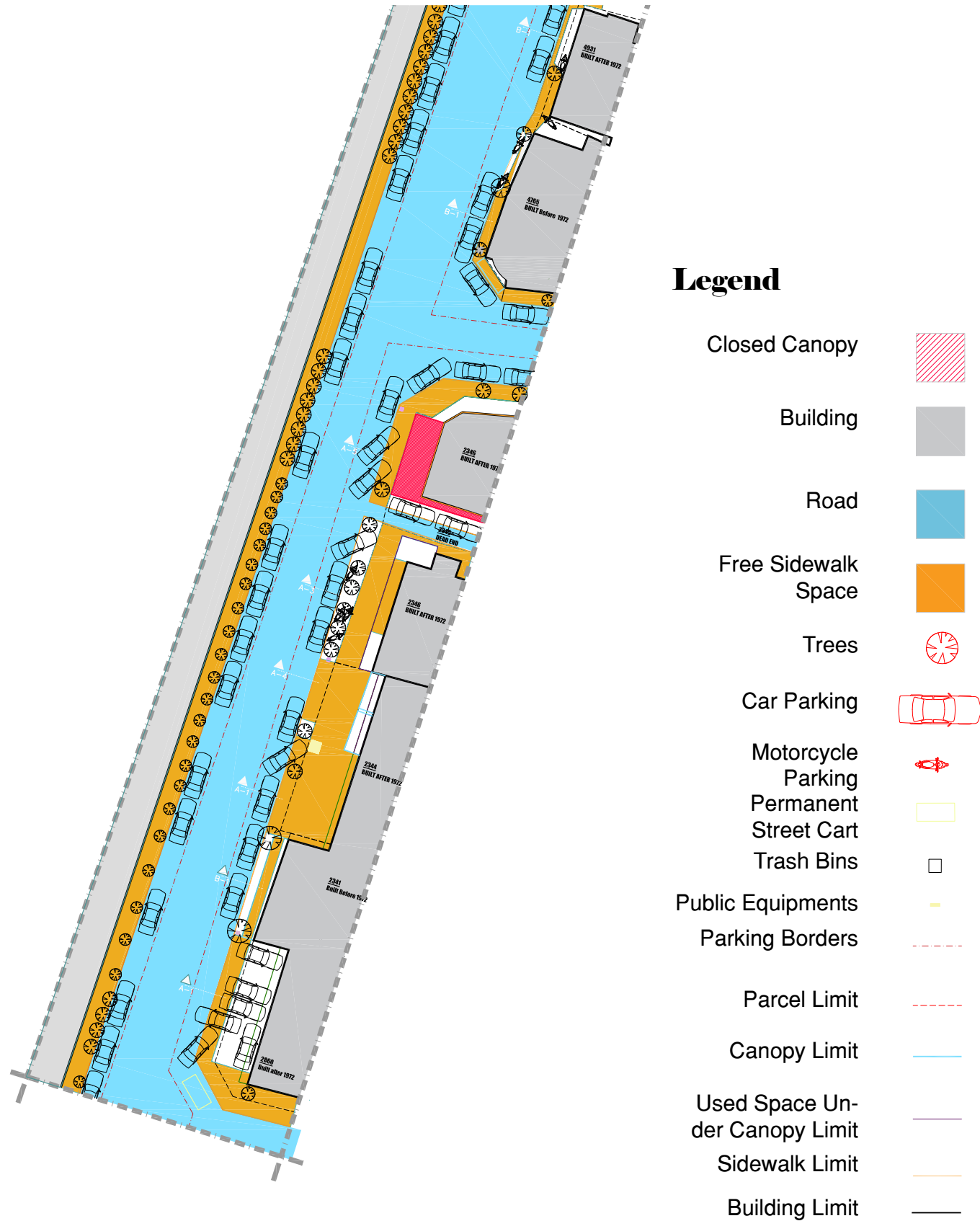
Figure 13- Detailed mapping of public domain use, showing privatization of surfaces in relation to adjacent building construction law
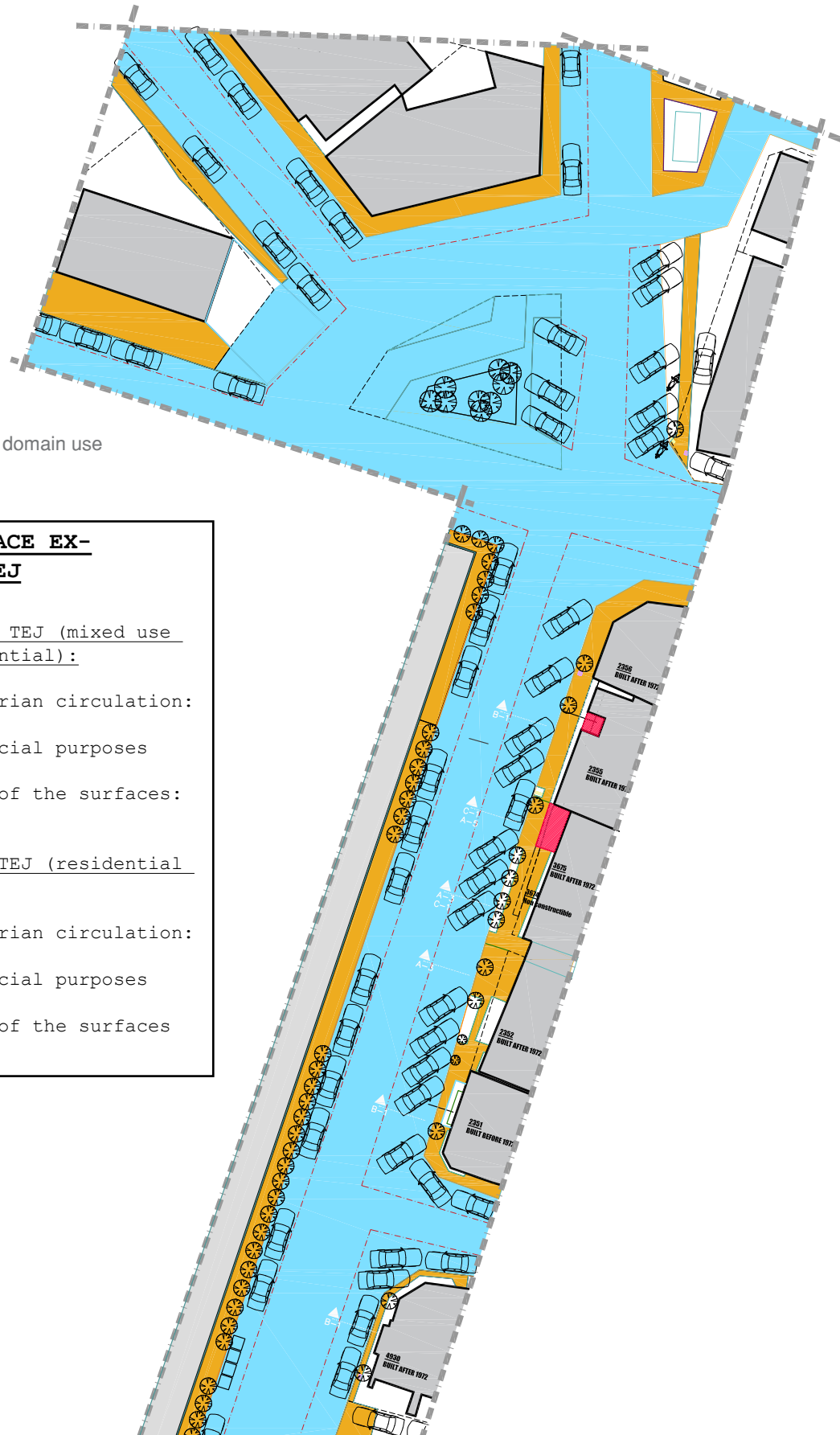
Beirut's urban tissue is, in general, heterogeneous, consisting of buildings from different time periods (Ashkar, 1998, Lamy, 2010, 2014). TEJ is no different. The existing built fabric of this neighborhood is a result of the many building regulations and laws that govern/ed Beirut and Lebanon over time (1940, 1954, 1972, 1992, 2005 laws) (Lamy, 2014). A majority of buildings dates back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. In this study, observations were made on the evolution of two legal provisions governing the relationship between buildings, sidewalks and streets in general: the setback (gabarit) and the pilotis (l'étage pilotis).

The first important thing to look at with regard to informal public spaces is the presence or absence of a setback, which define the limit between the private domain (construction) and the public domain (sidewalk). Presence of setback: The study highlighted six categories within this category, reflecting various forms of pedestrian circulation fluidity (Figure, 13; 16). The larger the setback, the more it allows for parking places. However, the larger it is, the more it represents an incentive to create fixed light installations for various, mostly commercial, uses. This permanent structure can be an open (figure, 16) or closed canopy (figure, 16) or simply unmovable commercial equipment like fridges and shelves. Furthermore, in many cases pedestrian circulation was completely shifted toward private areas within the setback (figure, 16) specifically when the sidewalk was being used as a parking platform. This shift was also encouraged by the presence of an open canopy or light curtain (figure, 16). Public equipment, such as telephone cabins, park-meters, electric pillars or even trees are considered physical elements that expand the exploitable surface originally created by the setback (figure, 16). Absence of setback: In general, the absence of a setback decreases the fluidity of pedestrian circu-

lation by reducing its surface area (figure, 11,13). Merchants use most of the area to display products or as sitting areas, keeping very little space for pedestrians, and in some cases even blocking their passages completely. In this category, canopies, both open and fixed, are also present but placed within the sidewalk limit, which is an illegal act that is not legally regulated (figure, 13).

Figure 14- A kiosk, one type of independent structures that exist on public spaces, built on a non-constructable plot.

