

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

NEW REGIONALISM FOR RURAL AREAS:
THE CASE OF HERMEL (LEBANON) AS CASE STUDY

by
YARA MARWAN HAMADEH

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Urban Planning and Policy
to the Department of Architecture and Design
of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
September 2016

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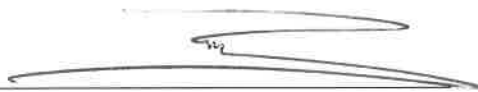
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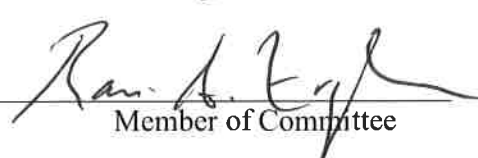
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My recognition and gratitude go first to my thesis advisor Dr. Mona Harb for her guidance, support, encouragement, time, and patience. Thank you for giving me the chance to work closely with you. It is because of you that I worked with passion and learned so much along the process. You were my mentor even before I join the MUPP program.

Special thanks go to all of my thesis committee members for their valuable feedbacks which helped me better structure and frame my thesis. Thank you Dr. Mona Fawaz not only for serving on my committee but also for being a great professor whose classes and lectures were one of the most useful ones I have ever attended. Thank you Dr. Rami Zurayk for taking time to talk to me on several occasions and for providing indispensable expert advices and comments on different aspects of my thesis. Thank you Dr. Jad Chaaban for your feedback which helped me organizing my thoughts and restructuring my thesis question in a much simpler way.

I would like to express my gratitude towards my parents, my brothers Amin and Bachir, and my best friends Rami and Imad for supporting me and pulling me up when I am down.

Thank you to all my classmates, especially Yara and Guilia for the considerate endorsement and for making my stay at AUB an unforgettable experience. I also would like to thank Serene Salam, Rabih Fawaz, and Siwar Karaki who were always available to assist me in administrative and technical issues.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Yara Hamadeh for Master of Urban Planning and Policy
Major: Urban Planning

Title: New Regionalism for Rural Areas: The Case of Hermel (Lebanon) as Case Study

As a neoliberal market economy that valorizes the service sector at the expense of productive sectors, Lebanon is a case in point of policies of uneven sectoral development and ingrained socio-economic and regional inequalities.

The Schema Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais (SDATL), approved by the government in 2009, aims at achieving sustainable and balanced development between Lebanese regions, and between urban and rural areas. However, the SDATL lacks specific and multi-scalar implementation mechanisms. In official discourse, regions refer to governorates (muhafazat).

Taking as a case-study the caza of Hermel, my thesis explores if and how regionalism can be used as a tool of rural planning in Lebanon. Hermel is infamous to be the most marginalized and impoverished caza, despite its multiple natural resources. The thesis shows that regions represent an appropriate scale for planning and policy making in Lebanese rural areas.

Using the framework of New Regionalism (NR), my thesis explores empirically how to devise an effective scale of sustainable regional development for Hermel. I recommend a set of institutional mechanisms for the production of Hermel as a new region, via establishing an elected council and a Regional Development Agency (RDA) at the level of the caza. The recommendations also include strategies enhancing the region's diverse and rich assets, and limiting constraints, in ways to improve Hermel's livability.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Abu Lughod (1996: pp.193) shows how many Arab states, including Lebanon, instead of adopting public policies that are based on economic growth and industrialization as main pillars of development, selected to invest in their capital cities as primate vibrant urban centers, limiting policy interventions in other areas to infrastructure, and neglecting productive sectors such as agriculture and industry. She further shows how such unequal spatial planning policies lead to increasing urban-rural migration, multiplying misery belts around large cities, more poverty, exclusion, imbalances between regions, and disparities within cities of the same country. Such outcomes are made worse by neo-liberal economic policies which prioritize market-led development in the real-estate and financial sectors.

Lebanon is a case in point of such policies of uneven sectoral development, as it long has been a neoliberal market economy that valorizes the services sector at the expense of productive sectors. Also, service policies have been systematically focused on Beirut, from as long as the French Mandate and early Independence periods. Gates (1989) notes that this form of development dates back to the colonialism period when Lebanon was integrated into the world capitalist market in a way that serves the needs of European Imperialism. Gates refers to this form of development as the "peripheral capitalist development" which is characterized by overdevelopment of the capital city, underdevelopment of the rest of the country, external orientation and dependence. This has generated underemployment of the growing labor force, large scale emigration, conflictual relations, dependence on unstable foreign conditions, as well as increasing

socio-economic, regional, and sectarian inequalities. Gates (1989: pp.8) states that the local political economy was restructured in a way that responds to the steep growth of European-exported finished goods:

The agricultural sector was reoriented from local production to that of agro-export production for the international market; local crafts were devastated and industry was placed on a path of weak development in the future; and an economic, commercial-financial, and communications- transport infrastructure was created by European-Lebanese capital to service the European economies rather than to promote auto-centered development in the Levant.

During the Fouad Chehab mandate (1958-1964), the Lebanese state elaborated several economic and developmental policies aiming for "balanced development," such as spatial planning, education, health and access to basic services. These policies were short-lived and did not succeed in improving rural areas, although they did improve the overall situation of different regions.

The Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) evidently did not contribute to redressing unequal regional development. On the contrary, rural-urban migration increased and poverty levels grew in relation to forced displacement and war. After the end of the war and the 1989 Taëf agreement, post-war reconstruction policies were largely confined to the reconstruction of the capital Beirut. Accordingly, the development gap between the center of Lebanon (Beirut and Mount Lebanon) and the rest of the country, especially regional cities such as Tripoli, Zahleh, Sour and Nabatiyeh, got exacerbated. Kubursi (1999) notes that the government's post-war reconstruction plan stressed on the physical infrastructure over human capital and privileged Beirut at the expense of the rural sector. Harb (2000) also confirms that the imbalance between regions is not only between Central Lebanon and the other regions but also between urban and rural areas. In the South of Lebanon, the cazas of Bint Jbeil, Hasbaya, Jezzine, Nabatiyeh,

Marjeyoun and Tyre are below the Living Condition Index (LCI) national average although the caza of Saida has a very high LCI. In the North, the cazas of Akkar, Batroun, Bsharreh, Minieh and Tripoli are below the LCI national average, while Zgharta and Koura have high ones. In the Beqaa, the cazas of Baalbak, Hermel and Rachaya are below the LCI index, whereas Zahleh and Western Beqaa have higher ones (UNDP-MSA 1998:73). Yet, the hierarchy of the regions according to their level of development changed following the post-war policies due to demographic and political power transformations (Harb 2010: pp122, Table 1).

Mohafazat	1960		1970		1997	
	Living conditions	Hierarchy of regions	Living conditions	Hierarchy of regions	Revenue per capita (LBP/ month)	Hierarchy of regions
Beirut and region	2.24	1st	2.59	1st	442,300	1st
North	2.13	2nd	2.52	2nd	228,700	4th
South	1.53	3rd	2.20	3rd	276,500	2nd
Beqaa	1.40	4th	2.00	4th	252,800	3rd

Table 1-Regional Living Conditions by Mohafaza (1960s - 1990s)-Source: Harb, 2010, citing Labaki, 1996: pp. 26

As Harb argues, Mount Lebanon witnessed a considerable urban growth due to the internal displacements which favored its socio-economic development. The South with a Shiite majority benefited from their growing presence in the political system particularly when Nabih Berri (leader of the Shiite Amal movement and speaker of the parliament since 1992) was appointed in 1984 as minister of state for South Lebanon and Reconstruction, and as a minister of justice. Thus, the South benefited from infrastructure, services and development projects especially following the establishment of the Council of the South in 1970, (Law 9/70 Decree no 14649), which receives public aid and international donations.

Conversely, Shiite political powers did not promote development of the Beqaa as no powerful political leader represents it. Yet, Harb notes that the region witnessed minor improvements, as people found informal ways to upgrade their living conditions either through goods smuggling across the Syrian borders or through illicit crops.

Currently, Lebanon's administrative structure is four-tiered: 1) the central level, 2) the regional level, composed of 8 governorates/mohafazat (led by an appointed governor), 3) the district level composed of 26 cazas (led by an appointed caïmacam), except for Beirut governorate which is also a caza, and 4) the local level of municipalities (led by an elected municipal council)¹. The latter three levels are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM).

Article 1 of the Lebanese Legislative Decree no. 118 of 1977 states that the municipality is a local government that enjoys financial autonomy, self-management powers, and that they are assigned of a broad range of tasks of public interest within their geographic boundaries. However, as Harb and Atallah (2015) show, many municipalities remain weak and constrained administratively and financially. They are closely controlled by the upper tiers of deconcentration (governors and qaimaqams), by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, and particularly by the monitoring authorities (the auditing court and the general comptroller).

Municipal work resumed after the civil war in 1998 when the first post-war municipal elections took place. Since then, several municipalities started establishing basic infrastructural projects, while a few initiated some local development initiatives, often under the impulse of international donors. Many municipalities grouped in municipal unions as they get more financial, developmental, administrative and

¹ Governorates and caza's represent the deconcentration level in Lebanon, whereas municipalities represent the only decentralization level.

economic benefits when they do so. This also allows them to become recipients of grants from international donors that promote decentralized regional and local development (e.g. European Union, World Bank, UN-Habitat, UNDP, USAID, Cities Alliance, Région Île de France, Agence Française de Développement).

Harb and Atallah (2015: pp.3) discuss how municipal unions are endowed of a legal personality, and have administrative and financial autonomy within their geographical boundaries. To date, the number of the unions reached 51. Yet, many of these unions lack technical capacities, fiscal resources, and suffer from internal conflicts among their members who represent municipalities with uneven resources and sizes. In addition, most of the unions are disconnected geographically and administratively as they do not incorporate all adjacent villages and cities, or the districts' administrative boundaries. These issues are hindering integrated development at the regional level (LCPS, September 2012).

Thus, besides the geographical constraints and particularly the distance from the capital, which concentrates all resources, local and regional administrative, legislative and financial issues are main obstacles blocking the development of the Lebanese hinterlands. In 2009, after almost three decades of having been assigned this mission,² the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in Lebanon, issued the SDATL (Schéma Directeur de l'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais), which represents a vision for Lebanon 2030 using spatial planning policies. The SDATL is built on three main pillars: i) unity of the Lebanese territory, ii) balanced development between Lebanese

² In 1977, 2 years after the civil war started, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was created as per the decree-law 5/77. Accordingly, the CDR was in charge of setting "the general framework for urban planning orientations" in Lebanon and in 1983 of elaborating a physical master plan for the Lebanese territory that serve as guideline for all stakeholders involved in the national and local development: any other plan at the local urban or rural and regional levels (SRD-PRD-PCZ), must be compatible with it and in case of absence of local plans the master plan substitutes them.

regions, and between urban and rural areas, and iii) rationalization in the exploitation of the natural and non-natural resources towards sustainable development. The SDATL presents a new framework for Lebanese regions, cities and towns that must be adopted by all planning experts and policy makers in their development plans. However, the SDATL suffers from constraints among which the lack of specific implementation mechanisms is a key hindrance. Indeed, there is no provision to how to implement the SDATL vision at the regional or the local scales. This lack of multi-scalar mechanisms of operationalization does not contribute to the aims of regional balanced and sustainable development. Urban planning and development in Lebanon are most commonly based on administrative and/or geographic scopes; regions in official discourse, including the SDATL, are referred to as the governorates (muhafazat). Currently, the CDR is pilot testing, aided by an EU grant, the implementation of a regional plan in the North region.

A. Thesis Question, Hypothesis and Objectives

My thesis explores issues of regional planning in Lebanon, and takes as a case-study the caza of Hermel, which is the most marginalized and deprived caza in Lebanon as per many statistics studies and surveys: 66% of the families living there are below the extreme poverty line. As my thesis will show, Hermel is rich in natural resources and important built environment's assets but still suffers from weak planning policies and effective interventions that take advantage of the caza's strengths to improve livelihoods in a sustainable way. The area used to rely on agriculture as the main economic pillar for its tribal community. However, the shifting of the economic system into a services one was detrimental to agriculture and agro-industrial sectors. People

resorted to informal economies and illegal crops to increase their income; this has stigmatized the area as being one of "outlaws." Using Hermel as a case study, **my thesis explores how a panning strategy building on the SDATL can be operationalized in a way that advances principles of regional and sustainable development, in order to improve livability in rural areas.** Neither attempts at reviving agro-industry and agriculture in Hermel, nor planning strategies devised for the region had significant impacts on the ground. I will demonstrate how this is due to the lack of a coherent vision that incorporates a regional framework approach, and to the absence of inclusive mechanisms that engage dwellers in the formulation of adequate planning policies. Indeed, most attempts are donor-led and top-down, and fragmented across an array of development actors, and disconnected geographic clusters.

My thesis argues that Lebanese regions represent an appropriate scale for planning and policy making in rural areas, which are constantly excluded from neoliberal policymakers' agenda and discourse. I will define a "region" relying on the framework of New Regionalism (NR). NR has been for a long time restricted to metropolitan areas, and used as a tool to respond to capitalist processes, manage economic growth, and achieve social equity by improving the competitive position of regions in the global market. The thesis will build on the literature that shows how New Regionalism is a well-suited framework for planning rural areas, where the local scale is too small for effective change. This entails rescaling to achieve more effective interaction within the dense webs of transnational and global exchange, as well as building institutional capacities by establishing new regional political and administrative bodies.

Since the Taëf agreement, the Lebanese government has been aware of the necessity of reinforcing decentralization in order to enable balanced regional economic, social, and cultural development. Policy-makers, who worked on the decentralization draft law submitted to the Parliament in 2015, advocate the creation of regional councils at the caza level, which would be responsible for regional development and planning. Conversely, the CDR's consultant, Fouad Awada, advocates the operationalization of SDATL through the creation of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) operating at the level of the current eight administrative muhafazats.

The thesis explores empirically how to devise an effective scale of sustainable regional development, applying the NR framework to Hermel's region. More specifically, I investigate two sets of questions: 1) Can Hermel operate as an effective region? 2) How to define the administrative boundaries of Hermel's "new region". My thesis is therefore positioned within the discussion mentioned above, and advocates the establishment of RDAs at the levels of groups of cazas—to be defined on a case-by-case basis, according to a methodology grounded in the NR framework which I detail in the thesis.

Using NR's principles, the thesis demonstrates that Hermel can indeed operate as an effective region. It also proposes a methodology for defining the administrative boundaries of Hermel, grounded in qualitative methodologies identifying dwellers' perceptions of their region's geography, and mapping their regional spatial practices. Based on these findings, the thesis proposes building and consolidating institutionally Hermel as a region through a tripartite strategy: i) furthering local identity and knowledge, ii) protecting and celebrating landscape and heritage, and iii) promoting multifunctionalism. This tripartite strategy needs to be elaborated and implemented by

Hermel's regional development agency (RDA), according to participatory and inclusive mechanisms. The rationale for strengthening Hermel as a "new region" derives from my intention to break the current political hegemony that rules the caza.

B. Methods

The main tools of inquiry adopted in this thesis are qualitative. The thesis relies on i) a desk review of reports, databases, statistics, maps, and secondary literature, and ii) fieldwork consisting of observation, photography, mapping, and face-to-face interviews in the city of Hermel.

I have first consulted socio-economic reports including numerical data about development indicators in Lebanon such as reports of socio-economic surveys conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) for Baalbak-Hermel; reports of the Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD) which focus on mapping poverty across the Lebanese territory, reports of NGOs such as the annual reports of Mada that has worked on Tarhal (ecotourism) project, and reports of international organization such as the Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The SDATL as well presents quantitative data which original sources are the ESFD and CAS (Central Administration of Statistics).

Second, I have consulted development planning reports in order to elaborate the SWOT analyses and investigate about former initiatives that are discussed and in Chapter 3 such as the "Simplified Plan of Local Development" issued by the Office of Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) as part of the Assistance to the Rehabilitation of the Lebanese Administration (ARLA) project for the grouping of

Hermel municipalities (Map 14); the "Local Development Plans" for the clusters of North and South Hermel which were prepared by the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) as part of ADELNORD (Maps 8, 9, and 10), and the SDATL.

In order to understand the local administrative and political context, I have referred to the reports and website³ of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) in addition to CDR report about regional planning, in particular Awada's (2011) report entitle "Definition of the Form and Content of a Strategic Sustainable Regional Development Plan adapted to the Lebanese needs and Context."⁴ The Localiban website⁵ has been useful for the administrative divisions mapping (Map1) whereas the websites of the union of Hermel municipalities⁶ and the Municipal Work Committee⁷ have been useful for the elaboration of the projects matrix represented in Chapter 4.

Besides reports and online websites, I have consulted the municipal publications of Hermel that are issued in form of magazines. They also include information about municipal achievements and plans, as well as about the socio-political background of the municipal council.

My second major tool of inquiry is the face-to-face interviews that I conducted in the city of Hermel during the last week of May 2016. The interview (see Appendix 1) adopts a mix of open and close-ended set of questions. Twenty-five randomly selected participants have been asked to describe the city's identity, indicate where they go to

³ www.lcps-lebanon.org

⁴ www.cdr-adelnord.org/5/8/5/7/0/9/Rapport_Fin_de_mission_SRADDT.pdf

⁵ www.localiban.org

⁶ Only the UoM of Hermel has a website (www.hermeldevelopment.org), municipalities do not have one.

⁷ www.amal-baladi.org

The Committee of Municipal work (lejnat al amal albaladi) is a Hezbollah NGO and aims at coordinating and supervising the work of the municipalities that are overseen by the party.

access urban services, list important heritage and landscape sites in addition to economic production, draw/identify the region's boundaries on an attached map for Hermel and surrounding cities and villages, specify the level of their engagement in the decision-making process, as well as discuss their perception to developmental projects and in particular to ADELNORD. The interview aims i) at involving local people in defining their "new region" administrative boundaries by investigating empirically how Hermel's inhabitants perceive and represent their identity and their city, and what are their spatial practices and mobility; and ii) at inquiring about understandings, representations and processes of planning, and local perceptions of development. The collected data is synthesized and organized thematically to profile Hermel and produce series of maps and diagrams that describe and analyze spatially its multiple features that are represented in both Chapters 3 and 4 (Maps 17,18, and 19).

The interviewees consist of 10 women and 15 men; their age range is as follow: 4 people are between 20 and 30, 8 people are between 31 and 40, 6 people are between 41 and 50, and 7 people are above 50 years old. Most of them are Lebanese, they live and work in the different neighborhoods of Hermel city (e.g. Hay El-Daya'a, Hay El-Ma'ali, Hay El-Morh, Hay El-Sabil, and Hay-Dawra) or in its urban extensions (Chwaghir and Mansoura) except a women and 2 men who live in villages located on Syrian-Lebanese borders (Hawsh El-Sayid Ali and Qasr) and are visiting their relatives in Hermel. Their professions are diverse; however 8 men have two jobs. For instance, the waiters work also as van drivers or construction workers especially during the winter season, an employee at the Ministry of Agriculture is also a fishery farm owner, one of the shop owners is also a concrete finisher, and another is a stone craftman (see

Figure 1). Women are either school teachers or housewives except one who is a farmer of potato crops.

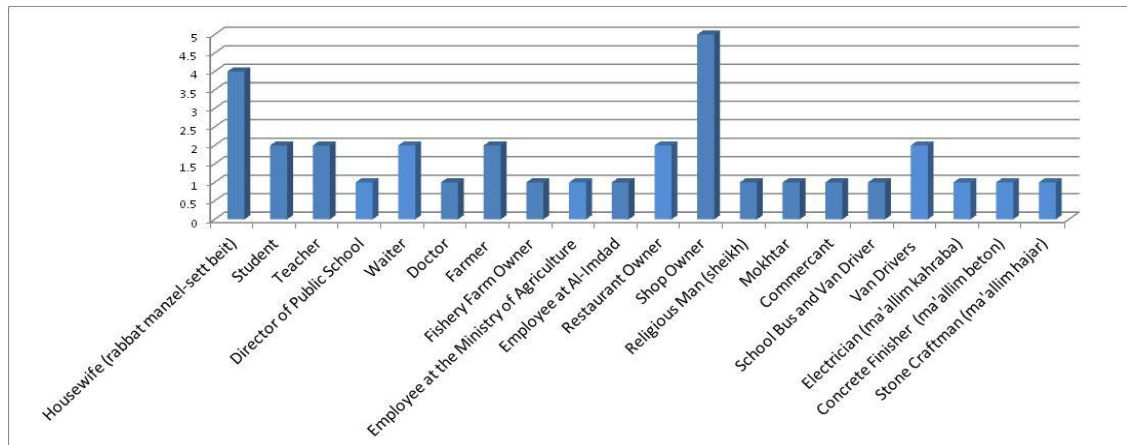


Figure 1-Distribution of Fieldwork Participants by Profession

During the fieldwork, I had several conversations with local people and with key informants in Hermel such as the municipal council member Hisham Iskandar who informally discussed technical problems and internal conflicts in addition to some developmental projects; a former council member of Chwaghir municipality and a local mukhtar who talked about the Syrian crisis and about corruption and clientelism (mahsoubiet) that hindered several projects. Local people also discussed the implications of the Syrian crisis and expressed their disinterest in local issues and their disappointment by the failed planning initiatives, in addition to their grudge against the state which has been "marginalizing, depriving, oppressing, and neglecting them for long" to the extent that some of them describe the state's attitude as an "intended impoverishment policy."

I have had also a conversation with two experts: Mouhib Hamadeh who as a historian from Hermel informed me about the socio-political background of the region,

and American University of Beirut (AUB) professor, Rami Zurayk⁸, who as an expert in agriculture, food, landscape and rural development, has stressed the importance of local knowledge, socio-political structures, and political ecology in elaborating any developmental plan or strategy, in addition to the importance of the subsidiarity principle in improving local conditions.

Adding to all of this, I am from Hermel and I have been observing it regularly for several years and hearing narratives about the region from my parents and relatives. This has enabled trust building when consulting and interviewing local people.

However, a main limitation is access to my case-study given distances and the dire security situation resulted from the war in Syrian since 2011 which I will discuss its implications on Hermel in the next section. Thus, I could not speak to a wide range of people but only to a few. I also could not interview NGOs, CBOs and political parties' representatives given the time limitations and scope of the thesis.

C. Implications of the Syrian Crisis on Hermel

Discussing the Syrian crisis and its implications on Hermel is beyond the original scope of work of this thesis. However, its huge impact and the accompanied socio-economic mutations in Hermel and surrounding villages urge us to briefly describe the current situation.

Lebanon is one of the countries hosting the highest number of Syrian refugees who, in turn, are mostly concentrated in geographic areas that suffer from protracted underdevelopment, weak infrastructure, unemployment, and marginalization. For instance, the Bekaa and the North are the primary destinations for Syrian refugees.

⁸ Professor at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut, chair of the Department of Landscape Design.

Hermel reflects best this situation: it reaches the southern Syrian interior where many Lebanese citizens have been historically present as farmers and property owners which makes it deeply entwined with what happened and is happening in neighboring Syrian cities such as Al-Qusair and Homs. For instance, reporting Kataya (2013), Hamadé et al. (2015) note that in 2011 the estimated number of Lebanese people in Qusair is 22850 residents. The crisis did not only affect socio-economic conditions of the city and its surrounding, but also, it made it open to suicide bombings, explosion, and missiles fired from inside Syria as it is considered a stronghold for Hezbollah which has been instrumental in helping the Syrian Army recapture several cities and villages especially the ones along the Syrian-Lebanese borders. This has also generated a conflictual relation with the nearby Sunni city of Aarsal.

Following the crisis, thousands of Syrians have come to live in the refugee camps that are spread across the different areas of Hermel and installed either on empty lands or nearby places of work such as farms and construction sites. Other displaced middle-class families have afforded to live in houses and apartments, which are often shared by more than one family. In addition, many Lebanese families are sharing their houses with Syrian ones on room rent basis.

UNHCR and other international organizations such as the Norwegian Refugees Council (NRC) are collaborating with Al-Imdad in order to deliver basic services and food aids to Syrian refugees to the extent that refugees in Hermel seem to live in better conditions compared to those in other areas. This is due to the historical interaction and interdependence of Lebanese and Syrian people in the region. These relationships were strengthened following the 2006 Israeli War on Lebanon as Hermel was targeted several

time by Israeli rockets and many of its residents found refuge in Homs and other Syrian cities.

At the beginning of the crisis, Hermel became isolated from the rest of the country due to insecurity issues, and from neighboring Syria which used to be one of the main sources of trade revenue. Tourism and commercial sectors in the region were also strongly affected and their revenues decreased significantly. Given its proximity to Syria, residents of Hermel used to go to Al-Qusair and Homs on regular basis to buy cheap goods and access medical services. This became nearly impossible. However, this situation changed after Hezbollah and Syrian government troops took over these two cities and their surroundings. Unlike most of the Lebanese hosting communities which are suffering from economic decline, job competition, and decreased wages following the influx of Syrian refugees, many Hermel residents were benefiting from this situation to increase their income either from high profit trade as goods are smuggled across Syrian borders or cheaply acquired, or from renting properties to displaced families to the extent that the city and surrounding villages are currently witnessing an unprecedented construction boom. Furthermore, the fact that Hermel inhabitants are historically accustomed to Syrian people has generated a peaceful cohabitation between both and facilitated the association of refugees and displaced families with local communities. This growth of population has increased local spending and consumption which are working as catalyst for generating new ideas to enhance productivity. The implications of this urban growth, whether ill or good on the long run, are currently improving the economic sector either by means of direct funding from international humanitarian organizations for both hosting communities and refugees, or by means of more job opportunities, more income sources, and more local spending. For instance,

Hisham Iskandar, a member in Hermel municipal council, states that more than hundred of houses are under construction which generates more jobs for construction workers and construction materials industries, and more income for landlords and property owners. Furthermore, the village of Qasr, which is located on the Syrian-Lebanese borders, is witnessing a huge transformation. The municipality is implementing several beautification and infrastructure projects such as street lighting equipped with PV solar panels and bridges. Moreover, trade became vibrant as well as crossed contraband activities as Syrian fuel, goods, and merchandises, that are either smuggled or stolen from abandoned Syrian industries, especially cotton products, are being sold in the village shops.

