

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND URBAN POLICY-MAKING:
ASSESSING DAHIYA'S UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES'
URBAN PROGRAM

by
ISSA YEHIA ALHAJJ

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
April 2019

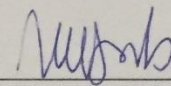
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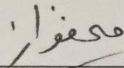
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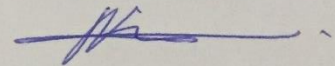
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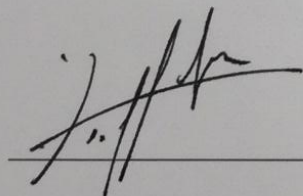
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of several people who consistently supported me throughout the entire process.

I thank Professor Mona Harb, my thesis advisor, for her continuous guidance, encouragement, excellent feedback, and most importantly her patience. I'm grateful she shared her knowledge, time, and reading material with me throughout the last year. I thank my thesis committee members, Professor Mona Fawaz and Professor Serge Yazigi, for their precious time, deep insights, and comprehensive remarks.

For being there for me throughout my time in the program, and for being such great company I extend my thanks to my friends and colleagues at the department, especially those whose presence got me through to finish the thesis – Diala, Mariam, Najmeh, Gretta, Dunia, Bassel and Walid. I wish you all the best.

To my family, for their unconditional support, especially to my father, I cannot thank you enough.

I dedicate this thesis to my mom.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Issa Yehia Alhajj for

Master of Urban Planning and Policy

Major: Urban Planning and Policy

Title: Local Governments and Urban Policy-Making: Assessing Dahiya's Union of Municipalities' Urban Program

The thesis argues that “Daheyati” urban program privileges an infrastructural and engineering urban approach, as well as an aesthetics/visual approach, with little regard to livability and sustainable mobility. It also shows how Daheyati forms a new phase in the role of Hezbollah as an urban planner, whereby the scale of its interventions is reaching a regional dimension, and raising important issues with regard to metropolitan urban governance in a post-conflict city.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBO – Community Based Organization
CCSD – Consultative Center for Research and Documentation
CDR – Council of Development and Reconstruction
DGU – Directorate General of Urban Planning
IMF – Independent Municipal Fund
LAA – Lebanese Association for the Arts
NGO – Non Governmental Organization
K&A – Khatib and Alami
MWA – Municipal Work Association
UMD – Union of Municipalities of Dahiya
JB – Jihad Al Binaa

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, the Lebanese political and economic situation pushed the limits of citizens across gender, sect and class. Political movements protesting the failure of the Lebanese government and its corruption such as “You Stink” (tol’et rihetkom – طلعت ريحتكم)¹ and “Beirut is my City” (Beirut Madinati – بيروت مدينتي)² spread across several parts of Lebanon, especially Beirut. The protests were not adopted by all for a variety of reasons, but they revealed contestations even within single political parties.

In 2016, prior to the Lebanese municipal elections, the general public including the “Islamic resistance fan base” showed strong discontent with the current situation and, also, with the local governments’ poor level of performance. The general secretary of Hezbollah felt compelled to address his constituency and convince them to vote for the slates run by his party in the elections. Shortly after, as a response to the mentioned frustration in the local governments' performance, a new “urban program” named “Daheyati” (My Suburb) was elaborated by the union of municipalities of the southern suburb for Dahiya (the Suburb), known for being the stronghold of Hezbollah. The program aims at improving the living situation of the southern suburb and mitigate its

¹ “You Stink” is a Lebanese political movement that started in 2015 in response to the Lebanese garbage crisis. The movement accused politicians and political parties of corruption and blamed them for the current situation.

² Beirut Madinati was is a political movement that strives for creating an alternative Lebanese political reality based on principles of inclusivity, transparency, equality, social justice ...etc. (<http://beirutmadinati.com/>). This political movement first appeared in the Lebanese political landscape prior to the Lebanese municipal elections in 2016. Beirut Madinati, and against most expectations scored well in the elections and took more than 40% of the votes in Beirut which really threatened existing political powers.

urban problems. Even though it is called an “urban program”, Daheyati can be best described as a strategy.

Daheyati operates as a tool that mediatizes the party’s response to people’s demands and its municipal work. The fact that Daheyati was elaborated post-Hirak (Political movements – حراك) and 2016 political elections indicates that Daheyati can be read as a political response to these activist urban politics and not merely a development strategy.

In this context, this thesis investigates and assesses Daheyati’s program with respect to the goals of livability and sustainable urban mobility. It asks to what extent is Daheyati program able to improve the life quality in the southern suburb. My investigation is framed in relation to the work of previous scholars who have investigated Hezbollah as an urban planner (Harb 2009; 2009b; 2007; 2007b, Harb and Fawaz 2012; 2010, Fawaz 2009; 1998), in addition to urban policy analysis (Bollens 2000), and principles of livability and sustainable mobility (Banister 2007, Gehl & Svarre 2013, Gehl & Gemzøe 2003, Harvey& Aultman-Hall 2015, Levinso & Krizek 2017, Levinson et al 2017). The thesis argues that “Daheyati” urban program privileges an infrastructural and urban engineering approach, as well as an aesthetics/visual approach, with little regard to livability and sustainable mobility. In addition, the program’s bias in spending allocation may be contributing to entrenching urban inequality and favoring the already privileged pious middle-classes of Dahiya. Daheyati may also be leading to further enabling the southern suburb’s exclusive identity.

1.1. Thesis Objectives and Significance

This thesis also aims to analyze urban policy making processes and how are they affected by goals and values as developed by a municipal union in Lebanon. There are a few studies taking place on these issues, and thus the thesis contributes to enriching knowledge in the fields of urban municipal governance, policy-making, urban strategies analysis, and their limitations in the context of post-conflict cities.

1.2. Methodology

The research relies on three methods of data collection. The first is review of grey literature and existing archival data, both physical and electronic, including documents related to Daheyati. The second uses semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. In total, I conducted 12 interviews. The sampling size was determined through snowballing and until the information was repeated by the respondents. The interviewee sample included municipal officials from different Dahiya's municipalities, engineers and professionals from firms working on Daheyati, relevant urban planners, and decision makers from the MWA (Municipal Work Association). The questions inquired about the vision, social and ideological meanings, as well as goals of Daheyati and how they will be achieved; the program's timeline; sources of inspiration; sources of funding; contribution of the union of municipalities/each municipality; Dahiya's decision-makers; the participation of other stakeholders (professionals, private sector, NGOs).

Access to these stakeholders was relatively easy because Daheyati is a public urban program that the union of municipalities in the southern suburb wants to expose and showcase, especially to the "foreign other", including professors and students at

AUB. Because of the lack of data and material in grey literature, my access to material about Daheyati was dependent on the benevolence of municipal officials and other respondents. Not all interviews disclosed similar information and stories, which helped me crosscheck and assess the information.

The third method is mapping as a tool to document and analyze the geographic allocation of Daheyati's projects. The union of municipalities' Facebook page proved very helpful in this as their publicity department posts almost all of their activities and achievements regularly making it easier to track and locate. This method basically included identifying the geographic location of Daheyati's projects, especially the beautification ones, to reveal areas where the municipalities are investing, and excluded areas.

In choosing to work on the district that I grew up in and currently still live there, I used my personal knowledge as well to reflect on Daheyati's suitability and convenience as an urban program for the southern suburb, and juggled between my personal entanglement to it and my academic training, and often collapsed them, to develop my understanding of the southern suburb. I did my best to detach myself enough to not jeopardize academic research integrity. In my understanding, Daheyati is a declaration of faith in the southern suburb, and is still at an embryonic stage. Even though Daheyati's decision makers currently view it through its four projects (which I will present later), I personally believe that it has the opportunity to develop and respond more accurately to the suburb's needs.

1.3. Thesis Outline

The thesis is organized in four chapters. The first reviews the literature and provides a synthesis of the readings on urban planning approaches, urban policy analysis, livability, place-making, and sustainable urban mobility. It clarifies the relation of livability and sustainable urban mobility and discusses relevant case studies, and finally presents the thesis theoretical framework. The second chapter examines the case study profile, and discusses Dahiya's history, urban structure, governance setup, socioeconomic relations, politics, and demography, by reviewing the work of key scholars on this part of the city.

The third chapter investigates the urban program Daheyati in depth, and its four projects, describing their main components. In chapter four, I analyze these four projects' values, objectives, and strategies. I also examine Daheyati's institutional setup and identify main stakeholders and decision makers. In the conclusion, I dissect Daheyati's program using the adapted analytical framework on urban policy, and underscore its limitations vis-à-vis the goals of livability and sustainable mobility.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & FRAMEWORK

This chapter will provide a general overview on the literature relevant to this thesis (urban policy, urban policy analysis, different planning approaches...etc.) and then will introduce the framework used to analyze Daheyati urban program.

2.1. Urban Policy and Planning Approaches

Urban policy incorporates the activities of different tiers of governments (central, regional, or local) that cater for the welfare of societies such as service provision and improving local economy (Blackman, 1995, P.5-12). Swaicki (1988, P.55) reflects on what urban policy is not. He points out to the distinction between policy planning (with urban policy planning being part of it) and urban planning in that, among other things, they differ in the scope with urban policy being directed at a particular issue or problem, while urban planning tends to cover several aspects even if no specific problem has been identified. Krueckberg & Slivers (1974, P.8-9) argue that the object of urban policy is to answer the questions of *what* and *whose* needs are to be served while pointing out that the needs are not only those determined by decision makers, but also those that are *felt* to be essential by the population. Therefore, the decision making process should incorporate information feedback mechanism to determine the popular felt needs (Krueckberg & Silvers, 1974, P.9).

What is common among urban policy programs is their territoriality and area focus (Cochrane, 2007, P.3). The value of area-based policies is that it allows policy makers to isolate a cluster of problems and synthesize interventions (Cochrane, 2007,

P.3). However, areas-based policies have limited influence on tackling structural inequalities and critical problems such as unemployment and poverty which remain by large a matter of national policy and even more, a global issue (Blackman, 1995, P.5).

Urban policy is part of politics, and it is inseparable from the question of who wins and who loses (Blackman, 1995, P.13). Research on urban and local governance stresses on the need and significance of “*effective leadership*” in urban areas and “*community involvement*” for urban policy development and good governance (Haus & Heinelt, 2005, P.12). Strong urban leadership and community involvement are often regarded as factors that can help fulfill transparent and effective urban policies (Haus & Heinelt, 2005, P.13). Urban political leadership and community involvement are directly connected; leadership *types* and *styles* are directly related to the legitimization of community involvement and enabling its complementary role (Getimis & Grigoriadou, 2005, P.169). Clark (1981) examines two opposed traditions that inform analysis on political culture, leadership, and citizen preferences. The first is the elite tradition (citing Schumpeter and Dahl) in which political elites play the dynamic political role supported by the average citizen who has a low political participation but shares a general political culture with the elites, while the second is where the citizen plays an active role in participating and in “*issue-voting*”.

Urban policies adhere to a variety of planning approaches which perform differently under various sets of circumstances, with none necessarily being better than the others (Feldt, 1988, P.44). In what follows, I briefly present the main planning approaches that I will use to think through urban policy making: comprehensive planning, incremental planning, advocacy planning, collaborative planning, and strategic planning.

Friedman (1965) defines urban planning as a way of managing the non-routine affairs of the city. Comprehensive or rational planning is when both ends and means are clearly defined and the ends are met by articulating an explicit process/course of action based on formal rationality (Banfield, 1973). It requires the use of personnel, tools, and money over a certain period of time (Feldt, 1988, P.48). This approach is driven by a strong belief in the scientific method often disregarding political, legal, economic, and social constraints (Altshuler, 1965). It deals with many areas of public policy which requires the planner to have a very clear understanding of the overall public interest and needs in every field (Altshuler, 1965, P.186).

However, more than often, and because of its comprehensiveness, the goals of comprehensive planning are too general and are often lacking practical applications, consequently leading to loss of political and public interest (Altshuler, 1965, P.186-188). Forester (2013) adds to this argument by stating that the object of planning (its goals and objectives) rarely ever reveal themselves so clearly. Identifying them is challenging, and in order to do so, the planner has to “*get his/her hands dirty*” and learn about dealing with all different fields and professions included in the planning process, in other words to respond to planning’s “*demand for plurality*”. The comprehensive rational method can be described as an approach that lacks realism (Banfield, 1973).

Incremental planning perhaps can be best described as the opposite of comprehensive planning. Incremental planning is used when both ends and means are highly uncertain. Lindbloom (1959), in his paper “The Science of Muddling Through”, describes incrementalism as a series of small incremental steps edging towards the unknown. Incremental planning is appropriate in circumstances where there is very little

money, time, and expertise (Feldt, 1988, P.50). It is often regarded by its critics as a description to what happens without planning as the analysis approach is drastically limited leading to neglect of alternative policies and desirable outcomes.

In his 1965 article Paul Davidoff states that: “*planners should engage in the political process as advocates of the interests of government and other groups*”. In advocacy planning, the planners’ role shifts focus to being an advocate for the more marginalized members of society, they are not only a technician but a facilitator for participation and decision making in the planning process (Davidoff, 1965). Advocacy planning is not an antithesis of other planning approaches but rather poses the question of in whose favor is a plan being developed (Davidoff, 1965). Advocacy planning puts forth the importance of values and attitudes in planning and politics. Through advocacy, this approach, in short, “*aims to prescribe a better urban future life*” (Davidoff, 1965, P.337).

“*Collaborative planning is most suitably interpreted as an element in longer-term research and theoretical development focused upon a concern with the democratic management and control of urban and regional environments and the design of less oppressive planning mechanisms*”, this interpretation of collaborative planning by Harris (2002) illustrates the ambitions of collaborative planning, as it integrates broad range of topics and issues related to contemporary urban planning (Harris, 2002, P.22). The collaborative planning theory emphasizes key dimensions in which its work is differentiated. It recognizes knowledge as a social construct and the different ways of communicating it, diverse stakeholders, different interests, and a shift from competitiveness to collaborative consensus building (Healy, 1992). Healy (1996, P.221) argues how communication is a key element in shaping our values, interests, and ideas

about ourselves. She introduces communication as a skill/tool that can harness our capacity to learn, listen, and understand each other on issues which collectively concern us. The communicative or collaborative approach turns away from the bureaucratic and hierarchal technical habits towards consensus building (Healy, 1996, P.231).

The last of the planning approaches to be discussed is strategic planning. Albrechts (2004, P.746) states that there is no single definition for strategic planning and that the term is used differently, however, based on numerous literature Albrechts (2004) defines it as a broad contextual spatial planning approach that tackles a certain issue and responds to urban challenges within a time frame (long-term or short-term) and budgetary framework taking into consideration different elements such as power structures, stakeholders, and competing values. Faludi (2000, P.299) defines it as an approach that addresses “strategic spatial issues” on different scales. CDS (city development strategies) are a form of strategic planning. CDSs are imagined as collective, participatory visioning exercises to establish priorities and strategies for future development (Parnell, 2005, 339).