Furthermore, protrusions are considered an asset in this case, as they facilitate the building of these canopies, often aligned with the limit of balconies or other protruding structures and elements. Non-constructible parcels: This spatial debris is an important asset for juxtaposing buildings, notably for those without a setback, as it enlarges the privatized space for commercial and other uses. The

Figure 15-Scene in a primary street in Tariq El Jdideh showing the different forms of commercial exploitation of sapce

privatization process can be through closed or open canopies or simply by folding the materials on the ground (figure, 11;13). However, non-constructible plots are not always private; in many cases, they represent an extension of the public domain, i.e. the sidewalk, increasing pedestrian fluidity. Moreover, non-constructible parcels are not always adjacent to a building, as they can be found at the corner of two streets. Many of the shacks used to sell coffee are built on such plots. (figure, 11;13)

Other buildings in TEJ reflect the "city-garden (cité-jardin) building era in Beirut, during which urban expansion followed a pavilion model that separated the private domain from the public by a garden and surrounding fence. In such cases, the privatization of sidewalks and the public domain does not occur.
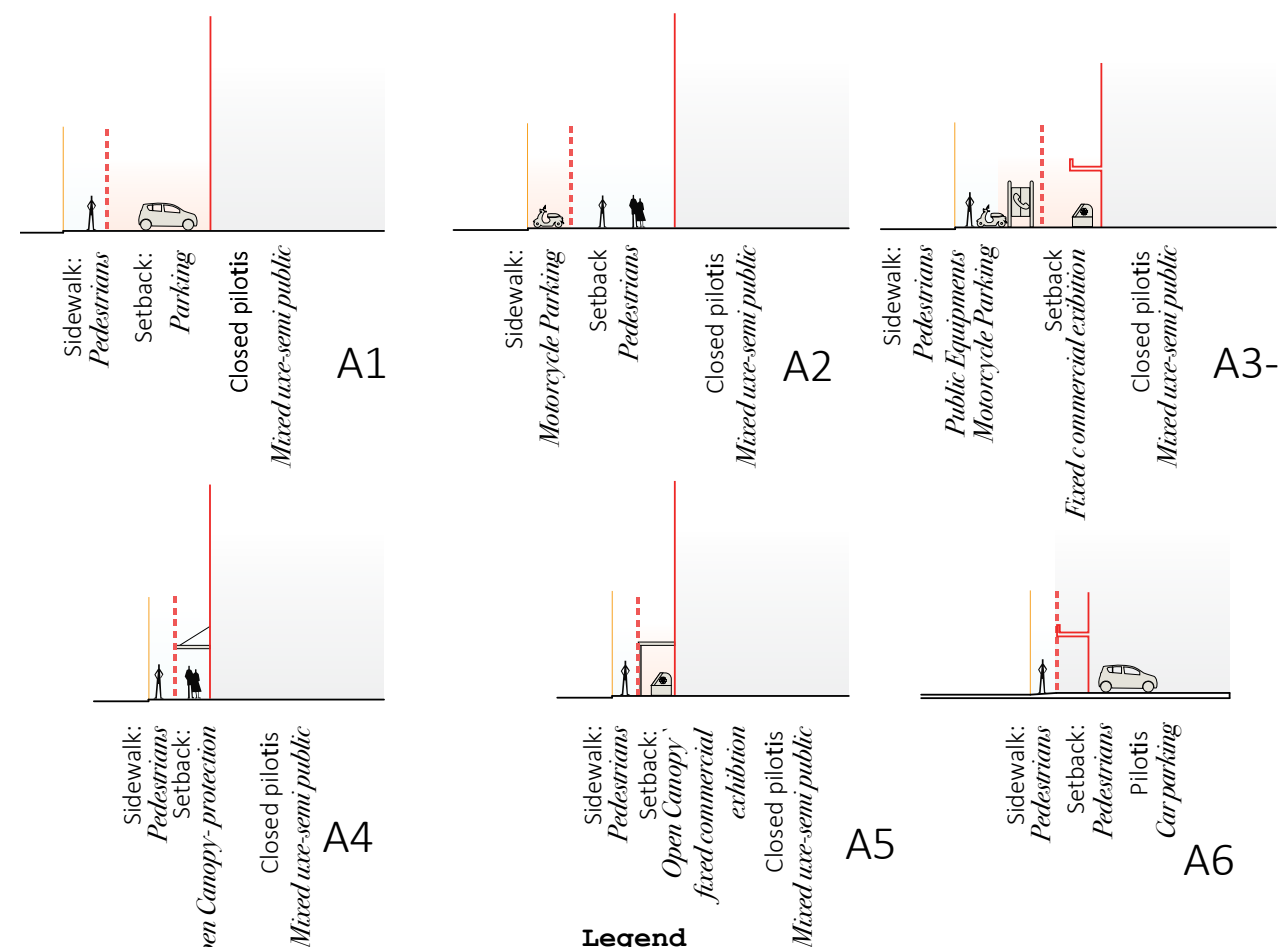
DEFINITIONS & RE-DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS A SIDEWALK ?

A sidewalk is also a crucial element in the city's livability, which allows for pedestrian circulation. It represents the main platform through which a city's built fabric (buildings and residents) interacts with the urban context, and through which most of the city's human-scale experience occurs (Loukaitou and Ehrenfeucht, 2009). Its uses and layout fall under public domain regulations and management, which are part of formal urban government prerogatives. However, in a context like Beirut's, in which informality is infused in all aspects of urban life, sidewalks create numerous informal public spaces for various sociopolitical goals and closely parallel the informal uses and constructions in the private domain.

In addition to pedestrian circulation, sidewalks also constitute sitting areas for residents, commercial exhibition spaces and platforms to affirm cultural identity.

DEFINITIONS & RE-DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS A SQUARE ?

The study examined how residents of TEJ defined a square, based on their understanding and perception of certain parts of the public domain. Generally, squares are defined morphologically and/or by their use. They can be in a semi-public domain, like mosque squares in Damascus or Istanbul; in a public domain planned and established by the local authority, such as the Martyrs' Square in Beirut; or in large surplus lands/allotments that are part of the public domain, usually at street crossings converted and equipped by the local authority, such as the TEJ squares highlighted in this study. Not all main crossings in TEJ are defined and referred to as "squares" by the residents. Often, the presence of a main landmark makes it more likely for residents to define the space as a square. At the edge of Abou Shaker Square, for instance, is a well-known charity institution in the neighborhood. While its toponym is widely used by residents, it is adopted without much awareness or reference to the collective urban memory that defines it. However, Al Sabil Square, for instance, takes its name from the landmark at the edge of it,

Al Sabil Building. Meanwhile, the Mufti Hassan Khaled Square, erected by the Municipality, was named in honor of a central socio-political Beiruti figure. Despite the fact that these public spaces are called squares (Sāhah (sing.) in Arabic, usually a place for gathering), they are not used as such. None of these squares have areas to sit, even when the space for such areas is available, as in the case of Abou Shaker Square. Sitting in public spaces is most of the time reserved to sidewalks facing shops or at the corner of a sidewalk as shown in (figure, 11, 12)

With Setback

A1
Sidewalk: Pedestrians
Setback: Parking
Closed pilotis
Mixed use-semi public

A2
Sidewalk: Motorcycle Parking
Setback: Pedestrians
Closed pilotis
Mixed use-semi public

A3-
Sidewalk: Pedestrians
Public Equipments
Motorcycle Parking
Setback: Fixed commercial exhibition
Closed pilotis
Mixed use-semi public

A4
Sidewalk: Pedestrians
Setback: Open Canopy- projection
Closed pilotis
Mixed use-semi public

A5
Sidewalk: Pedestrians
Setback: Open Canopy-
fixed commercial exhibition
Closed pilotis
Mixed use-semi public

A6
Sidewalk: Pedestrians
Setback: Pedestrians
Pilotis
Car parking

Legend

👤 Low ability of pedestrian passage

👥 High ability of pedestrian passage

🚗 Car Parking

🏍 Motorcycle Parking

🛵 Private equipment placed by the shops

⌐ Permanent closed canopy

╱ Permanent canopy

🪑 Public equipment

Without Setback

B1
Sidewalk: Exposi on Plus Passage
Ground Floor mixed use

B2
Sidewalk
Ground Floor mixed use

C1
Sidewalk
U.C Parcel
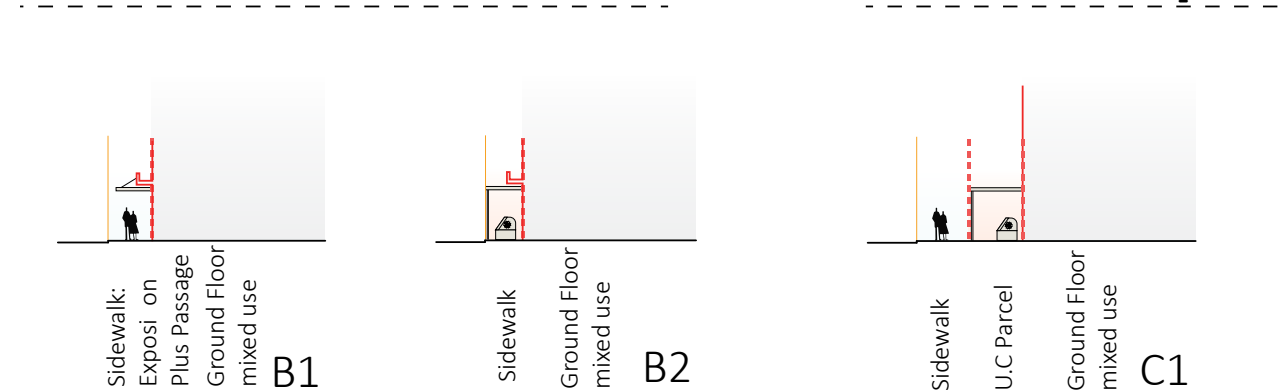Ground Floor mixed use

Non constructible parcel

Figure 16- Sections between the public domain (sidewalk and street) and the adjacent buildings, classified following the different distinction in the construction laws notably the set back and the pilotis exploitation
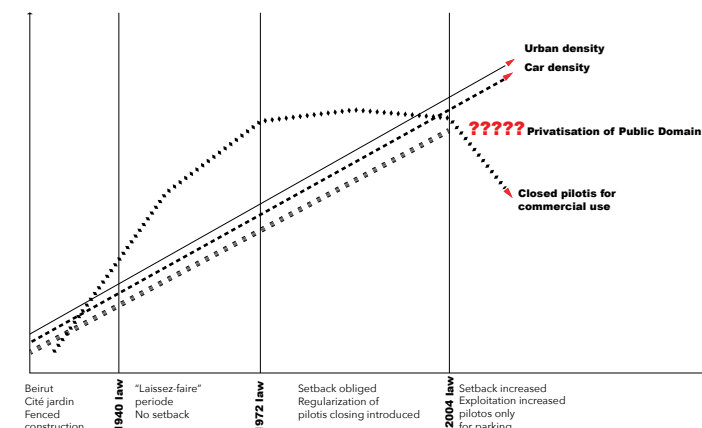
CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 17- Sections between the public domain (sidewalk and street) and the adjacent buildings, classified following the different distinction in the construction laws notably the set back and the pilotis exploitation

This chapter looked to understand the socio-spatial production of informal public spaces in TEJ, which can be projected on various neighborhoods in Beirut, or even other Middle-Eastern cities, with their respective contextual characteristics (Benfeil, 2016; Mady, 2012). The mapping exercise showed that there are two types of informal public spaces that are mainly created on sidewalks/roads or on adjacent small parcels. These spaces are used for various functions, whether commercial, recreational or cultural. An informal public space is governed, managed, and treated as the main public space of the city but this process happens in an informal way. The main concern driving this informal governance is who monetizes and capitalizes on the space, as shown in the example of the basta (Loukaitou and Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Shwan and Hudson, 2009; Rubbinz, N.D). Furthermore, the governing of informal public spaces by locals and direct users is the product of social territoriality and the existing power balance among two parties: the residents of the concerned neighborhood and residents of different neighborhoods (Wehbe, forthcoming 2019; Kastrissianakis, 2015; Costas, 2011).