This shows how, despite the undesirable growing urban pattern resulted from the crisis, Hermel's inhabitants are keen to benefit from every single economic denominator that may improve their livelihoods. It also calls attention to the importance of opening the trade across the Syrian-Lebanese borders.

D. Thesis Contents

The thesis is organized in three chapters. Based on the review of NR and contemporary rural planning literature, Chapter 2 answers how and why rural areas should be approached from a regional scale in order to implement territorial development policies and strategies, and what tools are required for this end. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth analysis of Hermel identifying the region's assets, potentials, as well as the caza's developmental hindrances. The chapter examines specifically how the poor development of Hermel is related to the absence of an effective regional administrative scale and institution. Chapter 4 demonstrates that Hermel has the key

components for operating as an effective rural region and the capacity to organize its local resources, and investigates how to identify its regional administrative boundaries. The thesis closes by proposing institutional mechanisms for the construction of Hermel as a new region, as well as a set of policy recommendations to enhance the region's assets and limit its constraints.

CHAPTER II

REGIONAL PLANING FOR RURAL AREAS: A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Most of the regionalism literature focuses on urban and metropolitan areas to manage growth, urban sprawl, environmental problems, uneven development and social equity in a way that places newly established regions of cities/agglomerations in the global market. Based on a review of recent literature of "New Regionalism" (NR) and contemporary rural planning, this chapter focuses at showing how rural areas can and should be approached from a regional scale that stretches beyond their politico-administrative boundaries in order to implement territorial development policies and improve the livability of these areas.

The following sections highlight characteristics and approaches of NR, show how these are applicable and useful in rural areas, discuss the challenges that NR faces in general and within rural contexts in particular, and ends up by suggesting a rural sustainable development strategy based on a set of tools extracted from the literature review.

A. New Regionalism

1. Origin

New Regionalism developed as a response to increased global economic competition and to resulting challenges related to growth, inequities, traffic issues, placelessness and environmental degradation. This called for regional governance institutions and strategies that cut across the existing levels of government to manage

"places" and "regions." For Wheeler (2002), NR attempts to address "problems created by the growth and fragmentation of postmodern metropolitan regions." Gilbert (1988) also notes that the concept of region is a response to capitalist processes. Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000) argue that NR emerged as a response to meet global economy pressure and to organize economic development.

2. *New Regionalism Approaches*

NR is defined, conceptualized, and analyzed through several approaches. Wheeler (2002) notes that scholars of literature, historians, sociologists, political scientists, and planners have used the term in different contexts. Storper (1997: pp.3) also states that in the early 1990s, "the region, long considered an interesting topic to historians and geographers, but not considered to have an interest for mainstream western social science, was rediscovered by a group of political economists, sociologists, political scientists, and geographers." For Söderbaum (2003), NR and world order approaches spanned along with "regional governance, liberal institutionalism and neoclassical development regionalism, to regional security complex theory and the region-building approach." Paasi (2011) discusses how scholars have different definitions and perceptions for the interrelated concepts of region, identity, and borders: while a group of researchers refer to the region as a given space unit between the state and the localities, others understand it as "social constructs" and expressions of power relations. Thus, despite the convergence of literature on the multidimensionality and multidisciplinary of NR, researchers tend to give value to and privilege some dimensions and drivers over others.

For Hamlin and Marcucci (2008), NR consists of the process of political construction of new territorial forms and the social reproduction through everyday acts and struggles around consumption and social reproduction. Söderbaum (2003), quoting Boas, Marchand and Shaw, discusses NR from a political approach stating that "regionalism is clearly a political project, but it is obviously not necessarily state-led, as states are not the only political actor around ... we clearly believe that, within each regional project (official or not), several competing regionalizing actors with different regional visions and ideas coexist'." Wheeler (2002) notes that several scholars have used the term of New Regionalism to refer to the establishment of new political bodies and to the extending of boundaries.

The economic approach sees regions as key territorial units for economic development. Amin and Thrift (1995) argue that regional economic prosperity depends on the institutionalizing process within economy and the capacity of regions to mobilize flexible institutional strategies. This will help regions to reduce and face the forces of globalization. Amin (1997) notes that the wealth of regions accompanied with economic upgrading, social and institutional base, constitutes a precondition for entrepreneurial success. Harrison (2010) underscores that the economic approach does not highlight the process of the political construction of city-region, and its translation into visible spaces. He considers that the "processes by which city-regions are constructed politically are the mediated outcome of trans-regional economic flows and political claims to territory." Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000) also argue that New Regionalism calls for the rescaling of political processes and the establishment of institutional capacities on the sub-national levels.

The institutional approach proposed by Paasi (2011) for region's building implies that regions are not isolated independent actors but rather they are institutional structures and processes shaped by social practices and power constellations extending beyond the region's administrative borders. Paasi (2011) considers that regions are time and space specific, they have a beginning and an end in the perpetual regional transformation. Paasi (2011: pp.10) defines regions as "the results and expressions of social relations that may have their origin in complex institutional contexts that can locate in the regions but also outside, and respectively be 'local', 'regional', 'national' and 'global'." NR challenges existing state's borders and emphasizes the new role of the region based on "its institutional position in the broader field of political, cultural, economic and administrative processes" (Paasi 2011: pp.10).

3. Characteristics of New Regionalism

NR is a multiscalar process that aims at achieving territorial development by engaging local community and institutions, and by relying on local resources. This necessitates a comprehensive multilevel planning that may be grassroot-based or politically steered through state-led initiatives, or both, but never merely top-down. Therefore, according to Söderbaum (2003: pp.1) NR is "characterized by multidimensionality, complexity, fluidity and non-conformity, and by the fact that it involves a variety of state and non-state actors, who often come together in rather informal multi-actor coalitions."

Below are five main characteristics of NR I extracted from my review of the literature:

- 1- New Regionalism acknowledges the failure of top-down planning approaches. For Wheeler (2002) the implementation of new regionalist concepts is unlikely to come through top-down regional government. Albrechts (2002: pp. 751) also states that "indeed, a mere top-down and centrally organized approach runs the danger of overshooting the local, historically evolved, and accumulated knowledge and qualification potential, whereas a one-dimensional emphasis on a bottom-up approach tends to deny-or at least to underestimate-the importance of linking local traditions with structural macrotendencies." For Wheeler (2002: pp.270), because NR is place- and action-oriented, it can replace large-scale top-down regional institutions, which failed at planning and development. For Soja (2015), new regionalism allows avoiding state-led planning by transferring power from the central government to regions, bringing together interdependent communities who share "collective experiences," common interests, goals and values within the same geographic space. NR involves processes that are more specific to the region and better able to target its specific problems.
- 2- New Regionalism is multi-scalar as it stretches from the intrastate micro-scale of an urban core or a city and its hinterland to the transnational macro-scale where several states group in a way to form a collective identity in the global scale such as the European Union (EU). This Chapter focuses on the smaller scale of regional building as it is appropriate to rural regional construction and planning. For Soja (2015: pp.379), new regionalism must be adaptable, flexible and able to stretch across the different scales. This will help focusing on specific issues such as regional equity and democracy, environmental management, social justice, transportation, and other development projects.

Paraphrasing Swanstrom (1995) and Pastor (Pastor et al. , 2000), Wheeler (2002) draws attention to NR as a new approach to promote central-city and suburban economic development operationalized in a way to reduce disparities in income and tax bases. This enhances abilities of competing in the global economy.

The city-region is increasingly seen as a viable scale of governance to address recent urbanization trends, and the economic realities of neoliberalism and globalization. Storper (1997) describes regions to be "vitaly important social units", and argues that the stimuli created by cohesive regional economies in city-regions generate a powerful driving force for economic development, cultural creativity, and technological innovation. Briffault (2000: pp.3) also argues that the region represents "the most complete unit of economic, social and ecological structure."

Quoting Scott & Storper, Harrison (2010) shows that city-regions have an increasing role in the economy and are perceived as the "'windows of locational opportunity' for capturing, nurturing, and anchoring wealth creating activity." Harrison notes that decentralization of socio-economic decision-making and policy implementation is crucial at the scale of city-regional institutions.

This shows that the city-region represents the smallest regionalist unit to which the state can transfer the responsibility of development. This unit brings together several areas sharing the same resources and "common territorial characteristics", but not necessarily the same administrative boundaries. It aims at formulating a shared vision and common objectives on a socially, economically, politically, and culturally coordinated territory.

3- NR is inclusive and promotes multi-governance. This "multigovernance" is essential for establishing regional economic development, regulating and managing natural resources and environment, triggering community engagement and social integration, and ensuring social service delivery. Transferring the responsibility of management and development necessitates the involvement of multiple actors.

For Paasi (2011), people's belonging to a region entails a sense of community and identity which mobilize them into conflicts with their respective states.

Gilbert (1988) conceptualizes regions as the medium for social interaction synchronizing people, nature, and social relations in time-space settings.

For Rodriguez-Pose (2007), the global drive towards devolution accompanied with the scalar turn focuses on governance as it has accentuated the local horizontal cooperation and has reshaped the relationship between central and local governments. This implies greater collaboration among local institutions and the setting up of governance structures among local governments and public and private actors. In this view, Brenner (2004) notes that the state's role has shifted from leading the design and implementation of strategies to enabling and facilitating the governance process, revising and shaping an adequate legislative framework, and assisting the institutional building.

4- NR is place-specific and redraws attention to physical and spatial planning. For Rodriguez-Pose (2007), the city-region approach implies that policies are custom-made as they must adapt to the conditions of every territory in terms of social, economic, and institutional dimensions. Wheeler (2002) notes that "reincorporating a focus on specific places and landscapes" is a key

characteristic of NR which calls for a direct observation of spaces through experience and contextual studies. Wheeler (2002) adds that this highlights the sense of place and stress the necessity of integrating physical planning and urban design in the process.

- 5- NR is comprehensive as it requires an integrated thinking at multiple levels. Researchers agree that NR implies the interconnectivity of the social, cultural, political, economic, and physical dimensions on a territory. Wheeler (2002: pp.271) calls attention to the necessity of a holistic thinking given the inefficiency of isolated projects' interventions. He argues that "[...] many growth management advocates have realized that it is not enough simply to establish urban growth boundaries or other growth controls, but that policies and designs must be adopted to bring about desired forms of development inside these boundaries. [...] What is required are strategies to produce a more coherent overall regional fabric for both metropolitan regions and exurban areas."

4. Building an Effective Region

The previous section discussed the interrelation of the social, economic, political and institutional dimensions in NR. For building an effective region, policies and planning interventions need to reflect this interconnectivity. This requests empowering local knowledge in order to identify and extract a region's identity, creating an effective governance system, and delivering and designing policies that are tailored in relation to the region's specificity and social, economic, environmental, and spatial needs.

Paasi (2011: pp.12) identifies four stages for the construction of regions: i) territorial shaping consisting of the construction of territorial form through which actors define the spatial boundaries ("soft" and "hard") of their region; ii) symbolic shaping through which the region is named and a set of symbols is developed in order to establish a socio-cultural unit; iii) institutional shaping through which activists, elites, and mass media establish formal institutions and practices in the spheres of politics, economics, legislation, and administration; and iv) establishment of the region to complement the institutionalization process and the struggles over resources and power in the regional system.

In line with Paasi, Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000) stress the importance of region institutionalization throughout the process of regional building. However, they link the efficiency of the region to its institutional thickness. They argue that the rescaling of political processes and the establishment of institutional capacities at the sub-national levels requires constitutional reforms and introduction of regional/sub-national institutions, agencies and chambers in order to build an "institutional thickness."⁹ The success of institutional thickness depends on networks, coalitions, cooperation, and collective representation of different institutions and actors. Institutional thickness can pave the ground for innovation/change, as well as, for

⁹ To prove their point that regional public, private, and nongovernmental stakeholders especially economic ones and those involved in land-use planning, react differently to the introduction of regional planning processes, Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000) use comparative case studies in England, Scotland, and Wales. In England, debates and questions emerged in relation to the existing context of fragmented local and public actors, the centralization of power, the "institutional congestion" reflected in the new forms of partnerships with the private sectors that are charged of public utilities, the lack of accountability, and the effectiveness of the creation of new regional institutions in solely generating successful economic strategies. In addition, other concerns question the adequacy of the adoption of regional spatial scales as most suitable for solving wider national issues. The case studies showed that the specific social, economic, and political backgrounds of the three countries combined with electoral tendencies in regional politics, required different approaches which in their turns privilege one regional dimension over others (planning and governance in the case of Scotland and Wales, and economic development in the case of England).

resistance to change. The change, in turn, depends on the regional individuals' characteristics and attitudes and on how existing institutions and networks (horizontal alignment) embrace and integrate with new forms of institutions and structures (vertically imposed). Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000: pp.716) identify six main assessment criteria of different stakeholders' perception of horizontal relationships between the new regional level and the different governance agencies, and of vertical relationships between the new regional level and other governance scales: "i) the adequacy of existing regional planning arrangements; ii) the effectiveness of existing regional planning guidance; iii) the new forms of governance and the impact on regional planning; iv) the accountability and the role of the public; v) the possible fragmentation of national strategic policy coordination; and vi) avoiding state fragmentation and a continued role for strategic policy coordination." Besides helping to foresee and assess the openness and willingness for change in different regions, this adds the spatial planning dimension and the governance scales to the understanding of NR through an emphasis on institutional capacity building and related networks.

Several scholars mention the importance of the establishment at the regional level of an institution/agency which responsibility consists of providing a holistic thinking for territorial development in a way that brings back the spatial dimension to planning, and combines it with social, economic and political dimensions. This institution is often referred to as a "Regional Development Agency (RDA)" or "Regional Planning Authority (RPA)". RDAs and RPAs are often politically steered¹⁰, and their output results from the multi-governance of private and public actors, and sometimes with informal institutional networks (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2000).

¹⁰ For instance, Harrison (2010) mentions the case of Scotland, Wales and Ireland which established RDAs working alongside Government Offices for the Regions and indirectly elected regional assemblies (ERA).

Harrison (2010) notes that the aim of these agencies is to reverse the trend of centralization and to strengthen transfer of responsibilities to regional bodies. For Wheeler (2002: pp.274), regional agencies must "integrate land use, air quality, and transportation planning, through coordinated action between agencies if not a single regional plan by one agency. Planning for housing, education, and social services is closely related to these concerns as well."

5. Challenges of New Regionalism

The application of the NR and the establishment of a region face often several challenges that are not only related to geographical constraints but also to other parameters such as the human resources or "social capital", trust building, strength of shared identities, financial and local resources, and the willing of the state to revise its regulation and legislation system, and the politics of rescaling (Brenner, 2004).

- 1- Several researchers (Storper, 1997; Soja, 2015; Albrechts, 2002; Wheeler, 2002) agree that the diversity of urban actors and their inclusion is a key aspect of NR. Albrechts (2002: pp.750) considers the process itself to be a "democratic struggle for inclusiveness in democratic procedures" consisting of the power of facing collectively shared problems and of struggling to reach the common objectives of a coherent vision. Wheeler (2002) also argues that NR fosters regional social movements around equity, environmental, growth, economic development, and physical planning issues. However, he also notes how NR necessitates social capital to support regional policymaking: all civil society actors in a region (powerful actors, business leaders, NGOs, citizens...) must agree on a common ground in relation to regional problems, acknowledge their

interdependency, and negotiate accordingly. This is needed for promoting participation and increasing the sense of community and belonging among citizens by the mean of "flexible governance."

- 2- Wheeler (2002) raises the question of leadership and its significance to sectors of "regional transportation, land use, design, housing, environmental protection, and equity planning." Lu (2011) also argues that strong leadership of key personnel is crucial for benefiting from available opportunities, establishing an appropriate and enduring governing structure, promoting regional alliance, and achieving benefits for communities.
- 3- For Wheeler (2010) multi-level coordination is a key challenge for achieving holistic thinking. He argues that meeting regional needs necessitates coordinated planning and urban design across regional, municipal, neighborhood and site scales.

6. *New Regionalism Limitations*

The New Regionalism framework has several limitations as many scholars have noted namely theoretical narrowness, imprecision, and abstraction (Lovering, 1999; Macleod, 2001). Most of the critiques addressed to NR are based on two major interrelated points:

- 1- First, NR needs more empirical studies in order to fill the gap between theoretical findings and NR application as on the ground many factors such as outside influences, institutional networks, political power, and social networks and alliances play a crucial role in the implementation of any development plan or strategy on a territory. Quoting Bristow (2005), Harrison (2006: pp. 36)

argues that "what is missing is any effort to conceptualize regions as territorially defined social aggregations, with very different economic and political structures... more empirical research is needed to understand and identify the conditions which enable some regions to adapt successfully, whilst others remain 'locked-in' to a fatal development path."

- 2- Second, NR needs more operationalization mechanisms using institutional and regulatory tools. Paraphrasing Goodwin et al. (2005), Harrison highlights the importance of the mechanism and process of power devolution from the state. Harrison (2006) also notes that the success of the regional scale depends on the degree of its intertwining with the state's restructuring. This calls for a constitutional change and a functional decentralization. In light of this, he argues that the success of the NR depends on its way of "doing regional regulations."

B. Planning Rural Areas as Regions: Theories and Tools

Several researchers explored socio-economic problems in rural areas, problems of inequalities and inefficiency of states' interventions and top-down planning. Their aim was to find alternatives that would lead to change, and research the "right" scale of intervention. For some (Marsden, 1998; Garrod et al. , 2006; Kerselaers et al. ,2013; Berdegué et al. , 2014), rural planning should be addressed from an economic and institutionalist approach in order to build a multifunctional space. Others investigated the application of the territorial development approach which relies on the areas specificity in terms of social, economic and natural resources. Still other researchers (Hamin and Marcucci, 2008; Lu, 2011; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2013; Harrison and Heley,

2015) argue that NR framework, because it is multi-scalar and multidimensional, is also applicable in rural areas and should not be restricted to large urban scales.

This thesis is in line with the latter position, and aims at showing how the region represents an effective scale for planning and policy making, not only for large central urban areas but also for rural areas. Rural regions often reflect a coherent and strong collective identity, but are plagued by fragmented or inadequate schemes of urban policies. Therefore, the thesis will argue that New Regionalism is a suitable framework for rural planning, alongside other scholars, and will identify through the literature tools, and policies for further rural regions' planning.

1. New Regionalism: A Useful Approach for Rural Planning

Marsden (1998) identifies three categories of rural areas: i) the paternalistic countryside where agricultural stable landscapes are viable and profitable; ii) the marginal countryside that is distant from metropolitan areas with less viable global scale agriculture and poor and elderly population; inter-local cooperation is required to sustain services and attract development¹¹; and iii) the contested countryside which tends to be highly scenic, and is often located near a university or other technology center¹². For Marsden (1998) and Harrison and Heley (2015)¹³, the need for regionalism

¹¹ The first two categories rely on government subsidies for the farming and agriculture sectors; Marsden (1998) describes them as "clientelistic countryside" while Hamin and Marcucci refer to them as "marginal countryside."

¹² The term "contested countryside" refers to the contestation on the land and resources for exploitation and development and to the contests occurring between new residents attracted to the region and old ones.

¹³ Using three cases studies of American rural regions (Highland Communities Initiative program in Massachusetts, Loess Hills Alliance in Iowa and Sierra Business Council in Eastern California) that fit

is not so pronounced in the first category but would be very adequate in the third category as contested rural areas reflects some metropolitan characteristics and show a deep interrelated nature of landscape, work and social life. Conversely, Lu (2011) considers that rural regionalism is an adequate approach not only to the contested countryside as mentions Marsden (1998) and assert Hamin and Marcucci, but rather to all three categories¹⁴.

In line with Lu (2011), I argue that NR is indeed appropriate for rural areas, and the building of an efficient region is a prerequisite to any development and planning attempts.

a. How is New Regionalism useful for rural planning and development?

For Harrison and Heley (2015), spatial equity and economic competitiveness call for sub-regional scales of interventions. However, these must also take into consideration the fact that rural areas are constantly excluded from policymakers' agenda and discourse. Harrison and Heley state that policy elites' geo-political

within the third category and that are challenged by urban sprawl, metropolitan spread, landscape fragmentation, and extreme pressure on the profitability of resources uses, Hamin and Marcucci (2008) argue that contested countryside are the most to have the potential of engendering new authentic rural regional identities that endure.

¹⁴ To argue his point, Lu (2011) uses the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA) in Western Kansas and the San Juan Forum (SJF) in the Four Corners Region (Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona) as case studies from the southwestern United States. Both are isolated agricultural areas with sparse population. The small dispersed population, rural depopulation, economic decline, political fragmentation, rivalries among the localities, long distance from the state capital, and state neglect hindered the economic development. Lu (2011) shows how this situation urged leaders to form a regional alliances aiming to face common challenges and solving shared problems by exchanging ideas and information and by providing resources for local and economic development. Communities' leaders succeeded to "renegotiate" a place in the globalizing economy by promoting the conception of their region and recognize that their collective power is much stronger than individual ones (access to more funding and having more political clout on their common issues). For instance, they succeeded to attract large dairy farms to some areas, yet the resulted beneficial impact extended across the region as other areas benefited from engaging in related businesses (e.g. veterinary, milk and cheese processing...).

perspectives on city-regionalism are either "spatially selective" focusing on the city/agglomeration scale or "spatially inclusive" focusing on the region scale, which has led to the fragmentation of territories along politico-administrative lines. City-region policy interventions that are based on functional networked geographies and not on territorially embedded administrative ones, fail to overcome the dichotomy between urban and rural, city and country.

Other scholars, such as Hamin and Marcucci (2008) and Lu (2011), use the term "ad hoc regionalism" to argue for applying regionalism in rural areas. For Hamin and Marcucci (2008), many researchers restrict regionalism to metropolitan areas in order to manage growth and social equity by improving the competitive position of regions in the global market. Hamin and Marcucci (2008) refer to the regionalism as the process of political construction of new territorial forms and the reproduction through everyday acts and struggles around consumption and social reproduction. The two scholars argue that in the case of rural regions, the local is too small for effective change, and thus, it is important to increase scales in order to achieve more effective interaction in the dense webs of globalization. This calls for the application of NR in rural areas as to reach the needed scale for development.

Lu (2011) also proposes NR as a suitable framework for rural areas. He notes that the region represents now the most suited scale for economic activities and interaction of political, social, and economic processes. Rural areas that suffer from many issues hindering their development such as shrinking population, weak functional organization, loss of political influence, and limited political configuration, are searching for new effective and politically feasible ways to overcome their limitations and enhance their quality of life. The shifts in the global market only exacerbated the

situation as rural communities that are historically based on farming, timber industry, low-wage, and low-skill manufacturing, are losing their job bases and are unable to compete. In addition, environmental changes added uncertainty to rural economies as primary sectors (agriculture and related industry) are directly affected by the climate change issue. By mobilizing existing grassroots efforts, rural areas can reach critical mass needed for transcending political boundaries and for implementing development strategies. Lu (2011) states that rural areas are in general characterized by many common assets such as wide-open space, lack of traffic congestion, lack of pollution, and low land costs. However, their sparse population worked against their "modern" economic development. This can be solved only by consolidating efforts and resources at a regional scale.

Ortiz-Guerrero (2013) notes that NR has been confined to metropolitan regions and most of the literature and initiatives did not reach consensus on a workable concept, nor did extend to the rural regions. Thus, he proposes an investigation of the direct link between NR and rural areas, by juxtaposing the characteristics of the former to the needs and challenges of rural planning and development.

In sum, I advocate a regional scale for rural planning as follows:

- 1- New Regionalism focuses on the territory specificity and spatial planning which call for public/private consensus, local actors' connectivity, social cohesion, institutions networking, resources allocation, and mobilization of the civil society. Planning approaches in rural regions, which reflect a mosaic of socio-political structures and forces, economic activities, and physical forms, must deal with the issue of government versus governance. Thus, NR represents an

efficient framework for rural planning as it works as an intermediate scale between government and governance or central power and local ones.

- 2- The fact that NR recognizes the complexity of regions and deals with these issues through a holistic approach as we have seen makes it an appropriate alternative for rural development policies. NR seeks to balance livability, environmental, and equity concerns (social justice, conflicts, empowerment and inclusion) with economic ones.
- 3- NR promotes a new emphasis on physical planning that is not only based on physical forms but also on integrating good urban and landscape design at all scales. This requires, according to Ortiz-Guerrero (2013), a change in socio-economic-patterns taking into consideration related institutional forms and social relations. Therefore, NR allows approaching rural issues and challenges from an endogenous perspective.

b. Key Aspects of Rural Areas

Ortiz-Guerrero (2013) argues that NR features are also applicable to rural territories, and accordingly, he investigates its implications for the formulation of territorial development strategies and policies in rural areas. Thus, he defines the region as a territorial community distinguished by a set of aspects such as common history, common social institutions, and a shared view of the relationship between people and their environment.

Several other scholars also focused on key interrelated aspects and specificities that are best to be approached from a regional perspective in rural areas and contribute to the elaboration of territorial development strategies. I synthesize below three of these key aspects.

i. Multifunctionalism

The term of multifunctionality is used to describe the integration of new functions to the original function of local resources, especially in relation to land and environment, and hence often relates to agriculture. For Knickel and Renting (2000: pp. 513), "rural development consists of a wide variety of new activities such as the production of high quality and region-specific products, nature conservation and landscape management, agri-tourism and the development of short supply chains." They discuss the "multifunctionality schemes" as the introduction of means to visualize the "complex interrelationships in rural development processes and to 'map' the functional relationships and specific reconfigurations in the use of resources such as land, labour, knowledge and nature that underlie them." This highlights the necessity of introducing new activities that are multidimensional, and multifunctional with a high degree of integration. A clear segregation of functions as recreation, housing, production, tourism and nature conservation is critiqued. Knickel and Renting (2000: pp. 513) argue that new forms of multifunctionality can generate a new resource base that "[...] often goes beyond the individual farm gate and, as a result, can only be perceived at more aggregate, regional levels."