2.2. Livability in Light of Place-making and Sustainable Mobility

The purpose of all the planning approaches mentioned above is to eventually enhance urban life quality. Urban livability is a broad term that encompasses many components that contribute to good urban life quality (Harvey & Aultman-Hall, 2015: Balsas, 2004). It is a difficult concept to define both in terms of quantity and quality as it can mean different things to different people (Balsas, 2004, P.101), and in terms of scale as in streets, neighborhoods or areas (Harvey & Aultman-Hall, 2015, P.149). “A *livable place is safe, clean, beautiful, economically vital, affordable to a diverse*

population, and efficiently administered, with functional infrastructure, interesting cultural activities and institutions, ample parks, effective public transportation, broad opportunities for employment and a sense of community” (Balsas, 2004, P.103). Studies show that some of the key indicators for livability are place-making and sustainable urban mobility.

Enabling urban mobility in cities as a tool for improving livability is a key goal of planning policies. Sustainable urban mobility privileges multi-modal transportation strategies, with a dominant focus on public transit, as well as on walkability. It also closely operates with place-making strategies that seek to enhance spatial practices in public open spaces on the neighborhood scale, which also impact favorably social and economic dynamics.

This issue is directly growing in importance as cities become more urbanized, dense, and compact. The process of urbanization impacts the distribution of activity and land-uses, increases travel demands, and alters travel modes, consequently intensifying urban mobility challenges (Kayal et al, 2014, p.5). Therefore, appropriate planning for urban mobility becomes crucial in order to reduce the impacts of traffic congestion, environmental hazards, and to improve socio-spatial practices in the city.

However, the lack of planning practice in most developing countries has dulled the efforts of enhancing transportation choices and accessibility (Handy & Clifton, 2001, p. 67). New planning movements are more inclined towards neighborhood-specific approaches that would complement a city-wide approach in order to develop mobility/accessibility strategies. These approaches favor public and soft modes of transportation in reaction to the transport bias of urban mobility that is dominated by private vehicles (UN Habitat, 2013, p.3). The use of soft modes of transportation reaps

various results. It is environmentally beneficial, and sets the conditions for social interaction, numerous spatial practices and activities, and economic revival (UN Habitat, 2013, p. 20).

Gehl & Gemzoe (2003, P.14) add to this argument by shedding light on public space and stress on the importance of public space in enhancing the quality of urban life, they illustrate how public space that allows pedestrian activity spurs social, recreational and economic life by giving people the platform to interact and linger more intimately. On the other hand, they continue, in “impoverished public spaces” these activities almost completely disappear leaving basic utilitarian public activities, such as walking, but only because people need to and have to. Public life is all that is happening between buildings (Gehl & Sarrre, 2013, P.2). It was only until the 20th century, particularly in industrialized nations, that the streets’ long historic role as a public space for social interaction and economic activity changed (Gehl & Gemzoe, 2003, P.13), the “invaded city” was born where urban space was usurped by cars and vehicular traffic had the upper hand, dramatically changing the use of public space (Gehl & Gemzoe, 2003, P.14), and often creating cultural impoverishment and “bedroom communities” where people’s life is reduced to bedroom and office life because of the placeless-ness (Gehl & Sarrre, 2013, P.3).

It is in that sense that non-motorized modes of transportation are considered one of the key livability indicators (Chen et al, 2007). Allan Jacobs (1993) states the importance of a well-designed public space in urban life, one where the pedestrian has the upper hand and placeless-ness is substituted by place-making. Whether it’s soft mobility or public transportation, sustainable urban mobility paradigms are important for urban livability. Banister (2007) examines the issue of sustainable urban mobility

paradigm. Rather than looking at transportation as a derived demand that ought to be done with minimal economic cost, the sustainable mobility paradigm provides an alternative in which the complexity of the city is investigated (Banister, 2007, P.73). He argues that the purpose of sustainable mobility is not to eliminate cars, but to limit the use and dependency on cars by providing innovative transportation solutions and efficient public transportation (2007, P.74). Levinson et al (2017) state that the objective of sustainable mobility is to increase people's accessibility (not necessarily mobility), "*nothing in cities make sense except in the light of accessibility*" (Levinson et al, 2017, P.19). The intention is to design cities in a way that people wouldn't need cars anymore. However, unless a regulatory or a developmental framework is used to push sustainable mobility forward, there will always be reasons for keeping the status quo and for favoring cars (Banister, 2007, P.76).

Levinson & Krizek (2017) disagree with Banister on this point and adopt a more optimistic point of view regarding urban mobility, based on a futuristic reading of aspects of life requirements and technologies rendering a shift in modes and transportation behaviors inevitable. They illustrate how the modal shift will happen as the way of life will change because of a plurality of reasons such as communication technology and more importantly a shift in people's spending priorities. Banister (2007) Levinson & Krizek (2017) agree that change in public behavior is of utmost importance for a modal shift to happen.

Sustainable mobility paradigms positively affect place-making approaches. The two urban pioneers, Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte first introduced the concept of "place-making" in the 1960s when they revolted against modern urbanism and its outcomes that lead to "placeless-ness" (Project for public spaces, 2016). In designing

cities, they tackled the social and cultural aspects of neighborhoods and encouraged the creation of social life in public spaces. This is based on the idea of designing cities that cater for people instead of cars and shopping centers. Gehl advocated this concept: “First life, then spaces, then buildings – the other way around never works” (Project for public spaces, 2016). In the 1990s, planners used the term “place-making” and described it as a collective work to shape a space by including other concerns such as social justice, and economic regeneration (Friedmann, 2010). This stresses on engaging local residents and planners in reviving urban neighborhoods to improve their livability. In other words, it calls to re-humanize the urban by focusing on places created by the activities and behaviors of people using them which are usually small scale, banal, and invisible to people who have power. In this light, Friedmann argues: “*the point is that the very act of inhabiting a neighborhood will shape its character, its daily and seasonal rituals, and the recurrent socio-spatial patterns that imprint themselves on its memory*” (Friedmann, 2010).

The analysis of place-led development work conducted by the DUSP (MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, 2013) and the Project for Public Spaces (an American NGO) in 46 countries shows that the development of the concept of place-making throughout the years reached a comprehensive framework in which its interventions can range from painting stairs to a district-wide revitalization depending on each community (MIT, 2013). In this sense, place-making is a continuous process that depends on the transformation of a place through the social practices of the people who dwell in it.

The work of DUSP and PPS gives importance to place-making and/in community-building by underscoring and emphasizing community knowledge and expertise. Since communities have different circumstances, place-making vary then in each case according to how people perceive and use the place (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995). The social experience of dwellers alters its context accordingly. I discuss next two case studies illustrating the creation of a plaza in New Yrok (Queens) and the repair of a city in Portland.



Figure 1. Corona Plaza, Queens, NY before the first intervention. [Digital image]. Retrieved from: <https://nacto.org/case-study/nyc-plaza-program-and-corona-plaza-new-york-ny/>



Figure 2. Corona Plaza, Queens, NY after the first intervention. [Digital image]. Retrieved from: <https://nacto.org/case-study/nyc-plaza-program-and-corona-plaza-new-york-ny/>

The first case is the ethnically diverse Corona neighborhood in Queens, New York which faced population growth and decline in open spaces due to the increasing numbers of recent immigrants. In 2012 the New York City Department of Transportation unveiled a 1300sqm plaza in Corona neighborhood as “*a temporary space that was designed to be flexible, to offer opportunities to observe how people used it, and to allow for a range of public programming, to help establish a pattern of user-ship within the community*” (MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, 2013). Within days of its opening it was clear that the plaza was a huge hit. It was a lively

scene of children, mothers, and men using the space in different ways and actively attending the opening cultural performances and activities.

The 26 parking spaces that were used by delivery trucks blocking the view in the plaza were removed, thus revitalizing the surrounding food shops, retail shops, and restaurants. Seeing this interventions' success, it was decided by the authorities to turn the plaza into a permanent public space.



Figure 1. Final design of Corona Plaza by RBA architects. [Digital image]. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/13/nyregion/lounge-in-them-dash-through-them-but-dont-call-them-parks.html>

The temporality of the plaza fostered the creation of a permanent design which was developed later by RBA Architects³. The design process included workshops and community meetings to ensure adequate design. This case study shows how tactical and temporary interventions can lead to permanent solutions and how the temporary-to-

³ An architecture, interior design, and planning firm based in the U.S (<https://www.rbaarch.com/>)

permanent place-making model allows communities to be “designers” of the space and inform professionals about important design considerations.

Our second case-study discusses Portland. In the mid-1990s, architect Mark Lakeman took the initiative and started a series of projects in different places in his neighborhood. The first project was a teahouse kiosk that he built in an empty lot to show people how to create community life. The project found acceptance, and the Monday evening tea for 25 quickly grew to 200-person event. The teahouse’s success prompted Lakeman and his collaborators to paint a large mural around an intersection (it was called share it square), build four solar-powered teahouses, furnish streets with benches and build a small on-street library, all without the permission of the authorities for according to Lakeman “*the ratio of deliberation to action is too often exhausting*”. Lakeman explains his activities: “*Villages don’t start with some agreed-upon consensus, they start with people bringing what they have to contribute*” (MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, 2013). He stresses on the social role these projects hold as community builders.

Although his actions got the authorities acceptance later, the initiative is still based on an anti-authoritarian and community-led approach that believes in communities’ democratic access to design and the transformational effects it can have on a society. Lakeman was then called to replicate the solar-powered teahouse model in Cleveland, but this has failed since the two neighborhoods had different contextual factors. This case study shows that “*communities can come together to vision and collectively implement the type of shared space they want, without the help of official approval or institutional support and that each community is different from the other*

and has its unique elements which must be accounted for” (MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, 2013).



Figure 2. Share-it-square intersection painting in Portland in 2015, 19 years after the initial intervention. [Digital image]. Retrieved from: <https://www.pps.org/places/intersection-repair>

Both of these case studies show that approaches to improve livability and urban life qualities are not always and should not always be done through legal and official avenues. As the collaborative planning approach promotes, perhaps it is better to divert from the bureaucratic, hierarchal and technical habits towards consensus building (Healy, 1996, P.231), and allow/encourage and give communities the opportunity to participate and even lead.

A third case study presented here is from Lebanon. As part of its plan to develop public spaces in Beirut, and draw Beirut’s sustainable and functional

development policy, the municipality of Beirut, in corporation with Île-de-France, has engaged a number of projects to reclaim Beirut's public spaces. One of these projects that overlaps the relation between urban mobility and transportation and the creation of public space is the pilot project "Soft link" (Liaison Douce) which aims to connect the pine forest in the south of Beirut, with the city downtown in the north via the street of Damascus. The project promotes soft mobility with pedestrian and cycling paths.

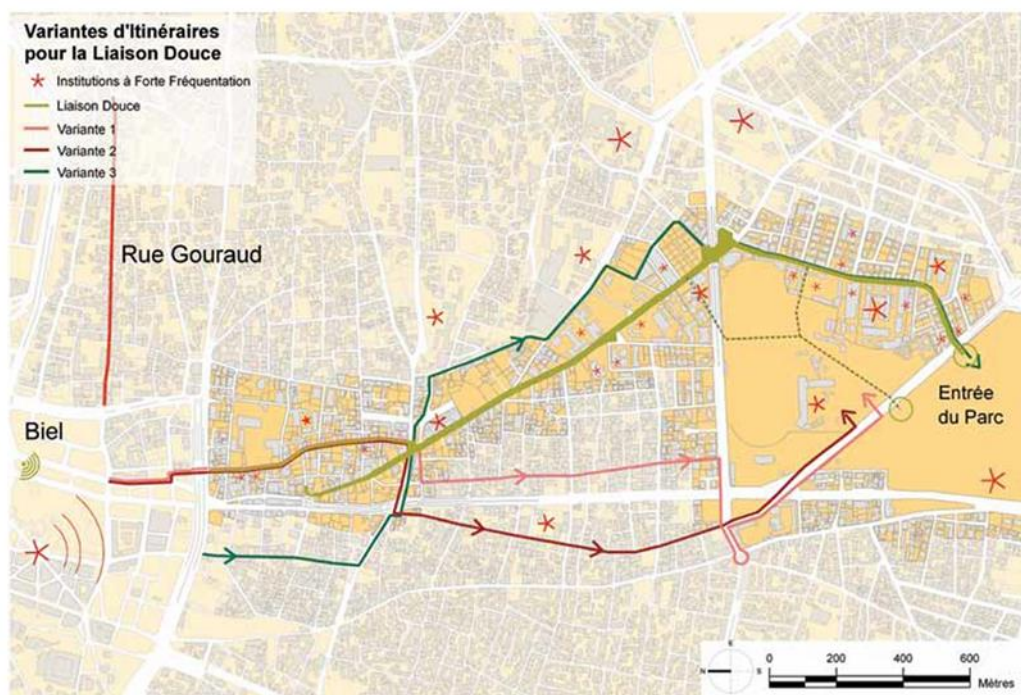


Figure 3. A layout showing the rout of the "Liaison Douce" project. Adapted from "RECONQUÉRIR LES ESPACES PUBLICS", by Municipality of Beirut, 2013, p. 112.

The project works on stitching existing public spaces to decrease segregation caused by roads, tunnels, and roundabouts and create a continuous stretch of public area connecting two major sites. Connecting these two sites holds great value since they are both big public spaces with social and historical significance. The path connecting these two major sites promotes urban heritage. The link connects the National Museum next to the Hippodrome, Beit Beirut Museum, the French embassy, University of Saint

Joseph, and others while physically and visually exploiting the greenery and space they can offer. The project also plans to develop some linear green spaces along the path from trees, shrubs, and grass areas to increase the green experience in this project turning the path into a connecting green corridor.

Liaison Douce imitates in its design a large garden in the city providing a continuous link of urban green space that can be joyfully experienced, it articulates streets and squares which are equipped with generous vegetation, pedestrian and cycling routes and pocket spaces for multifunctional uses and various social practices for people and residents. Because of its scale and social significance this pilot project represents a real urban project that tackles the issue of urban public space and urban mobility.



Figure 4. 3d views of the project in the national museum area (images clustered by author). Images adapted from "RECONQUÉRIR LES ESPACES PUBLICS", by Municipality of Beirut, 2013.

This chapter underscores the importance of having goals and objectives based on the paradigms of livability and sustainable mobility in urban areas. Urban planning approaches and urban policies are just tools to reach these ends. Goals set by planners are decision makers that are not aligned with livability and sustainable urban mobility values can backfire and most likely will lead to unwanted results regardless of the planning approach applied in the process. Identifying the problem/objective and setting

the values and criteria are a key condition for an urban planning program that seeks to enhance people's livelihood.



Figure 5. 3d views of the project in Sodeco square and before the bridge of Fouad Chehab areas (images clustered by author). Images adapted from "RECONQUÉRIR LES ESPACES PUBLICS", by Municipality of Beirut, 2013.

2.3. Framework

In *On Narrow Ground* (2000), the author Scott Bollens proposes different attributes to assess the “urban policy goals and strategies” and the “participants and relationships” that characterize this policy. For this thesis I am going to adapt his framework, adopt relevant attributes from it to help unpack the urban policy program of the UMD and assess its goals, strategies, and decision-making structure.