After the mapping exercise, it was important to address the impact of architectural laws and different urban transformations on the spatial construction of these spaces. It was clear that the largescale privatization of the public domain is affected by how the different Lebanese construction laws regulate the relationship between a building's ground floor and the public domain and how they define the general layout of the building template (gabarit). After the 1940 law, a new spatial order was created, introducing, among other things, the gabarit and the pilotis floor (Askar, 1998; Lamy, 2014). The latter was the product of the modernist movement, which considers that the separation of the building from its direct context by an empty space is a necessary for improved urban functioning. However, in Beirut, as in many other contexts, this decision was met with increasing resistance, and inhabitants closed the pilotis floor for various uses. A regularization process was launched to legalize these floors, which, in turn, made them a more common practice and paid little regard to the efficacy of the pilotis law itself. It is important for us to reflect over how the relationship between the building and the public domain should be: Does it have to be completely devoted to the services of the building's residential functions, notably parking, which is something that the latest construction law (2004) enforced? Or does it have to answer to the needs of semi-public spaces as they have been understood by the population over the decades and imposed by socio-spatial practices even when the latter bypassed the law? The direct relationship of the ground floor with the public domain increased through the second half of the 19th century, and is now decreasing, while urban density and car use are increasing. Therefore, the question remains: what kind of privatization process could be adopted in the city and how will the current practices evolve?

The socio-spatial practices of creating informal spaces, answering needs, and filling existing gaps represent an important learning opportunity for the urban planner, urban sociologist and architect. How can we work with and not against these practices in order to enhance the livability of our city and public domain for all inhabitants? The main recommendation would be to regulate and organize these practices without changing their core understandings. For instance, in each street, and depending on the urban density in terms of commercial and residential activities, part of the road that is currently used to park cars can be used to create floating platforms for polyvalent use. Such a spatial construction is called the "parklet", an extension of the sidewalk toward the street, used to optimize the presence of public spaces in the city[14]. Of course, such a design does not regulate the act of privatizing the sidewalk for commercial purposes. However, a law that regulates such exploitation, using a ratio between the width of the sidewalk and the required width for comfortable

Figure 18-a: An Example of a parklet as sitting area

Figure 18-b: Parklet social life. Source: https://pavement-toparks.org/wp-content/uploads//2015/12/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_2.2_FULL1.pdf

pedestrian circulation, can be proposed, forbidding the exploitation of the sidewalk if the latter is blocked or if pedestrian circulation is not fluid.

THE LAWS DESCRIBING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDING AND PUBLIC DOMAIN:

Setback:

• Along with the modernist movement, the idea of setback and building envelope was introduced in the 1940 law. Accordingly, the building is built around its relationship with the direct urban context: street and adjacent plot.
• Setback imposed in the 1972 law.
• According to the 2005 law, the only elements that can be built in the setback surface are: a shack for the guardian with specific dimensions, a slab or a staircase used to reach the entrance and a fence, all following specific measurements and surface areas as defined by the law.

Pilotis:

• The Pilotis floor was introduced in the 1954 law.
• The height of this floor was lowered in the 2005 law, which also reduced the allowed closed services outside the common use. The use of this floor is limited to parking and common usage such as the lift, stairs and a private space for the guardian.
Regularization in relation to these two provisions:
• Following the ART 26 of Law 59/71 in relation to the pilotis floor. Regularizing the illegal closing of the ground floor pilotis by paying a calculated amount of tax depending on the surface. (This is how all the commercial spaces are established in the ground floor of all the buildings built before 2005).
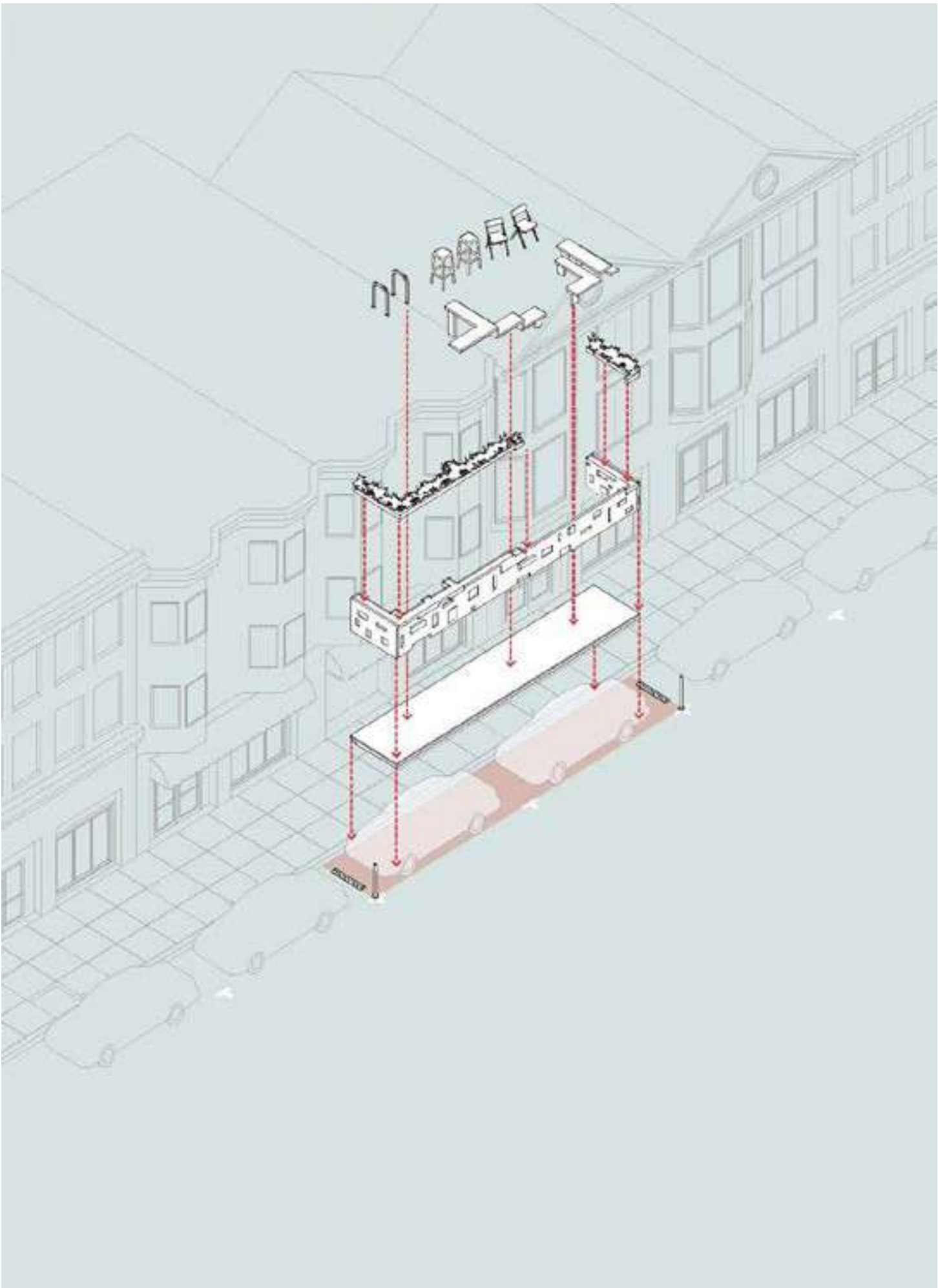

Figure 18-c: A parklet construction. Source: https://pavementtoparks.org/wp-content/uploads//2015/12/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_2.2_FULL1.pdf

STAKEHOLDERS: DESCRIPTION, INTERRELATION AND IMPACTS ON "USERS OF PUBLIC SPACE"