For Kerselaers et al. (2013), rural areas are undergoing several transformations such as residential development patterns and development of natural reserves and greenhouse clusters. Agriculture, which has historically been the main rural land function, is now competing with other functions such as housing, nature, recreational areas and commercial activities. Due to the pressure on rural land and conflict between urban sprawl and nature conservation, planning systems and tools are increasingly

developing multifunctional areas in order to control land use changes, protect open spaces and farmlands, and manage urban growth. Kerselaers et al. (2013) note that the need for multifunctional rural areas and the resulted increase in the number of the stakeholders made planning processes more complicated and more difficult. First, difficulties are encountered in linking different planning phases (vision, plan and implementation). This requires shift from a linear planning approach to a cyclic interaction between the three phases. Second, the need for data that supports planning and identifies the role of its different sectors is another major difficulty in rural areas especially in relation to the agriculture sector. Third, decision processes must be fair by taking into consideration "procedural justice." Distribution of outcomes (public goods and public burdens) must be equitable; this calls for the "distributive justice". Different socio-cultural values of the concerned actors must be also taken into consideration in order to overcome "value conflicts."

Harrison and Heley (2015) note that rural economic development calls for a "multifunctioning globalizing countryside." Using a functional economic perspective, they argue that when included in the framework of city-region governance, rural areas contribute to growth in and beyond metropolises. The framework of city-region governance, in its turn, must be constructed adequately in a way that reflects the interpenetration of urban-economic processes across all geographic space, and that shifts the discursive from "key centers" to "key settlements."

ii. Landscape and Heritage

People in rural areas are very closely tied to their environment and landscape, to the extent that communities often shape their identity in relation to their land not only in

terms of property and place of origin, but also in terms of landscape, environment, and heritage. Since they are naturally more articulated in rural areas and territories, the importance of rural landscape and heritage (natural sceneries and built environment) is originated in the fact that they represent a rural specificity and a node of tourism attraction and intra-national tourism in particular.

In this view, Hamin and Marcucci (2008) stress the role and efficiency of regionalism in rural areas, communities are tied to land and landscape which shape their shared experience and form their economic base. Communities' identity is also determined by natural resources, local environment, and physical landscapes. Thus, the community's structure of expectations that help to produce and reproduce socio-spatial collective identities must be based on landscape-related phenomena. Hamin and Marcucci (2008: pp.470) state that identifying with a landscape enables communities to "re-inhabit" the place.

For Courtney et al. (2006), the notion of rural does not represent anymore the simple setting of primary production, but rather it became associated with multiple production and consumption activities. They argue that rural land value shifted from a production value to a quality of space value which represents a geographically variable asset. Courtney et al. (2006) examine the role of natural heritage in rural development to argue that rural development opportunities, which depend on environmental quality and natural heritage, are capable of triggering rural tourism. The authors identify three categories of environment and natural heritage activities. First, core activities recognized as public goods and services: these depend on the environment itself and involve environmental industries' sector (e.g. pollution control, waste management). Second, primary activities: these depend on physical exploitation and management of

the environment (e.g. quarrying, farming, fishing, forestry and agricultural firms). Third, reliant activities which depend on the quality of the environment and natural heritage for their commercial vitality without interfering with its management (e.g. holiday tourism, recreation, production and marketing of food and drink in relation to the specific and unique environment)¹⁵.

iii. Local Identity and Knowledge:

Local identity and knowledge are key elements to rely on when planning for rural areas. Rural areas do not reflect nor metropolitan landscape nor metropolitan knowledge. Thus, positive change and sustainable development cannot occur unless they emerge from local knowledge in respect to local identity.

Hamin and Marcucci (2008) state that rural areas are complex and cannot be reduced to the simple definition of "little cities." Rural areas demonstrate significant diversity and cannot be generalized. For instance, agricultural production, which used to be a major indicator for rural futures, is no longer associated to population dynamics. Their residents differ in many ways from metropolitan ones especially in relation to the value they give to land and landownership as a way to protect their right of using their lands as they wish, and in relation to the way they perceive governmental interventions which are often opposed by aversion.

As mentioned earlier, Hamin and Marcucci (2008: pp. 470) propose "ad hoc rural regionalism" which consists of creating an alternative rural character with complex

¹⁵ Using four case study areas in rural Scotland, Courtney et al. (2006) argue that the geography and the three natural heritage activities have different degrees of integration within local economy. The results show that the importance of environment and natural heritage varies across local economies of rural areas. This is explained by the discrepancy among the related stakeholders'/business operators' perceptions except in agriculturally dependant areas. High natural heritage dependant areas show a great difference between natural heritage activities and other businesses.

land use planning and strong social bonds to found the base of the regional landscape-related identity: "on a practical level, one could expect to see it through the dispersion of knowledge about the geomorphic boundaries and ecosystem functions of the region, as well as the development or renewal of an aesthetic signification, and focus on local products and processes."

2. Tools for Effective and Sustainable Rural Regional Planning

As we have seen, rural planning can and should be addressed on a regional scale by relying on a specific set of tools. These tools operate as socio-economic catalysts to optimize benefits from an endogenous perspective. The interdependence of these multidimensional tools requires preserving a balance between the social, the economic, and the ecological. This enables sustainable development in resilient rural regions.

Based on the three dimensions we discussed earlier, multifunctionality, landscape and heritage, and local identity and knowledge, rural planning scholars have identified several useful tools to implement the regionalism in rural areas. Their aim is to find economic alternatives to agriculture, and to respond to the multiple claims made on land. These tools are often embedded in the economic and institutionalist approach. Several scholars advocate the linkages as a tool to enhance multifunctionalism. Others use the institutionalist approach to stress the necessity of establishing regional development agencies responsible for providing a comprehensive and coordinated framework for rural development and planning.

a. Economic Tools

Harrison and Heley (2015) suggest that policymakers should not shape their policies in relation to the agglomeration but rather in relation to economic functions. This allows them to secure functional coherence for other marginalized spaces and to identify city-region-like spaces. This therefore promotes the establishment of "multifunctioning globalizing countryside." The functionally economic approach reinforces linkages as it identifies and classifies hubs (e.g. market towns, touristic hotspots) as emergent, dominant (or formerly dominant), rather than presenting them as a static snapshot of regional space.

Linkages:

For Garrod et al. (2006), linkages between economic, environmental, and social dimensions are vital for rural change which must be based on a sustainable development. They identify two key bases to achieve this: tourism and employment.

- Rural tourism is key tool for enhancing rural economy in the countryside while maintaining its integrity. Garrod et al. (2006) consider that linkages between rural tourism and countryside are perhaps more important than agriculture. They state that the "countryside capital" on which rural tourism primarily depends is defined as "the fabric of the countryside, its villages and its market town" in reference to natural capital, to social context, and to local economy. This capital provides rural tourists with diverse things to do and attractions to visit. Nevertheless, tourism is an economic product which raw materials (e.g. historical buildings, landscape, and

biodiversity), infrastructure, equipment, workforce, skills and knowledge represent its capital stock and thus, must be sustained quantitatively and qualitatively. Investment in countryside capital is no longer understood as an optional addition but rather, as a core component for successful and sustainable rural tourism, and rural economic and social development.

- Courtney et al. (2006) explain that facilitating regional or local economic growth through income and employment is embedded in promoting growth poles and exports. Securing local economic growth depends on transactions of purchases and sales (upstream and downstream), on their related size, and on the spatial distribution of income and employment multipliers. Thus, they consider that it is necessary to identify locational, sectoral, and other characteristics of strong local economic integration in order to make linkages useful for rural development. In this regard, core activities will be more focused on sectoral employment, which ought to come in the form of expenditure transfer from central government, local government, or membership funds¹⁶. Rural and land-based tourism services are more integrated into local economies than other services. Courtney et al. (2006) highlight the need for, and importance of, an effective

¹⁶ Courtney et al. (2006) show that the primary sector activities are well connected within local economies but have weak downstream linkages as these depend on the firm's industrial sector and on its individual characteristics in terms of size, ownership and age. The geography in terms of accessibility or remoteness to urban areas is another factor determining the ability of an area to be "self-contained". Additionally, reliant firms beyond tourism services (e.g. craft manufacture) tend to more stimulate local economic growth through sales of goods and visitors' servicing, and to more generate net income and employment multipliers.

management of natural heritage. It consists of further support from public expenditure on core natural activities as they are vital for sustaining the viability of rural areas, and on integrating reliant activities in the management through participation and financial assistance.

b. Politico-Institutional Tools

Hamin and Marcucci (2008) distinguish between two forms for building effective organizations: either devolving power from the state to the region (European and British contexts) or empowering localities/collaborative networks to regional bodies (U.S context). In this regard, other scholars (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Lagendijk, 2009; Harrison, 2010; Lu, 2011; Harrison and Heley, 2015) underscore the necessity of establishing regional units to operate as mediators between both scales of power, such as the Regional Development Agency (RDA).

Harrison and Heley (2015) propose defining sub-national governance units based on functional economic areas, and not necessarily setting new territorial boundaries for sub-national policymaking. They argue that urban managers should extend the processes of deconcentration and decentralization to rural spaces in order to strengthen their characteristics and emphasize solidarity, diversity, identity, and community. Lu (2011) also calls attention to the necessity of establishing an appropriate enduring governing structure that forms regional alliances and promotes regional identity. This structure can help achieving benefits for communities that face common challenges, and allow regional alliances to solve their shared problems by exchanging ideas and information.

Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2000) argue that NR requires a swathe of constitutional reforms, including state devolution, the establishment of regional assemblies, and the introduction of RDAs and regional chambers. This must be completed by the possibility of electing regional assemblies at a later stage. Referring to Jones and MacLeod (1999), MacLeod and Goodwin (1999), Roberts and Lloyd (1999) and Baker et al. (1999), they note that RDAs face challenges in terms of future scales of governance, spatial policy dimensions, institutional compatibility, and coordination, but can still efficiently contribute to fostering strong relations with existing stakeholders. In addition, RDAs represent an opportunity to face major issues such as the fragmentation of local public and private bodies, centralization of power, and institutional congestion of bottom-up arrangements. The value added for RDAs lies in their ability to work alongside and cooperate with existing formal and informal institutional networks, and to improve partnerships and networking.

Legendijk (2009) examines how RDAs have the potential to fill gaps in regional economic development, and find external resources through more bottom-up means. RDAs are either part of the central state (subject to political control but benefiting from stable income), or bottom-up established by local authorities (more independent and relying on external funding), or (semi) private businesses (relying on service provision). Another RDA category is established by both local and regional authorities. This one has become more prominent as the fact that its political power is less pronounced facilitates decision-making processes. RDAs role consists of mobilizing support and funding for regional development projects such as institutional support in the form of local, national, and international grants.

Lagendijk (2009) argues that these regional units require more than the devolution of power from the state, namely a strong legal backing to improve local economic development and service delivery.¹⁷ Other factors, such as local engagement and external funding, affect the RDA capacities to trigger effective change, and to face challenges such as its embeddedness in a multi-governance system and within a developed regional structure and networking. RDAs face additional challenges especially in contexts of patronage and clientelist practices, as well as poor performance of local state organizations, and lack of competencies. In addition, in neoliberal systems, self-reliant RDAs run the risk of restricting their role to consultancy and coordination as they live on grants. Therefore, Lagendijk (2009) identifies two key aspects for effective RDAs that would work as catalysts of regional development and business growth while responding to local needs and benefiting from local opportunities. First, they need to form an effective network formation among firms and organizations to ensure the flow of information. Second, they need to effectively represent multiple regional actors to ensure trust building within public, private and nongovernmental organizations.

Moreover, Lagendijk (2009) identifies three key issues for the effective functioning of RDAs in special contexts that are ongoing the application of regionalism (e.g. Turkey): i) Drafting, discussion, and implementation of regional development strategies and plans; ii) attracting foreign investment; and iii) expanding and aligning the provision of business services.

To conclude, RDAs pave the ways for effective regional building even at a premature stage as they can still be successful in operating as intermediate agencies

¹⁷ The findings of Lagendijk (2009) are base on the case-study results of Istanbul, Turkey.

"making vital contributions and inducing change. But this will require more thinking and action on the organizational and institutional embedding of RDAs. A key issue is how an effective legitimization of RDAs in their regions can be achieved" (Legendijk, 2009: pp. 395).

c. Socio-Political Tools

As explained before, multifunctionalism, and local identity and knowledge are pillars of regional rural development. Scholars of the socio-political approach stress the necessity of enhancing multi-governance and the importance of including public and private actors (social, political, and institutional) using participatory tools.

Kerselaers et al. (2013) note that rural regions are no longer dissociated between open space and urban development, but suffer from a triangular model of "agriculture-versus-nature-versus-urban". The increase in functional claims implies a growth in the number of stakeholders who also have conflicting interests. This requires a multi-governance system that ensures larger inclusion.

Zurayk et al. (2001) show how indigenous knowledge is a crucial resource for identifying the bio-physical characters of a land. They use the case-study of supporting sustainable land management in Aarsal, a semi-arid mountainous locality in Lebanon, where conflicts in land use divide pastoralists and growers. The adopted method was based on a combination of participatory and GIS tools in order to understand and evaluate land capability. Zurayk et al. (2001) argue that this participatory approach enhanced the trust-building process with the community, and increased local people's commitment to the project as well as their sense of ownership. It helped initiating a debate on future land uses within the community, while allowing different stakeholders

to gain awareness of different risks and possibilities. Local people became more conscious of the consequence of different land use choices. This indigenous knowledge helped researchers complementing the data sets, which often represents a challenge in Lebanese and third nation contexts. Moreover, it helped overcoming the difficulties of implementing and avoiding the traditional top-down approaches of central government planning authorities.

d. Sustainable Development Tools

Sustainable development is a process and an outcome of combined and interrelated procedures, processes, plans, projects, regulations and tools.

Much of the literature links sustainable development to territorial development which relies on local resources (social, environmental, and economic) and on place-based strategies.

For instance the territorial school led by Alberto Magnaghi elaborated the concept of "local self-sustainable development" which focuses on the increasingly important role of local development led by "self-government". Magnaghi (2003) stress the notion of "territory" and suggests that territories are shaped in relation to their identity, history, and geography. According to him, the relation between communities and their milieu/territory is mutual and interrelated stating that "l'autosoutenabilité [...] repose sur le postulat selon lequel une nouvelle relation co-évolutive entre habitants-producteurs et territoire peut créer un équilibre durable entre établissement humain et milieu, en reliant les habitudes, les savoirs et les techniques d'aujourd'hui à une sagesse environnementale ancestrale."

To answer the question of how to promote sustainable development in rural regions by relying on territorial dynamics in a way that ensures economic growth and better income distribution, Berdegué et al. (2014) identify nine trends, using case-studies from Latin America:

- Combining hard and soft factors to connect to markets and to generate a positive dynamic.
- Identifying small and medium urban centers that are functionally bonded with surrounding rural areas.
- Enhancing transformative territorial coalitions to prepare the ground for more inclusive economic growth.
- Promoting the interaction of territorial and extraterritorial actors and institutions.
- Identifying natural resources that are coupled with local economies, local institutions, and territorial projects.
- Revising and applying laws and regulations.
- Integrating relationships between economic growth and gender-based inequities.
- Integrating relationships between economic growth and poverty reduction at the territorial level.

Diagram 1 synthesizes the literature review and shows how sustainable regional rural planning can be achieved via a set of tools that are based on countryside capitals. It also shows that effective regional building is a bottom-up process that must be preceded by state's devolution of power. The diagram presents a tripartite strategy based on local identity and knowledge, landscape and heritage, and multifunctionalism principles. This calls for i) the integration of new functions to the original function of local resources,

especially in relation to land and environment; ii) more tools that would work as socio-economic catalysts to optimize benefits from an endogenous perspective in a sustainable way that ensures a balance between the economic, the social, and the ecological aspects of the region; and iii) the identification of linkages between economic, environmental, and social dimensions, and more focus on the two early discussed key bases (the tourism and the employment). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, establishing an RDA ensures the implementation mechanism of this tripartite strategy, improves partnerships and networking, and cooperates with existing institutional and social networks (formal and informal). The RDA's main contribution is facing the fragmentation of local public and private bodies, centralization/hegemony of power, and institutional congestion of bottom-up arrangements.

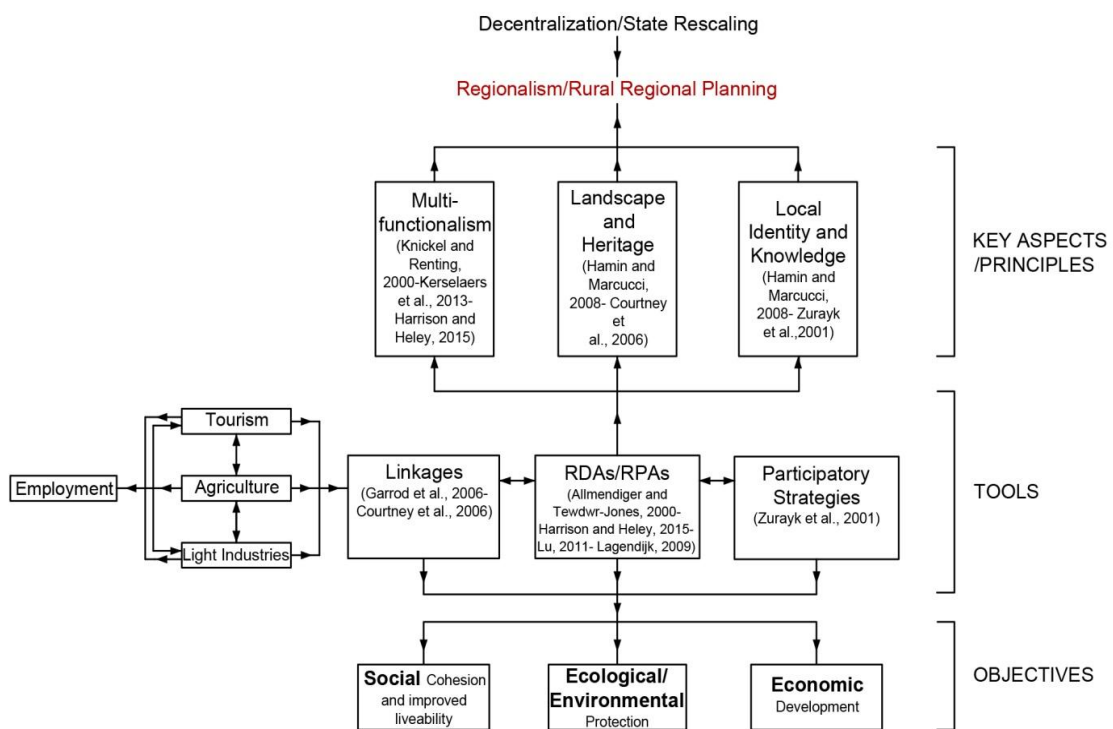


Diagram 1- Rural Sustainable Development as an Outcome of Regionalism
 Source: Cited Authors and Hamadeh, 2016

CHAPTER III

HERMEL AS A CASE-STUDY FOR REGIONAL RURAL PLANNING

This section will focus on the caza of Hermel that suffers from acute socio-spatial disparities, significant poverty, fragmented territories, sprawl, social exclusion, poor transportation systems, environmental degradation, as well as political hegemony. The region is infamous for its unexploited resources and numerous potentials but also for its poor development. This will be discussed and developed further in this chapter. The SDATL acknowledges the importance of Hermel in the Beqaa and lists it as a relay city that is supposed to boost the socio-economic development in the region. However, the SDATL that was intended to facilitate and guide development, regulate land use, and promote regional development did not provide the implementation mechanisms to achieve its main goals, and remained confined to the regulatory and traditional administrative approaches. Local authorities that are the appropriate scale through which specific urban and spatial problems should be addressed were not considered nor in the planning nor in the implementation. This lack of multi-scalar mechanisms of implementation does not contribute to the aims of regional balanced development recognized as a main principle in the SDATL.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, rural planning strategies should focus on local identity and knowledge, landscape and heritage, and multifunctionalism in ways to elaborate a regional plan that is conceived around existing territorial resources and around the concept of local self-sustainable development. The plan relies on an inclusive process that engages local NGOs and CBOs, and on a multiscalar approach

that brings together international donors, local and regional governments, as well as private actors and institutions. The regional plan abides by the SDATL, though it may revise some of its provisions for the Baalbak-Hermel governorate. This calls for state's rescaling to enable establishing regional institutions such as RDAs that are responsible of identifying linkages to fill the gaps in regional economic development, promoting multi-scalar governance, and finding resources by more bottom-up means and participatory strategies.

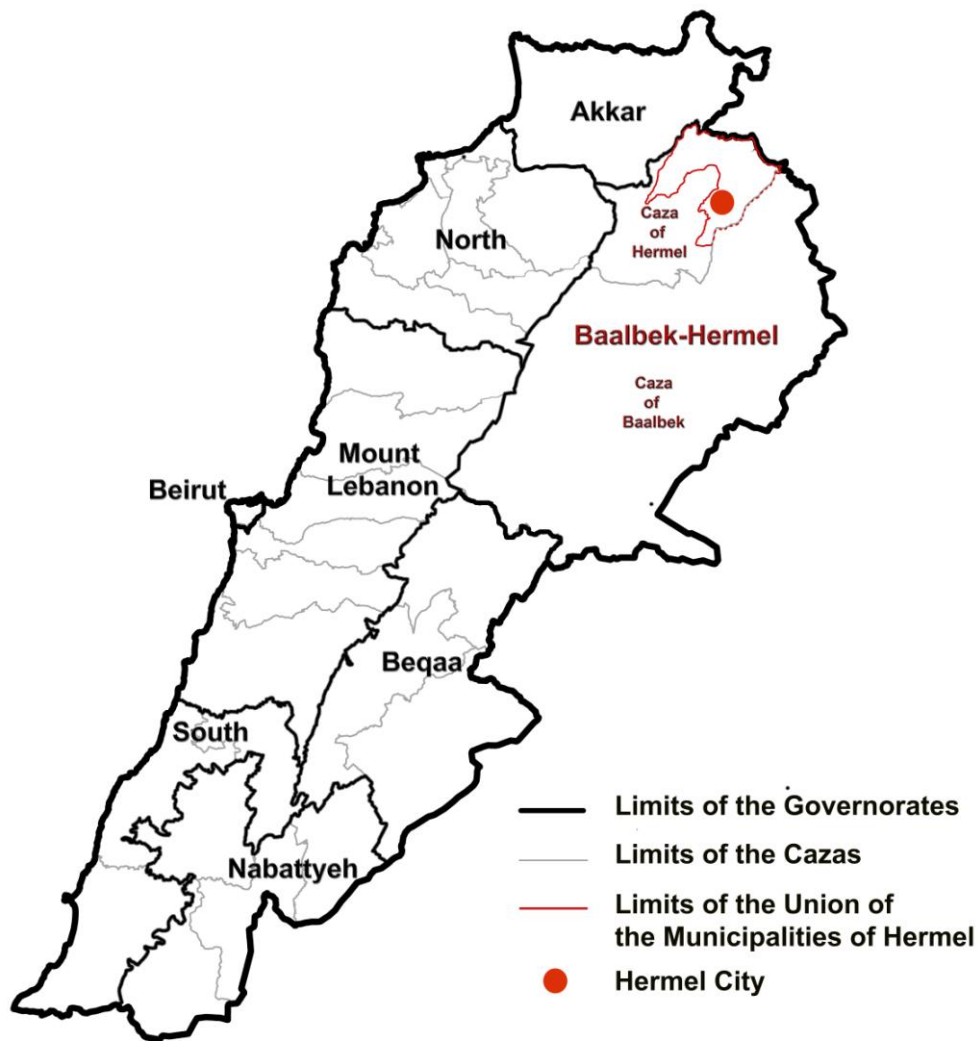
My thesis explores if and how regionalism can be used as a tool of rural planning in Lebanon and shows that regions represent an appropriate scale for planning and policy making in Lebanese rural areas. It adopts the NR framework and will present an empirical study of its application in Hermel by proposing an appropriate operationalization mechanism for its implementation.

A. Hermel: Case Profile

1. The Governorate of Baalbak-Hermel

The Governorate of Baalbak-Hermel was founded in 2003 (Act 522 of 07/03). Its administrative center is Baalbak. The critical socio-economic conditions led to the demand of the separation of both Baalbak and Hermel cazas from the Beqaa Governorate (Map 1).¹⁸

¹⁸ Akkar was as well separated from the Governorate of the North.



Map 1-Administrative Divisions of the Lebanese Territory
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016 adapted from the Administrative Divisions Map-Localiban

However, the new governorate of Baalbak-Hermel suffers from many issues: it does not have any administrative services, its governor was not appointed until 2014, and people still have to go to Zahleh for any governmental transaction they might need. Localiban website reports that in 2004, Baalbak-Hermel Governorate had 365,512 registered citizens. According to the SDATL, Beqaa and Baalbak-Hermel are today the areas with the lowest urbanization rates: only 34% of the population of Beqaa live in two major agglomerations: Zahleh-Chtoura and Baalbak. Zahleh is the capital of the Beqaa, and plays a central administrative role in both governorates.

Throughout the socio-political changes that the Beqaa went through, few cities flourished (e.g. Zahleh, Chtoura, Anjar, Ryak) and avoided the fate of others that were more marginalized and impoverished. The SDATL lists Zahleh and Chtoura among the metropolises of balance (growth centers- decentralization of governmental functions), whereas Baalbak is considered as a major agglomeration for being a large patrimonial city (see Map 4). Nahas (2002) notes that the attraction capacity of Zahleh remains confined to the central and meridional areas of the Beqaa regions and did not reach furthest areas such as Hermel.

Table 2 shows that, even when the State's expenditures ratio is high in relation to the region's population, marginalization, deprivation, isolation and impoverishment remain acute in areas that went through a legacy of insufficient and improper development interventions. The 8% expenditures ratio in the Beqaa region, which embraces 6.8% of the total Lebanese population, is acceptable and equitable when compared to the 14% expenditure ratio of the capital Beirut, which embraces 12.6% of the total Lebanese population. However, adding other variables such as the surface area and the high poverty ratios change the significance of the table: the Beqaa area is 4,429 sq.km with more than 22% of the total Lebanese families living below the extreme poverty line, while Beirut area is 19.8 sq.km with less than 1% of the total Lebanese families living below the extreme (FAO 2007).

Regions	% of Expenditure	% of Population
Beirut	14	12.6
Beirut suburbs	20	37.1
Mount Lebanon	15	
North	18	21.8
Beqaa	8	6.8
South	11	8.6
Nabattiyeh	14	13
TOTAL	100	100

Table 2- Geographic and Demographic Distribution of Government Shares, Source: FAO, 2007

The Beqaa governorate has the lowest economic activity rates in Lebanon. Based on the ESFD study of 2002, the Beqaa includes 12.7% of the Lebanese total population, and 17.2% of the total Lebanese extremely poor population that is concentrated in Hermel and Baalbak¹⁹ (see Figure 2).