In the Participants and Relationship section the author identifies six attributes. The aim of this section is to explore the significant policymaking participants and

relationships and the internal tensions within the implementing authority. Of the six attributes three are adapted here:

Local and Central Relations: in addition to the internal relations within the local authorities there are inter-level relations between the local and central authorities that affect urban policy formulation and implementation.

Community: depending on the urban policy's goals, how is the local community being affected by the urban policy? Is it being fragmented, solidified or ghettoized?

Civil Society: it is the layer of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations that express opposition, bring people's needs to the authority, and cooperate with the authorities to bring about better implementation of the urban policy program.

In the Urban Policy & Goals section the author identifies nine attributes. Six are adapted here:

Local Government Goal/s (Ideology): the ends toward public action is being guided and whether it's aligned with what the public wants.

Urban Planning Approach: What planning approach is being used to reach those goals (ends and means), e.g. rational, incremental, radical, utopianism, methodism etc...

Urban Policy Affiliation/Strategy: this is derived from the local government goals showing (if any exist) what group's interests are being advocated and disproportionately favored, and the stakeholders involved in Dahiya's urban

policy. The urban policy strategy can be either viewed as partisan, neutral, equitable, or resolving.

Spatial Techniques/Lens: specific spatial techniques applied to translate urban policy into physical shape and space and the scope in which these techniques are used (domination, exclusion, or division techniques). The spatial lens is often understood as coarse-grained or micro-grained scales of intervention.

Spending Allocation: In addition to policies that affect the spatial distribution of growth in urban regions the spending allocation of urban services and spending contributes to unequal growth and development.

Planning and Urban Policy Potency: effectiveness of the urban policy to facilitate change or development, or hesitance to facilitate change towards a different urban future by reacting only to perceived demands (active vs. passive planning).

By assessing and comparing the values and goals of Daheyati, using Bollens adapted framework, to those of livability and sustainable urban mobility, this thesis draws conclusions about the effect of Daheyati on the quality of life in Dahiya.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY PROFILE: DAHIYA

3.1. Urban History

The southern suburbs of Beirut is a place of contested urban modernity (Deeb & Harb, 2013b, P.725). The urbanization of Dahiya (ضاحية – Suburb in Arabic)⁴ started in the 1950s and 1960s when Shi'a migrants started arriving from south of Lebanon and the Bekaa valley and settling in the southern suburbs of Beirut looking for better lives and job opportunities near the capital city (Harb, 2007b, p.13). In the 1950's the suburbs of Beirut (northern suburbs and southern suburbs) were heterogeneous areas of both Maronite and Shi'a populations, however, in the late 1960's mobilization of Shi'a leftist movements led by Imam Mousa Al-Sadr started the territorialization process of the southern suburbs (Harb, 2009, p.72). The population of Beirut's southern suburbs grew sporadically after the forced displacement of Shi'a populations from the northern sections in Beirut caused by the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) that homogenized neighborhoods (Deeb & Harb, 2013, p.24), and from south of Lebanon after the Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 (Harb, 2009, p.72, Fawaz & Peillen, 2002, p.1). These migrants were attracted to the southern suburbs because they identified with the existing community (Harb, 2007b, p.13), and the land prices in the southern suburbs were relatively cheaper compared to other parts of Beirut (Fawaz, 1998, p.10), by doing so the presence of Shi'a populations in the southern suburb was consolidated making it a Shi'a territory (Harb, 2009, p.73). The legal name of the southern suburbs is *Sahel al-matn al-janubi* (the southern Matn coast) (Harb, 2010, p.130). In the 1980s the area

⁴ There is no one way to write Dahiya in English, I adopted this spelling because of its recurrence in several literature (see Harb, 2007; 2010 & Bou Akar, 2018), it can also be seen as Dahieh or Daheya.

extending south of Beirut to the airport was called Al Dahiya Al Janubiyya (the southern suburb), and shortly after the “al-janubiyya” part was dropped and it was shortened to Dahiya (Harb, 2007b, p.15, Harb, 2009, p.72). Consequently, Dahiya had specific connotations relating to it being “*Shi’a, poor, backward, rural, peripheral, anarchic, illegal, and Islamist*” (Harb, 2010, p.128). Even until today, the name Dahiya is reinforced in conversations and in the media and conveys an emotionally charged message (Bou Akar, 2018, p.17).

Moreover, the “*deliberate absence to periodic intervention*” of the state further contributed to the contested production of Dahiya (Harb, 2001, p.3). The forced migrations were intertwined with a shortage of urban planning in Dahiya, all aspects of life expansion were left unchecked and Dahiya missed out on planning opportunities in both infrastructural and socioeconomic frameworks (UNDP, 2007, p.11).

The relation of Beirut to Dahiya falls in the literature of center-periphery relations⁵. Peripheries can be viewed as places left out of the center forming at the outskirts of the city, a place that receives unwanted populations and forms in different conditions than the center (Bou Akar, 2018, p.17). However, in a contested post conflict city like Beirut where sectarianism spurs contestation, economic, and spatial control, the peripheries are quite different (Bou Akar, 2018). Dahiya’s rapid expansion into surrounding areas (mainly Hadath and Choueifat) has “*created the social, economic, and political conditions by which al-Dahiya may now be viewed as a new center, defining the peripheral conditions of adjacent areas*” (Bou Akar, 2018, p.17).

⁵ For more on Beirut center-periphery relations see Fawaz, 2009b.

3.2. Politics

The political scene in Dahiya is mainly dominated by two parties, Harakat Amal and Hezbollah⁶. The former was established in 1974 by Imam Mousa Al-Sadr and the latter officially in 1985. Since its formation, Hezbollah had critical roles in changing the political landscape of Dahiya. Alongside its' military activities⁷, Hezbollah established a network of institutions that were keen on providing different kinds of services in all Shi'a areas at very cheap prices, thus expanding its constituency and consolidating its' presence (Harb, 2009, p.73). Amal were not very fond of their growing rival which resulted in a military confrontation that lead in 1989 to Amal being forced out of Dahiya and confined to its peripheries by Hezbollah (Harb, 2009, p.73). Dahiya was then known to be "*Dahiyat Hezbollah – the suburb of Hezbollah*" (Harb, 2007, p.224) with Haret Hreik as Hezbollah's headquarters charging it with even more religious and political messages (Bou Akar, 2018, p.18). Consequently, and because of these events Dahiya received "unprecedented notoriety" (Harb, 2007b, p.12), and was looked down upon as a place of anarchy, and a rebellious Shi'a ghetto (Harb, 2009, p.72, Harb, 2010, p.128).

In 1998 the first municipal elections since the end of the civil war were held (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.191). Hezbollah participated in the elections in Dahiya and a significant proportion of its candidates were elected by voters (Harb, 2010, p.134-135), since then, Hezbollah has been mainly in charge of local governance in Dahiya, with the last municipal elections being held in May 2016, were Hezbollah and its allies, Harakat Amal and Al Tayyar Al Watani Al Horr (*Free Patriotic Movement – a Maronite*

⁶ Hezbollah (حزب الله) is made out of two words the first is Hezb (party in Arabic) and the second is Allah (God in Arabic) meaning the "Party of God".

⁷ After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Hezbollah has lead a military resistance against Israeli occupation resulting in the liberation of the South of Lebanon in May 2000.

Christian political party), undisputedly won the elections in all of Dahiya (Al Akhbar, 2017). Hezbollah has been keen on providing good services to the residents of Dahiya through local governance structures (Harb, 2010, p.134).

Local governance structures are not Hezbollah's only service provision tool to the residents of Dahiya. Its holistic network of institutions, as mentioned before, plays a major role in service provision. These institutions, Hezbollah's "Islamic resistance NGOs"⁸, are part of Hezbollah's timeline in planning in Dahiya. Hezbollah's service provision and development planning practices through its NGOs are as old as its military resistance (Fawaz, 2009, p.324), the oldest of these NGOs, Al Shaheed (The Martyr), was established in 1982 the year in which Hezbollah carried its first military resistance operations (Fawaz, 1998, p.24). The Islamic resistance NGOs stem from already existing Iranian NGOs⁹ as branches in Dahiya carrying an ideology foreign to Lebanon and openly sharing Hezbollah's strong religious and political identity (Fawaz, 1998). The purpose of these NGOs was to "*increase the role of the Lebanese Shiite community in Lebanese politics, primarily by improving their living standards and strengthening their military resistance in South Lebanon*" (Fawaz, 1998, p.21), and so they did. The Islamic resistance cluster of NGOs became the chief support in Dahiya's service provision sectors, cut down on Iranian funding, and registered in the Lebanese ministry of interior and municipalities as independent Lebanese NGOs (Fawaz, 1998). Hezbollah's NGOs are characterized by their accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, strong leadership, and professionalism (Harb, 2010).

⁸ This term was used by Fawaz, 1998 in her thesis on Hezbollah's NGOs. For more on the subject see Fawaz, 1998 and Harb, 2010.

⁹ These Iranian NGOs were established after the Islamic revolution and during the Iran-Iraq war under the authority of Ayatollah Khomeini. When these NGOs were established in Lebanon in a top-bottom approach they were first entirely dependent on Iranian funding.

Up until the first municipal elections in 1998 after the civil war, the Islamic resistance NGOs provided several basic services such as garbage collection and drinking water provision in Dahiya¹⁰ (Fawaz, 1998) and still do provide other services until now. Also, they have regularly partnered with municipal councils, “*which significantly rely on Hezbollah’s expertise for elaborating and implementing local development strategies as well as social policies*” (Harb, 2010, p.135-136).

Furthermore, the relation between the Mayors and councils of Hezbollah and international donors have been steadily developing. Donors such as UNDP, UNICEF, EU and several others highly consider Hezbollah’s mayors and councils for their learning skills, professionalism, and fast progress (Harb, 2010, p.138).

As a result of the above, Hezbollah has been able to position itself as a primary medium that provides services (Harb, 2010, p.132). Amal on the other hand, has a different approach to advance its constituency. While Hezbollah generates its own resources to provide services, Amal fall under the “direct redistribution” category where state resources and services are redistributed by sectarian leaders (Harb, 2010, p.133).

3.3. Urban Structure

The name Dahiya often refers to this area south of Beirut as a homogenous whole (Harb, 2007b, p.15), however, Dahiya has a multiple of distinct urban morphologies and histories and social and economic aspects (Harb, 2009, p.71). Dahiya has some well-established high-end and middle class neighborhoods, just like any part of Beirut, such as Hay Al Amerken, St. Therese, Jemous, Hay Al Abyad, Bir Al Abed, the posh neighborhoods of Bir Hasan and others. In the last three decades Dahiya also

¹⁰ Case studies of Jihad Al Bina’a (جهاد البناء – Construction Struggle), see Fawaz, 1998, p.28-36-40.

witnessed significant urban changes characterized by a leisure scene of cafes and restaurants in these high-end and middle class neighborhoods attracting different clientele, and a private enterprise that created vibrant economic life and services different consumers (Deeb & Harb, 2013b, p.726). These urban realities are evidence of the urban modernity in Dahiya. At the same time, this modernity is neighbored by Dahiya's informal settlements.

Five informal settlements and two Palestinian camps are distributed in Dahiya (see figure.1), the informal settlements are: Hay El Sellom, Ouzai, Al Raml Al Aali, Al Jnah, Horsh Al Qatil. The Palestinian camps are: Borj Brajneeh camp and Sabrah camp.



Figure 6. Palestinian camps (in red) and informal settlements (in yellow) in Dahiya overlapping UMD's boundaries. (By author)

All of the informal settlements started to develop in the same period (in the 1960s) (Fawaz & Peillen, 2002, p.15), during the civil war they grew sporadically because of the forced displacement. While some of these informal settlements originated on their own, like Hay El Sellom that originated outside of the southern suburb but then later grew and integrated with the growing Dahiya (Fawaz, 2009b, p.837), others like Sabra and Al Raml informal settlements developed in direct or close proximity to congested Palestinian camps to the point that they were almost indistinguishable (Fawaz & Peillen, 2002, p.15). The informal settlements in the southern suburb are quite substantial, *“today, it is the southern suburbs of Beirut that carry the label of “illegal settlements” in most people’s minds”* (Fawaz & Peillen, 2002, p.1).

In terms of mobility, in most of Dahiya’s neighborhoods and areas, it can be easily noticed that Dahiya has major urban mobility issues due to traffic congestion. There is high dependency on motorized modes of transportation causing monopolization of streets and sidewalks by cars and motorcycles, consequently leading to poor walkability quality. Public transportation is not very desirable, however, taxi cabs and mini busses operate during all of daytime and most of the night providing relatively cheap transportation services. The urban transport bias towards private modes of transportation and rapid urbanization in Dahiya are some of the main reasons behind the deteriorating quality of livability.

Monopolization of streets and sidewalks is not exclusive to vehicles, in most parts of Dahiya, shop owners use the front public space outside their shops as an extension to their own shops, which is considered by most a habitus of the economic activity in Dahiya. This monopolization and informal use of streets and sidewalks has

some positive characteristics related to active/dynamic street life and vibrant commercial activities. Indeed, it is easy to notice, even for first time comers, that commercial life in Dahiya is vibrant, it is extremely normal for cars and motorcycles to frequently stop on streets and street sides, and for people to maneuver their way through cars on the streets and between goods displayed on the sidewalks. Streets and sidewalks are also used by residents as part of the activities arena, they are a platform on which much of social interaction and leisure activities (sitting on street sides sipping drinks or smoking nargile) take place, these phenomena are exacerbated by the lack of formal public space. These are some of Dahiya's distinctive urban qualities.

3.4. Municipal Governance

Administratively, Dahiya is constituted from five municipalities: Ghobeiry, Chiyah, Haret Hreik, Borj Al-Barajne, and Mraijeh/Tahwita. Originally, Dahiya had only two municipalities. The first being Chiyah (founded in 1936) with Ghobeyri, a small neighborhood to its west, being part of it, and the second being Borj Al-Barajne (founded in 1933) with Haret Hreik, Mraijeh, Tahwita, and Lailaki being small hamlets that are part of it as well (Farah, 2011, p.198-211). Out of these localities only Ghobeyri and Borj Al-Barajne had significant Shi'a populations, while the rest where predominantly Maronite Christians (Farah, 2011, p.199). As Shi'a migrants were moving into the southern suburbs it was noted by Buccianti (1973) & Minier (2000) in Maraijeh and Hadath respectively (as cited by Farah, 2011, p.199) that Maronite Christians landowners refrained from selling them land which indicates how *"community logic is at the heart of social relations between these two populations"* (Farah, 2011, p.199).