Tariq el Jdideh's socio-pol
verse, vast and scalar in t
and influence of stakehol
lic service and public spac
who takes the initiative a
Who collaborates with wh
whom? What are the ber
each, and what are the in
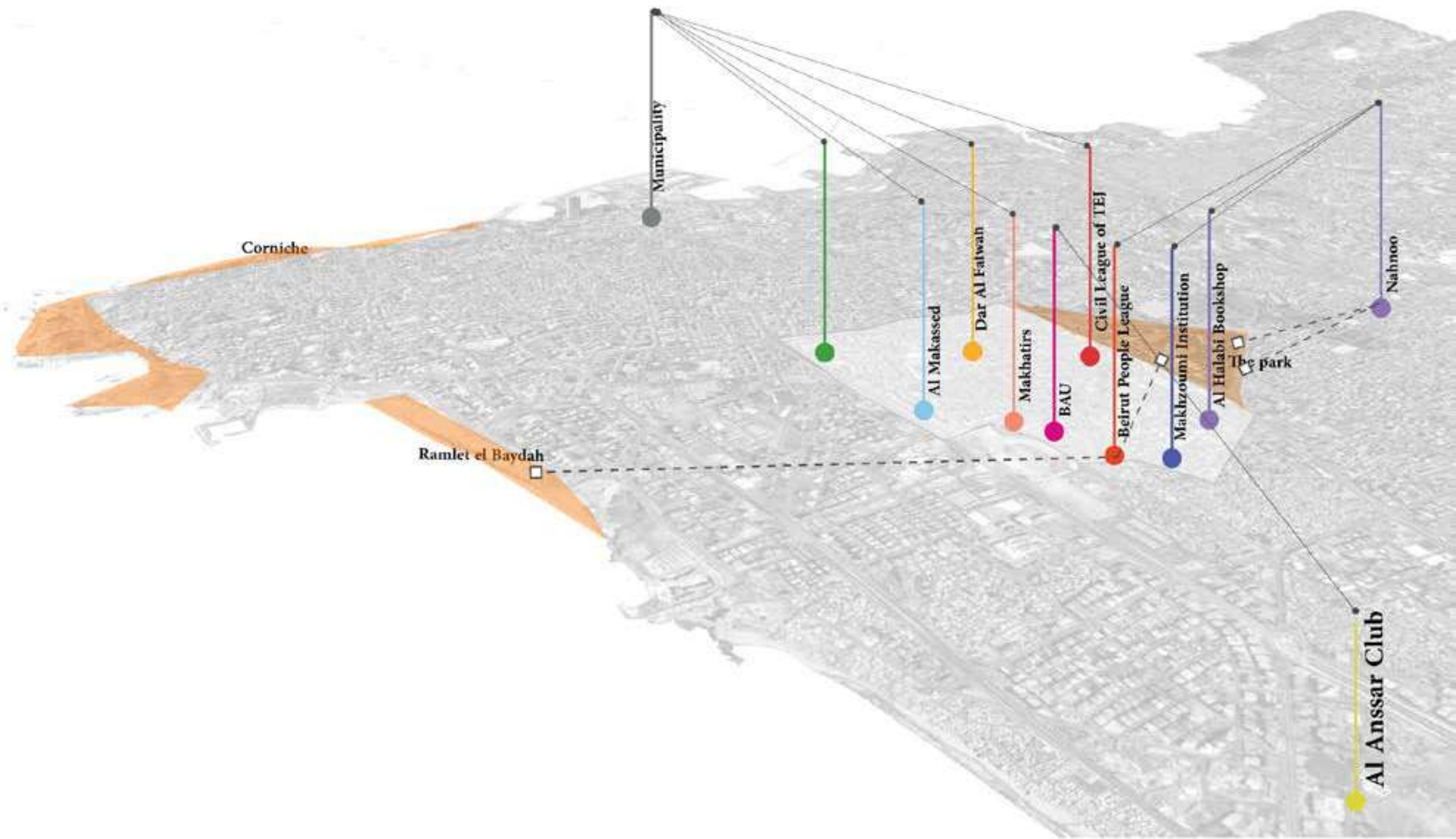the stakeholders and pub
space users?

Figure 19- Stakeholders from Tariq el Jdideh that collaborate with outside stakeholders concerned with public spaces outside TEJ

During the first stage of the research, a survey (annex, 03) was conducted with a sample of the residents and those present in the area for work or social and cultural incentives. During the second stage, deep, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a panel of stakeholders of different agendas and power/influence levels (Annex, 06)

General mapping, Collaboration and Decision-Making

In Tariq el Jdideh, public and private actors coexist.These include political parties and related institutions; charity, religious and social associations; sports clubs and academies; various committees and leagues; key social figures like notables, makhatirs (local heads), civil servants or individuals who are well-integrated into the local social tissue. The stakeholders revealed through the field work of this study are categorized based on their scope of interest and activities, represented by the eleven categories in Figure 20: religious, religious activities of a social nature, social and health services, sports, high education, related to TEJ as perimeter of activities, socio-political and pivotal players in fostering a clientelist relationship with the population, political parties, and public institutions.

As a general description of stakeholders' nature, capacities and general interest and agenda, we can start by dividing them into four groups based on their existing capacities and power level (figure, 21). These characteristics are defined based on their human/financial resources, the facilities they handle, the volume of services they provide in various domains and the level of collaboration with other stakeholders.

- Religious
- Socio-Religious
- Health, Education and Charity Services
- Sports
- High Education
- Diverse but Related to TEJ
- Political Parties
- International and Local Funders
- Public Institutions
- Social Keys
- NGOs ; Cultural hub

Figure 20- Stakeholders// classification

Figure 21 showcases the range of stakeholders in TEJ, along with their vertical and horizontal relationships. A vertical relationship is hierarchical and between stakeholders within the same range of influence. A horizontal relationship exists between stakeholders across the influence spectrum. The most important facilities in TEJ (figure, 04) in terms of schools, universities, health institutions, hospices, orphanages and meeting halls are held by the first- and second-level stakeholders (figure, 21).

Most of these first- and second-range stakeholders provide charitable and social services or financial assistance, whether directly through their facilities or indirectly by collaborating with the third and fourth range of stakeholders. This collaboration may come in the form of institutional and financial support to the third and fourth level of stakeholders in order to undertake an activity or maintain a facility. For instance, Dar Al Fatwa is an effective stakeholder that supports lower-level religious associations in establishing schools and education centers, as well as the provision of religious and cultural classes. Moreover, collaboration is also horizontal between stakeholders at the same influence level, as in the case of the collaboration between Al Anssar Club and the Hariri Institution: infrastructural support was given to Al Anssar in the form of a land donation in Khaldeh in order to build their new premises[15].

Two types of decision-making processes are distinguished with regard to public domain initiatives and projects: top-down and bottom-up decision-making. In the case of top-down decision making, high stakes in terms of governance or real estate investments exist, or convergence of interest between political agenda and public actor prerogatives (Hamadeh, 2015). The choice to adopt or reject a certain decision or demand relies on existing clientelist relations and vertical structures of collaboration between stakeholders with different levels of influence (Figure, 21-influence; figure, 23-collaboration).

The bottom-up decision-making process works in an opposite direction. Generally, it does not imply high stakes or the political agendas of parties at the government level; on the contrary, it carries local concerns and demands to the upper level for implementation. Yet, it passes through the same cycles of socio-political clientelism. For instance, the renovation of the Afif el Tibeh garden was, upon the demand of local inhabitants, passed to

the Mayor (head of the Municipality) through a local social figure living in the area, during a public meeting between the municipal councilors and the population. The project was implemented because of the Mayor's direct approval, but the financial support was provided by the Merchants Committee of Afif El Tibeh, who were invited to collaborate on the project by local figures (figure, 23).
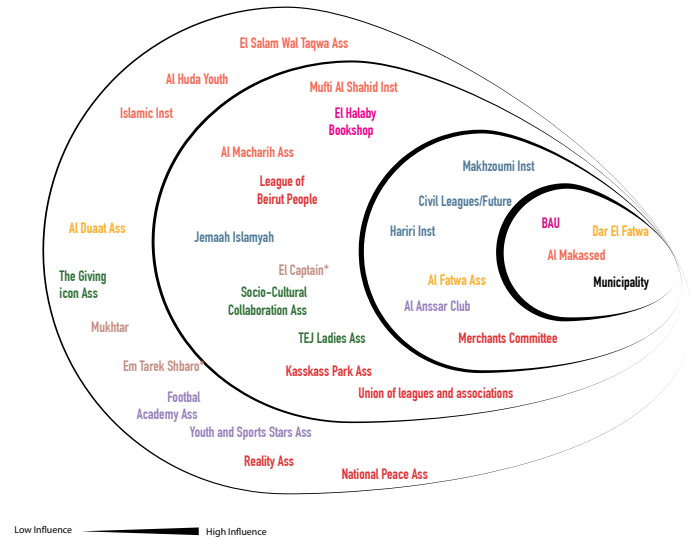
Capacities and interest in public space

Figure 21- Range of Stakeholders and level of influence

To understand the interest of stakeholders in the issue of public space, it is required to know how and, more importantly, at which moment in their political trajectory that this became a topic of interest (Bess, 2006; Mady, 2015; Sukkarieh, 2015). The study found six categories that characterize said interest, through the stakeholders' mapping exercise conducted in Tariq el Jdideh.
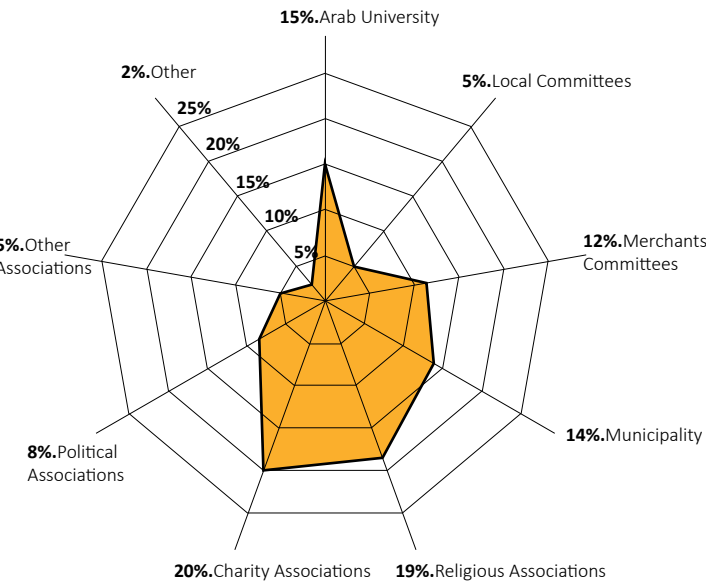

Figure 22- Level of acceptance

acterize said interest, through the stakeholders' mapping exercise conducted in Tariq el Jdideh.

The first category is when public space was the initiator of the stakeholder's creation and integration process in the social fabric of the neighborhood. An important example is Rabitat Abnaa Beirut, who have a longstanding relationship and affiliation with the Horsh Beirut. Horch el Eid, the traditional event of celebrating Eid in the park, was originally organized by local figures from Tariq el Jdideh, and was later given to local associations on a more formal basis (figure, 28). Rabitat Abnaa Beirut succeeded this organization in 1996 and organizes the event to this day (figure, 28). Horch el Eid made Rabitat Abnaa Beirut known to the general public, building a relationship of trust with a large number of people, not only in TEJ but also in Palestinian camps and other marginalized neighborhoods to the south of TEJ. This Association also took on the organization of a traditional event, Ourabaët Ayoub (the Wednesday of Ayoub) in another main public space in Beirut, Ramlet el Baydah (the sandy public beach).

Despite the fact that the interests of the Association vary considerably, covering a wide range of activities, public spaces remain an essential platform of action and integration for it (figure, 24). The second category represents another form of stakeholder integration into the social and the cultural scene of the neighborhood through public space. However, the identity of the stakeholder in this case is completely different. The el Halabi Bookshop is an example of this stakeholder: it is a family-managed space recently rehabilitated into an inclusive cultural area, fostering exchange between writers and the local population and enabling free access to books through a reading space in the bookshop (figure, 29)

Another category of interest in public issues is reflected in stakeholders' vision and/or mission. These stakeholders, which are mostly associations, claim that TEJ in all its urban aspects is their starting point and ultimate goal. For instance, Al Rabitah Al Ahlyah Fi Tariq el Jdideh (the Civil League of Tariq el Jdideh) plan all of their events in and for the neighborhood. They have a robust framework of intervention, including public domain maintenance and the organization of sports activities or charity and social services. Such stakeholders are heavily dependent on collaboration with other parties with varying level of influence (figure, 23, 24)

From this last category emerges a similar one, in the sense that it exists within the neighborhood

as a spatial limit of reflection and intervention, but its nature varies completely. For instance, the Merchant's Committee in Afif el Tibeh Street look to promote commercial activity in the street by organizing street festivals. In this case, interest in public space is part of a marketing strategy in order to foster an urban activity that generates profit to the private sector (figure, 23, 24).