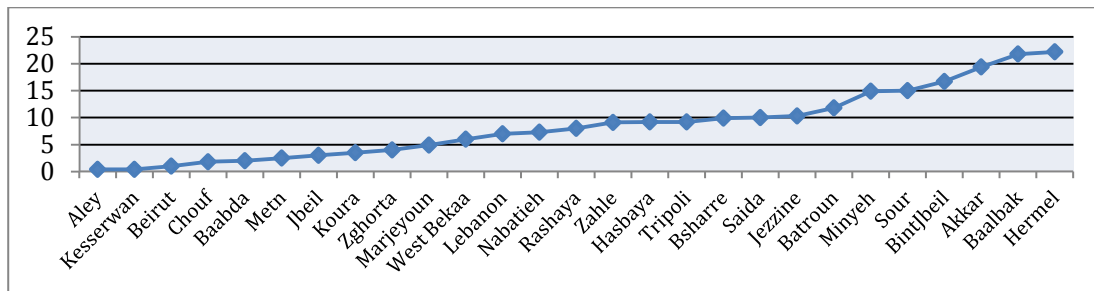


Figure 2-Percentage of households living below the absolute poverty level (314 USD per household per month) by Caza, Source: SDATL, 2005 adapted from ESFD study of 2002

Bennafla (2006) analyses the development issues in the Beqaa from a geopolitical approach as she notes that the permeability of the Syrian-Lebanese borders and the location of the Beqaa in a corridor of communications to the Central Syria (North) and the Galilee (South) makes it a strategic space for international mobility. However, during war times, the Beqaa becomes a battle site where foreign armies (Syrian and Israeli) are deployed whereas during peace time, it becomes coveted and overinvested by a host of local and foreign actors seeking to extend and impose their influence and power. Thus, socio-economic interventions did not respond to regional development concerns but rather to interests and conflicts over power and space occupation. She discusses how the CDR, which channels public funding, maintains a

¹⁹ The caza of Hermel has the highest index among all the Lebanese caza's with 22.2% of its households living below the absolute poverty level of 314USD household income per month. The caza of Baalbak is the second poorest caza with around 22% households living below the absolute poverty level and that the caza of Akkar, which is believed to be the poorest, is the third poorest caza with 19.5%.

It is worth mentioning that the within-governorate disparities highly affect the ranking of the governorates in term of living conditions, e.g.: Rachaya in West Beqaa has only 7% of the total Lebanese extremely poor population and Zahleh has 9%. This affects the total percentage of the Beqaa Governorate which includes the two poorest cities (Hermel and Baalbak).

sectarian approach in distributing them and in facing the shortage of equipments and rural poverty. Bennafla, therefore, concludes that the Bekaa suffers from a lack of development public policies at the regional scale and of effective decentralized administrations.

Volk (2009: pp. 265) highlights the central government's politics of neglect towards marginal spaces stating that "by looking at the disenfranchised of Lebanon, regardless of their sectarian affiliation, through the theoretical lenses of political economy, culture, and space, we can better understand how political power is organized and deployed at the centre." Volk refers to/defines margins not only as those areas furthest from center, but also as "natural containers for people considered insufficiently socialized into the law regardless of their actual location." Marginal spaces are also timeless as they manifest backwards or old fashioned traditions and behaviors. Moreover, she also discusses how states tend to read territories through census exercises and mapping which often do not reach the margins and turn them into imaginary rather than known spaces. This creates a certain vacuum/gap "to be filled by unofficial competitive documentary practices that accomplish a headcount of a different kind: the faces of martyrs, which appear on billboards, lampposts, walls of residential homes, and special commemorative structures (ac)count (for) the individual sacrifices of the residents in the borderlands."

This explains the socio-political hegemony over these spaces as well as the multiplication of local and foreign NGOs operating on the ground in an attempt to substitute the state's role.

2. The Caza of Hermel

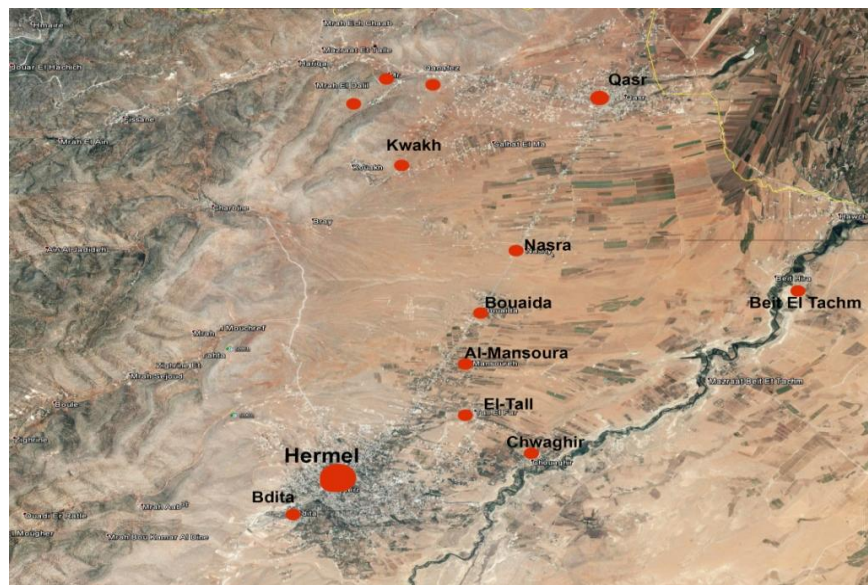
The caza of Hermel is one of the two cazas of the governorate of Baalbak-Hermel and is connected to the rest of the country through two main roads: the first one to Baalbak and the second one to Dennieh in the North governorate²⁰. It is neighbored in the west by Akkar and Dennieh that are also among the poorest Lebanese villages, and by the caza of Baalbak in the south and the Syrian Arab Republic in the north-east. The large distances (100-135Km) to Zahleh, the Beqaa provincial capital, and to Beirut (145-175Km) contribute significantly to the isolation of Hermel. This is further hindered by an inefficient and poorly maintained road network, particularly towards the North governorate and Tripoli. In addition, public transportation network and even taxis are completely absent in the caza. The only present mode of shared transportation is the privately owned mini-vans operating only between Beirut and the city of Hermel and not internally.

A recent study conducted by UNHCR in 2015 notes that there are 21 073 Lebanese people in Hermel living above the poverty line and 14 887 are considered to be deprived. The study also notes that there are 6 714 registered Syrian refugees in the caza and 26 resulted informal settlements in the governorate of Baalbeck-Hermel. The majority of these settlements are concentrated in Aarsal and Hermel cities which are considered to be the most vulnerable ones as per the study. Studying the implications of the Syrian war is beyond the scope of the thesis. Therefore, Syrian refugees and informal settlements are not to be taken into consideration in the strategy and recommendations assuming that this situation is temporary.

²⁰ The study of the road connecting Hermel to Sir el-Dennieh was completed in 1996 by the CDR; however, the implementation did not start until 2006 and was interrupted following to the Israelian war. The work resumed in 2008 and still ongoing. It is funded by the Islamic Bank and by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD).

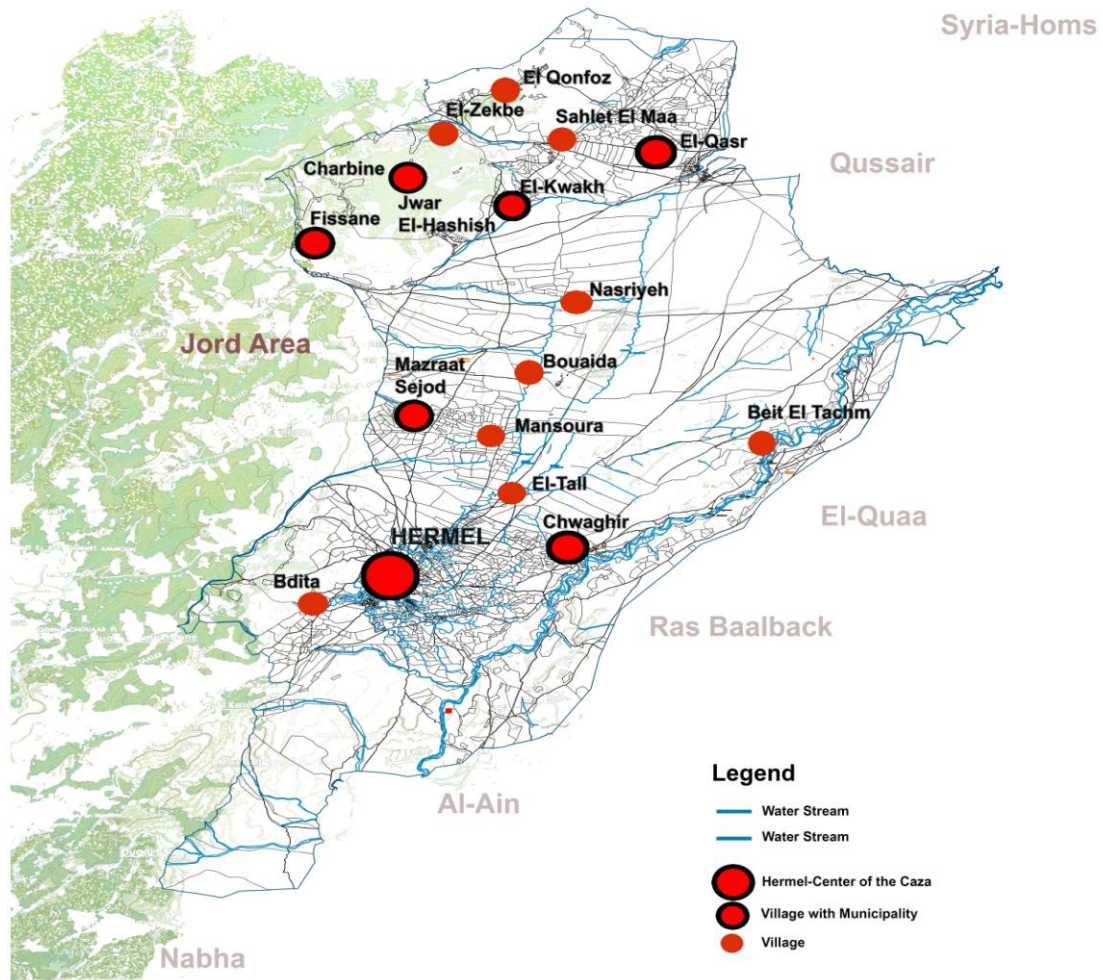
Hermel Caza includes 80 villages (Localiban website). Seven of them have municipalities: Hermel, Qasr, Fissane, Kouakh, Chouaghir Et-Tahta and Fawqa, Charbine and Mazra'at Sejed.²¹

Localiban website reports that the city's population in total constitutes 1.3% of the total population of Lebanon, whereas its 731sq.km represents 6.9% of Lebanon's total area. CDR-ESFD (2002) report notes that the caza of Hermel is among the least populated regions given that the former Beqaa Governorate scores the lowest density of all governorates and the lowest urbanization rate. The low population density that is reflected in the difference in numbers of registered residents and permanent ones shows a strong rural-urban migration trend within Hermel as is the case in most Lebanese rural areas. However, the rate of migrants' population varies from village to village in Hermel, as it is higher in Qasr and surrounding Jord villages than the villages at the center of the caza, particularly Hermel and Chwaghir.



Map 2-Google Earth Map showing Main Villages in the Caza of Hermel

²¹ The number of the municipalities is low due to the extensive urban sprawl, and to the fact that social groups in the surrounding areas consider their villages to be an extension to Hermel City and thus do not seek to organize themselves into their own municipality.

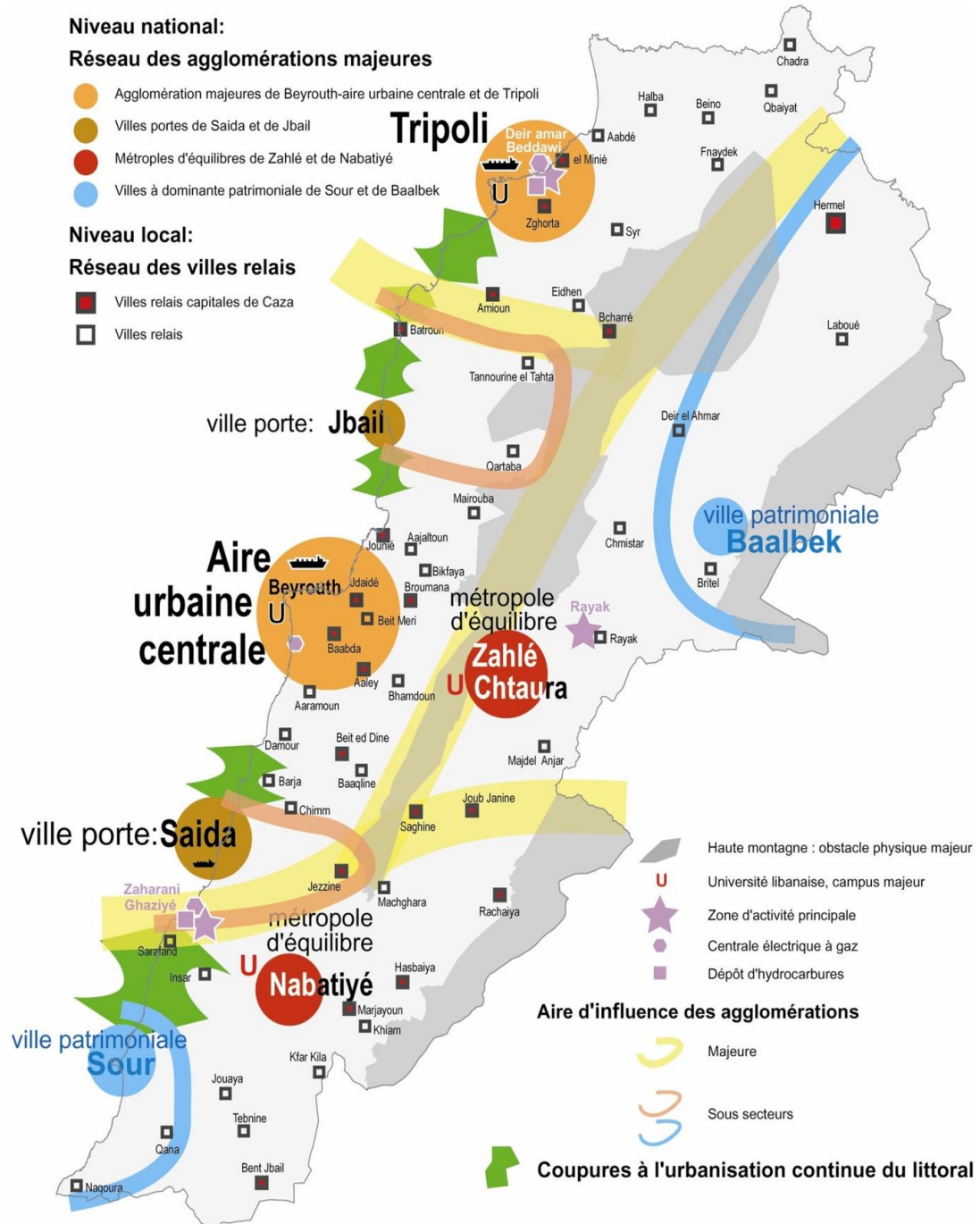


Map 3-Cadastral Map of Hermel. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

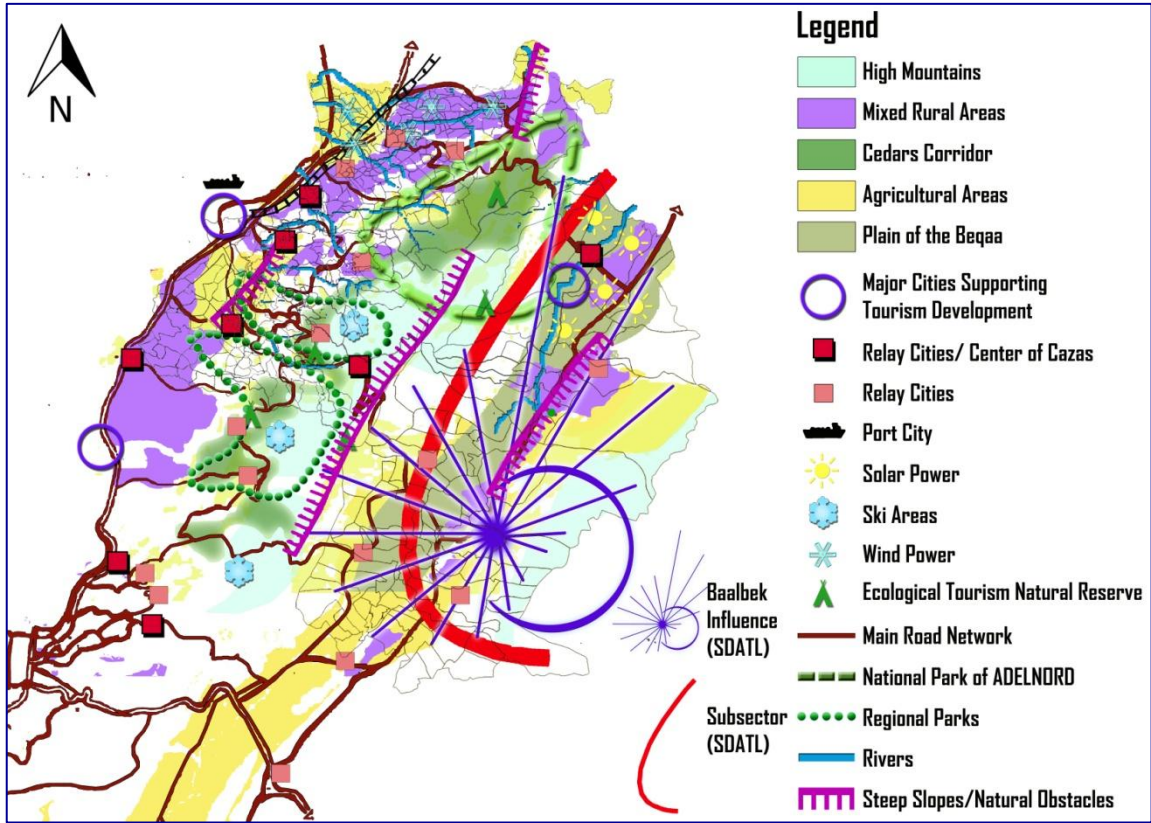
a. Hermel in the SDATL

The SDATL lists the City of Hermel as one of the "relay cities" but also recognizes the whole caza as the most deprived region in terms of infrastructure, and that it deserves particular attention. Relay cities represent the interconnections with the rural areas: they are centers of services and commerce easily accessible from the surrounding villages. Thus, the SDATL proposes the reinforcement of the connection between Hermel and Tripoli through Akkar (via a highway project), and between

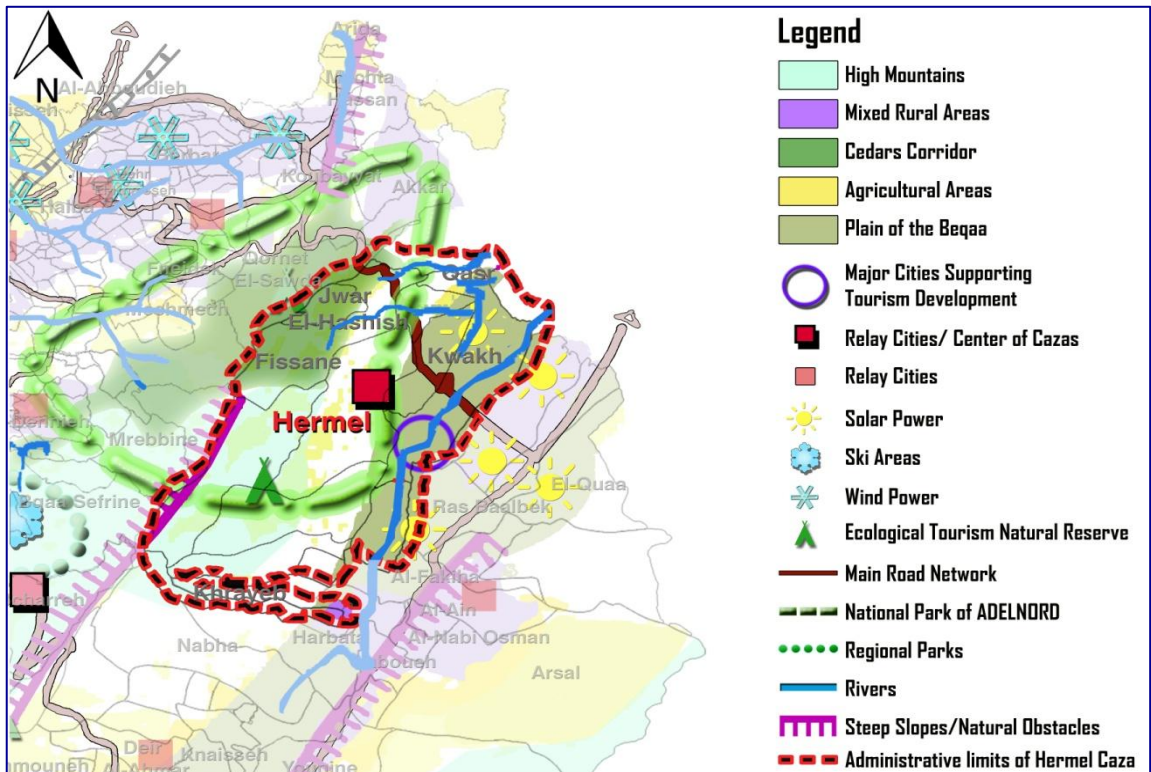
Baalbak and Hermel by improving the existing itinerary towards a high-speed connection (Map 4).



Map 4-SDATL Territory Structure. Source: SDATL, 2005



Map 5- SDATL Synthesis Macro-Map Showing Structure and Resources
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016, adapted from SDATL, 2005



Map 6-SDATL Hermel Synthesis, Micro-Map Showing Structure and Resources
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016, adapted from SDATL, 2005

b. Available public services

Several public institutions are concentrated in Hermel City: the Serail, the Hermel Governmental Hospital, the Civil Defense, a Police Station, an Official financial department related to the Ministry of Finance, the Civil Registry related to the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities, Electricity and Water Companies, a Court, a Shari'a Court, and the Office of Social Affairs related to the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, other facilities are missing such as those related to Education, the National Social Security office, and the Cooperative of the Public Sector employees.



Picture 1- Hermel Serail
Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 2- Services on the Main Piazza
Source: Hamadeh, 2016

c. Socio-Economic Situation

i. Morphology and Socio-Spatial Relations

Considerable morphological and environmental differences differentiate Hermel's central city and villages: those in the valley are distinguished from the ones in the mountains. When walking in the streets and neighborhoods of the dense city of Hermel, one can notice the socio-economic disparities and how they are materialized in dwellings, but the quality of services and infrastructure throughout the city is relatively good. Street lights are equipped with PV solar panels, the city entrance is inviting, many

services are available (banks, hospitals, restaurants, a public park and a theme park) (Picture3).



Picture 3-City Entrance showing the PV street lights. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

Yet, this changes in the Jord and other villages (Kwakh, Marjhine, Qasr, WadiTurkman, Jwar El Hashish), where we can see very poor quality of residences and empty lands reserved for illicit crops coexist. The road network there is in a very poor shape. This is interrupted by the villas built in new urban extensions (Mansoura and Chwaghir). The region is thus characterized by three different types of fabric: a mixed urban center (Hermel), high-end urban extensions, and a poor area (Jord) (Maps 2, 3, and 14 and Pictures 5 to 16).



Picture 4-Poor Neighborhood
Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 5-Poor Neighborhood
Hamadeh, 2016

Source:



Picture 6-Poor Household in the Surrounding Villages. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

Picture 7-Poor Household in the Surrounding Villages. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 8-Poor Household in the Surrounding Villages. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 9-Poor Household in the Surrounding Villages. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 10-Old House Renovated in Hermel City
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 11- Old House Renovated in Hermel City
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 12-Chwaghir Municipality, a New Building
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 13-New High-End Buildings at Chwaghir
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 14- New High-End Buildings at Mansoura
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 15-Villa at Mansoura
 Source: Hamadeh, 2016

ii. Social Structures

Hermel is mostly inhabited by Muslim Shi'a. Christians are a minority and are grouped in nearby Christian villages (El-Qa'a and Jdeidet Al-Fakiha). Strong family ties and tribal organization characterize the social structure. Feudalism ruled the Beqaa and the Hermel since the 19thC: small families orbit around big families, and tribal power was confined to certain individuals (zaims, chaykhs, emirs) (Hamzeh, 1994). Nowadays, the power of the tribal structure is reduced, but it is still important in several domains such as access to land and spatial distribution/appropriation. This tribal control partially determines territorial divisions, as well as coalitions and conflicts between territories. Another important social structure relates to partisan affiliation which is discussed further below. Another component of social structure is that of civil society, via the numerous NGOs and CBOs (discussed further in the next section) that operate in the caza.

iii. Major Actors

Highlighting the major actors of the caza helps understanding their roles, as related to their position, interests and power. This is important for planned future interventions.

- Political and Institutional Actors

One of the most prominent actors in the area is Hezbollah. The party managed to provide social services to the community and thus fill-in some of the Lebanese state's role. Today, Hezbollah oversees the Hermel municipality as well as a network of institutions providing social, medical, religious, cultural and educational services, (Harb 2009, Hamzeh 2009, Cammett 2014). Hermel is known as "the city of martyrs" in

reference to Hezbollah's martyrs, while the Beqaa is considered to be the "Resistance's reservoir" (khazzan al-muqawama) (Pictures 17 to 20).

Thus, the political representation of the community is solely in the hands of Hezbollah, especially after the party joined parliament in 1992, and government in 2005.