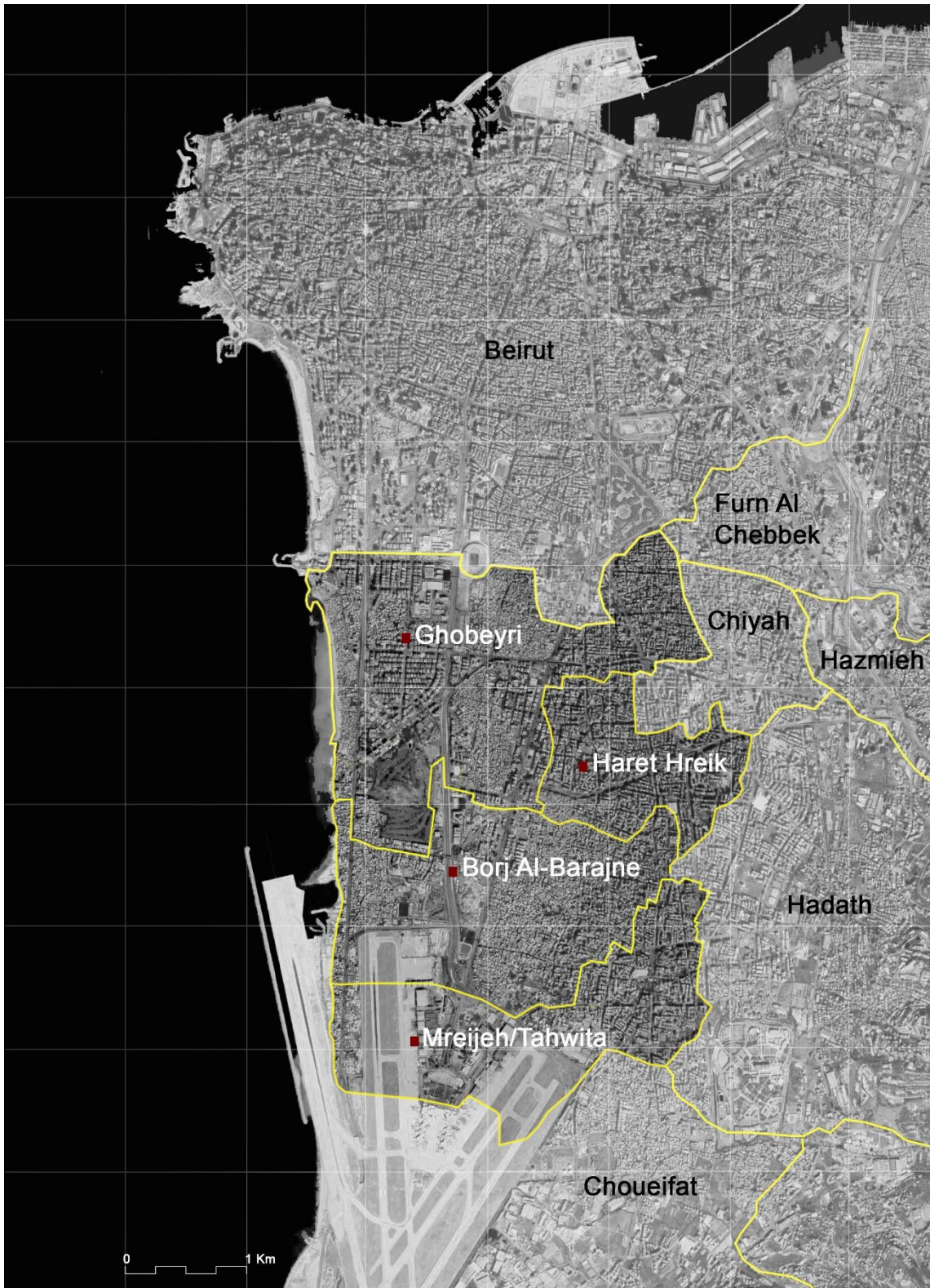


Figure 7. Municipalities of Dahiya and its surrounding. (By author)

This kind of logic extended to the municipal councils which caused Ghobeyri to secede from Chiyah municipality in 1956 (Khuri, 1975, P.169-207-211), and following the widespread crisis in 1964 that freezed elections until 1998 Haret Hreik and Mreijeh/Tahwita followed suit and seceded from Broj Al-Barajne (Farah, 2011, p.227-249), consequently leading to the administrative borders of local governments in Dahiya today. This also explains why the municipalities of Haret Hreik, Chiyah, and Mreijeh/Tahwita have Maronite Christian presidents and council members.

The municipal administrative borders of Dahiya are different from its social, demographic, and political realities. As mentioned before, Dahiya is strongly affiliated with Shi'ism and Hezbollah, and Hezbollah's constituency existence is not necessarily confined to the administrative borders of Dahiya¹¹. For both residents and non-residents of Dahiya, this is spatially translated into the "real" Dahiya (see figure.11).

Apart from Chiyah, the other four municipalities form the Union of Municipalities of Dahiya (UMD), which is run by elected Hezbollah candidates as well. The UMD was first established on May 25th 2006 and included three municipalities, Mreijeh/Tahwita Municipality later joined the union in 2011 making a total of four municipalities spanning over an area of 12.1 sq.km¹², and housing, according to some resources, around 730000 residents¹³.

¹¹ There is not a single interpretation of the social borders of Dahiya. Although the legal borders are very specific the social and demographic borders are not.

¹² Beirut municipal areas is 17.2 sq.km.

¹³ Numbers provided by the CCSD (Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation), according to the center this number includes Lebanese residents only. The total number of Lebanese residents within Dahiya's social borders is approx. 900000 in an areas of 16 sq.km, if non Lebanese residents are added the number rounds up to 1 million.

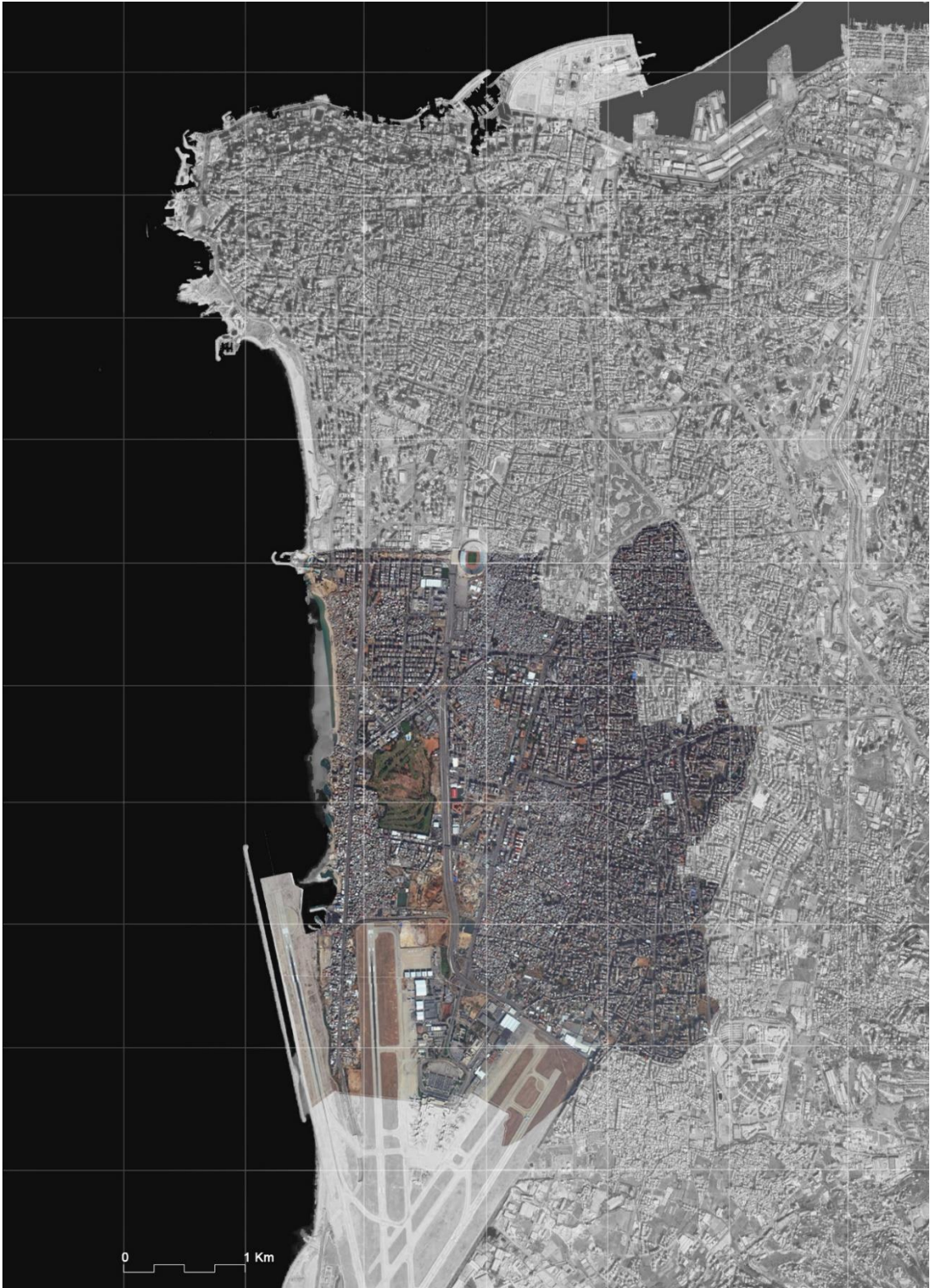


Figure 8. UMD municipal boundaries. (By author)

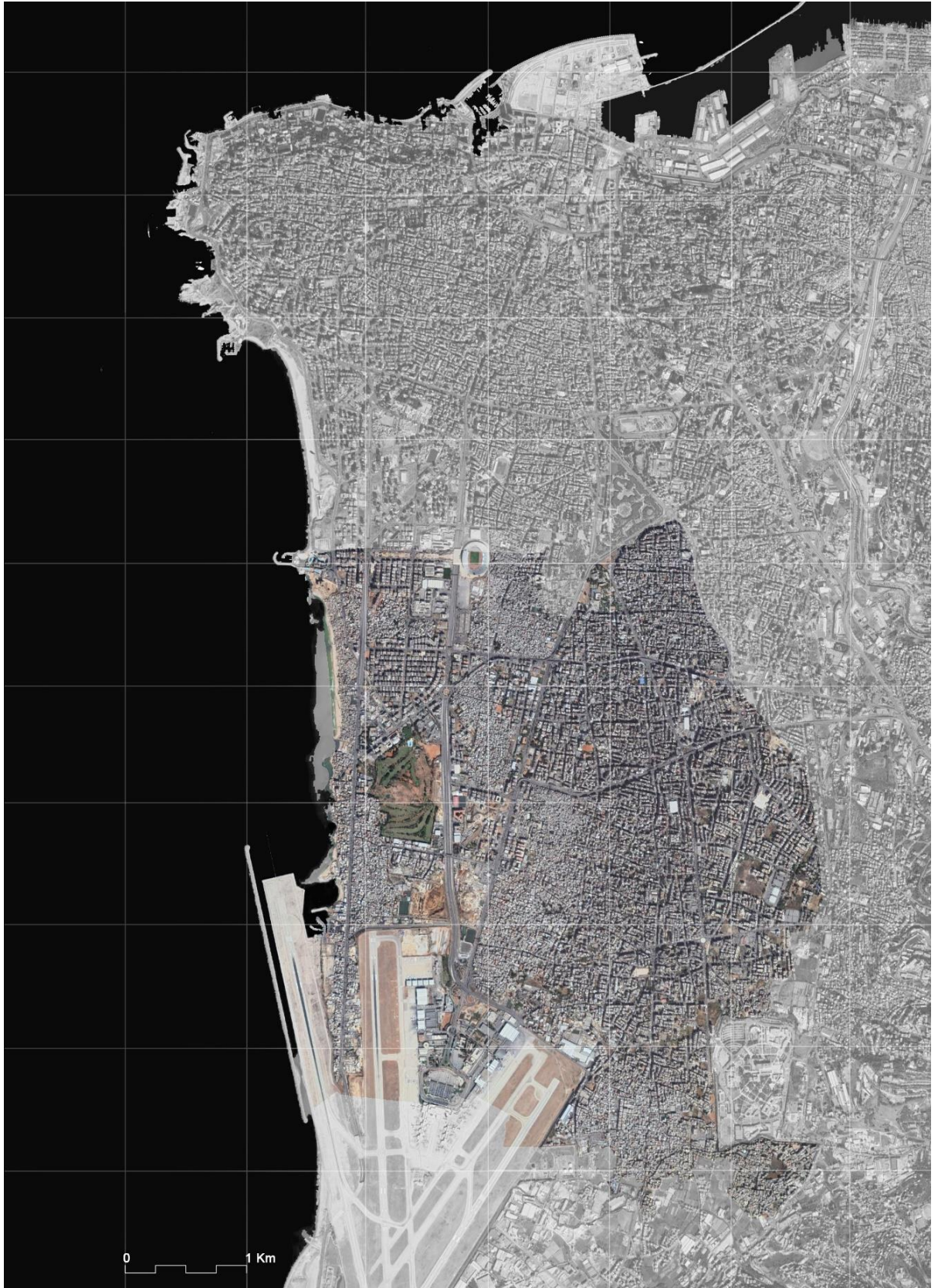


Figure 9. Dahiya Social/demographic/political boundaries. (By author) – note that this representation of real boundaries is according to author's own analysis.

The UMD has four departments each of which has its own role: Health care and engineering department, civil defense department, police department, and the administrative and financial department. The union itself is made up of two branches: the legislative which is the municipal union board, and the executive which is the municipalities' union president supported by the previously mentioned departments. The UMD was headed since its conception in 2006 and until 2012 by Hajj Abu Sai'd Al Khansa, previous mayor of Al Ghobeyri municipality, the wealthiest and largest municipality in the union. The leadership of Abu Sa'id marked an important time for the UMD, as he promoted for both social and economic development (Deeb & Harb, 2013, p.71). In 2012 Engineer Muhammad Dergham, a member of the municipal council of Ghobeyri, was elected as the new UMD president.

Like all local governments in Lebanon, the UMD is subject to the Lebanese voting system and the centralized system of governance. The voting system in Lebanon is quite debatable. "*The election law in Lebanon relates the voter's site of election to the voter's town of origin*" (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.196), therefore the majority of the residents in Dahiya don't vote to elect their local councils, only the native residents do. According to Harb and Atallah (2015, p.196) only half of the residents of greater Beirut elect the local councils. The ratio of the numbers of natives and that of the residents in Dahiya (approx. 130000 and 730000 respectively according to municipal resources) is almost 1 to 6. This distortion is detrimental to local democracy as elected councils are only accountable to the natives while the bigger percentage of the residents cannot hold the elected officials accountable, this is what is termed by Bahout as the difference between the "legal" and the "real" country (As cited by Harb and Atallah, 2015, p.196).

Another issue that raises accountability is the centralization in Lebanon. Within the centralized Lebanese system of service provision, local governments have little authority concerning service provision, instead, each service is centrally administered by its respective ministry (Harb & Atallah, 2016, P.197). Moreover, other central institutions and agencies tend to ignore and bypass local governments when working on initiatives and programs in their territories (Harb & Atallah, 2016, P.198-199). Centralization issues in general raise questions about accountability of local governments to their local electorates and responsiveness of central governments to local needs (Blackman, 1995, P.21), this disconnection between the locals and the service provider (which is in this case the central government) creates a disparity between the policies provided and the locals' preferences (Clark, 1981, P.32). Centralization, naturally, obstructs the goals of decentralization which presumably are better service provision and democratic practice (Harb, 2016).