Moreover, interest in public space is also a contingent process, which may in certain cases be used as a self-marketing policy by a political stakeholder to enlarge their social base. During the last municipal elections in Beirut, two new movements from the civil society, Beirut Madinati and Mouwatinoun Wa Mouwatinat fi Dawlah, adopted a public discourse that pivots around the rights of citizens including, among other things, access to public services. During the same time, the rest of the more traditional political parties employed the same guidelines in their discourse. The National Dialogue party, for instance, began promoting an advocacy discourse with regard to main public spaces in the city, such as the Hippodrome and the Municipal Stadium, which are now part of its political agenda (Annex, 04). Finally, the lack of clear, expressed interest in public space does not mean that the stakeholder in question does not have an impact on the course of events.

The clientelist relationship that characterizes the top-down relationship between, on the one hand, political parties and public actors, and on the other hand, members of the lower social strata, invites middle-agent stakeholders to play a mediatory role. In the majority of cases, these middle-agents compromise public demands for political interest, thus changing the course of events in a way that fulfills upper-level political agendas, especially when financial and political stakes are high. For instance, the removal of the Municipal Stadium was promoted through intermediary channels between the Mayor and the social stakeholder base in TEJ. This is a case where middle-level stakeholders supported projects that have a considerable risk of negative impact on the urban cohesion and/or cultural memory of TEJ, motivated by financial, economic and/or political interests of members from the upper political echelon. Stakeholders directly interested in public space issues are common; however, they are incapable of implementing their ideas and initiatives (figure, 24).

Spaces, Activities and Stakeholders

Exploring concrete examples of spaces and activities conducted by stakeholders serves to further apprehend the established dynamic between the latter and the former (Shaw and Hudson, 2009). Starting with spaces, the first element to explore are the numerous meeting halls that exist in TEJ. In fact, these latter are henceforth places of collaboration between various stakeholders, but they also constitute a platform of exposure and exchange with the public. The most important meeting hall, according to the collected data, is the Jamal Abed el Nasser Hall the Beirut Arab University (BAU). This space is used by main political parties, local TEJ and external associations, local elected officials, Al Anssar Club and, of course, the BAU administration and students.

Many public discussions at the neighborhood level generally occur in this meeting hall, situated in the main premises of BAU and easily accessible from Soleiman Boustani Street, coming from Cola Intersection, which is considered to be one of the main entrances to TEJ (figure, 04). Other stakeholders, mostly associations, consider the fact of having a meeting hall as an asset compared to other local actors. Al Rabitah Al Ahlyah Fi Tariq el Jdideh (the Civil League of TEJ) have a 40m2 space (figure, 04; 26) where they hold their activities, but they also rent this space to other interested local actors. For instance, many Palestinian activities, such as memorials or cultural meetings, are held in this meeting space, characterized by a clear political identity supportive of the Palestinian struggle.

Moreover, and because the administration of this association advances a clear discourse supporting the struggles for social justice and equality, old renters in TEJ hold their meetings there. Other meeting halls exist in TEJ, including in the Arts, Sciences, and Technology University of Lebanon, (AUL), in the main mosques and in the major associations like Al Makassed (figure, 04). Streets, sidewalks, street lighting and protection measures are a main concern for stakeholders interested in public space issues. It is under the umbrella of the Itihad Al Jamïyat wal Rawabet Al Ahlyâh fi Bayrut that such initiatives have been and are being concretized (figure, 23). The major maintenance works that took place in the 90s were carried out through an initiative by this
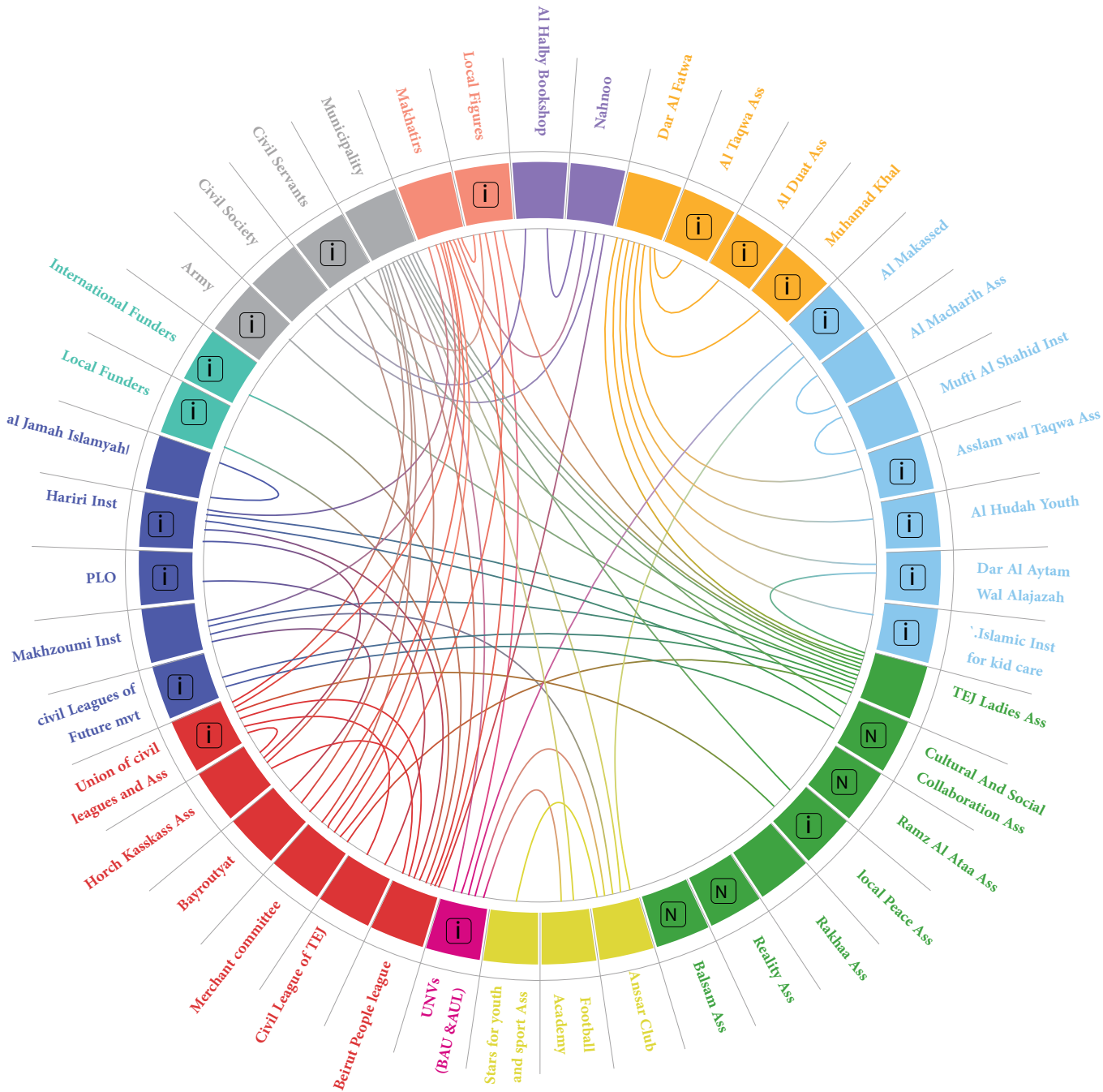

Figure 24- stakeholder Network

stakeholder. Currently, and according to the president of Beirut People's League (Rabitat Abnaa Beirut), the main associations and figures constituting this organism are conducting meetings with the local public authority in order to launch maintenance works in the streets, of Kasskass fields, in addition to discussing waste management solutions at the neighborhood level and other urban governance issues. However, interventions stir up sensitivities when the stakeholder is not an impregnated organ in the socio-political fabric of the neighborhood, and this increases territorialities and exclusion considering the current segregated political sphere in Lebanon. For instance, when NAHNOO, decided to install benches in a street of TEJ, highlighting the neighborhood's

relationship with Horsh Beirut in order to revive the weakened organic bond between these two spatial identities, the initiative got compromised by some local stakeholders who consider the neighborhood as their "fief", despite good reception from the overall population (Chen, N.D).