Picture 16-Territorial Markers at the City Entrance. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 17-City of Martyrs Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 18- Territorial Markers inside Urban Area. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 19-Controlling Social Behavior by Religious Means. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

The municipality of Hermel (21 council members) was established in 1892, and is the oldest in the caza. Qasr municipality (15 council members) was established in 1963. The municipalities of Qasr and Fissane used to be one municipality, and split in 2010. The municipalities of Chwaghir (12 council members) and Kwakh (12 council

members) were established in 2004. Jwar El-Hashish (9 council members) was established also in 2004 but it was dissolved few months later. The municipalities of Charbine (12 council members) and Mazra'at Sejed (9 council members)²² were established in 2013 and are considered the most recent ones²³. Thus, Hermel municipality is the most active and powerful one in the caza, as the others are constrained by internal social and administrative conflicts (between and within the clans) and by limited financial capacities. The current mayor of Hermel is Sobhi Sakr, the former manager of Hezbollah's al-Imdad philanthropic NGO in Hermel.



Picture 20-The Municipality of Hermel



Picture 21-Union of Hermel Municipalities.
Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 22- Piazza in front of the Municipality of Hermel. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

²² Seven members of the municipal council belong to Sejed family which reflects how the territories are shaped in relation to families' and clans' structure and geographical distribution.

²³ The Committee of Municipal work belonging to Hezbollah aims at increasing the number of municipalities in the Caza.

In 2005, the first five above-mentioned municipalities formed the Regroupement of Hermel Municipalities. In 2010, The Union of Municipalities was established as part of the Capacity Building Relay Race (Caburera) project which is funded by the European Union (EU) to promote collaboration in Mediterranean region by offering mobility and professional development opportunities to young people²⁴. The Union is led by Mustapha Taha, former mayor of Hermel and member of its current council.

In 2009, Caburera established the Planning Development Agency (PDA), a consulting civil agency that plays a technical role with the Lebanese local governments, as well with other international and local actors. Besides, PDA is "the executive and planning body working on the socio-economic reinforcement of the civil society. Its main goal is promoting of the sustainable local development mechanisms by the adoption of strategic planning and professional performance."²⁵ Caburera established as well a regional office for the development of the governorate of Baalbak-Hermel that aims to provide technical support and consulting services supporting seven unions of municipalities in the area in which more than 56 municipalities and several civil society organizations are involved.

Its main goals consist of activating local public and civil society developmental structures and promoting their capacities and formulating a strategic sectorial development plans for Baalbak-Hermel.²⁶

²⁴ The selected countries are Italy, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Portugal.

²⁵ <http://www.caburera.org/hermel-lebanon/>

²⁶ <http://www.caburera.org/hermel-lebanon/>

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The municipalities of Hermel support the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, cultural clubs and NGOs. In addition, they cooperate extensively with the numerous local and international NGOs. However, looking at the output and the role of these NGOs, we notice that the spatial dimension is missing except for few of them as shown in Table 3. In addition, their activities lack coordination not only at the horizontal level among them but also at the vertical level among the different donors and administrative public structures (ministries). This has led to a proliferation of data collection, studies, and reports while tangible outputs remain confined to the social, educative and cultural dimensions.

NGOs	Physical/ spatial Impact	Economic Impact	Social, Cultural, and Educative	Philanthropy
Mabarret El-Imam Zain El-Abidin			●	●
Martyr Institution (El-Shahid)				●
Jihad El-Binaa	●	●	●	
Al-Imdad			●	●
Dar El-Bahij				●
Mada Association-Jord Ecotourism	●	●	●	
Women NGOs (9)		●	●	
Learning Center for Carpet Weaving		●	●	
Center of Agricultural Production		●		
Center of Milk Collect		●		
Scout and Sports Associations (10)			●	
Cultural Clubs (5)			●	
Cooperatives for Animal Production (2)		●	●	
Cooperation Habitat Foundation (CHF)			●	
Cooperative of Fishermen		●	●	
Agricultural Cooperatives (22)		●	●	
Orontes River Club	●			
Union of Youth for Environmental Protection			●	

Table 3-Impacts of NGOs Operating in the Caza. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

In order to further investigate about how Hermel's inhabitant perceive development and decision-making processes in their region, I have interviewed 25 people and asked them to list the actors that are responsible of development. Figure 3 shows that 48% of the interviewees consider that development is a municipal task; 24 % have listed Hezbollah as a major developmental actor; however, other interviewees have equally (8%) listed political parties, Bou Hisham Al-Moussawi who is Hezbollah representative in Baalbeck Hermel, and the Mayor of Hermel Municipality who is the former executive director of Al-Imdad in the caza. This implies that by combining these responses, Hezbollah with its diverse individual and institutional representatives is the most listed one. An employee at Al-Imdad has listed NGOs and in particular Jihad Al-Binaa. The mukhtar considers that citizens are the first to be blamed for the lack of development in Hermel. Two people have chosen to not answer the question as one of them considers that there is no development in Hermel and the other has answered by "I do not know."

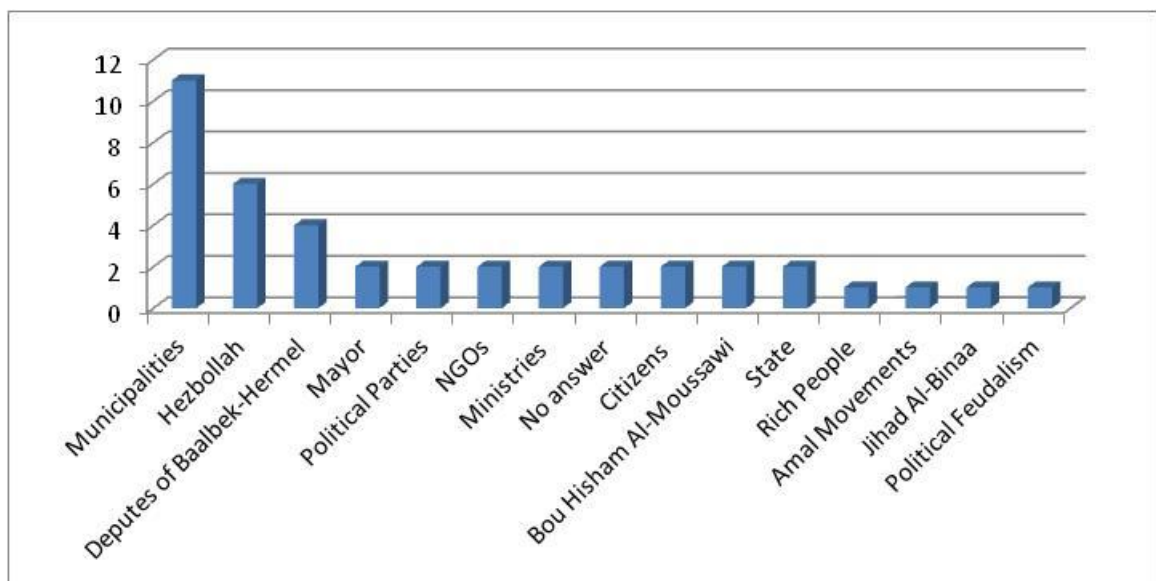


Figure 3-Frequency of Interviewees' Answers regarding Developmental Actors

d. Economic Sectors

i. Industry

Small industrial enterprises specialized in the production of building materials are available in the area, and date back to the 1990s particularly when the agriculture and trade of drugs were banned. Despite their numerous negative impacts on the environment, these enterprises have a considerable role in ensuring jobs and income to many dwellers.

ii. Commercial Activities

As mentioned before, commercial activities are mainly concentrated in the City of Hermel. Many commercial streets are active as extensions to the old souq. However, trade remains limited. Moreover, up until the Syrian war, people resorted to purchasing cheaper goods in nearby Syrian cities (Homs, Qussair).

Carpet manufacturing is an important craft in Hermel but suffers from high competition from foreign production. A center for carpet weaving that was established in 1973 by the Ministry of Social Affairs is still active, yet did not succeed in pushing the market forward. In addition, aluminum production and car mechanics are widely spread in Hermel.

The production of coal from wood in Jord is another significant trade that used to be very prominent. However, this activity declined given the negative and harmful impact on forests resources that led to deforestation especially in the mountains situated on the Syrian borders.

Agriculture

The agriculture sector constitutes only 5% of the national GDP in Lebanon (FAO, 2012). The budget reserved by the Ministry of Agriculture to support agriculture in the Beqaa valley dropped by 20% in the last three years. Only 8% of the national labor force works in the agriculture sector, whereas it is 33% in the caza. The total surface of agricultural lands in the caza is 11 194ha which constitutes 20% of the total surface area (Hermel Municipal Magazine, 2010).

Agriculture used to be the main economic production of this tribal community. After independence in 1943, the economic system based on services was detrimental to the production sector, especially to agriculture, which was the main investment of the Shi'a groups.

This aggravated the community's marginalization. Consequently, people found other ways to improve their living conditions, either through goods' smuggling across the Syrian borders, or through illicit crops especially cannabis (hashish)²⁷. Illicit crops' production started in 1928 and reached its highest levels during the civil war which was put to good use by the drug industry (Hamdan 2002). In 1992, after the end of civil war, the state decided to forbid illicit crops, in light of international demands. Bennafla (2006: pp.10) notes that at the end of the war, the illicit crops were covering 80 000ha of Baalbak-Hermel and ensuring an income of 100 million dollars to the region; most of these crops were exported to Germany, Switzerland, and Egypt.

The region became deprived of this important income which led to the aggravation of poverty rates. Unmet pledges by international donors for providing funding and alternative crops, and inefficient public efforts contributed to the worsening

²⁷ The Lebanese law prohibit the production, transformation, commerce and consummation of the cannabis.

of living conditions in Hermel²⁸. This was also aggravated by the criminalization and stigmatization of people in the area, accused of being outlaws (tuffar)²⁹ (see Picture 15).

As a result, many people left the area, choosing to emigrate or to relocate. Other people stayed and resorted to illegal crops again³⁰, or to illegal businesses which they considered their only resort (see Pictures 24-25-26). Servel and Zurayk (2014) argue that the crops of cannabis represent a sustainable way of survival in such a context rather than an act of illegality and criminality. They argue that this is the farmers' resistance and attempt to survive rather than a war against the State. Drug dealers/farmers are also protected by their own tribes who in turn benefit financially either directly or indirectly.³¹ Still other people remained but without working illegally. This generated important socio-economic disparities in the area between illegal traders and the other dwellers, living in dire conditions. These socio-economic differences are also shaped and materialized spatially. Servel and Zurayk (2014) highlight how the State closes eyes on some illegal business and "legalize exceptionally what is illegal" because the informal sector contributes to 30% of the economic sector.

This also had major negative impacts on the agricultural sector which was not invested in due to many interrelated causes: lack of facilities, poor access to agricultural land, weak technological skills, high costs of production, lack of local food processing industry, long distance from the market, and high competition from foreign markets.

²⁸ Bennafla (2006) notes that in 2000, international donors (PNUD, Europe and Japan) have only disbursed 12 million dollars out of the 55 millions as per their promises to support alternative agriculture programs.

²⁹ The number of the outlaws/people wanted for justice is more than 38 000 as per the Lebanese government.

³⁰ Bennafla (2006) states that some farmers returned to cannabis crops since 2001 as the related profits are much more important than other crops such as the tobacco, potato, cereals, and vegetables.

³¹ One of the most famous and big farmers is Nouh Zeayter who belongs to a the Zeayter tribe, and is portrayed as a social benefactor or even as "Robin of Cannabis".

Today, many initiatives attempt to revive and enhance the agriculture and agro-industrial sectors, through agriculture cooperatives, NGOs and international donors, but there is no real impact on the ground³².



Picture 23-Illicit Crops. Source: www.naharnet.com

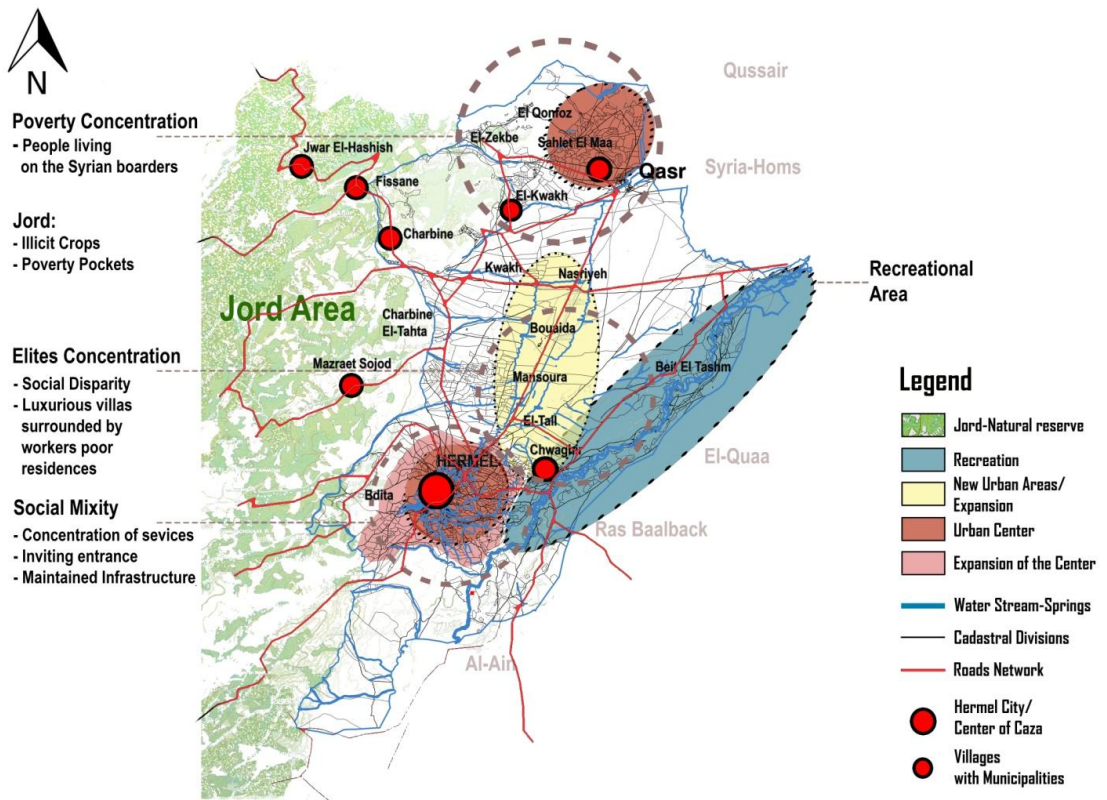


Picture 24- Illicit Crops. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



Picture 25-Illicit Crops in Al-Jord. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

³² It is worthy to note that homemade food processing (mouneh) is a common activity among the women of the area but remain mostly confined to household consumption. Some cooperatives were established to support and organize this activity.



Map 7-Synthesis Map of Hermel. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

e. Projects

The municipalities of Hermel are key local development actors. The projects they have implemented incorporate infrastructure services, socio-cultural activities, and philanthropy services. They have also started establishing two public gardens which are incomplete, in addition to a basketball field. However, although several other development projects and activities were implemented, many have not led to tangible outcomes, for reasons ranging from administrative issues, financial constraints to political conflicts. For instance, the municipality did not yet achieve objectives that date back to 2004 such as implementing the master plan, an industrial city, a touristic patrimonial souq, a farmers' market, a wastewater treatment plant and a sanitary landfill (see Table 6 p. 107).

Here are other examples of development projects:

- The Orontes Dam is a notorious project that started in 2004 and is still not completed to date.
- In 2012, the Ministry of Transports and Public Works installed 766 street lights equipped with PV solar panels: because of the costly maintenance, they are not operational. Its cost was 1220 000\$.
- The World Bank offered a loan of 753,000\$ to the municipality of Hermel in order to upgrade and renew its infrastructure. The municipality worked on the main entrance of the city, and as well on the entrances of some villages rather than investing in more needed infrastructure such as water networks.

- The Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) started a project in 2000s for an artificial lake nearby the Qamoue³³. It is still not finalized. The objective was the creation of a touristic hub, and the alleviation of desertification. The CHF assisted also in and funded the establishment of the fish feed plant, the animal center, the municipal slaughterhouse, and other projects.
- Walid Ben Talal Association funded the establishment of the library and cultural center building that are adjacent to the municipality.
- In 2005, the European Union funded a study that is entitled "Simplified Plan of Local Development"; it was prepared by OMSAR as part of ARLA project.
- In 2006, the ROSS program initiated by the Italian government cooperated with the Lebanese NGO Mada and worked on funding and assisting the rehabilitation and reinforcement of basic services. They also initiated the Ecotourism project entitled "Terhal" in Jord.
- In 2008, the Italian cooperation funded a study that aims at improving women's socio-economic status with the collaboration of an Italian NGO Arci Cultura e Sviluppo (Arcs) and Mada.
- In 2009, with a grant from the European Union, the CDR was also commissioned the implementation of a local development project entitled ADELNORD in North Lebanon.

ADELNORD represents the most recent and elaborated development project in the caza. Thus, it is important to analyze separately this project in terms of objectives,

³³ Th Qamoue' is a historical landmark dating back to the first century BC and is located at the entrance of the city.

principles, and implementation mechanisms in order to understand its real impact and its areas of failure and success:

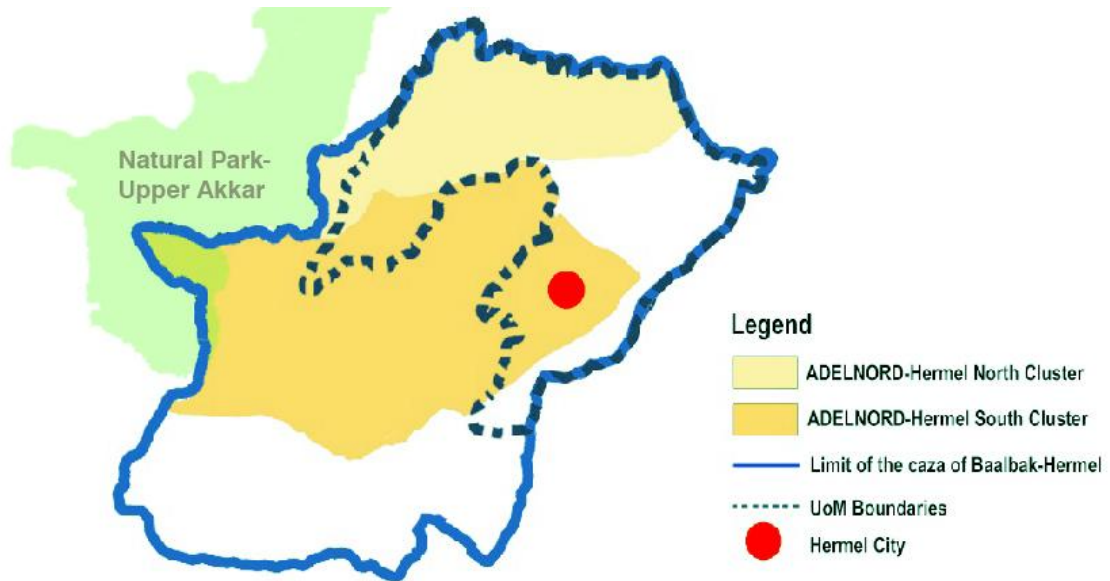
It adopts a three-tiered approach: agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation and development, community development, and sustainable management of environmental resources. The Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD) is in charge of implementing the Community Development component by partnering mainly with municipalities and the private sector. It focuses on job creation through the provision of loans to small and medium enterprises.

This project focuses on Upper-Hermel, Upper-Akkar and Upper-Dannieh which are considered as vulnerable villages/cities by targeting 10 clusters in total, two of them are in Hermel (see Map 8). The financial support for the North and South Clusters has a ceiling of EUR 250,000 and EUR 200 000 respectively³⁴. These clusters were selected by the EU based on the following criteria:

- Unity and social cohesion,
- Vulnerability and poverty,
- Local community potentials and capacities.

The output of this project in the caza of Hermel was the elaboration of a "Local Development Project Plan for the Clusters of South and North Hermel."

³⁴ Source: Pamphlet of the Local Development Plan of Hermel North Cluster.

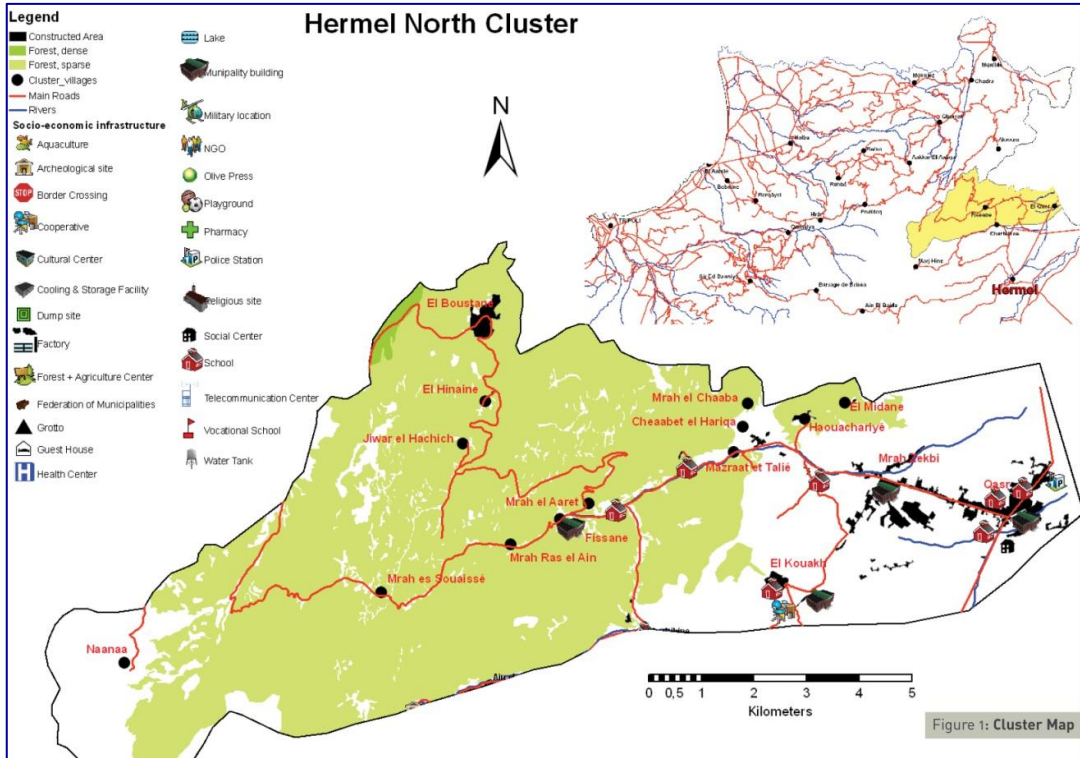


Map 8-ADELNORD, Selected Clusters in the Caza of Hermel. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

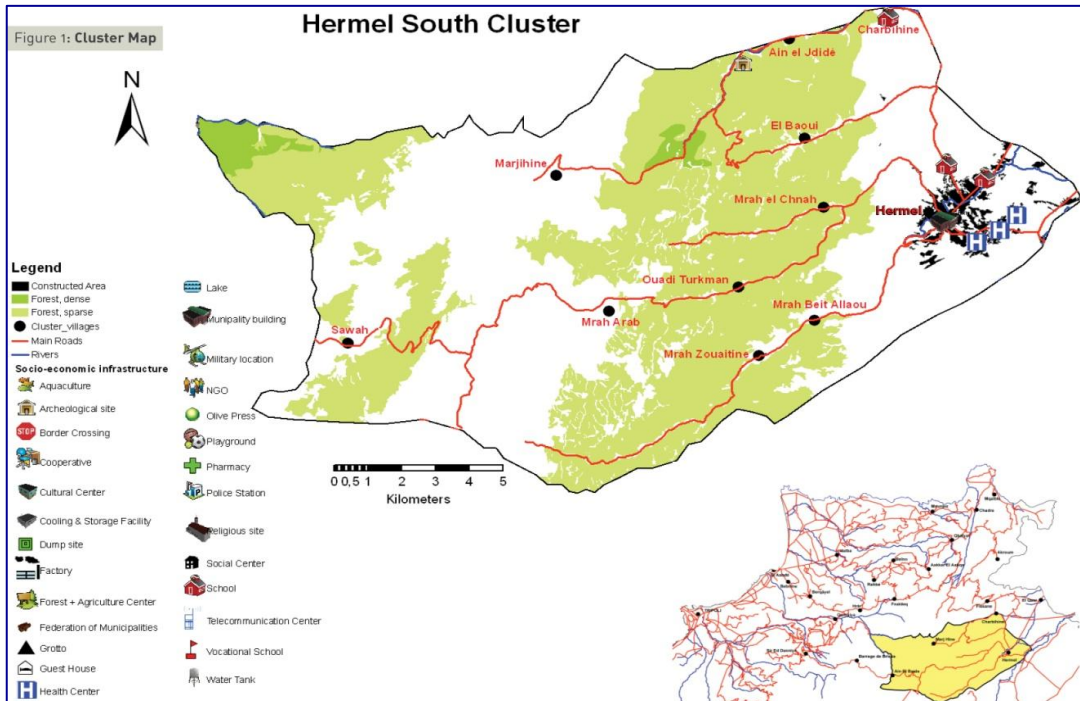
The objectives of the North Cluster Local Development Plan are "1) satisfying the infrastructure needs; 2) reducing risks for human health, improving the social and cultural development; and 3) improving/growth of local economy."

The objectives of the South Cluster Local Development Plan are "1) improving the agriculture sector; 2) providing safe drinking water to needed villages; 3) controlling the negative impact resulting from the solid waste; 4) decreasing the waste water leakage on water resources, roads and agricultural fields, 5)reducing risks to human health; and 6) improving education quality in public schools."

The only two mapping exercises for the two Local Development Plans represent only the data collection of existing institutions, landmarks, natural and archeological sites, but not planning strategies (see Maps 9 and 10).



Map 9-Hermel North Cluster. Source: ADELNORD-Hermel North Cluster, March 2012



Map 10-Hermel South Cluster. Source: ADELNORD-Hermel North Cluster, March 2012

This shows that the selection of clusters does not follow the four stages of regions' building discussed in Chapter 2 by Paasi (2011): i) the bottom-up territorial shaping; ii) the symbolic shaping; the institutional building; and the establishment of the region.