As per the law, the purpose of municipal unions is to promote “*inter-municipal cooperation for projects of public interest and/or to implement large-scale technical projects that benefit all municipalities*” (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.202). Municipalities in Lebanon have been keen on joining unions, as unions are more likely to receive governmental funding and foreign grants from donors who prefer to work on development with regional authorities (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.202-203). According to article 126 of decree-law 118 of 1977 municipal unions are entrusted with a wide range of responsibilities:

- Projects of common interests to all or some municipalities of the union or those that span over more than one municipality like roads, sewers, transportation...etc.

- Planning, expropriation, and terms of references concerning projects' implementation (as translated by Harb & Atallah, 2015, 203).
- Coordinating between member municipalities and solving/mediating issues and disagreements between them.
- Deciding of municipal budget.
- Management of Mushaa property within the unions boundaries that are not being managed by any member municipality and managing income generated by it.
- Producing and fostering development plans within the union's jurisdiction.

Although some unions have been successful in development projects and service provision (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.203), they still face several obstacles that prevent them from being able to function fully. The problems can be divided into two categories. The first relates to problems concerning the union itself and the relation of the union with member municipalities. As Harb & Atallah (2015, p.203) state "*The lack of clear delineation of responsibilities, between municipalities on the one hand and municipal unions on the other is becoming a source of conflict between them. The responsibility of unions according to Article 26 overlaps with those of municipalities*", other obstacles are related to geographic constraints, weak administrative capabilities, and weak fees collection capabilities (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.204-210-213). The second relates to the centralized system of governance in Lebanon within the central government. All municipalities and municipal unions fall under the authority of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MOIM) (Haase et al, 2016, p.1-3). "*Lebanon's contemporary administrative structures do not provide local municipalities the autonomy they need to manage their internal affairs*" (Haase et al, 2016, p.7), the

central government exercises its control over all of the municipalities and municipal unions' financial activities (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.196). Haase et al (2016, p.7) argue that *“Assuming the central government adopted legislation that decentralizes power and authority, municipalities would struggle to undertake administrative tasks related to strategic planning, data analysis, decisionmaking, program evaluation, budgeting and financial management, the use of information technology, and the management of human resources..... Consequently, to be effective, Lebanese policy-makers must complement decentralization reforms with substantial investments in administrative capacity.”*

Planning practices for local governments are very limited as planning falls under the jurisdiction of the CDR (Council for Development and Reconstruction) and DGU (Directorate General of Urban Planning) both of which are state institutions who practice a top-down approach over municipalities and municipal unions (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.197-198). Furthermore, there is improper allocation of funds. The IMF (Independent Municipal Fund) transfers taxes and fees from central to local governments. There are two problems relating to the IMF: first, it is inconsistent in transferring the funds that varies from year to year which creates uncertainty for local governments and prevents them from proper planning (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.217); second is that funds are calculated according to a formula that allocates funds depending on the number of registered voters rather than on the number of residents, *“because of the gap between resident and registered populations in many municipalities, the dependence of the IMF upon the registered population for both municipalities and municipal unions leads to an improper allocation of resources”* (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.216), causing some local governments to be underfunded and others to be overfunded

thus hindering municipalities' and unions' abilities to provide services (Harb & Atallah, 2015, p.217).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The Union of Municipalities of Dahiya’s urban program was first outlined in a press conference held by the UMD in September 2017. Titled “Daheyati”¹⁴ (my suburb), the intervention is inscribed in an urban regional vision that aims to address four urban issues through four plans (khotat): i) transportation, ii) greening and beautification, iii) removal of violations (illegal encroachments on public areas such as streets and sidewalks), and iv) cleanliness and health. Daheyati’s vision¹⁵ is to “challenge the current situation and inspire a new image of Dahiyah which components are very much associated with principles of urban modernity (حدائثة - Hadatha) such as



Figure 10. (2017). Launching of Daheyati in a press conference that had the presidents of all four municipalities of UMD, the UMD president Muhammad Dergham, the presidents of Chiyah, Hadath and Chouefat municipalities, and various council members and other personnel.[digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.

¹⁴ Daheyati is written here as written by the UMD.

¹⁵ In interviews with municipal officials from UMD and Borj municipality, they explained that “Daheyati’s vision” incorporates physical and social aspects and goals related to issues of presentation and perception of Dahiya.

order, hygiene and aesthetics, to inspire a sense of belonging to Dahiya's residents, encouraging them to preserve and care for their neighborhoods". Daheyati also aims to create social cohesion among its residents and delineate the existing differences between them that is mostly related to their place of origin¹⁶.

4.1. Daheyati

As mentioned before, Daheyati is made up of four plans (khotat - خطط). However, the word plan referred to as "khotta" in Arabic is not an actual document or set of maps that specify goals, timeline, and strategies. The word holds different meanings and operates as a discursive reference that can be narrated with various levels of difference depending on the stakeholder and the plan that is referred to (for example, the transportation "plan" does actually hold a set of documents and maps while the violation removal plan refers to more of an objective). Therefore, it is important to understand the word "plan" in its appropriate context and not its literal meaning.

4.1.1. Transportation Plan [largest/most important]

The transportation plan was described as a response to asphyxiating traffic congestion in Dahiya, which was explained as the outcome of "(i) the acute/chronic

¹⁶ As mentioned before, most of the residents of Dahiya are not locals, they are migrants that came from rural areas (mainly from the South and Bekaa) and settled in Dahiya. To this day, although not extreme, distinction between the two groups still exists, for example, some locals in Borj still refer to Dahiya residents that are originally from the south as "Qiblewiye", i.e, people who come from the "Qiblah" direction (Qibla is the direction of Kabaa to where Muslims turn at prayer). Other distinction exist as well between people from the south of Lebanon and people from the Bekaa valley.

non-compliance to traffic laws and non-order¹⁷ and (ii) the poor infrastructure supporting pedestrian mobility and shared modes of transportation¹⁸”.

The UMD commissioned Khatib & Alami Engineering Company¹⁹ to develop the transportation plan. K&A is a multidisciplinary urban and regional planning, architectural and engineering consulting, and construction company (khatibalami.com, 2019). K&A was established in 1964 in Lebanon and grew over the years to become an international company with more than 30 offices worldwide (khatibalami.com/about, 2019). K&A operates mainly in the Middle East (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kurdistan Iraq...etc.) and Africa (Morocco, Sudan, Nigeria...etc.) usually on big scale projects in the fields of architecture and planning, infrastructure, and energy (khatibalami.com/portfolio, 2019). It can be seen from K&A’s portfolio that projects like Daheyati’s transportation plan do not fall in K&A’s usual scope of work.

Recognizing that traffic problems don’t stop at the boundaries of a political territory, the intervention on traffic extends beyond the legal boundaries of the UMD to include parts of Hadath westwards towards Camille Chamoun Boulevard and southwards towards Choueifat. It spans over the social borders of Dahiya and entrance and exit points. Both Hadath and Choueifat municipalities are cooperating with the UMD and Khatib & Alami on the project. The plan is composed of two parts, the first is traffic management and road infrastructure development, and the second is a public transportation/soft mobility one.

¹⁷ Interviews with UMD official and a MWA official.

¹⁸ Interview with transportation engineer working for UMD

¹⁹ Khatib and Alami is a well-known engineering company both locally and internationally. It was ranked 46 internationally in design firms by the Engineering News-Record (enr.com) in 2018.

Traffic management is mainly vehicular and infrastructural, it focuses on street intersections, roundabouts, vehicular flow, traffic directions, traffic lights and signals, street signs, on-street parking...etc. K&A have developed a comprehensive traffic management plan that covers all primary, secondary and tertiary roads in Dahiya, the traffic management plan does not include any major infrastructure or civil works its purpose is only to manage traffic and not to increase roads' capacity. The infrastructure development aims to increase roads' capacity and decrease travel time by adding car lanes and building tunnels and bridges. Several projects of this kind have already had their studies made and funding secured (Kuwaiti Fund, UNDP, and UMD) such as the renovation of Sayyed Hadi highway and the expansion of Tarik Al Matar and Ouzai roads²⁰. Bigger and more costly projects are still under study.

²⁰ These main roads and highways are being widened by adding an extra lane in each direction. The new lanes is going to be accommodate for by narrowing down the existing sidewalks and medians and managing car parking spaces on both sides of the road.

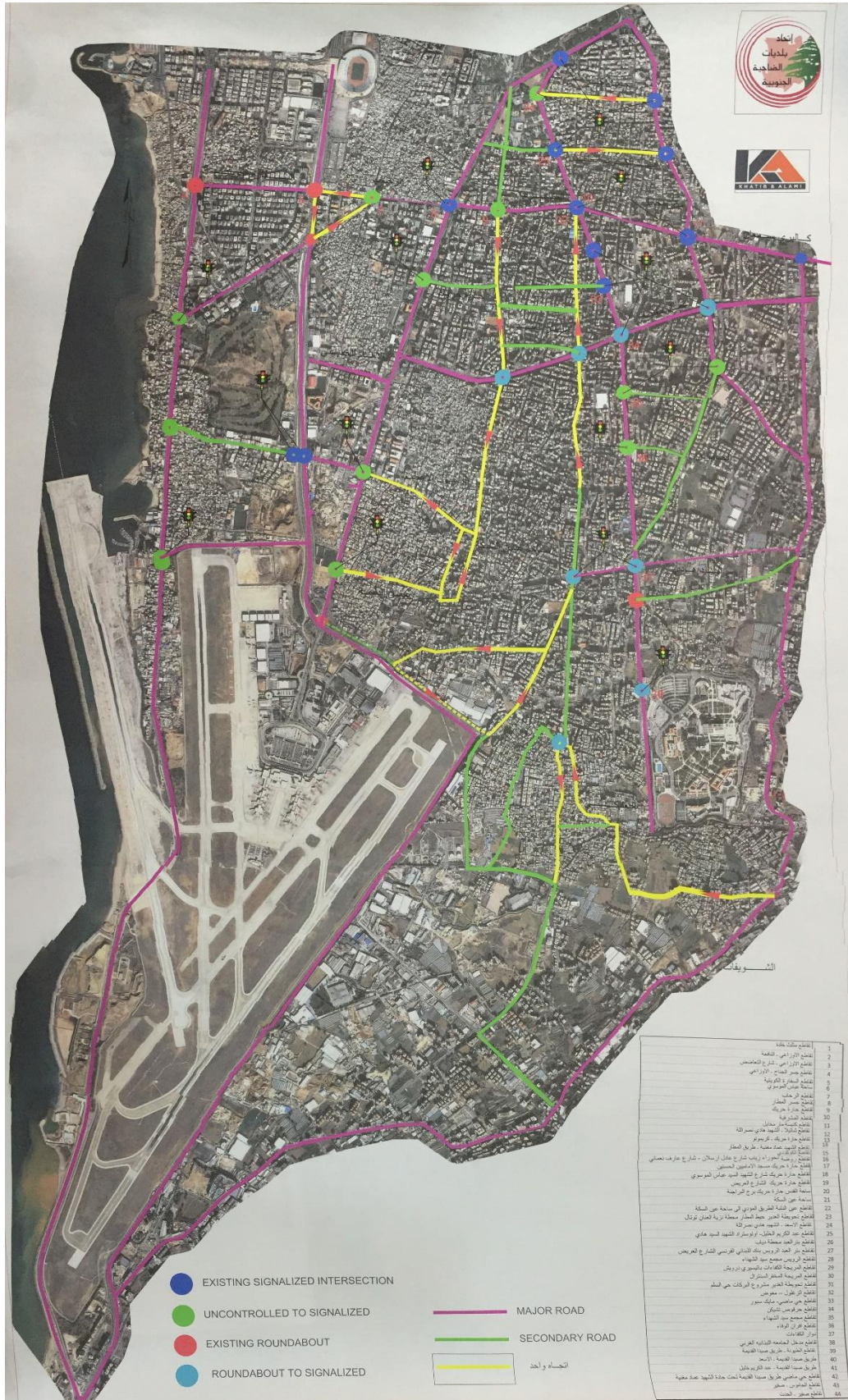


Figure 11. (2018). Main transportation plan layout showing proposals for the main intersections and traffic direction management of the main roads. [Digital image]. Courtesy of UMD.



Figure 12. (2018) Transportation plan implemented project near Bir Hassan neighborhood [digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.

The traffic management plan includes a freight transportation plan that regulates the allowed times for freight vehicles to use certain streets in Dahiya.



Figure 13. Transportation plan implemented project. A highway exit that connects Assad highway with Tarik Al Matar [digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page



Figure 14. The detailed traffic management layout of the UMD showing street directions and street signs, the plan is confined to the UMD's municipal borders. [Layout]. Courtesy of the UMD.

The “soft” part of the transportation plan is made up of three main components:

i) the first is a local public transportation project (expected to be announced in March 2019), the project plans to build 106 bus stops across Dahiya along its main axis. The goal is to provide affordable and convenient public transportation to decrease people’s reliance on cars. The second component creates two bus stations for buses and minivans traveling to and outside of Beirut, one is for traveling to the Bekaa and the other is for traveling to the South. This project aims to organize trips in an orderly manner and regulate public transportation in and out of Dahiya. The third component is developing a cycling network alongside traffic management. It is planned along Sayyed Hadi Highway and Tariq Al Matar.

The plan also includes a pilot project in a middle-class street in Bir Al-Abed that aims to promote pedestrian and leisure activities, as well as local commerce by widening the sidewalks and narrowing the road, by reducing it from a two-lane street into one-lane one. Whether this project will be implemented or not is still unknown.

Some parts of the transportation plan have already been implemented, some are waiting implementation, and others are still under study by K&A. The interviews revealed that *“the main reason the UMD employed K&A to do the planning is because they wanted a trustworthy and well known consultancy firm to give credibility to their plans so that they could seek funding from local and international donors”*²¹. Having K&A’s name on the design sheets and study files will not only fasten the process but also secure more funds. K&A’s work profile is that of corporate planning, the majority of their work is located in Africa and rich Middle Eastern countries rendering them a bit of an alien when it comes to planning in a dense built up area with a lot of informalities

²¹ Interview with UMD elected official.

such as Dahiya. In order to fill in the gaps caused by K&A's unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge on the social and spatial practices of Dahiya's residents, that not only affect the transportation plan but also to a great extent the violations removal and the beautification ones, the UMD has employed a local firm called "Terra for Engineering and Planning" owned by engineer Ali Saleh. Mr. Saleh's role is to adapt the projects to make them fit for Dahiya. Ali Saleh's firm has gained the trust of the UMD and Dahiya's municipalities since he started doing work for them in 2012, municipal stakeholders described his firm's work as being on a high level of professionalism and cheap at the same time. For example, if K&A recommends a roundabout on a road intersection and provide a generic design, Mr. Saleh's firm edits the design and produces the detailed drawings and necessary documents. By doing so the UMD ensures getting adequate designs "that they agree on and ensure a seamless flow of work"²².