Spaces, Activities and Stakeholders

Segregations among active stakeholders in terms of public space livability is also the reflection of physical segregations that occur within the space itself and vice versa. A flagrant example of such a spatial dynamic is the public sphere of Horsh Beirut park[16]. Physically, this
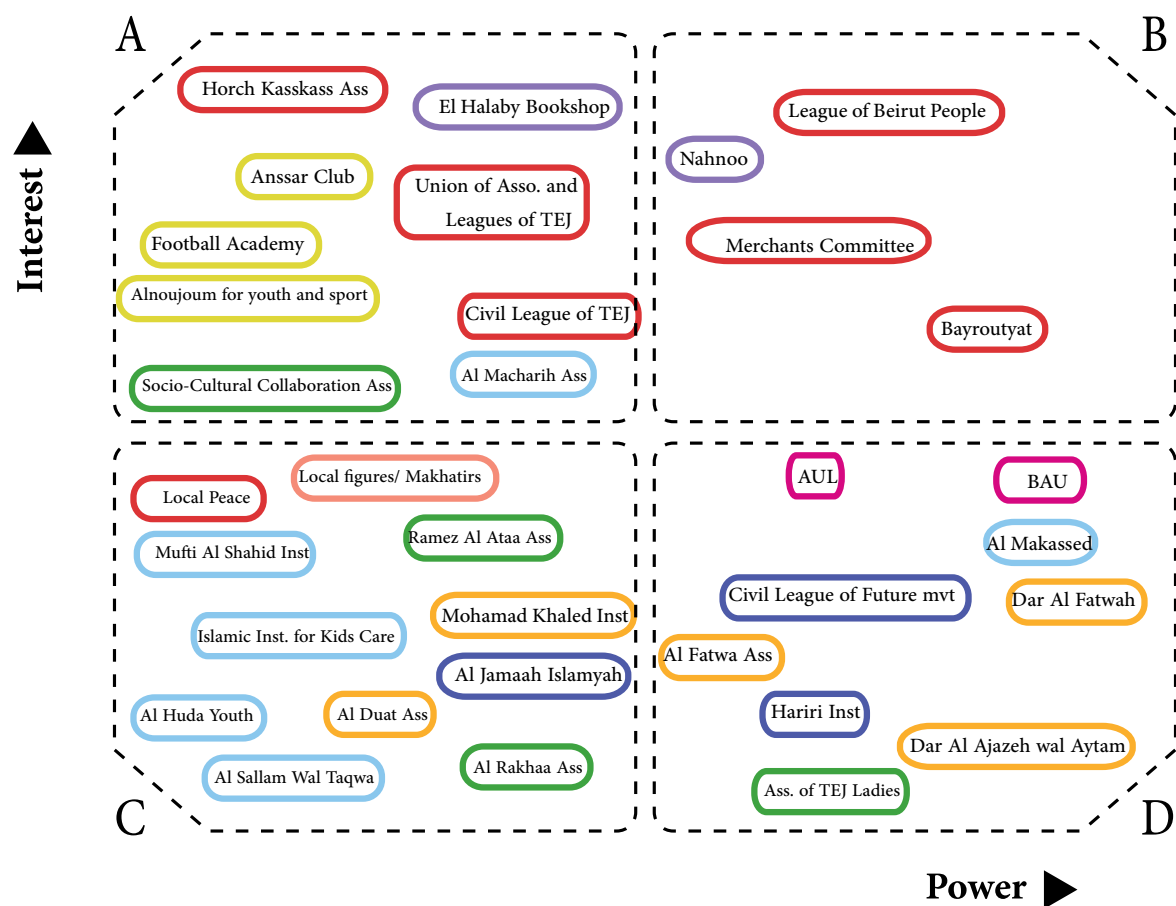
Figure 24-a Interest to Power matrix

park is divided into three non-communicating parts: Kasskass fields, "Kasskass park", and "the park"[17] (figure, 27). Horch el Eid[18] (figure, 28) is an anchored event in the spatial collective memory of both TEJ and the park itself since the 20s (figure, 28). After the renovation of the park in the 90s entrenched the separation between the "two parks"[19], this event became only part of the "Kasskass park" (figure, 27, 28). This socio-spatial

Figure 25- Afif El Tibeh garden

mutation was frequently contested by the interviewed population and stakeholders, describing it as an urban loss. Furthermore, and along with "Horch el Eid" event, another similar one is occurring in "the park" part of this main public space, the "Horch festival". Despite the fact that it is an inclusive initiative aiming to reintegrate

the park in the lifestyle of Beirutis, it is still the product of a spatial segregation which in turn is a product of a severe socio-spatial divide at the city level. In other words, and as described by the president of Beirut People's League, Horch el Eid became for the poor and the vulnerable and "Horch Festival" for the middle classes. Moreover, this succession of spatial segregations expands among the stakeholders animating these activities, thus eliminating any sense of collaboration between them, something a future initiative for change should counter (Salomon, 2007; Nahnoo, 2015).

Finally, in terms of the relationship between stakeholders and main public spaces, social networking plays an important role in animating main public spaces when the municipality is not investing in physical maintenance and equipment or in human resources. For instance, through the interview with a coach from the football academy of Kasskass, it was clear that the space is auto-governed and auto-managed through social networking among coaches, supervisors and the pupil's parents. This represents an interesting case to investigate further in order to better understand the kind of hybrid management of main urban facilities when the local public government is semi-present (Mehta and Bossom, 2010).

Figure 26- Tariq el Jdideh Civil League meeting hall

Conclusion & Recommendations

The most influential stakeholders in public space issues are those capable of reaching out to a wider social base, thus affecting people's positions with regard to public space use, acceptance and initiatives. These stakeholders usually have high capacities and speak to the socio-political affiliations of their social base (Bess, 2006, Bordes, 2006; Hanafi et el, 2013). They no doubt perpetuate the clientelist relationship, but their success is mainly due to the top-down decision-making process and collaboration with other local

stakeholders (Hamadeh, 2015). However, another type of influential stakeholders exists, adopting a bottom-up approach, favoring horizontal collaboration with local stakeholders and lacking any sense of clientelism. In most cases, the identity of suck stakeholders is directly related to the public space thematic, and they usually proceed with clear strategies, promoting project(s) and encouraging local initiative. El Halaby Bookshop is a clear example of such stakeholders, and to some extent the same goes for the Beirut People's League. As explored in the study, the level of interest in public space is not a question of pure stakeholder agenda. It remains a socio-spatial construction where, depending on the stakeholder, interest is: a) an organic initiator characteristic of the stakeholder; b) an interrelated characteristic where being active in public space issues is the continuity of the stakeholder's socio-spatial implementation in the neighborhood; d) a correlated characteristic where acting upon public space questions enhances the image of
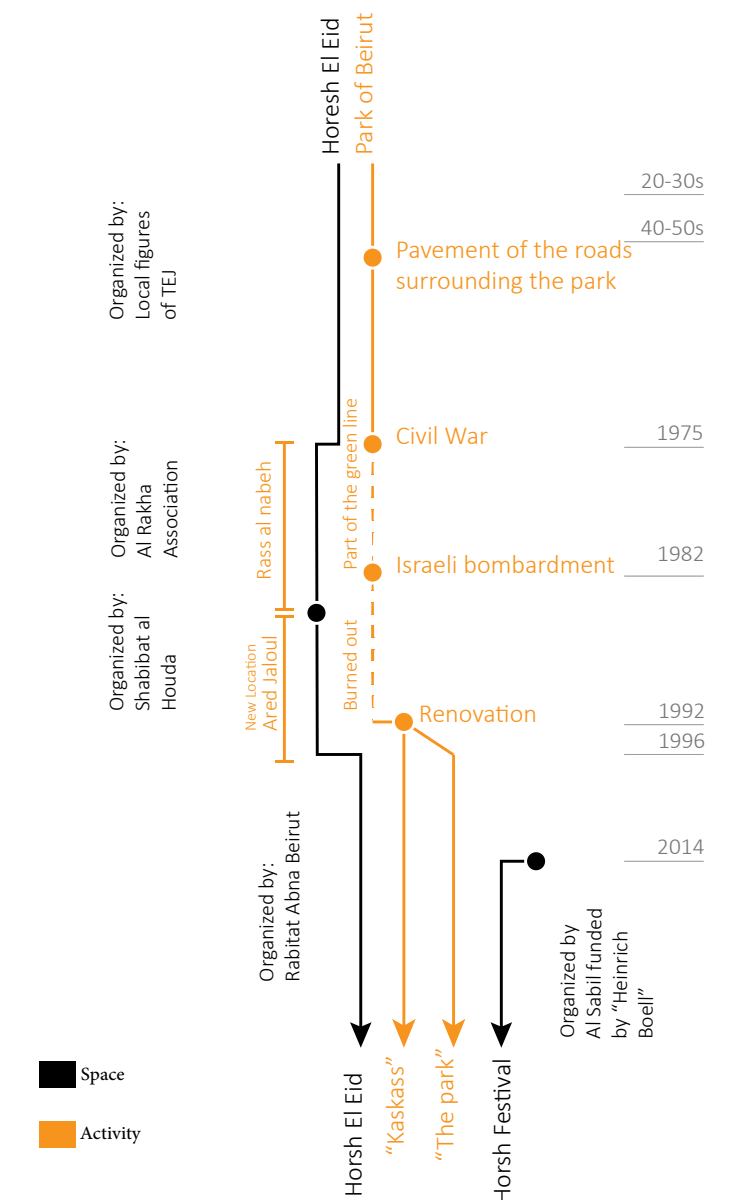

Figure 27- A sketch showing the multiple physical segregation in Beirut Park

Figure 28- A sketch showing the multiple physical segregation in Beirut Park

HALABI BOOKSHOP

Recently inaugurated in 2017, this bookshop represents a distinguished private initiative to highlight. Adding to the books selling, this space became in a very short period of time a hub for old book lovers, readers especially the youth of TEJ and even of other beiruti neighborhoods.
  Managed by a very prominent young lady, this latter inherited the space from her father who had the pleasure to collect books and magazine and different kind of printed documents like old poster. However, all the articles were staked making the library inaccessible. The daughter had a different approach, aiming at the same time valorizing the books of her father to better sell them and also creating a cultural hub of exchange among writer and local population.

Figure 29- El Halabi The bookshop. © El Halabi website

The visitors dispose of a reading zone free of charge, using the bookshop books. Several reading session are organized when the author came in and read for the visitors. When these sessions are held during the summer, the sidewalk is invested to make an outdoor reading sessions, something wanted as a platform in order to attract more the population. Two kind of reading sessions exist, the first is organized weekly and it is for the kids, where as the adult event is organized monthly with a high attendance of females as noted by the owner. Sometimes these readings are organized around a thematic and not an author in order to discuss different matters of public interest like the garbage or to keep alive the collective memory when, for instance, organizing a talk on 2006 war. Puppets theater is organized during special social occasion and for the Eid a Hakawati evening is organized gathering different class of ages. The interviewed owner confirmed the lack of intention to collaborate with funding stakeholders as she wishes to keep the project independent with its proper agenda. However, a collaboration with Nahnoo was conducted drawing a path of arrows on the different streets around the shop in order to indicate the bookshop direction. The project was highly covered by different media, local newspapers and televisions confirming its success and the of population acceptance of such initiative. The owner upholds that this success is of sure the outcome of huge efforts but also to the circumstances of the launching period during which a main library closed (Al Shareq), a main newspaper closed (Assafir), "We were seen as courage initiative that swim against the stream" as she describes.

the stakeholder; e) and, finally, a circumstantial characteristic usually dependent on their political agenda. Effecting change requires not only increasing people's interest and empowering them; it also requires enhancing collaboration and organization with stakeholders. Four processes are proposed. First, it is essential to empower those not only with a clear interest in public space but also with clear projects. For instance, El Halabi Bookshop advances high potentialities to capitalize on. Its owner confirmed her unwillingness to accept any financial empowerment, as she wishes to stay independent. However, empowering such an initiative requires increasing its social capital by connecting it to other stakeholders of similar nature and objectives. For instance, during the field work conducted in the Horch Festival, a library bus was seen participating. This itinerant library is an individual initiative of a librarian that wishes to enhance the reading capacities of pupils in public school. Her aim is to pass once month in a front of a school and conduct a reading session. A collaboration between these two stakeholders can be productive, as it gives further exposure to El Halabi Bookshop, thus enlarging its audience, and in return it empowers the bus library, as it can have access to an important stock of books.