- First, the selected clusters do not define the region on which the PDA and the regional office established by Caburera and funded by the EU will operate. Clusters were selected by a top-down approach. Selection criteria were put by technocrats (ESFD, CDR, Caburera, EU) without taking into consideration how local actors define their spatial boundaries.
- Second, the division of the clusters breaks the socio-cultural unity of the Caza and thus, referring to Paasi (2011), it does not follow the second stage of the region's construction consisting of setting symbols and establishing a socio-cultural unit.
- Third, ADELNORD and other donor-led projects initiated the stage of institutional building. However, the role of the established regional office and the PDA remains limited. Their goals and objectives are neither clearly specified nor measurable, nor time bounded³⁵. Their outputs appear to be confined to agriculture infrastructure, social, educative, and cultural services whereas the economic dimension remains confined to a selected group of people (such as supporting 30 small and medium enterprises), and the spatial dimension highlighted by Harrison (2010) is almost absent. In addition, the regions' characteristics in terms of spatial potentialities are missing as the provided plans do not specify nor the multifunctional areas nor linkages at

³⁵ Doran et al. (1981) set the S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) criteria as a project management tool to set objectives and indicators for development projects in order to monitor and evaluate it.

both local/intra-regional and inter-regional scales discussed earlier. Chapter 2 shows how effective planning in regions calls for a holistic, multidimensional and multi-scalar thinking which is not reflected in ADELNORD local development plans for the selected clusters.

We thus see how local development actors are actively seeking to implement projects that would improve conditions of life in Hermel and its environs, however these projects lack a common framework and plan that organizes them, identifies priorities, and manages them effectively. Currently projects are donor-led and fragmented across an array of donors and NGOs, without a sense of ownership by the municipality and other local development actors. Additionally, the municipality does not follow an inclusive mechanism through which inhabitants, local NGOs and CBOs are able to engage with proposed projects or to initiate its own.

This is also confirmed by the fieldwork results. Only 4 (16%) people out of the 25 fieldwork interviewees answered by "yes" when asked if they are involved in the decision-making processes of Hermel. These four people are: 1) a mukhtar who has stated that several NGOs often consult him in developmental matters, 2) a sheikh who considers that, as a religious man, he is responsible of discussing the community's matters such as developmental ones from a religious point of view, 3) a former council member in the municipality of Chwaghir who has claimed that the municipal council keeps on discussing projects plans with him, and 4) an inhabitant who has said that he is "audacious" enough to object to "inappropriate" decisions. Similarly, only 3 people (12%) have asserted that they know about the ADELNORD project. The first one has seen workers installing the project's signs in Marjhin, the second has been informed "by

an Italian NGO", whereas the third from his acquaintances in Amal Movement in which he is affiliated. The rest of the interviewees did not even hear of it. Interviewees have been also asked about their opinion regarding ADELNORD after I explained it briefly to them. 5 people (20%) consider that the project is "good". 5 other people (20%) consider that corruption will hinder its implementation, 4 people (16%) have stated that the project do not concern them and is confined to Jord, 3 people (12%) consider that political hegemony is another key hindrance for developmental projects. The former municipal member considers that "it is hard to implement such projects as the region needs to be restructured in ways to overcome political, technical, financial, and administrative issues." Conversely, the sheikh has stated that he wishes if ADELNORD merges Hermel and Akkar into one region.

This is in line with the analysis of Bennafla (2006) who notes that the development in the Beqaa has always been depending on international and NGOs support. However, she also highlights that the corollary of their profusion is nothing other than scattered uncoordinated interventions especially at the regional level. Most of the projects and micro-projects of the different cities/villages promote eco-tourism and bio-agriculture; however, their outputs run the risk of being redundant and unfit within the real needs of communities. Despite their emblematic labels, these projects remain confined to socio-educative equipments or to dairy cattle breeding. In addition, many projects have stopped suddenly following to the departure of the NGOs in charge of their implementation.

f. SWOT

In what follows, I synthesize studies and reports on Hermel into a SWOT analysis (Table 4).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fertile soils in the Orontes and Jord valleys-Agricultural lands covered 20% of the total area in 1996 (Moussawi 2001) (see Picture 27). <p>Animal Production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rich production of fish (pisciculture)-300tons/year (Moussawi 2001) (see Picture 29). ▪ Livestock -20,000 goats and cows (Moussawi 2001). <p>Natural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rich water resources (Orontes river, 11 water springs) (see Pictures 27 to 30). ▪ Available natural energy resources (water, wind, sun). <p>Tourism (see Pictures 26 to 37):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rich heritage and archeology (Qamou'e-aqueducts, old monastery, castle, mill, rock inscriptions). ▪ Rich ecology and natural resources (Jord, Orontes, Dardara waterfalls, Ain el-Zarqa spring, forests). ▪ Attractive tourism site (Orontes river, restaurants/cafes, Hotel, water sports). 	<p>Agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Absence of agro-industrial policies. ▪ Large number of inactive cooperatives. <p>Informalities and Insecurity (see Pictures 23 to 25):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor presence of Lebanese general security and other governmental institutions. ▪ Informal constructions and urban sprawl. ▪ Illegal businesses dominate over legal businesses. <p>Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resources not well exploited (water, forests...). <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unprotected and neglected archeological sites. ▪ Non competitive tourism sector. <p>Socio-Spatiality and Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poverty pockets in different areas: Kwakh, Qasr, Jwar El Hashish, Marjhine, Wadi El-Turkmen and the Jord area in general (see Pictures 4 to 11). ▪ Morphological and socio-economic disparities among the villages and neighborhoods (see Pictures 13 to 15). ▪ Remoteness from vibrant urban centers ▪ Poor infrastructure. ▪ Absence of universities. ▪ The cadastre did not cover most of the land. ▪ Weak banking sector (only 3 banks branches in all the caza).
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proximity of picturesque cities such as Fneidik, and Qobayyat, and of natural reserves (Wadi Jhannam, Mechmech, Qammouaa). ▪ International donors ▪ Ecotourism. ▪ Social media. <p>Socio-Spatial Relations and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjacent Syrian borders. ▪ Shared experiences. 	<p>Informalities and Insecurities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Syrian political conditions. ▪ Drug and smuggling businesses lead to insecurity and stigmatization. <p>Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High desertification risks due to the climate change conditions. ▪ Pollution in the Orontes River. ▪ Uncontrolled exploitation of forests and poor water management.

Table 4-SWOT Analysis of Hermel. Source: Hamadeh, 2016

The Orontes is considered one of the most important and regular water resource in Lebanon. However, this is not reflected through its contextual landscape where large green zones are absent. Darwich (2013) notes that the lack of public funding as well as the political problems for the sharing of the Orontes' water with neighboring countries have prevented the construction of a large dam as planned. This project would irrigate around 6 000 ha, and therefore would satisfy thousands of farmers. The absence of major irrigation public projects has delegated the responsibility of water management to private initiatives of individuals and communities who do not have the sufficient capacity to be in charge.



Picture 26-Agricultural and Natural sceneries
Source: www.naharnet.com



Picture 27-Juniper Trees (Lazzab)
Source: www.glamroz.com



Picture 28-Fishing Farms. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



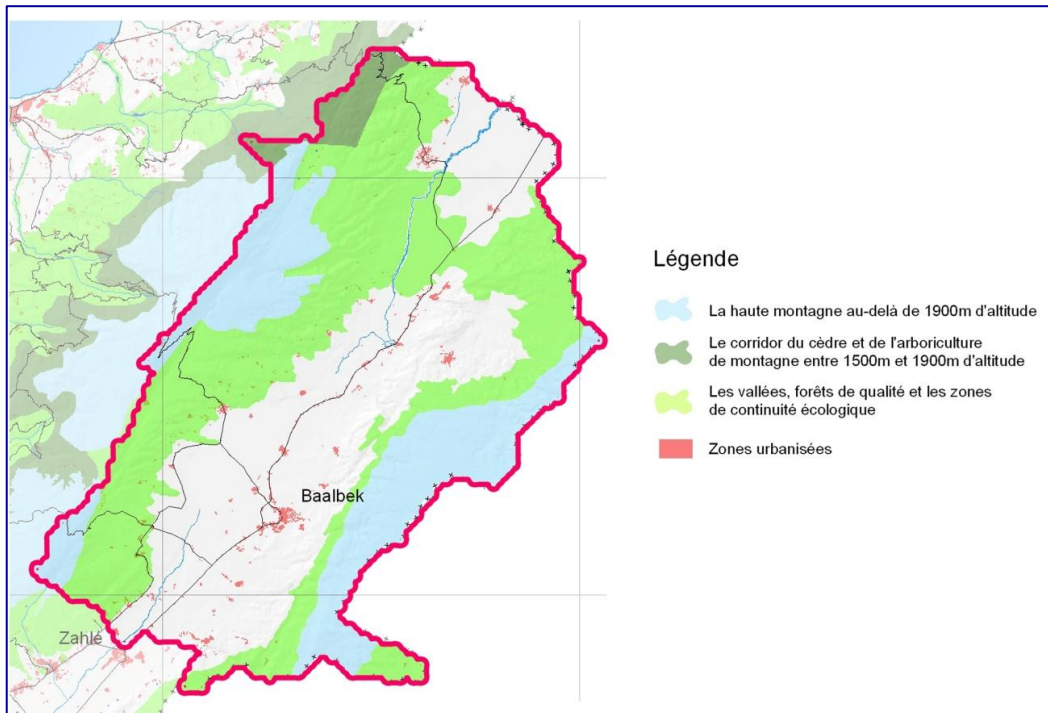
Picture 29-Orontes River. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



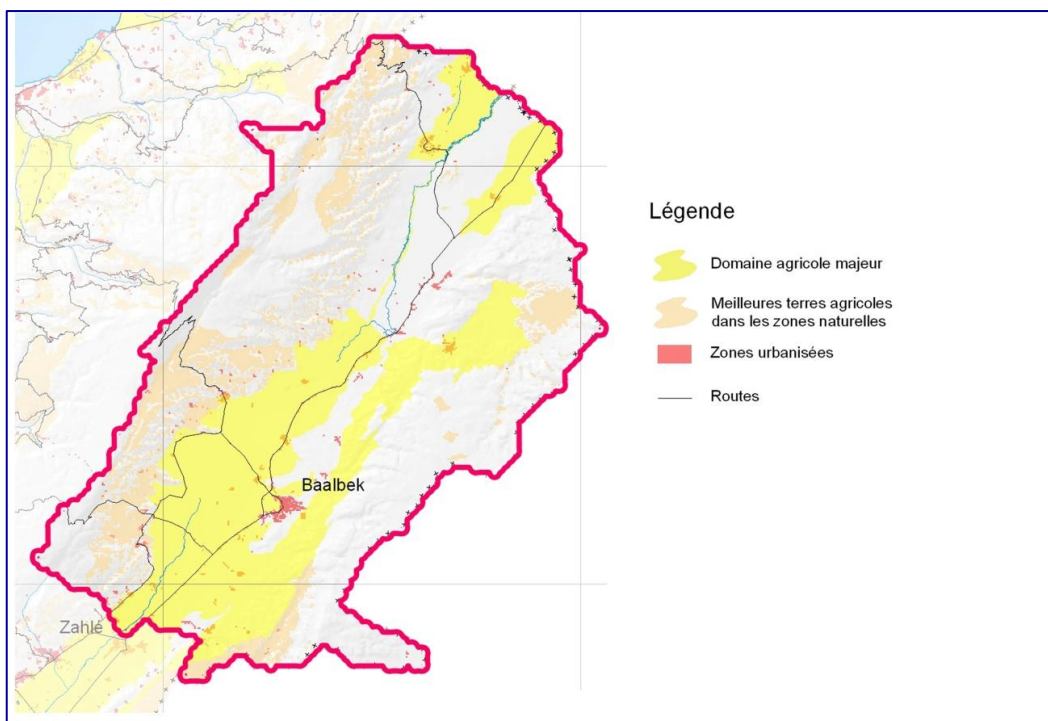
Picture 30-Orontes River. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



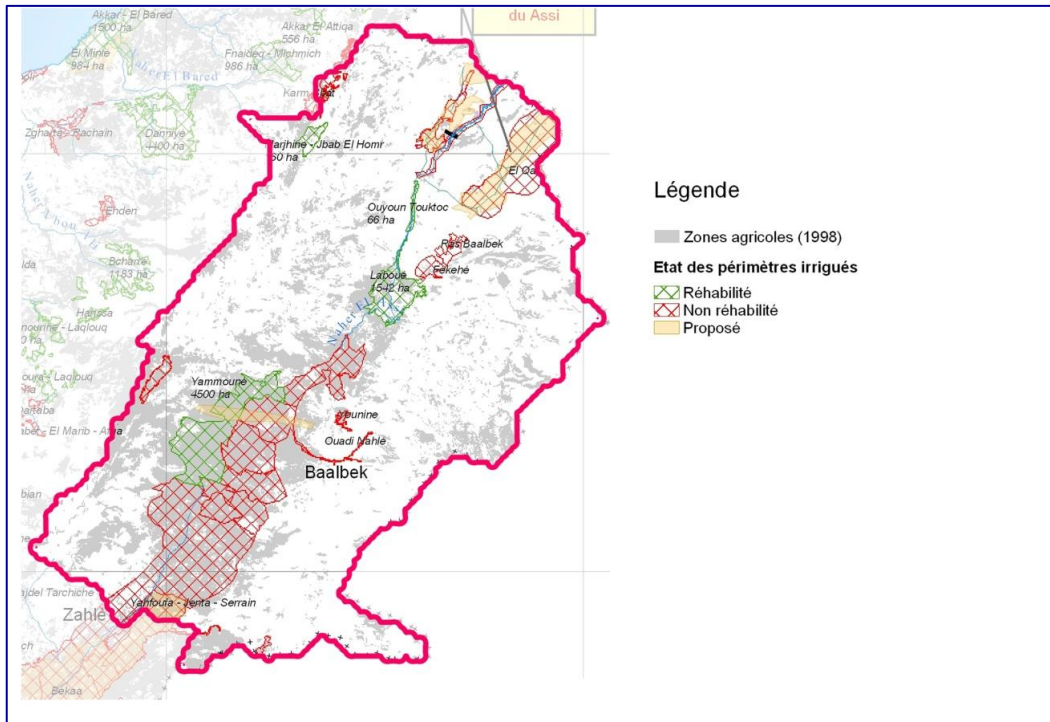
Picture 31-Water Sport. Source: Hamadeh, 2016



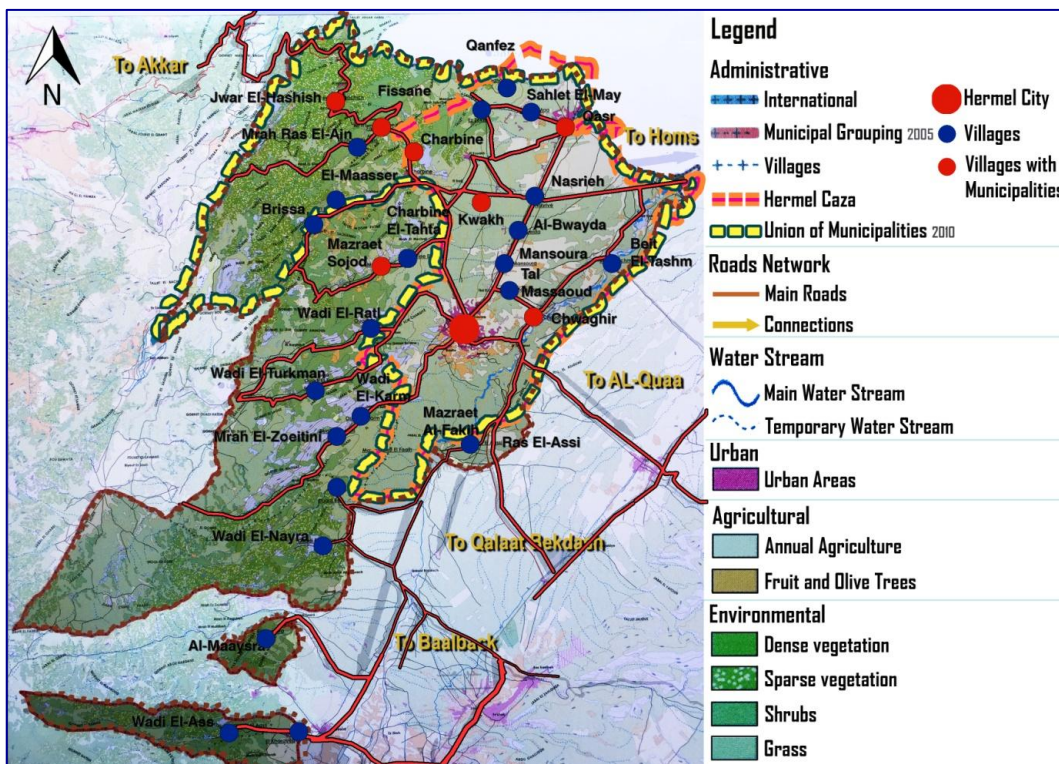
Map 11- Important Natural Areas in Baalbak-Hermel. Source: SDATL, 2005



Map 12- Main Agricultural Lands in Baalbak-Hermel. Source: SDATL, 2005



Map 13-Rehabilitated and Non-rehabilitated Agricultural lands in Baalbak-Hermel. Source: SDATL, 2005



Map 14-Synthesis Land Use and Connectivity Map. Source: Hamadeh, 2016, adapted from ARLA 2005

The SWOT analyses and Map 14 show how the region of Hermel is rich in natural resources and important built environment; however, it still suffers from weak planning policies and effective interventions that take advantage of the region's assets to improve livelihoods in a sustainable way. This is reflected on ground through a growing number of informalities, limited job opportunities, un- or badly exploited resources, and socio-spatial disparities. Most of the planned interventions lacked appropriate implementation mechanisms that take into consideration the different governance and geographical scales, the diversity of actors, and the socio-political specificity of the region. In addition, most of the proposed plans did not fill the gap between the national scale planning (SDATL) and the local planning of municipalities nor did identify economic linkages that would reinforce the status of Hermel as a "relay city" able of triggering socio-economic development in the region.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, urban sprawl, environmental impacts, uneven regional development, economic issues, social problems, and other diverse urban concerns, are agreed on to be best approached from a regional scale. Such movements had been connected to new urbanism, smart growth and sustainable communities and thus, translated into New Regionalism. However, New Regionalism has been confined to metropolitan regions and most of the literature and initiatives did not reach consensus on a workable concept, nor did extend to the rural regions.

In line with Ortiz-Guerrero (2013), I argue in my thesis that New Regionalism features are also applicable to rural territories. Applying the NR framework to Hermel's region, my thesis explores empirically how to devise an effective scale to implement the resulted sustainable regional development scheme shown in Chapter 2. I refer to the region as a territorial unit distinguished by its common

history, social institutions, and a shared view of the relationship between humans and the environment (Ortiz-Guerrero, 2013). I also consider that sustainable rural development is achieving the goals identified by Hamin and Marcucci (2008) consisting of creating an alternative rural character with complex land use planning, and strong social bonds, which constitute the basis for forming a strong regional identity.

Urban planning in Lebanon is executed in a highly centralized manner as it is confined to one governmental agency (The Directorate General of Urbanism-DGU) charged of developing, revising and approving individual master plans of localities with respect to their administrative boundaries. The SDATL built its development strategies on regional divisions which need to be complemented by detailed regional urban planning frameworks that are yet to be elaborated. According to the SDATL, rural regions are to depend on the dynamism of nearby cities (relay cities) to trigger economic and social development. Dynamic cities have the potential of attracting high income residents which generates commercial revenues in addition to tourism, activities, light industries and agriculture.³⁶

However, several issues are slowing down this regional transition, not only due to the centralized competence of planning, but also due to the representation of space and its delimitation that continue to be geographically based on administrative boundaries shaped following sectarian and political considerations. Awada also notes that the Urban Planning Law of 1983 is not comprehensive as it does not take into consideration all aspects of sustainable development and that the Environment Law does not yet take into account Strategic Environmental Assessment. He shows how master plans and

³⁶ This will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

urban development plans that are listed in the Urbanism Law, cannot generate integrated territorial development strategies, and are restricted to local and national levels of planning.

Thus, even the existence of administrative regions (muhafazat) divided into districts (cazas) did not help the establishment of a regional system that adapts to urban planning rationality and allows balanced regional socio-economic development.

Awada (2011) additionally underscores how the big debt of the central government cannot finance regional and local development. The role of municipalities in urban planning is increasing especially in light of the proliferation of international agencies partnering with the municipalities. Indeed, the European Union (EU) has initiated in Lebanon at the level of the Union of Municipalities several spatial planning policies and plans labeled as regional. The latest EU regional planning project is ADELNORD which targets a larger scale of planning beyond the administrative boundaries of the localities as it extends almost to the entire area of the caza of Akkar and reaches the caza of Hermel (Najem, 2016).

As discussed in the previous chapter, effective regional building should be a bottom-up process (even if state steered) that is mostly based on shared identities, symbols, common objectives, and needs. This implies that in a context where the administrative boundaries of the governorates do not necessarily match these aspects, regional strategies based on the administrative regions and not on people's perceptions are unlikely to succeed.

Berdegúe et al. (2015) state that the uneven distribution of territorial dynamics represents an important problem caused by many social issues (inequality, poverty, inefficient politics, and political economy) operating at different levels, particularly at

the level of supra-territorial decision-making. In this regard, wider development strategies require territorial and place-based policies especially in contexts of discrimination (geographical, racial, gender) and elites' reproduction through historically consolidated institutions.

As mentioned earlier, Harb and Atallah (2015: pp.3) shed the light on the importance of Unions of Municipalities (UoMs) and discuss how these are endowed of a legal personality, and have administrative and financial autonomy within their geographical boundaries. The main purpose of establishing a union is to achieve municipal shared objectives and to implement large-scale projects. Thus, UoMs are the agglomeration of several municipalities joining forces for dealing with financial, administrative, legislative and political problems. This trend started in the last two decades. However, again, as we have seen in Chapter 1, these unions suffer from many issues such as the lack of technical and financial resources, internal conflicts among their members who represent municipalities that have uneven resources and scales. Moreover, most of the unions are disconnected geographically and administratively as they do neither incorporate all adjacent villages and cities nor the districts' administrative boundaries. These issues are hindering integrated development at the regional level (LCPS, September 2012).

Therefore, conversely to Awada's suggestions, I argue in line with Harb and Atallah, that UoMs, despite their multiple flaws, still present a better (but limited) opportunity for regional building as they involve local stakeholders and are formed by elected members which is not the case of the appointed governors and caïmacams.

Osseiran (2016)³⁷ notes that there is a technical gap between the national level and the local one which urged the UN-Habitat to start promoting the regional level aiming at bridging this gap. UoMs are approached as key strategic local partners to international agencies because they represent the only regional structure and municipalities are very weak in financial and human resources. Thus, the UN-Habitat has established technical offices within unions to support the development of projects.

Feghali (2016)³⁸ also notes that UoMs can play major roles at regional levels until the state revise its decentralization system and governance. He adds that the Lebanese regions are defined in the SDATL according to either the functionality of the territory organization or to their development level. As for the topography, it comes after the functionality and development criteria in order to produce coherent territories. This shows that Feghali missed the importance of local identities, knowledge, history, resources, and social coherence. He discusses the building of regions from a technocrat perspective that ignores the issue of how communities shape and perceive their territories and its boundaries.

This shows that specific and multi-scalar implementation mechanisms are needed to operationalize the vision of the SDATL on regional or local scales. As we have seen, both the UoM and the existing administrative governorate do not represent nor an effective scale nor an appropriate institution through which Hermel regional planning should be addressed.

³⁷ During his participation in roundtable 1 of the City Debates 16' event at the American University of Beirut (AUB), 3 March 2016. Tarek Osseiran is a Program Officer at the UN-Habitat, Lebanon office.

³⁸ During his participation in roundtable 1 of the City Debates 16' event at the American University of Beirut (AUB), 3 March 2016. Sami Feghali is the Head of Land Use Department at the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR).

Chapter 4 aims at elaborating on the scaling and institutionalization debates as well as at empirically implementing sustainable regional development, using the NR framework on the case of Hermel.

CHAPTER IV

DEFINING THE NEW REGION: BOUNDARIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Lebanon, following the post-war municipal elections in 1998, many activists, scholars, politicians, citizens, and NGOs have been studying the decentralization framework in order to look for alternatives that allow the state to reorganize itself efficiently for a more balanced development. In 2011, the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) published a report containing a "strategy for the Reform and Development of Public Administration in Lebanon" that clearly highlights the need for a reform at the level of the Lebanese administration "in a way that contributes to economic and social growth and moves forward in building the modern State." It also notes that the excessive administrative centralization in public administrations is narrowing the role and prerogatives not only of municipalities but also of regional units which, in turn, need to be improved in order to function efficiently. Here, "regional units" are referred to be the center of governorates (muhafazat) in official discourses as each muhafaza has a regional office for the DGU which role is to assist municipalities in planning, as well as in technical and legal issues in the form of consultancy and follow-up. Conversely, on the ground, their contribution remains confined to reviewing buildings permits and construction documents, knowing that municipalities are allowed according to the Lebanese Municipal Law to draft their master plans, their regulations, and parceling project in collaboration with the DGU. In fact, most master plans have focused on land use and zoning rather on elaborating sustainable regional development vision in line with SDATL (Verdeil, 2008).

As we have seen in Chapter III, the SDATL, as we have seen earlier, recognizes the need for a regional approach to manage resources by calling to structure the Lebanese territory into four major regions that are the Central Urban Area (Beirut and its agglomeration), the North, the East, and the South. Major urban agglomerations within these regions would economically interact with the adjacent towns through "relay-villages". The SDATL underscores how the economic development of each region must depend on large cities by means of investments in the industrial and productive sectors, and not only by dissemination of small services³⁹. However, effectively, none of these recommendations were followed though and there are no mechanisms to operationalize the SDATL vision on regional or local scales.

The CDR⁴⁰ gets engaged in regional scale projects but they are often short-lived, donor driven, and/or responding to crisis. Awada (2011) states that the government also initiated the Master Plan for the metropolitan region of Beirut (1983-1986), the Socio-economic Programme for Post-conflict Development for Southern Lebanon (1998-1999), the Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable du Territoire for the UoM of Tripoli, and other proposals for Jezzine, Saida, and Tyre. The most recent one is the previously discussed project in Chapter 3, ADELNORD, which was funded by the EU for the North region.