4.1.2. Greening and Beautification Plan

The greening and beautification plan elaborated by the UMD and the municipalities targets Dahiya main roads, arteries, and highly visible places, it has already been implemented in several of Dahiya's spaces and roads. The greening part of the project focuses mainly on greening leftover spaces, road medians, roundabouts, and creating small pocket gardens although efforts to create gardens are dulled by the expensive land price²³. The beautification part consists of installing street scape

²² A UMD official stressed on the importance and benefits of having Terra for Engineering and Planning on their side. The firm collaborates closely with the UMD and understands the mindset of the decision makers.

²³ Interviews with the current and former UMD officials have revealed how costly it is to buy land and create public space (1500 – 3000 \$/sqm) which significantly prevents Daheyati from doing so.

elements such as water fountains and landmarks such as the Martyrs Square under the Bir Al-Abed Bridge²⁴ (see fig.17), decoration works, and mostly drawing murals on walls and on and under bridges. Most of the murals are for the sake of beautification only featuring natural landscape, villages, and some abstract art sceneries while the rest carry some messages mostly related to the Palestinian cause²⁵ (see Figure. 19). The plan privileges visual aesthetics with no emphasis on spatial practices or on ecology. It also appears to be very much aligned with other spatial and visual markings introduced by local governments in Dahiya, which emphasize Shiism and resistance symbols (Harb, 2010, p.145).



Figure 15. (2018). Martyr Square under Bir Al Abed Bridge. (Digital Image]. Source: UMD's Facebook page.

²⁴ This project was heavily criticized by the public for its unappealing design, for being unnecessary and useless, and a waste of money. And by no means it was considered to be worthy of being called the martyrs square.

²⁵ Observation has showed that most of the murals drawn do not carry any messages, only some of them do. This was further stressed during an interview with Daheyati's office manager that stated that they wanted to stay away from messages that are politically charged or carry strong religious connotations with the exception of the Palestinian cause, however, this appears to be limited only to murals.



Figure 17. (2018). Wall mural with a water fountain in front of it as part of a beautification project on Cocodi bridge near the airport. [Digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.



Figure 16. (2018). Wall mural about the Palestinian cause featuring calligraphy that says “My Name is Palestine” (اسمي فلسطين - Esmi Phalastine) and the map of the Arab world including Palestine in red to stress that Palestine is an Arab country. [Digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.

The greening and beautification plan can be best described as being “*eclectic*”, a term used by Harb & Deeb (2013) in describing cafes’ styles in Dahiya, the term applies to the UMD’s beautification plan. The beautification styles and efforts are

inconsistent and different as if each one of the interventions was created informally by a separate stakeholder. Unlike the transportation plan, the greening and beautification plan does not have a clear course of action, this was demonstrated by the UMD president who stated that the UMD is trying to plant trees wherever they can, and by another UMD stakeholder that described the plan as a puzzle that is yet to be completed.

4.1.3. Violations Removal Plan

Despite its name, the violation removal plan aims to manage (remove them in certain occasions and organize them in others) the building violations in Dahiya and infringement on public space instead of actually removing them. More specifically, the plan aims to control the amount of violations by removing some of the existing violations and limiting new ones, without amounting to a full eradication as explained by municipal official at Borj Municipality²⁶.

Building violations in Dahiya are widespread and extend to almost every street. There are two types of violations: violations of public property such as infringement on public spaces, sidewalks, and streets mainly by shop owners and by parked vehicles, and building violations such as adding an extension on the roof of a building. The plan concentrates on removing/managing the former type much more than the latter²⁷. That might be attributed to the fact that reclaiming public space is more pressing, gets “Daheyati” better media exposure, and is much more appreciated by the public (see Figure 21).

²⁶ Interview with Borj municipality official.

²⁷ Interview with Daheyati Urban program official.



Figure 19. (2019). Removal of a building violation in Ouzai in Borj municipality. [Digital Image]. Source: UMD's Facebook page.



Figure 18. (2019). Removal of on-street violations of a café that is infringing on the sidewalk in Bir Al Abed area in Haret Hreik municipality. [Digital Image]. Source: UMD's Facebook page.

It is also important to note that violations removal is not a continuous process in Dahiya. State police and municipal police collaborate and organize violations removal campaigns every once and a while, with no fixed timing separating these campaigns, concentrating on certain geographic areas within Dahiya.

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Like · Reply · 3w

Ali F Othman
الله يعطيكن الف عافية بس ان شاء الله بعد كم يوه مايرجى ويميرو الي هدمو لانو هي العادية

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Ali Al Ahmar
الناس المثلكت الأرصفة والطرقات

Like · Reply · 3w

Figure 20. (2019). Screenshot of UMD's Facebook page showing appreciation of the UMD's efforts in removing on-street violation in Sabra informal settlement in Ghobeiry. [Digital Image]. Source: UMD's Facebook page.

4.1.4. Cleanliness and Health Plan

The plan addresses cleanliness by providing basic services mainly related to garbage collection such as installing garbage bins and dumpsters, maintaining them, and making sure the garbage is collected in a timely manner. The plan also supervises and checks that institutions such as restaurants, cafes, and other shops that sell edible goods provide healthy food and drinks to costumers. Since Daheyati's initiation, the UMD has worked on developing its Health Department. It has employed several new employees (around thirty), developed its relationship with the Ministry of Health, elaborated law enforcement strategies and plans and raised awareness in Dahiya's municipalities. It also created its own health related info-graphic posters that are distributed to said establishments (see Figure 23).



Figure 21. (2018). Health elated info-graphic distributed by the UMD and Dahiya municipalities to restaurants, cafes, butchers shops and bakeries. [Digital imge]. Source: the UMD's Facebook page.

The Cleanliness and Health plan is regularly undermined by municipal officials and sometimes bypassed or not even mentioned by respondents. This may be because it

is overshadowed by the other plans, especially the transportation plan that seems to take the bulk of Daheyati's attention and budget. The plan does not operate with the same level of efficiency across Dahiya. This difference is directly related to the areas in which informal settlements and Palestinian camps exist, the inspections seem to have a light presence in these areas.



Figure 22. (2018). Butcher shop health inspection in the municipality of Mreijeh. [Digital image]. Source: the UMD's Facebook page.

4.2. Engaging the Public through Social Media

Media and public outreach are critical for rallying Dahiya's community to Daheyati's. The UMD has shown keen interest in publicizing its work and achievements in Dahiya, even if it's planting a tree or cleaning a sidewalk. Publicity and exposure is sought after through three forms of media. The first is regular media mainly through Al Manar TV station, the second is through printed media like brochures, flyers, and small booklets that the UMD distributes in their main events (events like Dahiya's annual

festival) showcasing their recent achievements, and the third mean of exposure is social media, mainly their Facebook page. Through Facebook the UMD is engaging with a wide range of audience, promptly and on a daily basis.

Figure 25. (2018). A post on the UMD's Facebook page telling their audience that the UMD president will respond to their comments. Source: the UMD's Facebook page.



Daily the UMD showcases its work and achievements, appealing to the younger generation that is more active on social media and encouraging them to engage, participate, critique, and comment. The UMD, and occasionally the UMD's president Dergham, respond to people's comments. This keenness on engaging youth can also be seen in the introduction of design competitions that invite young designers to participate in elaborating UMD's urban interventions. In early 2013, the UMD launched the



Figure 26. (2018). Instagram page post [digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.

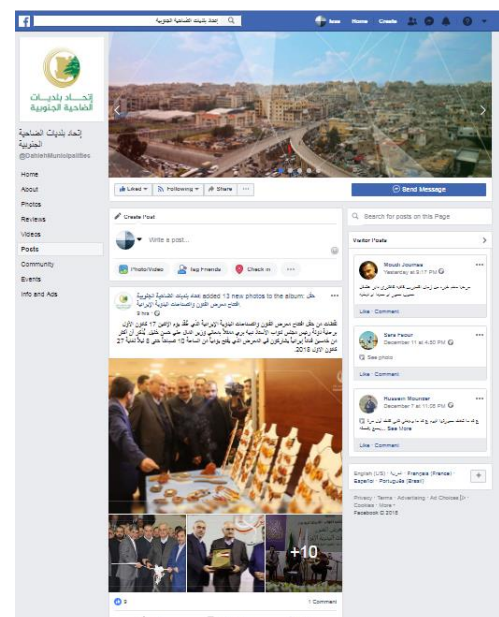


Figure 27. (2018). Facebook page screen shot [digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook

Nouwat competition for creative ideas (nouwat.org), inviting architects, graphic designers and photographers to participate and compete in several competitions some of which are designing a roundabout, a public garden or a road intersection in Dahiya. Since then, Nouwat competition had been held annually.

By performing a quick statistics analysis on the UMD's Facebook page (created in 2006), by selecting a random sample of 100 followers who participate and comment on the UMD's posts the, following profiling of users appeared:

			Overall
Gender:	29 females	71 males	100
Average age:	28.3 years	32.35 years	31.6
Position:	20 satisfied	35 satisfied	55
	8 constructive criticism	22 constructive criticism	30
	1 dissatisfied	14 dissatisfied	15

The data shows that most of the participants are males and that a bit more than half of the users are content with the UMD's performance in Dahiya, and that they are mostly residents of Dahiya.



Figure 28. (2018). *Dahiyati Flyers*. [Digital image]. Retrieved from UMD's Facebook page.

CHAPTER 5

DAHEYATI: STAKEHOLDERS AND PLANNING APPROACH

5.1. Hezbollah as a Planner

It is evident that Hezbollah's role as an urban planner is as old as its military activities (Fawaz, 2009). Within Hezbollah's timeline as an urban planner, Daheyati is its latest phase of using planning as a tool to consolidate its power and existence. Indeed, since its existence, Hezbollah has used several planning tools to do so. The first were Hezbollah's network of NGOs that provide and still provide different forms of services such as education and health care to low income beneficiaries in areas of high Shiite concentration such as Dahiya (see chapter 2 p.31 for more on that subject), and provided development aid such as micro-credits (Fawaz, 2009). These NGOs established Hezbollah as a primary service provider in Dahiya and won the people over.

Moreover, the party's urban services extended to "*creating leisure for the Islamic milieu, ranging from directly producing sites to co-opting existing sites to, most commonly, facilitating and supporting private entrepreneurs who abide by what are perceived to be appropriate moral standards*" (Harb & Deeb, 2013, p. 67). Hezbollah direct interventions included investing in the cultural and built environment especially after the liberation in 2000 focusing on certain forms of leisure, such as "jihad tourism" and "purposeful tourism". For this purpose Hezbollah created the Lebanese Association for the Arts (al-Jam 'iyya al-Lubnaniyya lil Funun – LAA) (Harb & Deeb, 2013, p.67-68). Indirect interventions were through Dahiya's municipalities that are controlled by the party, were the municipalities only gave permits to cafes, restaurants, and

amusement sites that abide by the party's moral code and benefited al-hala al-islamiyya (Islamic sphere) (Harb & Deeb, 2013, p.70-72).

The reconstruction of Haret Hreik neighborhood²⁸ post July war 2006 marked an unprecedented move on Hezbollah's behalf. Right after the war the general secretary of Hezbollah, Sayyed Nasrallah, pledged to reconstruct Haret Hreik "more beautiful than it was". To that end the party established a private planning agency to supervise and coordinate the reconstruction of the neighborhood and called it Waad, meaning promise in Arabic, referring to the promise of the general secretary (Fawaz, 2014, p.922). The post-war reconstruction materialized a new role for Hezbollah as a planner independent of the undeniably weak public agencies (Fawaz, 2009).

The last of these tools is Daheyati, only now it's being done on a much larger scale and through the UMD. Daheyati also addresses new sectors such as transportation and public space that Hezbollah has not addressed before. Just like the tools of before Daheyati has a deeper meaning than a development strategy, it aims to consolidate the party's power in Dahiya and appeal to the constituency. Through its plans, Daheyati reproduces religiosity by serving the Islamic sphere, contributes to class difference, and reinforce social/political and sectarian boundaries.

²⁸ Haret Hreik was almost completely destroyed by the Israelis during the war of 2006, the neighborhood housed for more than two decades the headquarters of Hezbollah.

5.2. Mapping Daheyati's Stakeholders and Decision-Making Process

There is a multiplicity of decision makers in the UMD's urban program Daheyati. Some of them are directly responsible for the program and others are indirectly associated via other stakeholders. Each possesses an influence and position regarding decision-making over Daheyati. This section identifies, and assesses the role, position, and influence of each stakeholder, and their patterns of interaction.

It is well-known that Hezbollah is the most influential stakeholder and decision maker in Dahiya when it comes to urban governance and planning (Fawaz 2009, Harb 2010). The party has been operating as an urban manager and planner in Dahiya via its consultative center for studies and documentation and its network of associations (such as Jihad al-Binaa) in its early years (Harb 2007), through the municipal councils as of 1998, through Waad for the reconstruction of Haret Hreik post-2006, and through the UMD since its formation in 2006. Daheyati is a novel platform through which Hezbollah further positions itself as an urban manager and planner. The executive board of Hezbollah (المجلس التنفيذي) is the most influential and interested stakeholder of Daheyati. The party has a direct saying in the agenda of Daheyati and seems to use it to legitimize its intent to improve urban livability in Dahiya. It also seeks to induce more effective cooperation between municipalities in Dahiya.

Hezbollah's influence on and role in municipal governance operates via an association called "Jameiyat al 'Amal al Baladi" (municipal work association, MWA – جمعية العمل البلدي). The MWA's agenda seeks to train municipalities on local development and municipal regulations, and supports municipal election campaigns. They are well connected and involved with all of Hezb-led municipalities in Lebanon.

The party also influences also materializes through the UMD's director who is the main actor responsible for the overall management and implementation of the Daheyati project. They are the main reference to which all stakeholders report to. The MWA is present through one employee who is present in all meetings of the UMD and participates to all decision making, and can thus be considered a main partner in elaborating Daheyati's policies and implementation timelines. In addition, the four municipalities which are part of the UMD also have influence on parts of the Daheyati program in terms of both decision making and implementation—namely through their mayors. Daheyati's donors also influence some aspects of policy and implementation. The consultancy firm Khatib & Alami (K&A) are exclusively associated to providing their services for designing Daheyati's transportation plan. Moreover, one engineer, Ali Saleh, plays a mediating role between the UMD, the four municipalities, and K&A, on an individual level.

The stakeholders operating in Daheyati can be categorized into two groups: primary and secondary, on the basis of their ability to use veto power, i.e. to reject or obstruct a proposal or a decision. The primary group incorporates Hezbollah, the MWA, the UMD and the four municipalities. The secondary group assembles the donors, K&A, and the engineer.

In Figure 29, I tried to map of the decision-making process and hierarchy in Daheyati's policy making. The figure stresses the centrality of Hezbollah and its linkage to the program through MWA as well as the UMD.