Another stakeholder to empower, as it currently represents an important activity center for a large social base of pupils coming from different neighborhoods, is the football academy that practices in Kasskass fields. Empowering this stakeholder requires serious commitment from the part of the municipality, as it is the governing party of these fields, but also because the initiative requires logistical and financial support. The academy lacks basic sports equipment and means of transportation for the kids. In an interview with one of the coaches, it was understood that an organic structure exists among coaches, pupils and the municipal officers on the ground. However, it requires more structuring in order "to optimize our capacities and potentials", according to the coach.
In light of the conducted field work, it appeared that

est, while collaborating with other stakeholders on the ground.

The two final processes are complementary, which means that a certain should take the initiative to organize and to propose interventions, while collaborating with other powerful and stakeholders interested in public issues. This kind of double process might bypass the political clientelism and compromised top-down decisions by encouraging transversal and horizontal collaboration. In addition to that, any collaboration must sensibly address the issue of stakeholders from outside the neighborhood, in order to reduce socio-spatial territoriality (figure, 19).
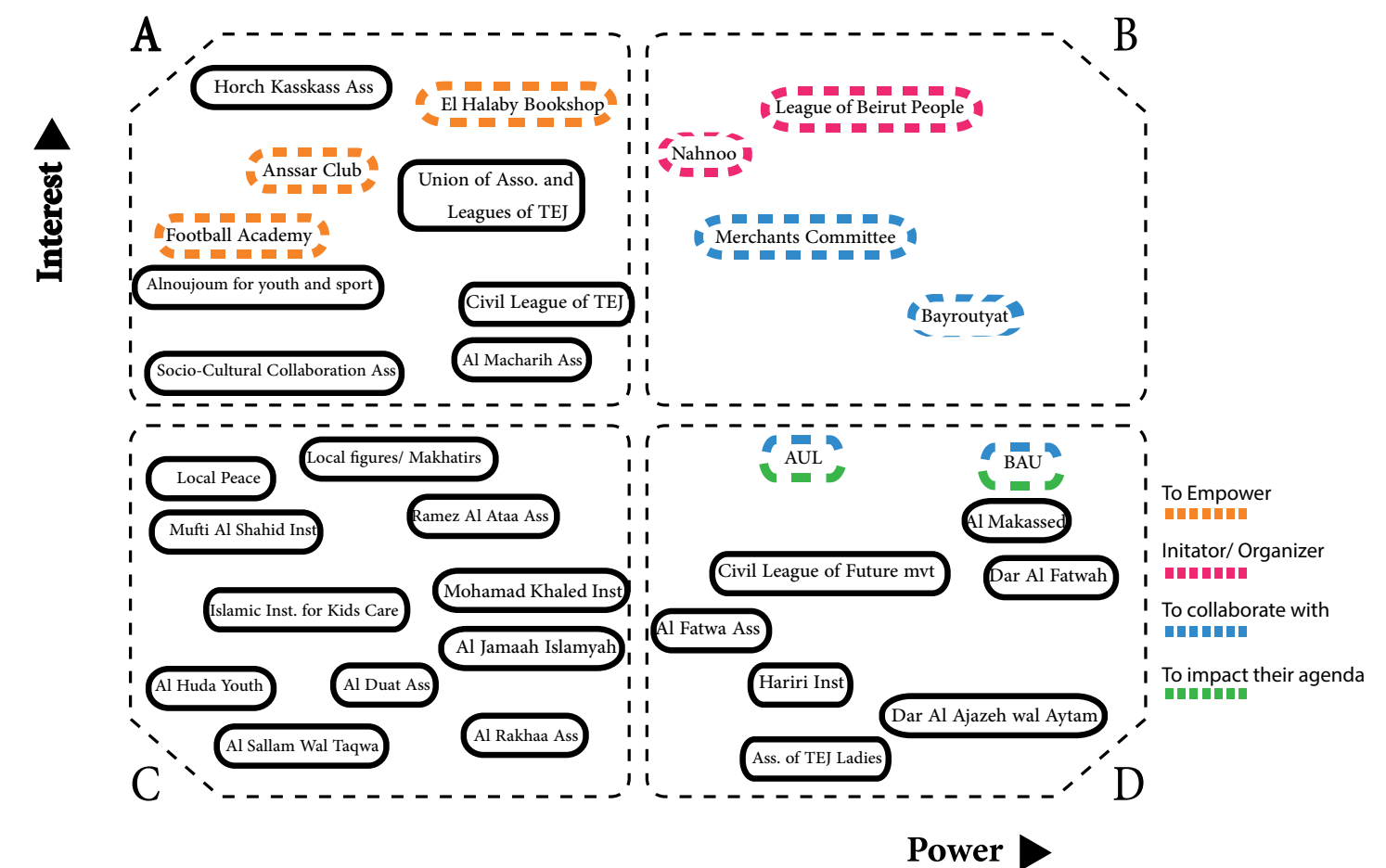

Figure 30- Steps to improve the dynamics between local stakeholders working on public space

the Beirut Arab University has a wide acceptance among the inhabitants (figure, 22), as the majority of them confirmed that they would participate in activities proposed by this stakeholder. This is not to say that the BAU is inactive in the neighborhood; to the contrary, it organizes football competitions and graduation ceremonies in the Municipal Stadium for example, and it has an important meeting hall that is open to outsiders (figure, 23). However, and considering its potentials, the university can interact more with its urban fabric to promote sensible spatial public inter-

The final recommendation is related to a concrete spatial context that is essential for all citizens: Horsh Beirut park. In order to counter the multiple aforementioned segregations (physical and social), it is crucial for the various stakeholders involved in the different activities carried out in the separated parts (Kaskass field, "the park" and the Kasskass park) to collaborate in organizing one big event.

THE MUNICIPAL STADIUM: a case study

ATTACHMENT, SPATIAL FEATURES AND STAKEHOLDERS

In 2015, the municipality of Beirut carried a communication campaign to advertise its plan to replace the Beirut Municipal Stadium by a multi-purpose complex with a giant underneath parking, with a capacity to host 5000 cars. In response, many civil society organizations, including NAHNOO, decried the plan and denounced it as ill-advised both in regards to the preservation of Beiruti cultural heritage and to the improvement of mobility in TEJ. In our study, we found that a mix of socio-cultural issues, governance factors, and stakeholder agendas play a role in people's attachment to and visions for the future of the Municipal Stadium.

It was clear that the Municipal Stadium is a very important landmark for TEJ inhabitants. For several it is a defining landmark of TEJ recognized on a national level, others have memories inside it, others associate it with the launch of the Ansar football team that makes the pride of TEJ. But while the majority of the interviewees expressed considerable attachment to it, they did express that it requires some intervention in order to improve it (figures, 9 and 31). For instance, the presence of the military presence, the strict entrance control, and the limited activities that are organized there are seen as factors that limit access and therefore attachment in the MS.

It was also striking that none of the existing functions, whether commercial or recreational ones, on the main street longing the Municipal Stadium are related to it (figure, 11), as if this main public space is a just large, closed and vacant piece of land with little integration with its surrounding. However, this spatial feature of void is also appreciated by the inhabitants of the buildings longing the Stadium: "It is a privilege", "It's a good

view to have". Even the rents of apartments with a view on the Stadium are, to a certain extent, more expensive than the neighborhood's norms.

While the majority of interviewees were against the closure of the Municipal Stadium, it is remarkable that most of them were young people who advanced a very different discourse than older inhabitants. Interviewed young people coming from different backgrounds and occupations advanced an openness toward public space use and even the public space cause. They believe that the Municipal Stadium is part of their heritage to conserve,
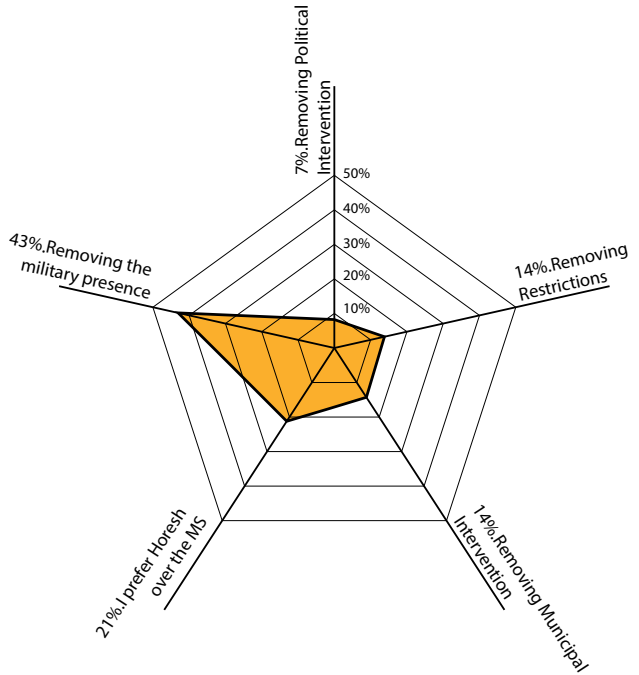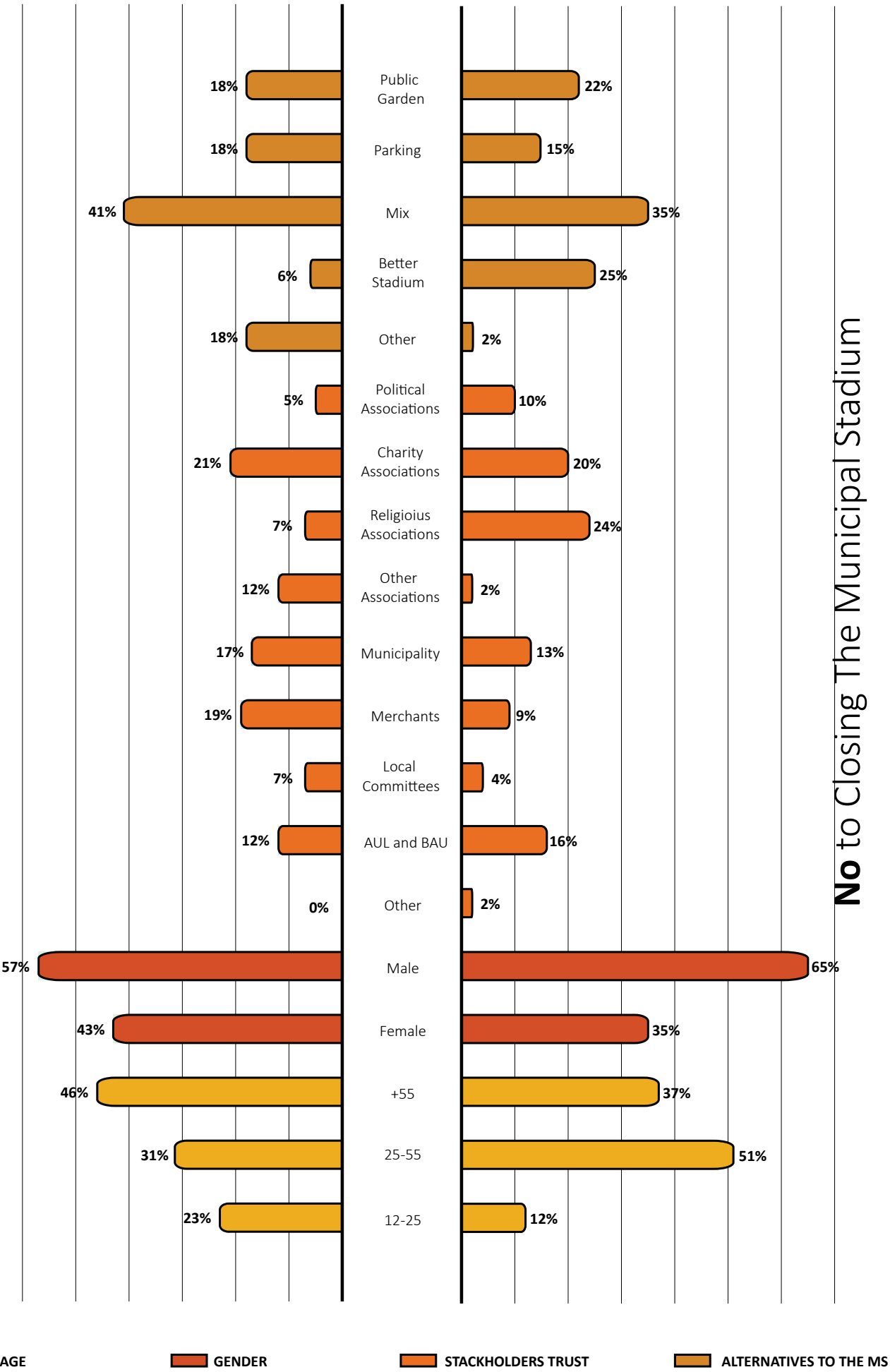
Figure 31-"How do you see the improvement of the Municipal Stadium?" according to local stakeholders