Another institution with regional scope of intervention is the UoM. However, as we have seen earlier, UoMs have limited means and cannot undertake effective regional

³⁹ www.cdr.gov.lb/study/sdatl/English/NPMPLT.PDF

⁴⁰ The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was established in 1977 to replace the Ministry of Planning. It is an autonomous institution that is directly accountable to the Council of Ministers through the Prime Minister and endowed with extended jurisdiction. Its main responsibilities consist of complying a plan and a time schedule for development and reconstruction projects, ensuring the funding of projects, and supervising their execution. The CDR is the receiver of numerous international and national funds that are allocated mainly to large-scale projects especially infrastructure ones.

development. Also, their administrative boundaries are conceived on the base of political considerations rather than economic and developmental criteria (Harb and Atallah 2015). Some of them perform better than others, thanks to their networks with international donors but again this is short-lived, and the plans they produce have no legal value.

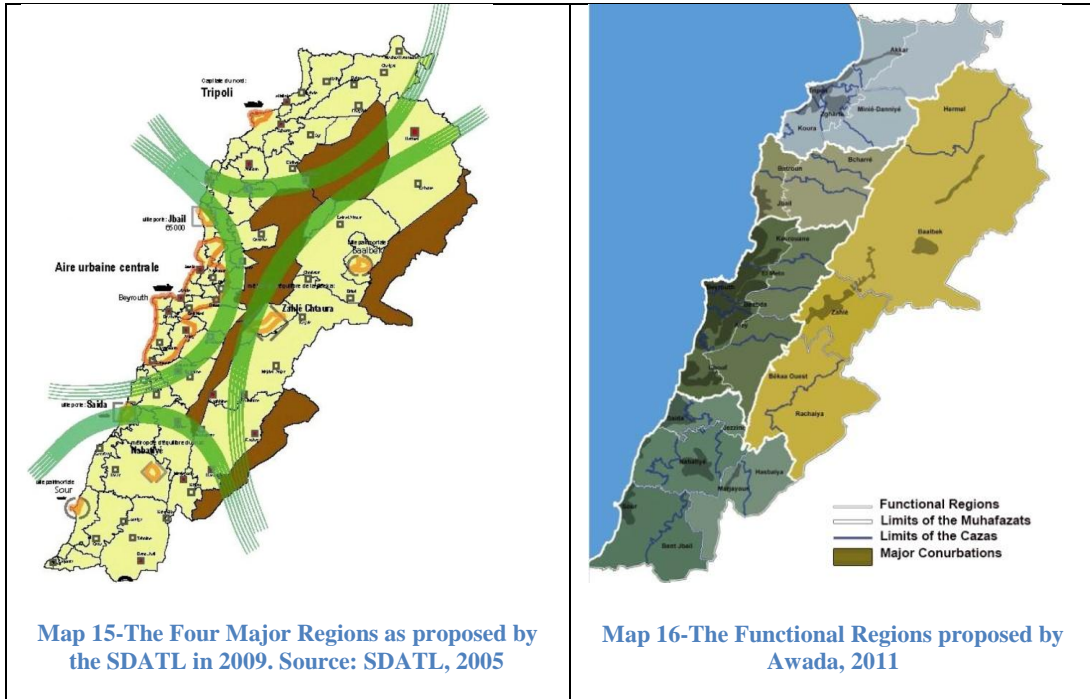
To summarize, the Lebanese government is aware of the necessity of reinforcing decentralization which would enable regional development. This was stipulated by Taëf agreement which calls not only for a balanced economic, social, and cultural development at the regional and local levels but also for the creation of smaller administrative units at the level of cazas headed by elected councils. In line with this, former Prime Minister Najib Mikati and former president Michel Suleiman formed "the special decentralization committee" to prepare the draft law on decentralization in 2014.

Atallah (2014), who was a member of the committee, explains why the draft law provides authority to cazas and transforms them into key developmental actors, namely in order to overcome development challenges. Cazas will have directly elected councils rather than being headed by qaimmaqams and will be then endowed with a mandate as well as fiscal resources to provide services and implement large-scale projects (e.g. environment, tourism, infrastructure, and transportation). This entails redrawing cazas' administrative boundaries in a way that serves developmental needs. The establishment of regional councils must be completed first by revising the responsibilities, roles, and fiscal resources of municipalities and UoMs, and second by establishing related executive authorities which responsibility is to sustain the implementation of development projects and strategies.

Apart from the draft law on decentralization, the CDR has been involved in conceptualizing regionalism, through the operationalization of the SDATL. For this end, as mentioned earlier, the CDR has implemented a regional pilot project in North Lebanon by the name of ADELNORD. This came as a result of a study led by planner Fouad Awada for CDR, entitled "Definition of the Form and Content of a Strategic Sustainable Regional Development Plan adapted to the Lebanese needs and Context" (2011). Awada notes as mentioned previously that the SDATL set out a doctrine of regional development that focuses on the eight major conurbations⁴¹ as drivers for the development of four main regions. The SDATL advocates however the creation of regional development agencies (RDAs) in three conurbations: Zahleh, Tripoli, and Nabatiyeh—as one RDA could operate over more than one region. Awada notes that RDAs are intended to act as both IDAL-type⁴² economic development agencies and urban planning agencies. They must be supported by "local engineering services working in both territorial marketing and project planning and programming." He also proposes dividing the territory into fifteen "functional regions" or "project regions" (Maps 15 and 16). Yet, oddly, the report does not explain the criteria by which these functional regions were identified.

⁴¹ The eight conurbations are: 1) the region around the capital, 2) Greater Beirut, 3) Northern Tripoli, 4) Saïda (port city), 5) the port city (port city), 6) Zahleh-Chtoura (counter magnet conurbation), 7) the counter magnet conurbation of Nabatiyeh (counter magnet conurbation), 7) Baalbak (major heritage centre), and 8) Sour (major heritage centre).

⁴² Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) was established in 1994. Its main role consists of promoting and regulating investment activities in Lebanon, in addition to providing investors with a range of incentives and business support service. IDAL is entrusted with financial and administrative autonomy and reports only to the President of the Council of Ministers.
www.investinlebanon.gov.lb



My thesis builds on both proposals. It advocates the reinforcement of decentralization by establishing regional councils at the level of cazas, the regionalization of the Lebanese territory and its subdivision into "project regions", as well as the establishing of RDAs. However, the number of regions and their identification must be based on a set of criteria such as social, economic, geographic, and topographic. This is currently missing from the CDR's proposal, but more in line with the draft law of decentralization which calls for the revision of cazas' boundaries based on developmental needs. My thesis also advocates the establishing of regional development agencies at the level of cazas or groups of cazas, rather than establishing only three RDAs, and charging them of the development responsibilities of the whole Lebanese territory, because this might run the risk of the re-centralization of development policy making and implementation. I am aware that this may be a too high number of RDAs, but I

would like to advocate that this may be a temporary measure until the institutions and the regions become stronger and more competitive entities, and may then join together as one RDA. I will discuss this proposal later after presenting the case study of Hermel as a new region.

Accordingly, my thesis will contribute to the regionalism and rescaling debates by exploring how can we empirically implement sustainable regional development, using the NR framework on the case of Hermel. More specifically, this chapter investigates two complementary questions:

- A- Does Hermel have the key components that allow it to effectively operate as a region as per the rural NR framework?
- B- How to define the administrative boundaries of Hermel's region according to the NR framework, and to SDATL?

The following sections begin first by exploring the capacity of Hermel to organize its resources and assets in order to operate as a "region" within a regional system. Second, the chapter proposes criteria for drawing new administrative boundaries for the Hermel region using participatory methodologies. Third, institutional mechanisms for the production of Hermel's region and a set of policy recommendations based on the region's assets and constraints are derived.

A. Does Hermel Have the Key Components for an Effective Rural Region?

As we have seen in the previous chapter, rural regions can be identified by three key components: 1) landscape and heritage, 2) local identity and knowledge, and 3) multifunctionality. These three components should be operationalized when elaborating territorial regional development strategies. In this section, I will apply the rural regional

framework discussed in Chapter 2 to test the capacity of Hermel to operate as an effective region and to identify its assets and constraints.

My main tools of inquiry are qualitative. I will rely on research using available data and fieldwork. Therefore, besides the desk review of reports, databases, statistics, maps, and relevant literature which was synthesized in Chapter 3, I have conducted face-to-face interviews in the city of Hermel. The interview adopts a mix of open and close-ended set of questions. Twenty-five randomly selected participants have been asked to describe the city's identity, to indicate where they go to access urban services, to list important heritage and landscape sites, in addition to economic production, as well as to draw/identify the region's boundaries on an attached map for Hermel and surrounding cities and villages. The aim was to investigate empirically how Hermel's inhabitants perceive and represent their identity and their city, and what are their spatial practices and mobility.

1. Landscape and Heritage

The SWOT of Hermel demonstrates the area is rich in natural resources. Besides the picturesque sceneries of the valley, the Jord, and the waterfalls of the Orontes, the mountainous areas are covered with pine forests, cedar, oak, and juniper trees. As for the built environment, there are several archeological and cultural sites such as old churches, the Qamou'e which represents a national and local symbolic landmark for Hermel, the old souq, Zenobia aqueducts, St. Maroun old monastery, an old mill, old rock inscriptions, and the house where Gibran Khalil Gibran spent his childhood. These sites are spread across the territory in the form of isolated edifices as most of them are dilapidated due to neglect and lack of maintenance work.

The results of the fieldwork (Figure 4) highlight the importance of the Qamou'e as a major landmark, symbol, and heritage site by local people followed by the Orontes River as natural resource and touristic attraction. It also shows that the Qamou'e, the Orontes River, and St. Maroun Monastery⁴³ are considered to be very unique and specific to the region as they are the most listed ones followed by the Jord which is considered a recently discovered resource⁴⁴.

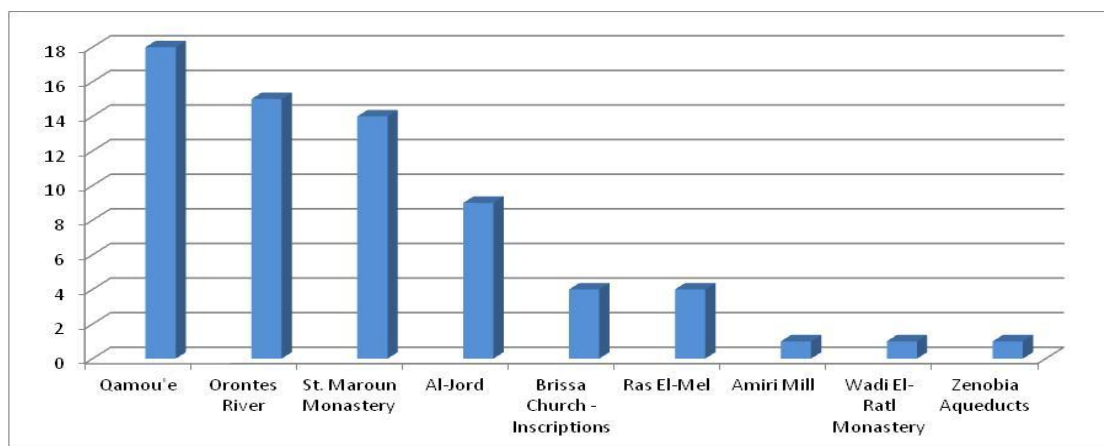


Figure 4-Fieldwork, Q8- Frequency of Answers Regarding Landscape and Heritage Sites

This shows how the area is rich in natural and archeological sites that are worth being included in the list of resources that need special policies not only to rehabilitate, protect, and preserve them, but also to improve and maintain their economic vitality as touristic attractions.

⁴³ Local people use different terms to refer to the monastery: "magharet al-rahib", "qasr el-banet", "deir mar maroon."

⁴⁴ People have been asked to list the most important heritage and landscape sites in Hermel.

2. *Local identity and Knowledge*

We have seen in Chapter 2 that people in rural areas are very closely tied to their environment and landscape, their identity is not only shaped in relation to their land as a property and place of origin, but also as landscape, environment, and heritage. Similarly, the local identity of Hermel is strongly linked to its natural and built environments. However, Hermel is also characterized by its political identity which is materialized in narratives and imagery across the territory. Thus, different sets of images are associated to Hermel's region: the Dardara waterfalls, the Qamou'e, and the St. Maroun monastery are often used in touristic pamphlets and social media, while "City of Martyrs (madinat al shohada)" and "The Orontes' Neighbor (jarat al'assi)" are other labels attributed to Hermel. Newspapers often refer to Hermel as "the city of poverty and marginalization." Political discourse often frames the city and its inhabitants as illegal using the terms of "outlaw (kharej al-kanun)" and "fugitives" (tuffar)⁴⁵. This reveals how Hermel's identity is fragmented between socio-economic labels and political stigmas.

In the conducted interviews, participants were asked to describe in three words the main components of the identity of Hermel. The results shown in Figure 2 reflect well the socio-economic and political conditions of the region as 30% of the interviewed people mentioned marginalization (tahmeesh) as a major component of the region's identity (see Figure 5) in addition to other answers such as "neglect (ehmal)", "poverty", "unemployment", "goods smuggling (tehreeb)", "political hegemony", "cultivation of cannabis (hashish)", and "spread of illegal weapons." Most of the

⁴⁵ The term of "tuffar" is widely used to describe the socio-political conditions of people living in the region to the extent that two Lebanese people from the region formed a band called Tuffar. They use the "gangsta rap" style in their songs to portray the urban image of Baalbak-Hermel and its related socio-political issues such as inequality, marginalization, illegalities, armed groups, unemployment, and absence of basic needs in their region.

respondents highlight the region's positive social values such as "generosity (karam)", "simplicity (bassata)", and "chivalry (nakhweh)", in addition to the "unique" and "beautiful" natural resources of Jord, the "good weather", and even the "beautiful city." The Orontes River is considered as an important component as 30% of the respondents linked it to the region's identity. It is important to note that the age, gender, and profession of respondents have an effect on their answers. For instance, only males whose age range from 20 to 40 years talk freely about deprivation, hashish, and smuggling. Many of them are either unemployed or work as minibus (van) drivers. The older generation, whether males or females, focused more on social values. Students and participants who work in the tourism sector especially in the restaurants spread alongside the Orontes focus on landscape and heritage sites. Farmers' responses are the most diverse as some identify themselves in relation to their natural and agricultural environment while others complain about the marginalization.

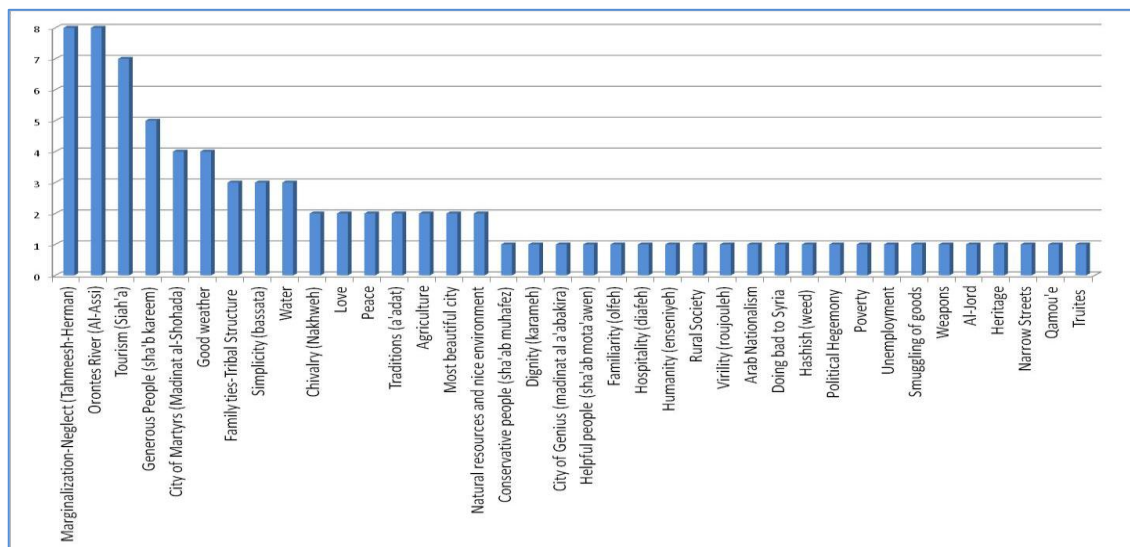


Figure 5-Fieldwork, Q1- Perceptions and Labels of Hermel, Organized by Frequency of Responses

3. *Multifunctionality*

Multifunctionality, as discussed earlier, shows how agriculture can operate as a multi-output activity, producing not only food and goods, but also landscape sceneries, biodiversity, and farmlands. The SWOT analysis presented in Chapter 3 shows that several areas in Hermel have the potential to operate as multifunctional territories and spaces such as the Orontes, the Jord, and the previously listed archeological sites. Inhabitants are keen on generating income for their livelihoods, and thus, some already have started integrating new functions to traditional uses, especially in agricultural and natural areas, either as individual entrepreneurship or via NGOs' interventions such as the "Tarhal" ecotourism project initiated by Mada in Jord⁴⁶. The land in these areas incorporates both an agricultural value and a landscape value. However, both agricultural and touristic sectors can be much more productive but have been stalled due to a variety of factors: as discussed in Chapter 3, the agricultural sector is constrained by difficult market access, inefficient irrigations techniques and water distribution, weak production techniques, high costs of production, high competition of foreign markets, and the absence of state's agricultural policies. Thus, the sector is not industrialized yet and does not ensure employment, nor does it increase land rentability. Furthermore, the State did not yet find adequate alternative crops to illicit agricultural production, which are still present, nor formulate policies to regulate and manage the production and trade of cannabis, knowing that it could start integrating it to the economy and legalizing it for medical or limited use⁴⁷. Exploring this issue is beyond

⁴⁶ www.cdr-adelnord.org/5/8/5/7/0/9/DIAGNOSTIC_REPORT_20140423_FINAL-low2.pdf
www.mada.org.lb/Content/Actives/MADA_Recources/141/FilePDF_141.pdf
www.tarhal.org/aboutus.php

⁴⁷ For instance, the state can regulate and control the recreational use by controlling the age of the consumer and the quantity of the used drug.

the scope of this thesis but in rural areas of many countries such as the Netherlands, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Canada, native American Indian reservations and several states in the USA⁴⁸, the illicit drug industry provides jobs in the agricultural sector to a large number of people with limited resources, skills, and education, whereas its trade ensures employment for distributors, runners, and laboratories workers. The Lebanese State turns a blind eye towards illegal businesses (cultivation and trade) or grey economy because it is neither taxed nor monitored nor even included in the GNP and GDP, although it contributes to the national economy as it performs outside the global market competition (Servel and Zurayk, 2014). It also instigates businesses by means of money laundering. I am not taking a position with or against illegal businesses here but I am highlighting the necessity to explore and understand further this economy to devise policies that can help the region's development.

The animal production used to be a vibrant sector in Hermel but it declined dramatically due to the high cost of imported animal feed which, in turn, increases the cost of production. Like agriculture, the sector did not reach the industrialization phase as the region lacks dairy products industries, in addition to more innovative ways of bringing additional income such as farm tours, value-added products, and farm stays.

Besides agriculture, the Orontes banks represent an excellent multifunctional space where diverse and numerous functions are integrated, such as recreational amenities, sports activities, and fishery farms. However, this touristic destination is still not as vibrant as it can be because of its poor branding and marketing policies, and

⁴⁸ For instance, Colorado, Michigan, and Washington are among the 25 states that have legalized the cannabis in the USA.

perhaps its remote geographic location. In addition, the absence of touristic facilities and establishments such as hotels and boutique hotels is another hindrance.

The results of the conducted fieldwork show that people are not involved in strategies and policies that boost economy and multifunctionalism as the respondents are much more acquainted with what relates to heritage, environment, landscape, and nature than with industrial and economic production⁴⁹. Figure 6 shows that few respondents were able to list some food specialties and industrial production. Fishery farms, dairy products, and olive oil are the most familiar ones.

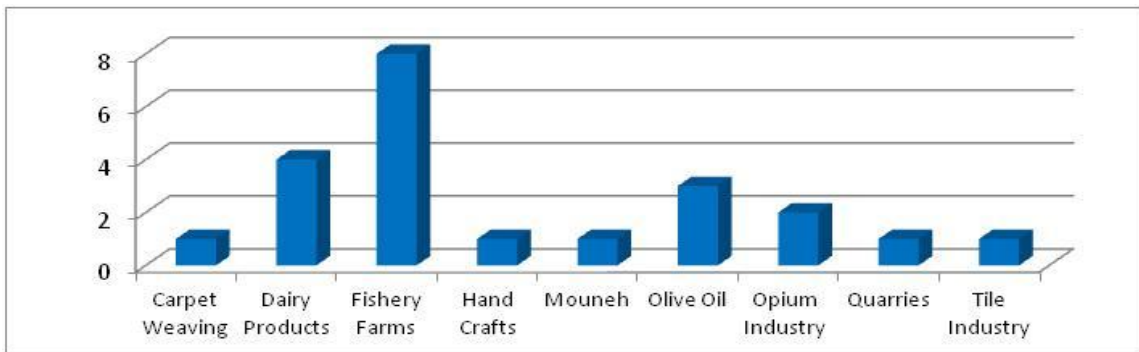


Figure 6-Fieldwork-Q7, Frequency of Answers regarding Food Specialties and Industrial Production

In order to further investigate if Hermel incorporates the key regional components to operate as an efficient region, I examined the development projects implemented in the area since 2002. Table 5 shows how most of the major development projects and activities whether initiated by private, public, governmental, non-governmental, municipal, local or foreign bodies and organizations (or a mix of several ones) build on the three identified regional components that are landscape and heritage, identity and local knowledge, and multifunctionality. Accordingly, the criteria, by which the projects listed in Table 5 are categorized, are based on the main resource(s) or

⁴⁹ Participants were asked to list the food specialties and industrial productions of their region.

raw material(s) that stakeholders (donors, decision-makers, and local community) have relied on to initiate, design, and implement the project.

Project/ Initiative	Milk Collection Center	Orotas Dam	Fish Smoking and Feeding Industry	Al-Kwakh Eco-lodge	ADELNORD	Plantation	Solar Power	Annual Cultural Festival	Annual Sports Festival	Livestock Market and Slaughter-house	Agricultural Refrigerator	Rehabilitation of the Qamou'e surrounding	Developing the olive sector	Al Jord Eco-lodge	Lazzab Club and Lodge
Further Description	Aims at storing the milk and keeping it in good conditions.	Aims at irrigating an area of around 7,000 ha in Hermel and Qaa Areas; in addition to the hydroelectric power generation of 6 to 8 MW.	Aims at increasing the benefits of fishery farms and ensuring employment opportunities	Eco-tourism activities- women empowerment	Adopts a three-tiered approach : agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation and development, community development, and sustainable management of environmental resources.	Growing and providing inhabitants with different kinds of plants and seeds	Installing 766 street lights equipped with PV solar panels	Aim at portraying the region cultural identity and belonging to Hezbollah in general and to the Islamic resistance (al-muqawama al Islamiya) in particular	Aims at managing the sector	Aims at ensuring cold storage of agricultural products for Hermel каза	The area of the project is 10000 sq.m, it consists of creating green areas, building an amphitheater and other recreational amenities in addition to a small artificial lake to collect water.	Aims at importing olive pounder to produce oil, in addition to improving the quality of crops	Eco-tourism activities- private business		
Location	Hermel city	Hermel city- Orotas	Hermel city- Orotas	Al-Kwakh	Hermel-Sir El Dennieh-Akkar	Al-Tall village	Hermel City Entrance	Hermel city- Orotas	Hermel city- Orotas	Hermel city	Hermel city- Qamou'e	Hermel city	Hermel city	Jord	Qornet el-Sawda
Year	2002	2004	2004	2008	2009	2010	2012	yearly	yearly	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost	N/A	US\$300 Million	US\$194 Thousand	N/A	€450 Thousand (in Hermel)	N/A	US\$1 Million 122 Th.	N/A	N/A	US\$150 Thousand	€650 Thousand	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Funded by/Main Stakeholders	CHF-Hermel Municipality-Cooperatives	Ministry of Energy and Water	EU-Hermel UoM-CHF	Mada (Terhal Network)-Arcs Italy Gov.	EU-CDR-OMSAR-ESFD-Hermel UoM	EU-Hermel UoM	MTPW	Hezbollah Hermel Municipality	AUCE-Anal Movement- Hezbollah (Saraya al Mukawama)- Hermel Municipality	CHF-Hermel Municipality-Cooperatives	EU-Hermel Municipality-Cooperatives	CHF-Hermel Municipality	CHF-Embassy of France-Hermel Municipality	Private (people from Allow Medyen al Sahill) Clan)	Private (Husein Dandash and Bou Medyen al Sahill)
Status	Stopped functioning	Incomplete	Incomplete	Stopped functioning	Blocked	Operating	Stopped functioning			Stopped functioning	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete but operating (private management)	Operating	Operating
Regional Components		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Landscape and Heritage		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Identity and Knowledge	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Multi-functionalism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Projects

Table 5-Projects Matrix

Regardless of the success or failure of these projects, these projects are considered as indicator of the capability of Hermel to operate as a region by relying on its own territorial resources. Conversely, the table shows the inconsistencies in implementing these projects, as the majority is incomplete and many of the provided equipments stopped functioning. Additionally, it shows that these initiatives, except the ones promoting ecotourism, are concentrated in urban centers rather than being distributed across the territory which would have helped creating linkages among villages. They thus reveal how the projects lack a coherent vision and a strategic plan that coordinates among the different initiatives and their stakeholders.

4. Recommendations to Strengthen the Regional Components of Hermel

In sum, I have shown that Hermel incorporates the three components needed to build an effective rural region:

- 1- Rural landscape and heritage in Hermel are rich and diverse, and represent a strong node of tourism attraction and internal tourism in particular, but they lack protection, maintenance and effective management policies to be more vibrant attractions. They can be rehabilitated, connected to a network of trails, and serviced by the needed touristic and economic infrastructure.

Environmental policies and regulations are also needed to protect the region's capital which represents the raw materials of tourism (e.g. archeological and natural sites, landscape, biodiversity...). This includes controlling urban growth, combating desertification, increasing environmental awareness, eliminating pollution, treating wastewater, managing solid waste as well as benefitting from the region's potential to produce solar and hydro-electric energy.