Based on observation and interviews' findings, it very much seems that the decision making process on Daheyati does not follow the same procedure all the time, and shifts according to the project's scale and technical complexity. The transportation

and engineering projects are namely decided upon by professionals and experts in K&A, with input by Ali Saleh. Beautification projects seem to be delegated to the UMD's and MWA's decision-makers, like the case of Sayyed Hadi highway median mentioned at the end of this chapter. This compartmentalization is not institutionalized and operates more ad-hoc. It clearly appears that projects that are decided upon by the UMD and MWA follow a more complicated and lengthy decision making and implementation processes.

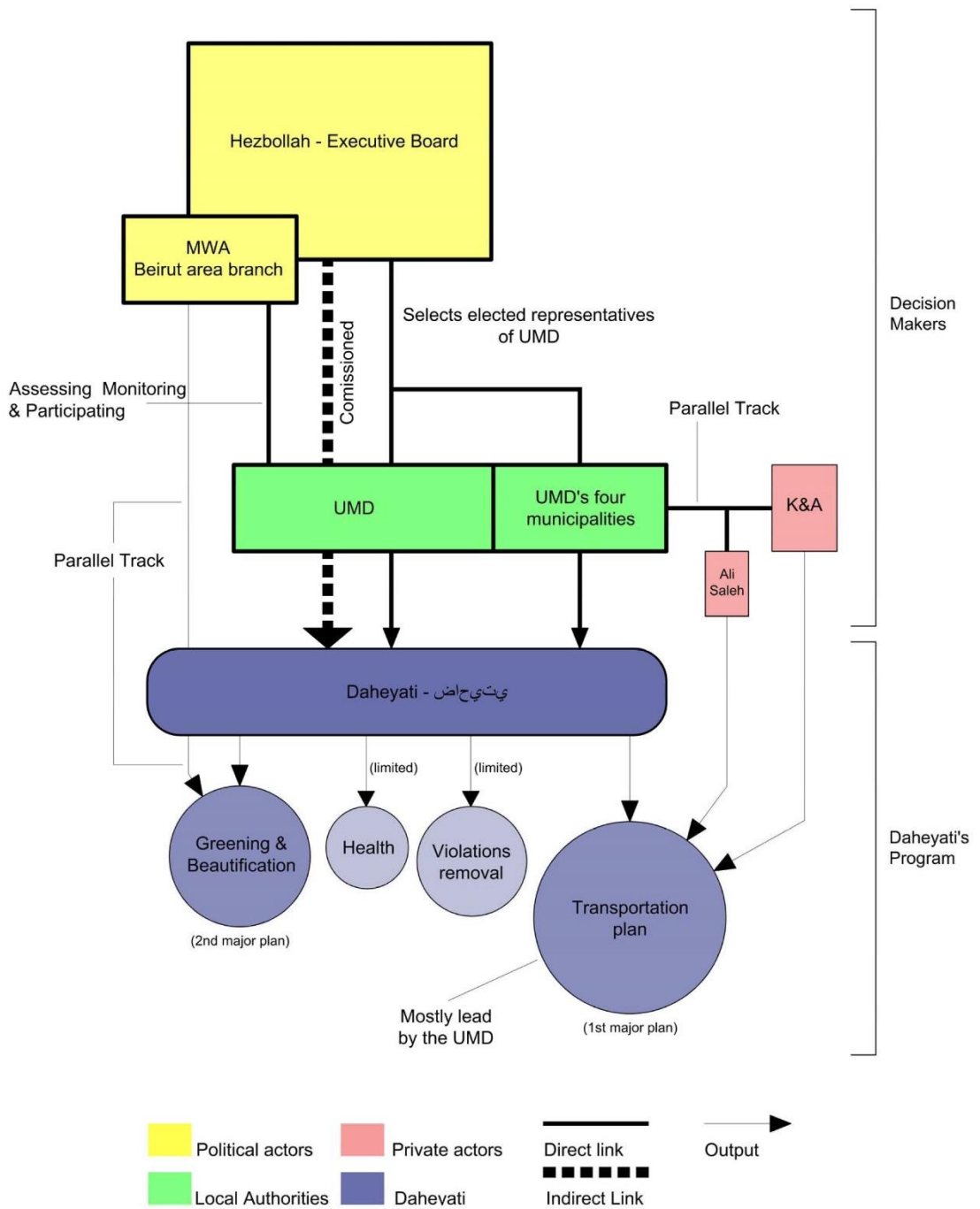


Figure 29. (2019). Diagram showing the decision-making process in Daheyati. [Diagram]. By author.

The UMD is characterized by its strong leadership over Daheyati, specifically its director stands out with his self-assurance and engineering vision. Getimis and Griogoriadou (2005) identify four attributes that distinguish leadership style and how leaders envisage their roles: ability to cope with change; generating capacity and problem solving; cohesiveness; executive action. The UMD's president's leadership style fits well to these attributes. He openly stated that the program is "constantly undergoing change... and [they are] reorienting/ updating [it] when needed," demonstrating a "proactive" attitude towards change. In terms of capacity and problem solving, the president showed a lot of dynamism and competency in fundraising from various donors. He also revealed a strong capacity at "negotiation" and coordinating the work across with four municipalities. The UMD is also strongly cohesive given the Muqawama (resistance) political/religious drive. The UMD's president is also very much operating as a city planner/manager eager to accomplish his tasks and enable executive action, rather than a political actor. As such, Daheyati's leadership style is action-oriented and can be qualified as a combination between that of a "city boss" and a "consensus facilitator". The former is characterized by strong determination, and the latter by adaptability and mediation.

It is noteworthy that no central public agent is involved in the Daheyati's program. One would have expected oversight from the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) or from the Ministry of Public Works given the transportation plan, but it was not clear at all through the fieldwork that these stakeholders are part of the daily operations of Daheyati. When asked if they are operating within the framework of a master plan, in line with the Urban Planning regulations, the president of the UMD's reaction was completely dismissive, and commented to the effect that this

would delay their work. We are thus in a situation where the UMD is effectively operating as a decentralized regional government, making full use of its legal prerogatives to do so, but with little accountability to the undeniably weak and intentionally callous central government and to other relevant public planning bodies. This raises important questions regarding the role of Hezbollah as an urban planner further consolidating its territoriality and autonomy, which we discuss later.

In addition, the exclusion or the absence of concerned NGOs, CBOs, and professional organizations from the Daheyati program is remarkable. The MWA and the UMD do not seem interested in participatory development and planning, and is only informing dwellers of its actions through its Facebook page, and occasionally distributed informational brochures.

5.3. A Dominant Engineering Approach

“Cities are made and unmade by engineers” argues Björkman & Harris (2018, p.244). Since the 19th C., engineers led the modernity project, introducing new visions, ideas, and technologies related to “modernity,” such as sanitation, cleanliness, and transport (Björkman & Harris, 2018, p.247). Graham and Marvin (2001, p.44) underscore how engineers understand the city as a “systematic machine” that needs to be organized and analyzed through “the best scientific and technological practices available”. Furthermore, Picon highlights how urban progress is understood to be largely achieved through the integrated infrastructural urban fantasy of modern engineering imagination (Picon, 2018).

The engineering imaginary is strongly featured in Daheyati’s vision and policy. This is not very surprising when we note that most of the stakeholders involved in

Daheyati are either mechanical or civil engineers²⁹, while the others are neither architects nor urban planners³⁰. Indeed, none of Daheyati's stakeholders is trained as a professional urban planner or designer³¹. Daheyati's urban program is hence very much approached as an urban engineering program that favors vehicular mobility, with no interest in incorporating any urban planning expertise.

The engineering approach is most obvious in the transportation plan. As mentioned in chapter 3, the majority of the projects in the transportation plan are vehicular, and aim to enhance traffic flow and increase roads' capacities largely bypassing the tenets of sustainable urban mobility³². The majority of decision makers in Daheyati are namely practicing their "*embodied spontaneous knowledge*" (Björkman & Harris, 2018, p.252), which is the fluency in applying what one knows best in a given situation. In the case of Daheyati, these are engineers doing "engineers' stuff". Moreover, the decision makers are responding to what Krueckberg & Silvers (1974, P.9) name the *felt* needs, those felt to be essential to the population, which in this case are to solve the problem of traffic in Dahiya, and they're doing so through engineering solutions of widening roads, building bridges, and fixing roundabouts, although it is well known that larger roads increase traffic. Case studies of several European cities³³

²⁹ This is clearly noticed throughout the conducted field work and by profiling the interviewed stakeholders.

³⁰ Some of the interviewees were architects but they were not decision-makers in Daheyati.

³¹ When asked about the complete absence of urban planners, the response was that economic situation does not allow hiring urban planning professionals, instead the UMD and the municipalities outsource, and in the case of Daheyati they outsource to an engineering firm.

³² Sustainable urban mobility paradigms were introduced in the literature review. For in depth review see Banister, 2008.

³³ Possibly the most famous of them is the case of Copenhagen. In the 1960s Copenhagen was suffocating from traffic congestion and loss of public space, so the authorities announced their intentions to reduce cars in the city and turn the city into a walkable city which the newspapers responded to: "Copenhagen will never be a city for walking". Slowly, the authorities started taking small steps to

demonstrate that the problem of traffic congestion can only be solved by investing in public transportation and reclaiming urban space for people. The fact that key stakeholders are not “frog leaping”, i.e. learning from others experiences to leap forward and avoid undergoing all the failures others went through, indicates serious levels of unawareness, and highlights major opportunities being missed.

During interviews³⁴, I tried to have discussions with stakeholders about the importance of sustainable urban mobility choices over vehicular infrastructural approaches. Occasionally, they agreed, but more often they underscored the near “impossibility” of this, and blamed it on the “underdeveloped culture of people” who would not accept such interventions, forgetting how policy can shape behavior, and that, as decision makers, they have the opportunity and the duty to advance their society.

5.4. Public Space as Aesthetics

The greening and beautification scheme of Daheyati privileges aesthetics over social space and livability. They do not serve any functional or social purpose. Indeed, the UMD’s efforts in the greening and beautification scheme are negligible in providing public spaces, in the sense of spaces to be used by people for a variety of socio-spatial practices and/or recreational uses. Public space is instead understood to be a pretty, green or decorated, sealed and secured space.³⁵ The UMD’s approach towards public

change the status quo by providing a set of policies over the years (providing public transportation, higher tax on parking spaces, removing parking lots, turning streets into pedestrian streets only...etc.) which eventually lead the city to be one of the most walkable/livable cities in Europe and an example to follow. For more on this subject see Gehl & Gemzøe, 1996.

³⁴ Quite often after interviews were over I introduced aspects of sustainable urban mobility which stakeholders usually responded positively to.

³⁵ Based on interviews with UMD officials. Stakeholders showed different understandings of what a public space depending on the interviewee background and experience in life, those who often

space provision is accordingly quite passive and reduced to greening small existing patches³⁶ of open spaces and fencing them, as if these little spaces need to be protected from people instead of serving them (see Figure. 30). Such interventions and choices are justified with the narrative that “people’s culture is not used to this” – “مش معودين على هيدا” – “النشي”. Therefore, “public space” in Daheyati is mainly about greening and aesthetics, for the mere purpose of visual consumption.



Figure 30. (2019). A small patch of space in Bir Al Abed, the space is fenced all around and inaccessible, even visually the space cannot be seen by bypassers since the fence is higher than eyelevel. This is an excellent example of the local authorities’ general attitude towards existing spaces than can be used to serve the public [Digital image]. By author.

In addition to greening, beautification strategies also include murals. Some are just aesthetic imagery, and others carry political messages relative to Palestine or to the

traveled or lived outside of Lebanon for parts of their life showed better understanding to what constitutes a public space.

³⁶ Throughout Dahiya there exists patches of spaces that can be used as pocket gardens or small parklets, however, municipalities usually fence them and at most plant some greenery.

Resistance. They are often strategically placed, in highly visible sites, on crossroads or on main access roads to districts. Thus, they fit with the overall strategy of promoting symbolically and through imagery the Resistance society and its territory (Harb & Deeb, 2013).

Through its greening and beautification scheme, Daheyati may also be leading to furthering urban inequalities between Dahiya's neighborhoods. Most of Dahiya is not targeted by the scheme, and as such is excluded from these interventions that also contribute to increasing real-estate value, and thus to a dynamics of gentrification. The scheme does not incorporate poorer and older neighborhoods. It operates as a tool of representation of Dahiya to its own people and to others, through these selected places, that are supposed to be clean and beautiful, while overshadowing other places, an attempt to perhaps gain legitimacy by making Dahiya a more modern, and greener, prettier, more ordered, urban place—but actually a façade presenting a more pleasant image than the actual reality.

5.5. Privileging Pious Middle-Classness

As argued by Bou Akar (2018), Dahiya can no longer be identified as a periphery to Beirut, but rather as a new center defining the peripheral conditions of the surrounding areas. This framing can help understand Daheyati in more accurate ways. Being a center, Dahiya pursues certain characteristics to its position. The first is “autonomy” whereby a certain agent, here Dahiya, tries to increase its own dominion. This materializes in self-sufficient social, religious, and political structures as well as clearly set geographical boundaries. Dahiya's political/religious autonomy is not only self-generated, it is also defined by opposing narratives that have different

political/religious ideologies³⁷. Daheyati represents that program that actualizes its territorial boundary and qualifies it relatively to Beirut and to other adjacent territories.

The second is “rivalry”. Through Daheyati, decision makers are responding to their long-lasting relationship of rivalry with Beirut. On one hand, the religious and political symbols Daheyati is spreading further normalize and claim the Resistance ideology. On the other hand, the asserted modernity of the transportation plan led by a leading consultancy firm responds to the long-lasting denigration of Dahiya as an anarchic, chaotic, illegal and lesser part of the city. Daheyati achieves a demand for legitimacy and respect, and claims for acknowledgment rather stigmatization.

Third, “development”: the center-periphery model describes the relationship between the advanced center and the less developed periphery. If Dahiya considers itself to be a center that has its own periphery, then it has to plan itself in ways to be comparable to a center.

To Daheyati’s decision makers, Dahiya’s center is where their main constituency is located, namely in Haret Hreik, Bir al-Abed, Rwess, Hayy al-Abyad, and parts of Ghobeiry and Borj al-Brajneh—which are middle- and upper-class neighborhoods as Harb & Deeb have shown in their mapping of the pious middle-class (2013) . The peripheries of Dahiya hence group the poorer neighborhoods where the Palestinian camps and informal settlements are located.

³⁷ Chapter 2 explains how Dahiya came to be the way it is now, part of the story refers to how Dahiya was looked down upon. The religious/political ideology of Hezbollah and its constituency was described as a culture of death (ثقافة الموت), which Hezbollah obviously refuse and consider to be misleading, and that of their political rivals as the culture of life (ثقافة الحياة). The stronghold of the former was Dahiya. The two opposing views are still mentioned in media and by political leaders from time to time.