Figure 32- Who's with and who's against closing the Municipal stadium

while highlighting the need to implement certain maintenance works and adjustments in its use regulations, as it is currently described as being a partially inclusive space. In contrast, the elders in general approved closing the Stadium, and adopted the same argument used by the Municipality in justifying this urban intervention. After crossing the positions regarding the Stadium's closure with further qualitative data, such as stakeholders' acceptance and the respondents' will to collaborate with them, it was clear that those who support the Municipality's intervention are closer to the dominant political parties. Whereas those against the Municipality's intervention prefer neutral stakeholders like the Beirut Arab University or others (figure, 31). Finally, both categories were asked: "If it was certain that the Municipal Stadium was going to be changed, what would you prefer to have in its place?" (figure, 32). It was clear that the majority of the answers were impregnated from the intensely discussed alternative proposed and advertised by the Municipality.

Finally, we found that local stakeholders are entrenched among themselves with regard to both the use and the future of the Municipal Stadium. Our different interviews revealed that the proposition of the Municipality to transform it into a mixed project of sports fields and parking areas was partly adopted by the inhabitants of TEJ due to this clientelist mechanism between the different stakeholders and the population. Indeed, the Mayor at the time set a list of secondary (political parties and institutions) and tertiary (local figures and associations; makhatirs, etc.) stakeholders that can work with local key figures in order to convince the population to back the project and to some extent the mayor succeeded in neutralizing the local opposition at that time. However, in 2018, a month before holding parliamentary elections, a sit-in was organized by locals who support the Ansar football club in collaboration with NAHNOO to protest any plan to dislocate the municipal stadium. The protest received wide coverage and resulted a week later in a promise by the Lebanese Prime Minister to keep and renovate the stadium[20].

Figure 33- Municipal Stadium fence with military equipment and security measures. The Author ©, May 2018

A SAMPLE OF STAKEHOLDER'S VOICE AND THE CITY

PRESIDENT OF AL ANSSAR CLUB:

the return of Al Anssar premises from Khaldeh to TEJ with the support of the Beirut Municipality; Organization and regular maintenance of Kasskass fields; More organization of the park before the complete opening; reducing the security measures at the Municipal Stadium while endorsing the presence of the army there; the reopening of Al Anssar dispensary and the hospital of Al Anssar veterans; demanding an impact. assessment of the construction of a new vegetable market at the southern limit of TEJ not too far from the an existing one: what is the impact in termo f circulation in this already congested area?;

PRESIDENT OF RABITAT AL AHLYEH:

against closing the Municipal stadium; ameliorate the trust between local population and the public actor; reduction of security meaures at the Municipal stadium; make the organization of Horch el Eid more inclusive for other associations and social figures;

PRESIDENT OF RABITAT ABNAA BEIRUT :

Inviting the municipality to be more collaborative and to facilitate the work of association interest in the public services ; Inviting the municipality to an executor beside being a good regulator ; Mitigate corruption in the way public actor support financially local associations (not all the supported associations provide and execute projects); Put in place a very modest entrance tariff for Kasskass fields in order to create an independent maintenance budget; Ameliorating street lighting; limit the violation of sidewalks; Municipal employer must be natively from Beirut;

Notes

1. According to the Public Space Chart (Italian National Institute of Urban Planning, 2013), public space/s is/are considered: "spaces that presuppose or encourage individual use; spaces that have a predominant role for aggregation or social condensation with regards to intersections between function, form, signification and particularly for the relationship between the built and non-built. In the interrelation between aggregation and social condensation lies the essence of a city" (INU, 2013; p.2).

2. The traditional Ottoman inner-wall city was known, prior to the Civil War (1975-1990), as the city center or in popular discourse as "El Balad", then as "Solidere" post-war, named after the real estate company that headed the area's reconstruction in the 1990s.

3. Rural migrations occurred mainly at the beginning of the 19th century, bringing the traditional Sunnite-Orthodox social tissue, Maronite and Shiite population, however, the spatial implementation reflected segregations per social classes and status and not communal and cultural identity.

4. For many Lebanese, the place of registration and domicile number does not reflect the actual place of residence, thus compromising the ability of inhabitants to influence main aspects of their daily urban life through municipal and parliamentary voting.

5. Thiran, meaning picnic, was a way for beiruti families in the 18th century to escape the dense urban scene of the intra-muros city, and enjoy a journey outside in the nature in an unplanned and unequipped space, near the sea or greeneries. This activity was still part of TEJ inhabitants' tradition till the middle of the 19th century. In fact, in the "laissez faire" period during which construction became more dense, the city lost most of its natural scenes affecting this tradition.

6. Purposive sampling was used intending to reach a fairer balance among residents and visitors of TEJ over random sampling of passers-by. This was done through targeting specific areas within and around main public spaces like the MS and the Kaskas park or main facilities, like the BAU or al Makassed compounds, schools, mosques and health facilities to have a sample with a diversified demographic composition, including women, kids, and people of varying nationalities. Finally, surveys were carried out in different sub-neighborhoods and streets with different statuses (primary, secondary, tertiary). The focus of data collection was in two main streets in TEJ, in Tamliss - an enclosed poor neighborhood in TEJ – and, in Sabra, which is a very poor area in which there is an intense commercial activity.

7. In the case of street surveys, saturation was reached and answers became repetitive. In the case of merchants, all types of commerce existing in the two streets were covered. In the case of stakeholders, we were unable to reach a few of the relevant ones and this constitutes a limitation of the study.

8. These figures are not to be interpreted as a reflection of TEJ demographic composition as a whole. The survey sampling was designed around public spaces issues in TEJ and not the neighborhood as a whole.

9. This exercise was initiated during the workshops with the volunteers, which they later adopted in their surveys (they showed a map to the interviewees, but it was not constant for all the interviewees).

10. Refer to figure 26 exploring the spatial division of the park.

11. In a closed-ended question, Interviewees were asked to choose between four main reasons encouraging them to go to a public space: Nature, Social networks, place attachment or security

12. This percentage is calculated based on the two streets studied in detail. It is to be taken as a comprehensive, rather than an indicative, percentage.

13. It is important to add that this does not govern the spatial implementations of basta(s) in all the city. It is most observed in enclosed and marginalized neighborhoods.

14. For more information on this practice, see: https://pavementtoparks.org/wp-content/uploads//2015/12/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_2.2_FULL1.pdf

15. According to the president of Al Anssar Club who mentioned that this was an ill-advised decision as it "uprooted Al Anssar from its social and cultural background."

16. Horsh Beirut extends beyond the park.

17. Noting that currently the municipality is building a hospital on the edge of the park, something that will for sure aggravate the existing physical segregation, without mentioning all the negative impact and the illegality of this project.

18. Traditional event that has always occurred in the park, starting from the dates when this latter represented a larger surface and a natural continuity of TEJ and other neighborhoods without any heavy infrastructure separating it. During the three days of the Eid, the Horsh el Eid event animate the park with all sort of entertainment for the kids and families. The interviewed inhabitant from TEJ a high sentimental attachment to this event, pointing out a very lively collective memory.

19. According to the municipality, this physical segregation is devoted at « preserving » the part considered as « the park » which represent the bigger surface and where the valuable design work have been executed.

20. We were surprised to learn of construction works to rehabilitate and restore the Municipal Stadium as a main football field for national games a week prior to the publication of this study. In 2015, Beirut's then-Mayor led a large campaign promising to "refurbish" the Stadium and a significant amount of public money was spent on studies that imagine a new complex in its place. The Municipality's inability to implement the project gave the public time to express their true sentiments and mobilize accordingly, thus allowing them the opportunity to determine and impact the Stadium's future.

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APPENDIX

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Appendix 02 - Workshops and field visits