- 2- Local identity and knowledge are strong components but fragmented and weakly linked up and branded. Hermel has a lot of potential to be constructed and represented as a region that showcases its assets. Therefore, it is recommended to empower local knowledge in order to extract the region's multiple rich and diverse identities and associated images. This can help also in shaping policies tailored in relation to the region's specificity and needs, in relation to participatory/inclusive planning.
- 3- Multifunctionality: Hermel has high potential to industrialize its agriculture and animal production, and create linkages to tourism that will increase its economic productivity and make it operate effectively as a multifunctional region. Thus, it is recommended to: i) Operate land registration (cadastre) in order to elaborate spatial strategies, initiate development projects, and facilitate investment; ii) Provide agricultural policies and industrialization mechanisms at both the national and the regional levels for the agriculture and animal production sectors, as well as linkages to tourism in a way that increases employment. This must be preceded by training farmers on agricultural know-how, facilitating their access to markets, and encouraging organic farming; iii) Provide national support to core natural activities⁵⁰ in order to develop or renew their aesthetic significance and link them to local production. Thus, as we have seen in Chapter 2, it is important to integrate reliant activities⁵¹ to sustain the region's

⁵⁰ We have seen in Chapter 2 that Coutney et al. (2006) refer to core activities as the activities that are recognized as public goods and services: these depend on the environment itself and involve environmental industries' sector (e.g. pollution control, waste management).

⁵¹ Coutney et al. (2006) identify reliant activities as the activities that depend on the quality of the environment and natural heritage for their commercial vitality without interfering with environmental management (e.g. holiday tourism, recreation, production and marketing of food and drink in relation to the specific and unique environment).

commercial vitality; and iv) Identify not only sectoral linkages but also spatial ones at the macro-scale (inter-regional) and the micro-scale (intra-regional).

Micro-scale linkages implies enhancing the specialization of villages within the region itself and promoting their interaction by spatially linking and distributing functions across the region rather than concentrating them in urban cores⁵².

Thus, although the three components of a region are incorporated in Hermel and can be strengthened through a set of procedures and policies, it requires a series of institutional and policy interventions to operationalize it as such. Before listing the related recommendations, I turn now to exploring how to define the boundaries of the region.

B. Identifying the Region's Boundaries

As we have seen in Chapter 2, regions are time and space specific, and are in perpetual transformation. This challenges existing administrative boundaries and requires revising the boundaries of regional territories accordingly. The next section presents an attempt to identify the regional boundaries of Hermel through its territorial, functional, and social linkages. However, central to this exercise is that any region's boundaries are never fixed and that the choice criteria by which a region's boundaries are drawn should be an open-ended process rather than a rigid one. My discussion is thus an exercise exploring how one can identify regional boundaries using objective criteria as well as participatory methods that contribute to also engage dwellers in the construction of "their" region.

⁵² Intraregional linkages are discussed in the following sections.

Thus, in this section I will be proposing new regional boundaries for Hermel referring to two sets of data: i) the SWOT analysis shared in Chapter 3, and ii) the interviews with twenty-five dwellers who were asked to identify Hermel's boundaries as well as to report on their mobility and spatial practices⁵³. The results are represented in figures (7 and 8) and maps (17 and 18).

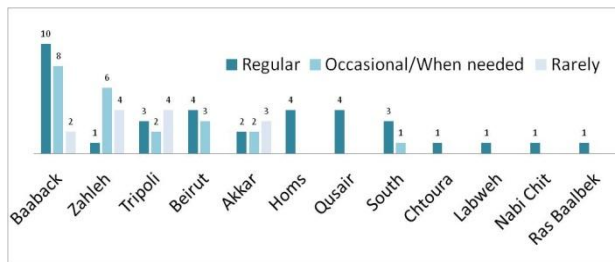


Figure 7-Fieldwork, Frequency of Visits to other Regions

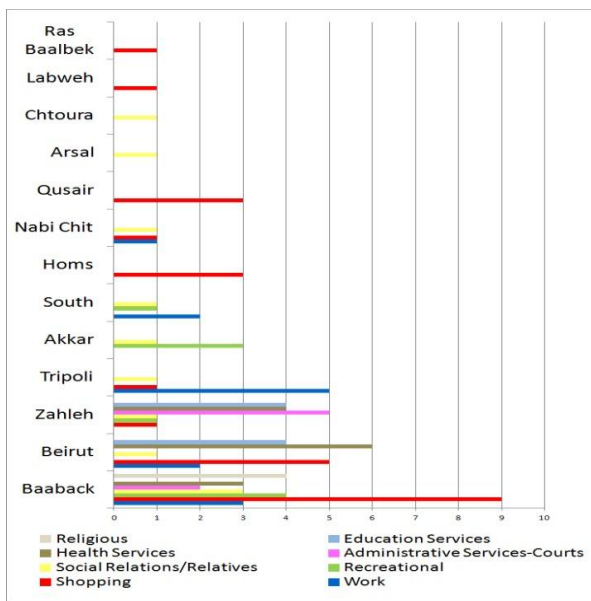
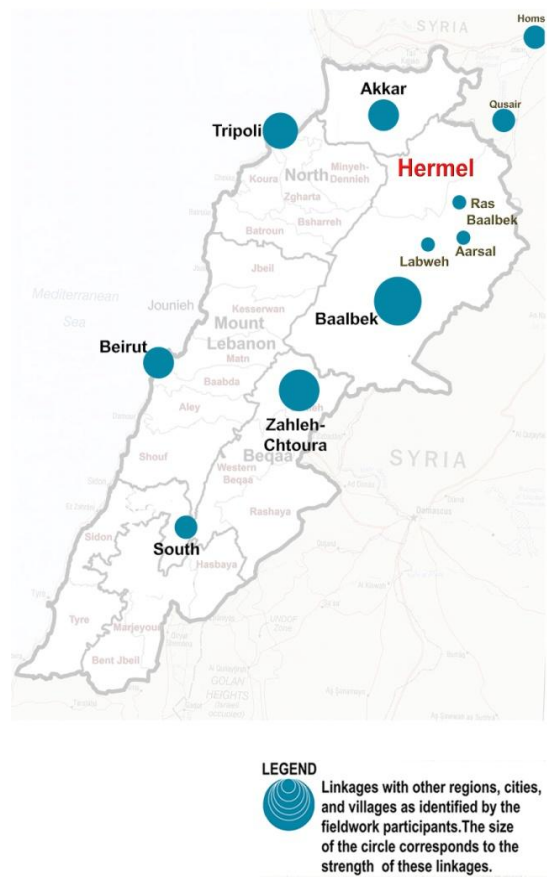


Figure 8-Fieldwork, Purpose of Visits to other Regions



Map 17-Fieldwork, Linkages with other Regions

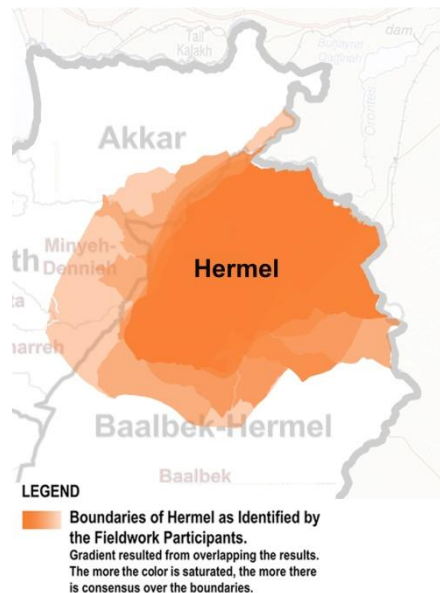
⁵³ Respondents were asked to, first, list the places where they go to access basic needs and facilities such as leisure activities, shops, educational and health services, and second, about the frequency and purpose of their visits (if any) to a list of cities that were selected either for their geographic proximity such as Akkar and Tripoli, or for their importance as major cities in the Beqaa governorate such as Baalbak and Zahleh.

Figures 7 and 8 show that the vast majority of respondents listed Baalbeck (80%) as the most visited city, followed by Zahleh (44%), and Tripoli (36%). Linkages with Zahleh result from the fact that it is considered a major urban agglomeration which used to be the center of the former Beqaa governorate⁵⁴. The results also show significant linkages with Akkar that are equal to those with the capital Beirut (28%). However, the figures show that visits to Zahleh are occasional and depends on one's needs, as most of the respondents go to Zahleh for specific purposes such as administrative, health, and educational services. Conversely, people go to Baalbak regularly not only due to its geographic proximity and multifunctionality, but also due to social relations and to the presence of important religious sites (e.g. shrine of Sayida Khawla). 16% of the respondents listed the two Syrian cities, Qusair and Homs, as the most visited cities; however, by considering the frequency of visits criteria, the two cities come after Baalback in the most regularly visited ones (Figure 7) because people go there to buy cheap goods⁵⁵. Figure 8 shows that most of the respondents go to Tripoli for business purposes to buy merchandises, while fewer go to Akkar for recreational activities. Regular visits to south reveal some linkages resulting from marriages, and from the affiliation of many people with Hezbollah which institutional networks extend to the South. Results also show, as expected, that people in Hermel use local facilities for daily shopping, health services, educational services and leisure activities. But, due to the absence of fully equipped hospitals and univiersities, many resort to Baalbak, Zahleh, or Beirut for health and education services.

⁵⁴ This situation is expected to change after implementing the legal, institutional, and administrative setups of the recently established governorate of Baalbeck-Hermel as explained in Chapter 3.

⁵⁵ As explained in Chapter 3, linkages with Syrian cities used to be much stronger before the Syrian Crisis. People used to go to Homs and Qusair also to access cheap health services. They now go rather to Baalbak, Zahleh, and Beirut.

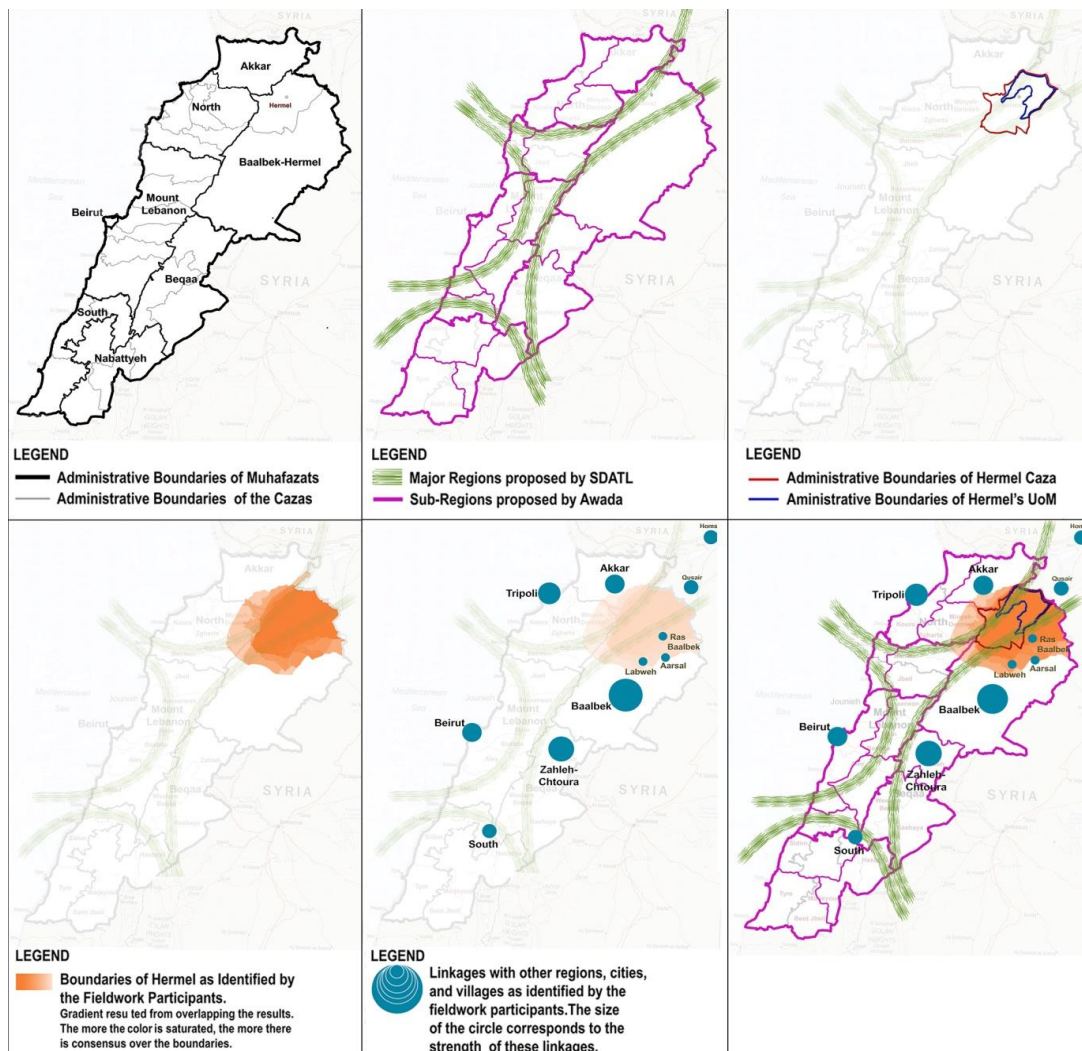
Drawn boundaries by respondents were overlapped in a way that identifies potential consensual borders. Map 18 shows that there is a consensus among the interviewees that Hermel region includes the city of Hermel and its surrounding villages and neighborhoods, as well as over some villages that are beyond the administrative limits of the Caza, such as Labweh, Ras Baalbak and Al-Qaa. Wider borders are more contested, especially the western ones. This probably relates to the fact this area is owned by clans and covers a large natural terrain which is not yet subdivided by the cadastre.



Map 18-Boundaries of Hermel Region as Identified by Interviewees

Now, let's turn to the boundaries proposed by SDATL. As seen previously, the SDATL proposes a system composed of four regions that cut across Hermel without taking into account the fact that Hermel functions more as we identified in Map 4. Participants did not identify nor the boundaries suggested by the SDATL, nor the UoM's boundaries. However, Map 19 shows that the caza's boundaries are the closest

to the ones identified by participants. Based on this discussion, I suggest that the region of Hermel should adopt the administrative boundaries proposed in Map 19 which are generated from people’s responses and the region’s key components assessment. These boundaries will not be fixed in time, but will be reassessed every few years (a period to be specified by the RDA itself), as interactions and linkages between Hermel, Akkar, Tripoli as well as Syria are in flux, and contingent on the Syria’s war, as well as on the construction of the Akkar-Hermel highway, which is currently stalled.⁵⁶



Map 19-Comparison of the Different Boundaries of Hermel Region, and Proposed Boundaries

⁵⁶ Further investigation is recommended to understand how the original (current) boundaries of the caza were drawn in relation to the local scale (boundaries with adjacent cazas) and to the national scale (Syrian-Lebanese boundaries).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Key Recommendation: An RDA for the Region of Hermel

In the previous chapter, I identified Hermel's region's rough boundaries, as well as a set of integrated regional planning strategies to promote the development and growth of Hermel. These strategies should be elaborated by establishment of a Regional Development Agency (RDA).⁵⁷ This RDA would be the executive arm of the future elected qada's council, as per the decentralization draft law. I am imagining this RDA to help fill the gap between the national and local scales of planning. It would abide by the directives of the SDATL, after adapting them to a re-assessment of Hermel's region as per New Regionalism's criteria, in the manner I suggested in this thesis. And it would operationalize the SDATL into a regional planning vision that identifies specific projects which would then be implemented by the RDA in partnership with relevant public agencies and ministries, municipalities, political parties, as well as private sector and civil society actors. I imagine Hermel's RDA as one of many RDAs, also operating at the level of caza's councils. With time, adjacent RDAs could be combined together, but it may work better at an early stage to allow for each RDA in a caza to establish its territorial identity along the NR's integrated approach, before expanding. I also imagine

⁵⁷ I am here focusing on regional policy recommendations but of course there are other important measures that should be taken. For instance, we have seen that the region lacks basic infrastructure. Thus, it is important to provide and improve infrastructure, basic needs, and service delivery such as educational and health services, accessibility to agricultural lands, safe drinking water to all villages, and irrigation water. The region must also provide policies and plans for energy management, large irrigation public projects, water collection and distribution, as well as incentives to improve and attract public private partnerships. Other policies and services are best to be approached from the state level such as budgetary plans, and water management and trade agreements with Syria.

the RDA of Hermel to be closely working with cities in Syria, like Homs and Qusair, as to consolidate existing social and economic linkages.

Since 2000s⁵⁸, RDAs have become an important institutional tool used to address regional imbalance and socio-economic problems resulting from the lack of industrialization processes in many developed and developing countries.⁵⁹ The EU has requested the establishment of RDAs to all its member and candidate countries (Toktas, Sevinç, & Bozkurt, 2013). Indeed, as discussed in this thesis (see Chapter 2), scholars stress how RDAs operate as mediators between national and local scales (Hamin and Marcucci, 2008; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Legendijk, 2009; Harrison, 2010; Lu, 2011; Harrison and Heley, 2015; Wheeler, 2002), contributing to the reduction of regional disparities among and within regions. In addition, RDAs function as key strategic economic drivers in their territories. Given their participatory planning approach, RDAs have also more opportunities to become planning institutions which are inclusive and people-centered, and where dwellers feel enabled and engaged.

Turkey is an interesting case study where RDAs played a positive role in rebalancing development between an underdeveloped Eastern region and a more developed Western one (Akpınar, 2011: pp. 115). Compelled by their desire to join the EU, the Turkish state embarked on meeting the EU's requirements of establishing RDAs. The first RDAs were established in 1999, and they became legislated in 2006 with the "Law for the Establishment, Coordination and Tasks of Development

⁵⁸ First RDAs were established in the USA in year 1933. "The countries, which have established agencies in 1950s, are Austria, Belgium, France and Ireland; those in 1960s are Germany, England, Italy and Holland; those in 1980s are Greece, Spain, Finland and Denmark. Due to necessitation of EU; Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden and Ukraine have met with regional development agencies in 1990s" (Toktas et al. , 2013).

⁵⁹ Mountford 2009 notes that in developing countries such as Mexico and Bulgaria few national governments have decided to create a holistic coverage of development agencies on their territory, while in others such as Brazil and South Africa, there are bottom-up initiatives to create Development Agencies in few places to enhance local development.

Agencies”⁶⁰. Twenty-six RDAs were then established under the coordination of the State Planning Organization (Akpinar, 2011: pp. 129). The criteria by which the RDAs’ boundaries were determined was "the intersection of cities’ economic and demographic characteristic."(Toktas et al. 2013: pp. 678). Some included one city, while others incorporated several. The Turkish RDAs structure is organized into 4 units: i) a Development Council, ii) the Board of Management, iii) the Office of the General Secretary, and iv) Investment Support Offices. The Development Council elects representatives from the private sector and/or NGOs. Its main responsibilities are discussing and evaluating annual activity reports and internal audit reports, as well as providing advice and information to the Board of Management. The Board of Management is responsible for the decision-making of the RDA. The General Secretariat is the executive arm. The Investment Support Offices are responsible for the investments and related transactions, as well as guiding and informing investors.

Hermel’s RDA will be responsible for the elaboration and implementation of regional planning strategies according to participatory and inclusive mechanisms. As discussed in Chapter 2, the RDA will conceive a regional planning strategy integrated the three NR principles of local identity and knowledge, landscape and heritage, and iii) multifunctionalism.

The detailed organizational structure of the RDA should be designed as a result of a participatory process inclusive of all Hermel’s stakeholders. Even if this will take

⁶⁰The Law lists the main tasks of RDAs as follow:

"To improve the cooperation between public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations, to provide the efficient usage of resources in appropriate location, to accelerate the regional development in harmony with national development plans and programs by activating the local potential, to ensure the sustainability, and to minimize the inter- and intra-regional development differences." (Toktas et al. , 2013: pp. 675)

time, this is the only way to establish the essential sense of ownership for the RDA to operate effectively in the long run. Special attention must be given to empower the weaker groups, those who are mobilized outside mainstream political and tribal allegiances. The RDA should give them voice and provide them with an alternative platform to effectively engage in the regions' public affairs, especially by enhancing its partnership with independent educational institutions that can train them to innovative business and entrepreneurial skills which can be invested in Hermel's regional planning vision.

As we have seen throughout the chapters, there are several socio-political groups and actors in Hermel. Despite their multiplication and their different (and sometimes antagonistic) relations and claims, decision-making is confined to powerful actors such as Hezbollah and tribal groups⁶¹. As mentioned in Chapter 3, ADELNORD, which privileged a participatory approach, did not involve neither tribes nor political parties in its project's strategy formulation, which prevented its implementation to go through. The RDA needs to be institutionally designed in ways to organize the weakest dwellers without allowing the powerful groups of co-opting them. The RDA should really find ways to provide platforms and opportunities for youth, women, elderly, and the non-partisans to voice their concerns about public matters. It needs to try to position itself as a viable alternative to the existing political parties, along the lines of what the Ministry of Social Affairs' Centers for Development provide at the neighborhood level, in districts where they are operational. The institutional design of these inclusionary mechanisms should be generated from a detailed analysis of stakeholders, and their networks, that helps identify the elements structuring the political ecology in Hermel.

⁶¹ Tribes' power continues to partially affect and shape the relations within and among clans and tribes.

B. Closing Remarks

Taking as a case-study the caza of Hermel, the thesis has explored if and how regionalism can be used as a tool to address regional inequalities and uneven sectoral development in Lebanon, and to improve the livability of rural areas.

Based on a review of recent literature of New Regionalism and contemporary rural planning, we have seen in Chapter 2 how New Regionalism is a suitable framework to address uneven regional and sectoral development, and to approach rural areas in a way that stretches beyond their politico-administrative boundaries. This enables implementing territorial development policies and improving the livability of these areas. New Regionalism is therefore used for rescaling political processes and for the establishment of new political bodies and institutional capacities. Chapter 2 closes by proposing a tripartite regional rural planning strategy based on i) furthering local identity and knowledge; ii) protecting and celebrating landscape and heritage; and iii) promoting multifunctionalism.

In Chapter 3 we have seen how Hermel is famous for its unexploited resources and numerous potentials but still suffer from weak planning policies and lack of effective interventions that take advantage of the region's assets to improve livelihoods in a sustainable way. Most of the planned interventions lacked appropriate implementation mechanisms that take into consideration the different governance and geographical scales, the diversity of actors, and the socio-political specificity of the region. We have also seen in both Chapters 3 and 4 that projects are donor-led and fragmented across an array of donors, development institutions, and NGOs without a coherent vision and strategic planning approach that engages different local actors. In addition to the lack of development public policies at the regional scale, the findings

also highlight the lack of decentralized administrative bodies that can fill the gap between the national scale of planning (i.e. SDATL), and the local scale of planning. As discussed in Chapter 2, this calls for a comprehensive multi-scalar planning that should be grassroots-based. The state's role consists of revising and providing an adequate legislative framework that facilitates governance processes and assist in institutional building. In Chapter 4, I have argued that Hermel incorporates the key components needed to build an effective rural region and has the potential to be constructed and represented as a region based on its territorial capital.

I have also explored empirically how to devise an effective scale of sustainable regional development for Hermel. Therefore, based on analysis of previous data and on fieldwork findings, I have suggested new administrative boundaries for the region of Hermel and a set of institutional mechanisms for the production of Hermel as a new region, via establishing an elected caza's council. The thesis closed by proposing to the establishment of a participatory and inclusive Regional Development Agency (RDA) that would be the executive arm of the caza's council. This proposal can be piloted in Hermel which is a needy area and transferred to other regions in the long run.

Based on the tripartite strategy presented in Chapter 2, the recommendations also include strategies enhancing the region's diverse and rich assets, and limiting constraints, in ways to improve Hermel's livability.

However, due to the fact that I could not conduct a representative survey of dwellers, and I could not interview a substantive number of NGOs, CBOs and political parties' representatives given the time limitations and scope of the thesis, my findings require further empirical research to be validated. Besides, the research is confined to only one Lebanese region which implies that the related findings may not be applicable

nor generalized to other regions; further investigation must be conducted to test the applicability of the methodology I suggest in this thesis elsewhere. This thesis is thus a first empirical attempt at investigating about how to regionally rescale the territory according to NR principles.

APPENDIX

A. Fieldwork Questionnaire

American University of Beirut, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Urban Planning and Policies,
Thesis: New Regionalism for Lebanese Rural Areas: A Case Study in the Caza of Hermel
Student investigator: Yara Hamadeh –Principal investigator: Dr. Mona Harb

Male Female

Age:

Area:

Place of residence:

Place of work:

Occupation:

Identity

1. Describe in three words the main components of the identity of Hermel, as you see it.

.....

2. According to you, what are the limits of Hermel region? Can you please draw them for me on this map?



Linkages and Urban Mobility

1. Where do you go for shopping?

Grocery shopping:

Clothes:

Less frequent needs (furniture, home utilities...):

2. How often do you go to the towns/cities listed below, and to do what?

- Akkar:

- Tripoli:

- Baalbek:

- Zahleh:

- Other:

3. Where do you (or your children) go for education services?

.....

4. Where do you (or your children) go for health services?

.....

Multifunctionalism

5. What are the most important agricultural crops, food specialties and industrial productions?

.....

.....

.....

Landscape and Heritage

6. List the important landscape and heritage sites (natural sceneries and built environment)?

.....

.....

.....

Governance

7. Who is/are the decision-maker(s) responsible for local development in your village?

.....

8. Are you involved in the process of decision making about your village/town? Are you part of any municipal committee/family association/political party/NGO/independent coalition?

.....

.....

.....

9. Do you know about ADELNORD or any other development projects in Hermel?

.....

ADELNORD represents the most recent and elaborated development project in the caza. It adopts a three-tiered approach: agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation and development, community development, and sustainable management of environmental resources. It focuses on Upper-Hermel, Upper-Akkar and Upper-Dannieh which are considered as vulnerable villages/cities by targeting 10 clusters in total, two of them are in Hermel.

The output of this project in the caza of Hermel was the elaboration of a "Local Development Project Plan for the Clusters of South and North Hermel."

The clusters of North Hermel include Qasr, Fissane, Jwar El-Hashish, Mrah El-Ain, Hamiri, Souayssah, Kanafez, Harika, Boustan, Maasser. And Sahet El-May.

The clusters of South Hermel include Charbine, Zighrine, Wadi El-Ratl, Wadi El-Turkman, Marjhine, Swah, Amiri, Himi, Mgharreb, Zwaitini, Mrah Beit Allaou, and Berghosh.

What do you think about it?

.....
.....
.....

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