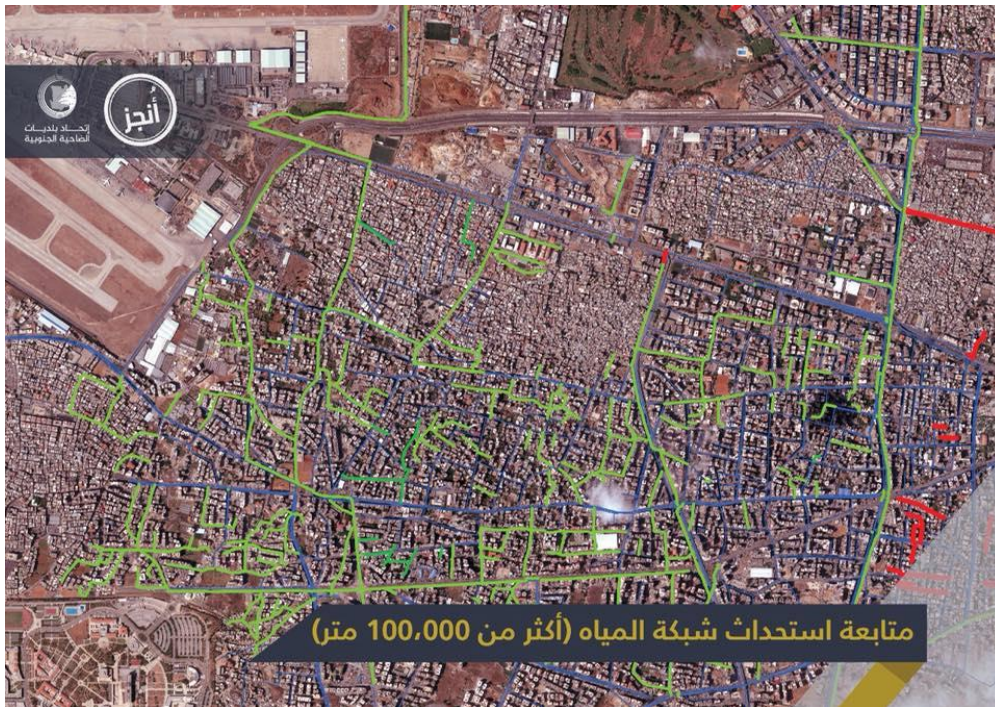


Figure 31. (2018). Layout of water supply network of parts of Dahiya, [Digital Image]. Retrieved from: the UMD's Facebook page.

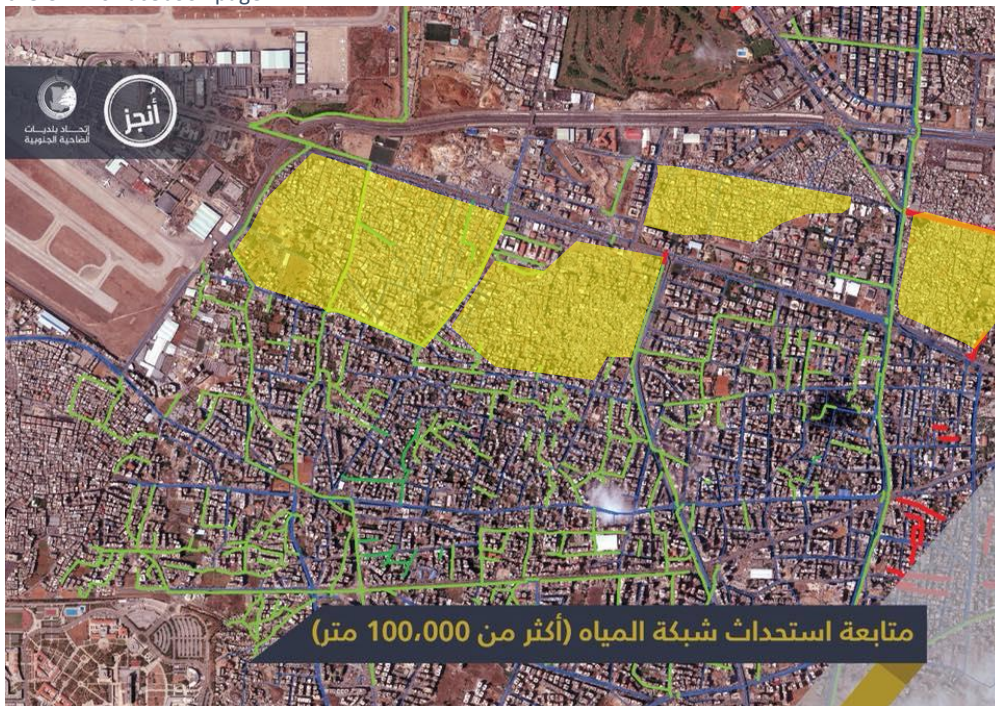


Figure 32. Layout of water supply network of parts of Dahiya showing how network does not include the informal settlements.

Thus, to consolidate the status of Dahiya as a center, the political/religious ideology is furthered, and planning favors the middle-class neighborhoods of

Hezbollah's constituency in terms of representation, services, and aesthetics (see Figure. 31 and Figure. 32 examples on infrastructure³⁸).

5.6. Boundaries and Scales

As mentioned before in chapter.2 the legal and social/political boundaries of Dahiya are different. The difference is not minor, by only reading maps one can clearly see that when the social/political boundaries are included Dahiya almost doubles in area stretching to Hadath, Choueifat, and the borders of Khalde (see figures. 33-34).



Figure 33. (2019) The UMD administrative boundaries. By author.



Figure 34. (2019) The boundaries of the transportation plan. By author.

³⁸ Although water supply is not part of Daheyati and does not fall under any of its plans, such projects are often presented as being part of Daheyati on the UMD's Facebook page.

In that sense, given Daheyati's transportation plan consolidates the socio-political boundaries of Daheyati, ignoring the rest of the city's mobility issues (see figure. 13), it reveals contentious issues of territoriality in Greater Beirut.

Indeed, Daheyati reveals the structural problems of municipal and metropolitan planning in Lebanon, where institutions and regulatory tools of regional planning are absent. As discussed before, the municipality of Beirut commissions the soft mobility plan of "Liaison Douce" but it stops at the doors of Dahiya, whereas the UMD commissions a transportation plan for Dahiya which stops at the municipal boundary of Beirut. Both policies reveal contradictory values (soft mobility vs. vehicular mobility), and competing agendas of ghettoization and self-management, evidently ruled by competing political ideologies (Hariri vs. Hezbollah). This demonstrates how the Lebanese planning system only recognizes central and local authorities, and fails to think and operate on different scales, leading to fragmented and ineffective planning solutions. It does not seek to regulate the metropolitan scale of its capital city, and to conceive of solutions for the dire traffic situation that need to transcend the administrative boundaries of municipalities, and the constraining logics of sectarian (geo)politics. In the absence of the possibility of creation of a Great Beirut municipality given the multiplicity of values, histories, and religious beliefs of different city dwellers (Bollens, 2000), perhaps thinking of planning through sectors rather than institutions, like mobility, may be more pragmatic—introducing for instance an independent transportation planning unit for the Greater Beirut area.

5.7. Municipal-led Urban Management

I want to end this chapter with a story that illustrates really well how municipal-led urban management and planning can be practiced in the southern suburb. Among the several beautification projects that Daheyati is working on is located along the Sayyed Hadi Nasrallah highway, specifically its median, currently made of casted concrete pots that are planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers. The highway stretches over all four municipalities that make-up the union of municipalities of Dahiya (UMD). The UMD decided to beautify this median and decided to cover it with ceramic tiles. No consensus was reached regarding how to do that: some objected to the idea of tiling and proposed paint instead, others wanted to change the type of proposed tiles. Several mock examples were tried to see which fits the median best, but no agreement was reached, even within the same municipality. Each municipality went on to beautify its own stretch of the median in the way it sees fit, resulting in several tiling styles being used throughout the median's different "municipal" sections.



Figure 35. (2019) This figure shows the different designs of the concrete median in different areas. From upper left: original concrete median, designs in Mreijeh/Tahwita, Borj, Borj, Haret Hreik, Haret Hreik, Haret Hreik, and Ghobeiry municipalities. (By author).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis has discussed the UMD's urban program called Daheyati in the southern suburb of Beirut (Dahiya) in light of goals of livability and sustainable urban mobility. In chapter 1, I first presented the literature related to planning approaches, policy analysis, livability, and sustainable urban mobility. Chapter 2 presented the case study profile, Dahiya. I first showed its urban history and the story behind its current state, then its politics, urban structure, and finally its municipal governance. I also briefly mentioned in the chapter its demography, geography, and socioeconomic life.

After that I presented Daheyati's program in depth in chapter 3. I unpacked its four plans (the transportation plan, the greening and beautification plan, the violations removal plan, and the health and cleanliness plan) and presented their values, objectives, and scope of work without any analysis or personal input.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of Daheyati. I showed how Daheyati is actually operating and how its set of values and planning approach is not aligned with goals of livability and sustainable urban mobility. I illustrated how: the transportation plan adopts a vehicular approach and favors vehicular infrastructure over pedestrianism and walkability; the greening and beautification plan's provision of public space is minimal to non-existent because of the stakeholders' understanding of what constitutes a public space, their attitude towards existing ones, and complete dismissal of overlapping the transportation plan with sustainable mobility strategies to create public space; the violations removal plan and cleanliness plan respond to basic urban order and hygiene

and are still at early stages to have effects on livability. I also presented in Chapter 4 a mapping of the stakeholders in Daheyati and the decision making dynamics involved.

Urban Policy Goals and Strategies

1_ Local Government Goal & Ideology	Improving life quality Achieving Coherence Political/religious support Self-governing/autonomy Resilience
2_ Urban Planning Approach	Strategic planning
3_ Urban Policy Affiliation/Strategy	Partisan approach
4_ Spatial Techniques/Lens	Site specific interventions - Physical reconstruction Micro-grained and limited coarse-grained
5_ Spending Allocation	Spending/urban service imbalance
6_ Planning and Urban Policy Potency	Passive Responding to people's perceived demands

Adapted from Bollens (2000, P.315)

Table 1. Urban policy goals and strategies of decision makers in Daheyati. By author.

In this section, I return to Bollens' framework to assess the Daheyati program according to the goals of livability and sustainable mobility.

Starting with Bollens' goal #1, Daheyati's goals and ideologies are about improving life quality, achieving cohesiveness between residents, and providing a sense of belonging. Other goals include yielding more political/religious support for Hezbollah, establishing Dahiya's autonomy and responding to the rivalry with Beirut by positioning Dahiya as a modern, planned territory, as well as increasing Dahiya's resiliency.

As far as the goals of livability and sustainable mobility are concerned, Daheyati's program fails. Indeed, the program prioritizes an infrastructural vehicular approach over pedestrianism and walkability, generating more traffic and pollution and jeopardizing a myriad of benefits such as reclaiming space from cars for people's use. The greening and beautification strategy is only about aesthetics, and has no actual effect on quality of life in Dahiya's neighborhoods, and seems to further advance Hezbollah's political/religious identity through symbolic imagery.

Moving on to Bollens' goal #2, Daheyati's urban planning approach is best described as a set of strategic plans that address various issues on different scales within a limited budgetary framework, while taking into account stakeholders and values. Given it has only been a year and a half since Daheyati was launched, it's too premature to evaluate this approach, and we need more time to assess how the four plans will develop their approaches.

Concerning #3, Bollens (2000) mentions four urban policy strategies. First is partisan planning where authorities favor one group over another leading to disparity, unequal development, and eventually polarization and antagonism between the groups. These groups are described as the in-group (group favored or group in power) and out-group (marginalized group). Second is neutral planning or "color blind planning" where planning ignores existing injustices and disparities between groups or areas and treats everybody according to a "grey attitude", equally developing and allocating spending to all areas. Third, equity planning is well sighted and acknowledges previous urban disparities and inequalities, trying to minimize the existing gaps by allocating spending, developing, and providing services to the marginalized areas. Fourth, resolver planning addresses the grassroots problems and tries to eliminate the root causes of inequality.

This approach is more confrontational and is unlikely to come from leaders, but is rather generated from the actions of a myriad of non-governmental stakeholders (planners, NGOs, political parties, social movements...etc.).

The Daheyati's program seems to fit the closest with the partisan planning approach identified by Bollens. Indeed, the greening and beautification projects operate as tools of territorialization, and the spending disparities between middle-class neighborhoods of Dahiya and the rest of Dahiya (its camps and informal settlements) consolidate social and spatial inequalities. According to Bollens, a partisan planning approach leads to urban instability, heightened political contestation and provocative disparities (Bollens, 2000, p.308).

Turning to Bollens #4 dimension, the spatial techniques and policy lens, we see that those used in Daheyati are site specific interventions, as well as engineering, physical design and infrastructure reconstruction. The lens through which these techniques are applied combine macro-interventions and micro-grain ones. We have a large-scale infrastructural project in addition to numerous small projects.

As for spending allocation (#5), Daheyati's expenditures are imbalanced, both across geography and sectors. Certain neighborhoods are favored over others, generating unequal growth and development. And, the sectors' most privileged is expensive road infrastructure at the expense of soft infrastructure, and other developmental sectors.

Finally, Daheyati's planning potency (#6) can be described as passive, as it is directly reacting to people's perceived problems such as traffic congestion, resolved by obsolete solutions such as widening roads for vehicles. The program resists changing urban reality by not providing any daring alternatives and more sustainable

transportation solutions. Even in political/religious symbolism, stakeholders are using the same well-rehearsed imagery to deliver the same messages.

In its ideology, Daheyati does not place people's needs first. It is an urban program that caters for vehicular transportation, aesthetics, and furthering a political/religious identity. Its goals are not aligned with those of livability and sustainable mobility. Aspects of the urban program that could indicate an interest along those lines (the cleanliness plan and the violation removal plan) have limited impacts. The violations' removal scheme also responds to wanting to implement urban order, rather to actually address informality.

The goals of livability and sustainable mobility require accommodating for life in its integrated social, economic, and environmental dimensions, whereas the engineering approach of Daheyati does not. Furthermore, Daheyati might negatively affect livability in Dahiya by consolidating an exclusive identity, leading to increased political polarization.

In sum, as it is currently conceived, elaborated, managed and implemented, the Daheyati program is unable to meet the goals of livability and sustainable mobility. It has opted for an approach that does not challenge the status quo and does not attempt at working with the people to understand well their demands, and present to them alternative planning solutions. As such, Daheyati's program might as well lead to impacts that defy its very intentions. Is there any possibility for Daheyati's stakeholders and decision makers to reassess and reorganize their values, redefine the problems/issues, and modify their strategies based on principles of livability and equity? The fallacy of people's "cultural" and "economic" situation³⁹ as a deterrent from

³⁹ Several elected officials and stakeholders have mentioned that the people's cultural situation is an obstacle to adopting sustainable mobility strategies.

adopting sustainable mobility approaches is a fundamental component of the stakeholders' beliefs that needs to be changed. Perhaps if urban planners and designers who support values of livability and sustainable mobility, and are trusted by Daheyati's stakeholders, lobby and advocate for these planning values, there may be a possibility for a value shift to occur.

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